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Check Us Out!

BACK TO SCHOOL, BACK TO GRATITUDE: HONORING THE TEACHERS WHO SHAPE OUR LIVES

Why We're Celebrating Staten Island's Teachers This August

Growing up, I didn't exactly have the easiest start in school. I went to St. Vincent Ferrer grammar school in Brooklyn, and my first-grade teacher, Ms. Maron, fit the old-school stereotype of the "mean" teacher a little too well. Back in those days, teachers had no problem raising their voices or even a ruler if a student wasn't measuring up. And I wasn't. I couldn't even spell my name when I walked through the doors that September. I struggled to read, and I fell behind the curve from day one.

Looking back, I'm grateful things eventually clicked. But I know it wasn't by chance. I had the good fortune of being taught by educators who were patient, passionate, and persistent, teachers who believed in me before I believed in myself. One of my favorites was my fifth-grade teacher, Mr. D. We all called him that because no one could pronounce his last name. But what we could do was look forward to his class. He made learning fun, kept things lighthearted, and showed us that school didn't have to be a place we dreaded. It could be a place we enjoyed.

Now, as a parent, I see that same spark in my own kids. I watch them walk into school with excitement (most days), and I see how hard their teachers work, especially here in Staten Island schools. Their dedication, day in and day out, is what shapes not just young minds but entire futures. I've also come to know many of these teachers in another way: as clients. At our firm, we've represented teachers who were injured on the job, often in environments that were far more demanding and sometimes dangerous than most people realize. These are professionals who give everything they have, not just to teach, but to protect, nurture, and advocate for their students.

That's why, this August, we want to give something back.

We're launching a Teacher Appreciation Giveaway for Staten Island educators, and we need your help. We're inviting parents, students, and community members to nominate a local teacher who's made a difference in their lives. Whether it's a kindergarten teacher who made your child feel safe on their first day or a high school science teacher who ignited a lifelong passion, we want to hear about them.

Winners will receive thoughtful gifts and supplies to help them keep doing what they do best, and we'll highlight some of the stories on our website and social media. It's a small way to say thank you to the heroes in our classrooms.

To nominate a teacher, visit our website, email us, or look for our social media content. Let us know who they are, where they teach, and what makes them so special.



This back-to-school season, let's show our appreciation for the people who do one of the hardest and most important jobs there is. I know I wouldn't be where I am today without the teachers who lifted me up when I needed it most. Here's to the Mr. D's of the world. And maybe even to the Ms. Marons, who, in their own way, helped shape who we've become.

-Brian O'Connor

The Original Anti-Tech Movement

WHAT CAUSED THE LUDDITE UPRISING?

Most of us associate technology with progress. Ideas and inventions like electricity, computers, and the internet allow us to live more comfortably, communicate better with the world, and progress toward a more advanced and well-rounded future. However, not everyone looks at technology as a good thing. In today's society, we refer to these individuals as Luddites. This is not a new term; it originates from the 19th-century Luddite movement in England.

After mechanized looms and knitting frames became popular, British weavers and textile workers with years of training feared that unskilled machine operators would replace them. As machines spread throughout England, these workers broke into factories and destroyed the new technology. They referred to themselves as Luddites, in honor of Ned Ludd, a supposed weaver from Anstey who was rumored to have wrecked a textile machine in 1779.

While Ned Ludd may sound like a hero to the Luddite movement and similar to other historical rebels like Joan of Arc or William Wallace, he was more like Robin Hood than anyone else. There's no proof he ever existed. He was a mythical leader whom many referred to when trying to inspire other Luddites or strike fear in the companies replacing artisans.

Although the term "Luddite" has survived the test of time, their movement was relatively short-lived. The first major attack on a factory occurred in 1811, and similar events followed across England for the next few months. By the following year, machine-breaking became illegal, and 17 men were executed for their actions. By 1813, the movement was essentially dead.

Modern Luddites may hate technology and think it interferes with the traditional ways of life, but most won't go to such extreme lengths as breaking into factories and destroying all the equipment.

HAWAII'S UNCOMMON LAWS

Strange Rules in a Tropical Paradise

When you travel outside the continental United States, you often have to research the laws and customs of your destination to ensure you stay out of trouble. While this is certainly a good idea when visiting Europe, Asia, or another continent, you should also do research when visiting somewhere closer to home. Even Hawaii has strange laws you might not know about until it's too late. Here are three of the weirdest laws you must follow when visiting Hawaii.

One at a time.

Many people who go to bars, concerts, or sporting events have a habit of getting two alcoholic drinks at once to ensure they don't have to wait in line when they need their next drink. However, doing so in Hawaii could land you in trouble. To curb people's drinking habits, the Aloha State does not allow people to have two drinks in front of them at one time. You also cannot order a multi-serving drink,

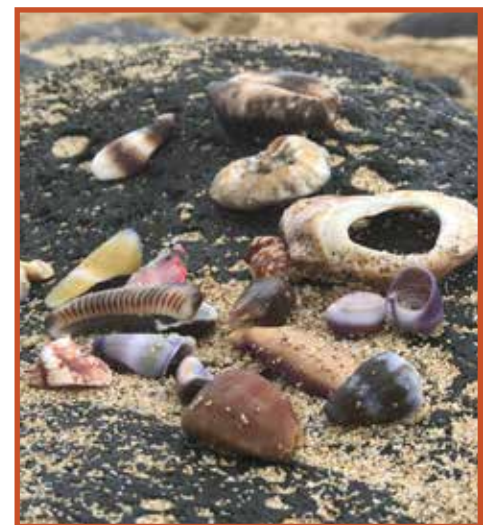
such as a pitcher of beer, unless you're with another person.

Don't take it with you!

Many people like to take a memento of their vacation home, such as a seashell or a rock. If you plan to do this while visiting Hawaii, you must be careful where you grab from. You cannot remove rocks, plants, or wildlife from state or national parks. Not only is this action illegal, but it also invokes the "Curse of Pele" upon the individual. Many who take rocks home with them end up mailing them back later after facing bad luck or misfortune. It sounds like something out of "Moana," but it's probably not worth the risk.

No skyscrapers.

If you want to build a home or business in Kauai, you'll have to keep the building shorter than four stories. It's illegal for buildings to be taller than coconut palm



trees on this island, which is how it has retained its natural beauty. Other Hawaiian islands do not have this law, which is why many high-rise hotels and resorts line the coast of Waikiki Beach.



TAKE A **BREAK**



Summer Chickpea Salad

Inspired by [HowSweetEats.com](https://www.howsweeteats.com)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 (15-oz) cans of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 2 ears grilled corn, cut kernels from the cob
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh chives
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 tbsp honey
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
- 1 lime, zested and juiced

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine chickpeas, onions, corn, tomatoes, basil, and chives.
2. Toss well with salt and pepper and set aside.
3. In a small saucepan over low heat, add oil, vinegar, honey, garlic, lime juice, and zest.
4. Whisk until the mixture is warm and garlic begins sizzling.
5. Pour over the chickpea mixture and toss well to coat.
6. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving.

NO ROOM FOR DISTRACTION

Why Every Kid Needs a Homework Haven

While some kids love school and eagerly start their homework when they get home, others dread everything about it. They might not enjoy what they're learning or have a difficult time sitting down to study. You could try countless strategies, such as hiring a tutor or offering rewards, but the solution might be simpler than that. If you don't have a dedicated homework area in your home, now is the time to create one.

Start by determining the best location in your home. Ideally, choose a location without distractions, such as a bedroom or office. However, if your child does not work well without supervision, put them in a central location. If you don't have the space in your home to set up a dedicated homework area, you can create a homework basket or cart to break out whenever it's time to do schoolwork.

You also need to gather supplies and set them up for success. Consider the assignments your child will need to complete during the school year and provide them with the necessities for each assignment. Younger children will likely need paper, crayons, scissors, and glue, while older kids should have access to pencils, erasers, a calculator, and a dictionary.

All that's left is organizing everything they'll need. Separate everything into bins, cubbies, or baskets by their subject. You could apply labels to each bin to ensure everything stays organized. This will help your child focus only on the task at hand.

Once you establish the space, you must set ground rules to ensure your child does their homework. Restricting the use of phones or tablets is a must in today's day and age. They may say they need it for their studies, but it will distract them. If possible, set specific times your child should be at the desk doing schoolwork. Even if they don't have homework that day, they can still benefit from studying.

While it might not fix every school woe, creating a dedicated homework area for your child could help them foster a love of learning!



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The Value Menu Joke That Cost Taco Bell
a Lawsuit

TACO BELL TRIED TO REBRAND 50 CENT IT ENDED IN A LAWSUIT

Rapper 50 Cent was seemingly everywhere in the mid-2000s. His hit albums, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" and "The Massacre," took the country by storm, and nearly everyone was familiar with at least one of his iconic songs. He appeared in commercials for

Reebok, Vitamin Water, and other consumer goods, but one popular fast food enterprise attempted to use his name without the artist's approval. As you might expect, 50 Cent didn't take kindly to this and promptly sued the chain.

In 2008, Taco Bell unveiled an ad campaign promoting the low cost of items within their Why Pay More!? Value Meal. Offering burritos, nachos, and other signature Taco Bell items for 79¢, 89¢, or 99¢ got people's attention, but their marketing experts thought the campaign needed more punch to drive business. The brand suggested that 50 Cent change his name to 79 Cent, 89 Cent, or 99 Cent.

Unfortunately, Taco Bell did not contact the rapper to see if they could use his name while promoting their new menu. He was bothered by this and filed a lawsuit against

the fast food giant. The lawsuit claimed that Taco Bell made 50 Cent the star and focus of their nationwide campaign without seeking or obtaining his authorization.

A spokesperson for Taco Bell claimed that the company "made a good faith, charitable offer to 50 Cent to change his name to either 79, 89 or 99 Cent for one day by rapping his order at a Taco Bell, and we would have been very pleased to make the \$10,000 donation to the charity of his choice."

50 Cent sued Taco Bell for \$4 million. He won the lawsuit, but the settlement terms were not disclosed.

This case serves as a great lesson to any business owner. Do not use a celebrity's name or likeness for a marketing campaign without permission!



Photo: RiverNorthPhotography