



DONAHOE KEARNEY
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

1901 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006
202.393.3320
DonahoeKearney.com

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BRIEF

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FRANK'S COLUMN MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Just when we were cruising through life, 2020 came to remind us of everything we have to be thankful for — and that life is short, and try as we might, we can't control everything.

Painful as it is, I need that reminder, to paraphrase the famous prayer — to accept what can't be changed, to have the courage to change what can, and the wisdom to tell the damn difference! (I think that's the Irish version).

This year we have a built-in excuse to slow down and just enjoy the holidays, not stress about end of the year gifts and obligations, what other people are doing or what you "should" be doing. The time is magical and special, so what if you have to celebrate by video or with just a few people?

Just celebrate!



"We heard the post office forgot about some of you in November and you didn't get our Veterans Day edition. If that's you, scan this QR code to catch up!"

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DECEMBER 2020

2020: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

WHAT DID WE LEARN IN 2020?

When the pandemic hit, one thing that really helped was taking immediate action. We doubled down on our technology and already had our processes and core values in place, so we didn't panic.

Everyone here knows what we do for people with serious injuries, how we do it, why we do it, and how important that work is. That never changed.

We really hustled to set up a remote business and made sure everything worked so we could help people — no matter where they are or where we are.

Honestly, it's that kind of hustle and action that sets us apart from law firms that see their clients as a number. I heard from several that it took them a long time to adjust — they were more concerned about whether to keep running TV commercials than their clients ...

HOW WERE WE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE?

I'll be honest, when we first moved our client meetings to Zoom, I wasn't thrilled.

You see, I've been a lawyer for 25 years, and I'm a bit old fashioned. I like counseling, coaching, and listening to people's stories in person. I like sitting down with people and getting to know them and their families. **Our office has tons of pictures of people we've helped over the years — and I love telling their stories, they let you know someone else has been through the same thing.**

So, I miss doing that.

Yes, I'm getting better at it ... they taped my password to the computer so that helps.

SO MANY BUSINESSES STRUGGLED THIS YEAR — HOW DID WE MANAGE?

Bottom line — our business wouldn't survive without you and the people you refer to us.

Even after 25 years practicing law, I still get excited when I see that a client was referred by someone reading this newsletter.

It's ultimately because of all of you telling your friends and family about our firm and the work we do that we were able to make it through this year.

We didn't take any government money, even though our bank and accountants were pushing for it and we were approved for it. It just didn't seem right for us when so many other small businesses in America needed it more.

WHAT WILL BE NEW AND IMPROVED IN 2021?

The big news is we're moving our main office to Old Town, Alexandria. And it has nothing to do with politics or protests or coronavirus. It has everything to do with parking.

That's right — free parking.

No more paying \$25 to park in a downtown garage or having someone wait in the car while you meet with us. Right off the Beltway and easy to get to from DC, Maryland or Virginia. Want to take Metro instead? Cool — Metro stops are close but a bit of a walk, so we'll pick you up.

And we still have all of the technology in place to help you wherever you are — no need to even come to the office (we still miss you though!)

Nobody could have predicted 2020 but so what? We got through it together and in some ways got stronger. That's definitely something to be thankful for going into the New Year!

And, especially, I want to thank you for reaching out to us, working with us, referring people to us — your support was the No. 1 thing that got us, as people, through this year.

From all of us, thank you.

- Frank Kearney

MEET KISMET, A DENTIST'S TOOTHLESS THERAPY DOG

Therapy pets can have a powerful impact on dental patients, especially if those patients have anxiety.

"The studies are very clear: People who sit and pet animals have lower blood pressure, and that's what it's all about," Dr. Cameron Garrett told TODAY when the world found out about Kismet. Garrett's dental practice employs the adorable 13-year-old Chihuahua rescue as a therapy animal that patients can hold and pet while they get dental work done.

Kismet's life has not been easy. The Muttville Senior Dog Rescue has invested thousands of dollars into Kismet's health — they diagnosed her with heart disease, removed a cancerous tumor, treated a hernia, and removed all of her teeth due to periodontal disease. Yet, Kismet remains a very sweet dog. She never barks and loves back scratches and being held.

It's especially amazing that the toothless Kismet found such a perfect new home with dental professionals! This past July, Cameron Garrett and his wife, Debra Garrett (a hygienist), adopted Kismet into their home as well as their dental practice. The serene dog has provided a special experience for patients who come for exams, cleanings, and even root canals.

Of course, some patients are scared of dogs. In those cases, Kismet relaxes behind a closed gate. But over 98% of patients happily take Kismet on their laps while they undergo their dental procedure.

Cameron Garrett told CNN, "Quite honestly, as a dentist, I'm as much a psychiatrist or psychologist as anything



else. Kismet has allowed us to have another tool in our toolbox." They can even use the toothless pup's story to teach patients about the effects of periodontal disease.

Getting love from patients also helps Kismet. "She just wants to be with us,"

Debra Garrett explained. The new owners suspect that she was abused in the past and is still recovering from that trauma. "When she is on a patient's lap, she's providing them comfort, but she's also getting comfort. It's hard for me to describe how nice it is for me to be looking at her while I'm working. It's just a win-win all the way around."

Our hearts are officially melted. It's only fitting for a pet hero to have heroic owners, too!

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS WHEREVER YOU ARE

Like many of you, I have experienced Christmas traditions in many different places: the Midwest, the East Coast, and Florida (the North that got cold). Here's a little snippet from each regional experience.

The Midwest:

My grandparents lived in Iowa and Kansas, respectively. It was a treat to load ourselves into a chugging minivan and make the 14-to-18-hour trek from Ohio or Florida. On my grandparents' farm in Iowa, my grandfather would build forts for us kids in the heaping snow. We always had a candle-lit service at home on Christmas Eve before we opened the presents. And you could see all the stars at night.

My other grandmother lived in a town so small you could jog around it. My favorite part of visiting her was the freedom I had to wander around without any adult

supervision. And, of course, shooting my uncle's guns!

Florida:

Christmas in Florida was really bizarre the first year: They had the island decorated to the hilt with Christmas lights, but people were still wearing shorts. Eventually, I got used to it and grew to love the Christmas light displays that still seemed out of place. I really loved the sand castle contest that happened on the beach — you wouldn't believe what kinds of things people can craft from the white sand!

The East Coast (D.C., Maryland, and Virginia):

Christmas in D.C. is something I've experienced as an adult, and it's truly a magical time. I love the Botanical Gardens and how beautifully they are decorated with trains and the sculpted shrub animals.



And let's not forget the wooden carved replicas of the various D.C. landmarks: the Supreme Court Building, the Washington Monument, etc. Last year, I enjoyed a jazz concert there on Christmas Eve.

No matter where you are from, we all have special Christmas traditions and memories. I hope that wherever you are, you are enjoying some, too!

-Brooke Birkey

CREATING THE PERFECT SNOWBALL FIGHT WITH NO SNOW AT ALL



An old-fashioned snowball fight is one of the best winter activities. And here in the DMV, some forecasts are for 10 times more snow than we got last year!

But 10 times 0 is still 0.

So here's how to create your own indoor, snow-free, and entirely safe snowball fight.

MAKE YOUR SNOWBALLS

While craft stores sell large white cotton puffs that look like snowballs, they're too light to get any good velocity behind them. Instead, make your own "snowballs" with just a few materials in four easy steps:

1. You'll need a pair of scissors, several pairs of cheap white nylon stockings (one pair can make about 10 snowballs), and a bag of polyester fiberfill, like Poly-Fil, or use the stuffing from a few old stuffed animals you no longer want.
2. Stuff a handful of the filling down into the end of one stocking leg and tie a knot, creating a round "snowball."
3. Make another knot after the one you just made, leaving a little space between the two knots.

4. Cut between the two knots to snip off a tied-off snowball. Repeat these steps until you have at least a few dozen, but if you're patient enough to make 100 or more, you'll have ample supply for a substantial encounter.

HOW TO PLAY

There's really no "right" way to have a snowball fight. It's often just about who can hit whom the most, but if you want to turn it into a measurable competition, divide your group into two teams and distribute the snowballs evenly between them. Then create boundaries for each team by laying down masking tape across the room. Teams must stay on their side of the line at all times. Set a timer for however long you'd like the fight to go on, and at your signal, teams can start hurling snowballs across the room at one another. When time is up, gather and count the snowballs on each side, and the team with the fewest snowballs is the winner!

It's kind of like indoor dodge ball, which is awesome and even more likely to result in broken lamps, vases and other breakable stuff you probably don't need anyway!

3-INGREDIENT CHRISTMAS COOKIES

Are you short on time this year? Try this easy three-ingredient recipe that's sure to be a winner. When COVID hit, I made three-ingredient cookies for the people in my hallway so I could get to know my neighbors, and they were a big success! This recipe I got from Pam's Daily Dish — it's got a little extra Christmas flair and is even more convenient than the cookies I made from scratch. —Brooke Birkey

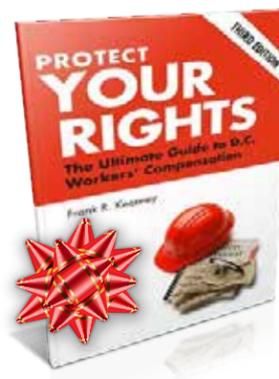
INGREDIENTS:

- Store-bought, ready-to-make sugar cookie dough (Pillsbury recommended)
- 24 Hershey's Kisses
- red and green M&M's



DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper.
3. Add cookie dough, about 12 per pan.
4. Bake for 11-12 minutes, pull out and put a Hershey's Kiss on each cookie. Put back in the oven for another minute or so — don't let the Kisses melt!
5. When baked together, pull the cookies out and add red and green M&M's for decoration.
6. Allow to cool and tell everyone they were made from scratch! :)



GIVE YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND COLLEAGUES THE GIFT OF PEACE OF MIND THIS CHRISTMAS

A book about workers' comp might not be on your spouse's or friend's Christmas list. But we know that it's more than just a book. All year-round we love to give the gift of peace of mind. **And this book brings with it the bonus of just that — peace of mind after a serious work injury.**

Every week we hear from workers who are injured, can't work, and worried about the future. **The best part about Donahoe Kearney is we take the "worry" out of workers' comp.** And that's why we give good, hard-working people free information to help combat the insurance company! Anyone who has read this book knows that they can outsmart their insurance adjuster just by reading it and understanding their rights.

You can give someone you care about the gift of peace of mind today. Just call us at **202-393-3320** or go to <https://bit.ly/WorkmensCompGuide> and we will send you as many as you ask for. It's the gift that keeps on giving!