

FLATTMANN FILES

May 2023

“Quality Is No Accident”

Our Yellowstone Dream Came True

Where Will You Go?

As Memorial Day approaches, we all look forward to the long, relaxing weekend. Yet, did you know the Friday before Memorial Day is Take a Road Trip Day? With the extended weekend, Take a Road Trip Day encourages us to hit the road with family or friends and make new memories. I'm sure many of us have a road trip we'll never forget.

My unforgettable road trip would have to be one with my family to Yellowstone last June. Neither my wife nor I had ever experienced this famous national park before, and we were pretty clueless about what to do or where to go. Luckily, with the help of our friends who made the trek, we created an incredible itinerary.

Honestly, I love the nitty-gritty planning needed before traveling to a new destination. When heading somewhere I've never been, I'll buy a few books and listen to podcasts to familiarize myself with the location and build up the excitement. My son and I listened to Yellowstone podcasts on our way to and from his karate classes, making us even more eager to prepare for a road trip!

A podcast my family enjoyed was Adam Brubaker's "Tied to Nature." With brief 30-minute episodes, this podcast helped me plan our Yellowstone trip and had every family member counting down the days until we packed our bags! Another great podcast is "Explore Yellowstone Like a Local," introducing hidden gems we'd never known about. Planning was just as fun as the trip itself!

The plan was to fly to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, then take a road trip to Yellowstone. Everything was perfectly in place until the Jackson Hole airport began canceling flights due to runway construction. That's the thing about traveling. No matter how much planning you do, unpredictable situations can throw you a curveball. Fortunately, we found another flight and finally landed in Idaho Falls late one night. Since it was fairly late, we decided to spend the night at a hotel and hit the road in our rental car first thing in the morning.

That night alone was hilarious, as I decided to stock up on supplies at a nearby Walmart and definitely went overboard (road trip snacks are mandatory). Of course, we also picked up our nature supplies like bear spray, which I had fun testing out in the hotel parking lot. My apologies to the Camry owner whose car got accidentally sprayed!

The next day, it finally happened. We made it to Yellowstone! When I say no planning could have prepared us for the surreal beauty of this national park, I mean it. We went on multiple tours, and our family also got super-soaked while white water rafting on the Snake River! While the uncomfortable wet suit wasn't exactly a highlight for me, it was a memorable experience.



I even remember the moment we first entered the park. We planned to see Old Faithful that day and were at once overwhelmed by the spectacular natural beauty. Within five minutes, we saw our first bald eagle and loads of bison. We even got stuck in a bison jam when a group of massive bison decided to stand completely still in front of our vehicle.

After searching for different animals, it began to rain, so we decided to head up to a higher elevation. We were shocked to find it snowing and even got to throw around nonstop snowballs. Yellowstone was like experiencing many different areas on Earth all in one spot!

When driving through the extraordinary beauty of Yellowstone, our then 10-year-old son said, "I can't believe this is real!" That's when I knew all the time and effort put into making this road trip happen was completely worth it.

You don't need to pack your things and drive to Yellowstone this Take a Road Trip Day, but I encourage making the voyage with your family or friends at some point. But no matter where you are on Memorial Day weekend, I'm sure you'll create some fantastic memories you won't forget!



-Grady Flattmann

— *Bad Grade? Sue Your Professor!* —

During your school career, you probably got at least one grade that was less than you deserved. Maybe you painfully accepted the grade or confronted your instructor for an explanation. Most people choose one of those two options — but have you ever heard of a student taking their professor to court?

That's precisely what this Pennsylvanian student did when she discovered her C+ grade wouldn't let her graduate. Megan Thode, a Lehigh University graduate student, sued her professor and school for the mediocre grade that would ultimately cost her a degree. Thode reported that due to the incorrect grade, she couldn't graduate and, therefore, couldn't pursue a career as a licensed therapist.

Thode demanded a grade change from this lawsuit as well as monetary damages. How much exactly? She wanted \$1.3 million. According to Thode, this represented the money she would lose from not earning her graduate degree and starting her desired career. We should note that since Thode was the daughter of Stephen Thode, a finance professor at Leigh University, she attended the school for free.

Her professor, Amanda Eckhardt, gave Thode a zero in class participation, lowering her overall grade to a C. And Eckhardt stood by her evaluation. According to USA Today, when questioned,

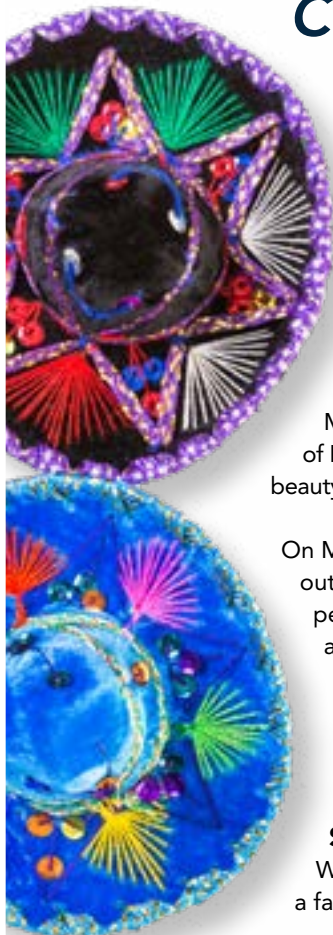
the professor remarked, "I believed she received the grade she earned." In fact, Eckhardt testified that Thode had explosive behavior in class, acted unprofessionally, seemed emotionally unstable, and didn't even heed a warning letter.

As expected, a judge quickly rejected this case in court. NPR announced that, after only four days of testimony in the civil trial, the judge determined the university never breached any contract and did not owe Thode a dime. In the end, Thode changed her master's degree to human development. She won't be anyone's therapist any time soon!



Cinco de Mayo: More Than a Drinking Holiday

Celebrate Mexican Culture All Year Long



While Cinco de Mayo may have already passed, there's never a wrong time to celebrate Mexican history. Cinco de Mayo fiestas have certainly taken on a life of their own in the U.S., but we should honor the holiday with appreciation, not just margaritas.

Not everyone knows that Cinco de Mayo marks Mexico's victory in the Battle of Puebla — it's a reminder to embrace the beauty and power of the Mexican culture.

On May 5, 1862, French troops outnumbered Mexican forces, yet the latter persevered. The Battle of Puebla remains an astounding historical victory for Mexico and gives us the celebration of Cinco de Mayo. So, maybe it's time to discover how you can honor this vibrant culture in your own community.

Supporting Mexican Businesses

Whether it's a local Mexican artisan or a family-owned Mexican restaurant, you

can support plenty of Mexican businesses. You'll uplift the owner and the Mexican community whose culture we all love. Most of us understand that small businesses have it rough. So, take the time to shop for hand-crafted Mexican jewelry or pottery — and dine at a Mexican restaurant you've never been to.

Experiencing Mexican Museums and Art

From Frida Kahlo to Diego Rivera, Mexican art has offered countless masterpieces and colorful works. Take some time to visit a nearby Mexican museum or art gallery to witness some authentic Mexican art and history. A country's artwork often reflects its culture, so explore nearby venues that spotlight Mexican artists.

Cooking Authentic Mexican Cuisine

Have you ever heard someone say, "I don't like Mexican food"? Neither have we! This month, skip Taco Bell and try cooking an authentic Mexican dish. Enchiladas, tortas, flautas, pozole, and more authentic recipes are at your fingertips (on your smartphone). When you taste a nation's popular meals, you can better grasp its unique culture.

If you missed Cinco de Mayo this year, don't worry; you can embrace Mexican culture all year long. Remember the true story of the Battle of Puebla and uplift the Mexican community in your area.

TAKE A **BREAK**

SOLUTION

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KEEP YOUR FAMILY HAPPY AFTER A DIVORCE

With These Co-Parenting Tips

After any divorce, if you have lingering feelings of resentment or anger toward your ex-spouse, co-parenting might seem incredibly daunting. Yet, it doesn't have to be a bitter relationship between you and your ex. While it does take two to tango, and each parent needs to put in the effort, there are ways to ensure you create the best possible family environment for your children. While co-parenting may be challenging, don't be discouraged. We'll share why co-parenting is essential and tips for healthy co-parenting.

How Co-Parenting Affects Kids

The American Psychological Association found that children who spent time with both parents after a divorce experienced fewer emotional and behavioral issues and were as well-adjusted as children whose parents never divorced. The following co-parenting tips can help prevent conflicts so you can focus on caring for your children.

- **Separating Emotions From Behaviors**
Negative emotions about your ex-spouse should never affect your actions, especially in front of your children. Arguing in front of your kids will harm them emotionally.
- **Avoiding the Temptation of Venting to Your Kids**
Prevent complaints from reaching your children's ears. Instead of voicing negative comments about your ex-spouse to your child, you should vent to a friend or counselor.
- **Letting Everyone Have a Say**
While you may always want to be in charge, you should allow your ex-spouse to participate in your children's daily lives.
- **Maintaining Respect**
Think of co-parenting as a business relationship where disrespect is never allowed. When you remain respectful, you can avoid heated conflicts.

While it may be difficult, proper co-parenting can ensure your child feels loved by both parents. When done with your children's best interest in mind, this will boost their confidence and help them better acclimate to the divorce. Their well-being should always be both parents' top priority.



SALMON CROQUETTES WITH DILL SAUCE

Inspired by Epicurious.com

This dish is light and refreshing, making it perfect for spring! The crispy salmon patties pair perfectly with the cool dill sauce dolloped on top.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups plain yogurt or fat-free sour cream
- 1/4 cup Dijon mustard
- 6 sprigs fresh dill, chopped
- 2 14.75-oz cans salmon packed in water
- 4 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 large white onion, finely chopped
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 tbsp salt
- 1 tbsp pepper
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Directions

1. In a small bowl, whisk together yogurt, Dijon mustard, and dill to make the dill sauce. Set aside.
2. Drain the salmon, then remove and discard the bones and skin. In a large bowl, mix the salmon, celery, onion, eggs, salt, and pepper. Form the mixture into 8 patties. Coat a medium skillet with olive oil and heat it over medium-high heat. Cook the patties until browned on both sides, about 5 minutes per side.
3. Put a dollop of the dill sauce on top of each patty and serve.



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Stargaze This May

DON'T MISS THIS ASTRAL EVENT

Why You Need to See Eta Aquariids

All month long, countless astronomy aficionados will be camping out in the dead of night to catch a glimpse of an annual meteor shower. First discovered in 1870, the meteor shower known as Eta Aquariids can be seen from Earth every May. This stellar space show moves as fast as 44 miles per second and leaves a bright, glowing trail behind it.

Eta Aquariids is visible to both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, making it an optimal summer night event. However, this one might be for the night owls since it peaks past midnight. Curious to know more about this mysterious annual meteor shower? Let's discover the origins of Eta Aquariids and how you can catch a glimpse of this galactic sight.

The meteor shower was made from Halley's Comet.

Eta Aquariids is a collection of leftover space debris from the famous Halley's Comet — mostly ice and dust. As these meteors pass through the Earth's atmosphere, they heat up and glow bright enough for you to see. Every year, you can watch as these small chunks of Halley's Comet burn and leave shining streaks in the night sky.

It takes nearly 76 years for Halley's Comet to orbit the Sun just once, and the last time we saw this iconic comet was in 1986. It won't even reenter our solar system again until 2061, but luckily it left us the yearly gift of Eta Aquariids.



Here's how to best view the Eta Aquariids.

There's no specific date to see Eta Aquariids, and we only know the time range of early to mid-May. Your last chance to witness this spectacular sight in 2023 is May 27. Yet, 2023 is said to be an exceptionally bright year for this meteor shower. According to Bill Cooke, the lead for the Meteoroid Environment Office at NASA, the meteor rates will be over two times the average speed which will cause an abnormally vibrant glow.

For specific stargazing dates, check the American Meteor Society's official calendar ([AMSMeteors.org/meteor-showers/meteor-shower-calendar](https://www.amsmeteors.org/meteor-showers/meteor-shower-calendar)). To best view this magnificent meteor shower, you'll need to get cozy in your lawn chair around 2 a.m. It's crucial that you give your eyes at least a half hour to adapt to the darkness so you can see the shower. There's no need for binoculars or telescopes since Eta Aquariids is visible to the naked eye. Simply find a dark spot away from city lights and wait for the show!