Step Aside, Balto

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TOGO THE SLED DOG SAVES AN ALASKAN TOWN

In the winter of 1924–25, the Alaskan town of Nome suffered a deadly outbreak of diphtheria. Facing an epidemic, with no medicine on hand, the entire population of Nome and the surrounding areas could’ve been wiped out. The doctor sent a plea to the U.S. Public Health Service in Washington, D.C., for help.

Due to the harsh Alaskan winter, ships couldn’t reach the Nome port, and it was too dangerous for planes. Sled dogs were the only method of transportation available. They decided to send a shipment of serum by train to Nenana, Alaska. The serum was then transported to Nome by sled dog. The fastest trip from Nenana to Nome was nine days. Due to the brutal conditions, the serum could only last six days before it would expire.

What followed was the Great Race of Mercy — a desperate relay to deliver the serum 700 miles across northern Alaska. Twenty mushers and 150 sled dogs participated in the relay, but most historians agree one hero stood out above the rest: Togo, lead dog of renown musher Leonhard Seppala, who crossed the longest and most dangerous leg of the relay.

Togo’s 91-mile race crossed the frozen Norton Sound, where unstable ice could break apart and claim the lives of a musher and their dogs. But this route saved a day of travel, and Seppala and Togo carried on. In a whiteout blizzard, with temperatures at -85 F and winds up to 65 mph, Togo’s incredible stamina and ability to sense danger led his team to safety. Thanks to their bravery, the serum arrived in Nome in 5½ days.

The official death toll for Nome and the surrounding Native Alaskan encampments was less than 100 — far below the 100,000 predicted. Today, a statue of Balto, the lead dog of the relay’s last leg, stands in Central Park, New York City, though it’s worth mentioning the award on the statue was not actually given to Balto, but to Togo. As Seppala said himself, “I never had a better dog than Togo. His stamina, loyalty, and intelligence could not be improved upon. Togo was the best dog that ever traveled the Alaska trail.”
GIVE A DIY HOUSEWARMING GIFT BASKET!

Around the world, people welcome their newest neighbors with special gifts. Russia is often credited with starting this housewarming tradition, as dignitaries would visit nearby villages to deliver salt and bread to townspeople. The salt was symbolic of living a life full of flavor, while the bread was so no one would go hungry.

Other cultures have their own housewarming customs. In Italy, a broughm is bequeathed to new inhabitants to sweep away any lingering evil spirits. Another common gift is a candle, which signifies always having light. Meanwhile, the French make a day of it by inviting new neighbors over for a “l’aperitif,” an afternoon snack of cheese and meat. Indians also extend a hospitable welcome, inviting new neighbors to join them for lunch or dinner. These neighbors also receive a gift for their new home.

People often lament a time when “everyone knew their neighbors,” and while some nostalgia is better left to memory (lava lamps, for example), a neighborly connection is worth pursuing. If you’ve never met yours, or if you just noticed the new family moving in next door, it’s time to extend a friendly hand. This holiday season, go above and beyond by putting together a gift basket for your neighbors inspired by some of the aforementioned traditions. Here are a few themes to try:

CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GOODNESS
There’s nothing worse than unpacking and realizing you tossed out all of your cleaning tools. Draw on Italian sensibility and put together a household supply basket. Fill this basket with items like all-purpose cleaner, furniture spray, antibacterial wipes, sponges, and automatic air fresheners.

FLAVORS OF LIFE
Everyone needs the basics when they are settling into a new home. Put together a basket with these ingredients for a savory start: gourmet salt, a bread mix, olive oil and vinegar, a mixed herb set, and a bottle of wine to make unpacking a bit more enjoyable.

WARMTH FOR WINTER’S CHILL
You can also provide heartwarming gifts to brighten a new home. This theme might include seasonal candles, scented plug-ins, a decorative string of lights, and glow-in-the-dark stars for the kids’ room.

Once you’ve chosen a theme, gather the materials to prepare your basket, including a decorative bow and matching tissue paper. Then, stop by and introduce yourself and share your thoughtful, creative gift. You’re sure to impress!

Testimonials

“A friend referred me to Neely and his team over at Herrman & Herrman right after I got in my accident. They did an amazing job working and communicating with me even though I was located in Austin, Texas. They were very courteous and efficient with my case. I highly recommend this company and Neely and his team if you find yourself needing an attorney.”

–Carly C.

“I was injured in a serious car accident. After being ignored and disregarded by the insurance company representing the at-fault driver, I reached out to Herrman & Herrman. The attorney assigned to my case was Stephen Strato. All I can say is, what a relief! The day after my first meeting, I was scheduled for a medical exam and treatment, and my damaged car was scheduled for repairs. After learning that I had several bulging and herniated discs in my back, I was offered a nonsurgical method of treatment. The anti-inflammatory injections worked wonderfully, and my quality of life returned as my therapy progressed. I honestly believe that, had I not utilized Herrman & Herrman, I would not have received the treatment and restitution that I required.”

–Steven G.

2 More Insurance Company Tactics

Insurance companies can be stressful to work with, especially after an accident. You call them and all you want is some help and compensation to pay medical bills and get back on your feet. They want to profit. Over the past two months, we’ve looked into the insurance adjuster’s toolbox and at tactics they use to pay you as little as possible. This month, to round out the series, we have two more:

Befriending You
This tactic is all too common. The adjuster acts like he or she is your best friend. There have been even instances where adjusters flirt with the claimant. They may even give you personal advice about the type of treatment you should get and how frequently you should get it. And then, regardless of whether you take their advice, they will likely claim that your treatments are excessive. If you miss a doctor’s visit here or there, they’ll claim you must already be healed and there is no reason they need to pay for those treatments.

Delivering False Promises
Some adjusters will tell you to get whatever treatment you need and just send them the bills. They say that they’ll take care of the rest. Simple! They do this will the full knowledge that they will later on claim certain treatments or procedures were unnecessary, unreasonable, or excessive. Then, you’ll owe money to the provider. With the insurance company refusing to pay, you’ll find yourself in an aggravating bind.

These and other tactics we’ve explored represent only some of the tools adjusters have at their disposal. Be vigilant and work with an attorney who can break past these barriers. When you’ve been in an accident, you don’t need another obstacle to your journey back to normalcy.

EASY HOLIDAY PARTY CHEESE FONDUE

Scrambling to find something for the holiday potluck? This fondue is sure to impress!

INGREDIENTS

1. 1 cup dry white wine
2. 1 tablespoon cornstarch
3. 1 (8-ounce) package sliced Swiss cheese
4. 1 clove garlic
5. Salt to taste
6. Foods to dip (apple slices, bread cubes, roasted vegetables, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, whisk together wine and cornstarch. Add some cheese and slowly whisk. When nearly smooth, then discard.
2. Heat wine mixture over medium-low heat in the pot until thick and bubbling. Add some cheese and slowly whisk. When nearly smooth, add more cheese and whisk gently. Repeat until all cheese is melted. If mixture seems too thick, add 1 tablespoon wine.
3. Season with salt and serve immediately. Keep pot on low heat to keep the fondue dippable.

Recipe inspired by PinchoFyum.com.