



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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The Mottley Law Firm

- 1 The End of a Holiday Era
- 2 Say Goodbye to Dark Circles With These Home Remedies!
What to Do After an Uber Crash
- 3 Best Practices Following an Accident
Tasty Holiday Chocolate Mousse
- 4 Discover the Most Enchanting Christmas Towns in the US

EXPLORE AMERICA'S MOST MAGICAL CHRISTMAS TOWNS

From Snowy Villages to Year-Round Holiday Cheer

It may be too late for less spontaneous travelers to start planning a Christmas vacation. But that shouldn't stop you from planning next year's holiday journey! The good news is you don't need to venture to another continent to find a Christmas wonderland. There are countless picture-perfect Christmas towns across the country. Make your next Christmas trip feel like a Hallmark movie at one of these festive towns!

Leavenworth, Washington

Many have dubbed Leavenworth the most Christmas-centric in the U.S., and it's easy to see why. This Bavarian-style village experiences nearly 96 inches of snowfall every year, and they certainly don't hold back when it comes to the holidays. The town lights up and decorates almost 21 miles, where you can find reindeer farms, carolers, gingerbread competitions, and Christmas markets. Every step of the way offers an Instagram-worthy photo opportunity!

Solvang, California

A slice of Denmark right in sunny California, Solvang brings endless holiday cheer, especially with their annual Julefest. Pronounced "Yule-fest," this month-long festival takes place every December and features picturesque events, including a ballerina-filled tree lighting ceremony, visits from Santa, culinary delights, traditional Danish celebrations, and much more!

Woodstock, Vermont

During Woodstock's Wassail Weekend, you'll find the town in peak Christmas mode, where you can experience parades, horse-drawn carriages, carolers, and the Billings Farm, a local favorite of the season. Stroll down Main Street to witness an idyllic Christmas spot filled with cozy small-town shops and restaurants.

North Pole, Alaska

If you ever feel like celebrating Christmas in the middle of summer, we know the perfect



destination. North Pole, Alaska, offers Christmas decor and festivities year-round! Here, you can get up close and personal with Santa's reindeer, meet the man himself, and enjoy the snow that covers the entire town. Be sure to check out their ice sculpture competition, which features artists from all over the world!

Ready for the Christmas celebration of your dreams? Start planning your next holiday vacation at any of these destinations, and we promise your dreams will most definitely come true!

DEALING WITH EARLY EMPTY NEST SYNDROME

THE LAST YEAR WITH A CHILD AT HOME

This year holds special significance for me and my family. It's the last holiday season that we'll have a school-age child in the house — Catherine, our youngest, is a senior in high school. As the leaves change and the air grows crisp, I can't help but look forward to the traditions and togetherness that define our holiday celebrations. I've been reflecting on how our family holidays have evolved over the years, and how I intend to savor every moment this season.

Our family is not one for extravagant holiday trips or fancy escapades. We prefer the cozy and familiar confines of our home, adorned with the festive decor that reappears each year from dusty storage boxes. It's not about where we go; it's about who we're with — our family and close friends.

One tradition that holds a special place in my heart is attending church every Christmas Eve. It's a peaceful experience that gives us a moment to pause and be grateful for the year that's passed. After church, I insist — much to the groans of my children — that we all pile into the car to drive up and down Monument Avenue in Richmond. The avenue is known for its grand mansions, beautifully lit for the holiday season. Despite the complaints, we've kept this tradition alive for 24 years. It's one of those instances where the collective groan has become a cherished part of the ritual.

Ah, the complaints. Why do they happen? Well, my children are eager to return home to a delicious meal prepared by their grandmother. The presents under the tree beckon, but for me, the drive is a way to slow down time, if just for a little while. I want to savor the twinkling lights that bring back memories of my own childhood Christmases.

As years have gone by, some traditions have adapted to our changing family dynamics. For many years, I would film the children bounding down the stairs on Christmas morning to see what Santa had brought them. As they've grown



older, that tradition has been phased out, but I cherish the two decades of videotaped memories that let us travel back in time.

This season, however, isn't just about the holidays. I run my own law firm, which means that while I may be the toughest boss I've ever had, I do enjoy some flexibility. The holidays provide a lull in the usual hustle and bustle of the legal world, allowing me to spend more time with my family. This year, we have a significant trial in mid-December, and I suspect that its conclusion will be my gateway to slowing down and really soaking in the holiday spirit.

Another tradition I hold dear is cooking something special on Christmas Day. Whether it's a hearty winter stew or some other culinary delight, it's a labor of love that rounds off our day of celebration. This year, I intend to go all out, not just for Catherine but for Andrew and Sarah Ann, my older children, who will be home from college and work.

So, as I prepare for this unique holiday season — the last one with Catherine still living at home — I feel sentimental. My personal goal this year is to savor it more than ever before. I intend to revel in the familiar groans, the sparkling lights, and the loving chaos that is a family meal.

Time moves quickly, and before we know it, our house will be empty. But the traditions, the videotapes, and the memories will forever be a part of us, filling our home with warmth and love, no matter how far apart we may be.

—Kevin Mottley

3 HOME REMEDIES FOR DARK UNDER-EYE CIRCLES



As you age, you likely see dark spots underneath your eyes. Luckily, dark circles aren't typically a cause of concern, but you may want to lighten their appearance. Here's everything you need to know about what causes dark circles and how to treat them.

While aging is a common cause of dark circles, other factors could also cause shades of blue, purple, brown, or black to appear under your eyes, including:

- **Genetics:** Many medical professionals say dark circles could run in your family, meaning you're prone to have the condition as you age.
- **Dermatitis:** If you've suffered from eczema or contact dermatitis, it can cause blood vessels under your eyes to dilate and become visible.
- **Excessive Rubbing:** Sometimes, your eyelids itch! But rubbing or scratching them too much can cause your eyes to swell and the blood vessels under your eyes to break.
- **Dehydration:** If you're not getting enough H2O, the lack of water can make the skin under your eyes appear dull.

How can you treat dark circles?

Although dark circles are inconvenient, there are treatment options available to you that you can use in the comfort of your own home!

- **Head elevation:** When asleep, fluid can collect under your eyes, making the skin appear puffy and dark. Using pillows to further elevate your head can prevent this fluid buildup and shrink dark circles.
- **Cucumbers:** While you mainly see cucumbers used in spas, they're a great tool to help de-puff your eyes. The vegetable is also a great source of vitamin C and water, which will keep your under-eyes hydrated and looking fresh!
- **Cold compress:** Place two spoons in your freezer for at least five minutes or until they are chilled. Then, gently place the outside circumference of the spoons under your eyes to shrink dilated blood vessels and reduce the size of dark circles. You could also use tea bags if you prefer.

There are also medicinal treatments available to help remove dark circles permanently. Consult your health care provider to determine if one of those treatments is right for you!



STEPS TO TAKE AFTER AN UBER CRASH

Follow These Tips to Protect Yourself

minor, as some conditions might not manifest immediately, and a medical evaluation provides documentation to prove your injuries were sustained in the accident.

Contact the police.

Regardless of the accident's severity, it's essential to report the incident to law enforcement. This creates an official police report of the Uber accident, which can be crucial evidence to support insurance claims and legal proceedings. If your Uber driver doesn't report the accident, you can do it yourself.

Similar to being injured in some other type of car accident, there are essential steps to follow after a vehicle collision involving an Uber.

Ensure safety first and seek medical attention.

Your safety should always be the top priority. Check yourself and others for injuries. If there are serious injuries, call 911 immediately for medical assistance. Getting prompt medical attention is vital even if your injuries seem

Exchange information.

Be sure to trade contact information with all parties involved in the accident, including the Uber driver, any other drivers, and witnesses. Make sure you have their names, contact information, insurance details, and license plate numbers.

Document the scene.

If you're able to, take photos and videos of the vehicles involved and of your injuries. This evidence can be invaluable later.

Report to Uber.

Notify Uber of the accident and provide the name of the driver and description of their vehicle. Uber has insurance coverage for accidents that occur during rides, and reporting the accident promptly is essential to access this coverage. Drivers are also required to carry their own car insurance.

Contact a lawyer.

Navigating the complexities of car accident claims while trying to recover from your injuries is an unnecessary burden. An experienced Virginia car accident lawyer like the professionals at The Mottley Law Firm will help determine if you have a case and ensure your rights stay protected.

8 Common Mistakes After a Truck Accident

Follow These Tips to Get a Maximum Payout

In all the confusion after a collision with a commercial truck, it's easy to overlook certain things, but unfortunately, these actions can hurt your case. Here are some of the key mistakes to avoid.

Not Seeking Immediate Medical Attention

Even if your injuries seem minor at first, some injuries don't manifest symptoms right away. Delaying medical treatment not only worsens your condition but also weakens your claim for compensation. Insurance companies may dispute that your injuries were related to the accident.

Not Calling the Police

Make sure to call 911 and have law enforcement assess the scene. An official police report provides a record of the accident and is crucial when establishing liability and documenting the events leading to the crash.

Admitting Fault

It's only natural to want to be polite, but admitting fault or even apologizing at the accident scene can be detrimental to your case. Fault determination should be left to the authorities and insurance companies.

Failing to Gather Evidence

Collecting evidence such as photographs, witness statements, and contact information is vital to support your case. Without these facts, proving liability is more challenging.

Speaking With Insurance Adjusters Without an Attorney

Insurance adjusters may seem friendly and concerned, but their primary objective is to minimize their company's financial liability. You're not obligated to provide a statement without legal advice from your Virginia truck accident lawyer. This safeguards against unintentional self-incrimination or inadequate compensation.

Settling Too Quickly

Rushing into a compensation agreement with the other party's insurer can be a costly mistake. Work with a knowledgeable personal injury attorney to assess the full extent of your injuries and damages before agreeing to any settlement. Once you accept, you typically cannot seek additional compensation.

Not Considering Future Expenses

Failing to consider future medical expenses, rehabilitation, and lost earning potential might result in insufficient compensation.

Failing to Contact a Truck Accident Lawyer

One of the most important things to do after a truck accident is to talk with an experienced truck accident lawyer. At The Mottley Law Firm, we encourage you to come to a consultation with a list of essential questions so we can fully understand your concerns, clearly outline how we'll work to protect your rights, and help you avoid costly mistakes that could affect the outcome of your case.

-Kevin Mottley

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7	6			1		4	2	3
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9		6	4					7
1				9		8	5	4

SOLUTION

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2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2
4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

SUDOKU



TASTY HOLIDAY CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

INGREDIENTS

- 10 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 4 large eggs, separated
- 4 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium heatproof bowl, add chocolate and butter. Set the bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water and stir until chocolate and butter are melted and blended, then remove from heat and let cool slightly.
2. In a medium bowl, beat egg yolks until thick. Then gradually add melted chocolate mixture, stirring until blended.
3. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until foamy. Then gradually add sugar, beating until stiff peaks form.
4. In another bowl, beat cream until stiff peaks form; fold egg whites and then cream into the chocolate mixture.
5. Pour into individual serving dishes and chill for 3 hours or until set.