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# The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

## A Dad Joke a Day Keeps the Stress Away

### PIRATE PUNS AND THE POWER OF LAUGHTER

What's a pirate's favorite letter? You'd think it's the "arrrr," but it's actually the "sea."

Are you rolling your eyes a little? Well, read it out loud with a pirate voice, and as long as you're laughing, my joke worked. I've always loved comedy; the drier, the better. Puns, irony, dad jokes, and absurd (deliberate) misunderstandings are all right up my alley. The best kind of humor is when you expect one thing and hilariously get something else. Like the other night during the bedtime routine. After brushing his teeth, 7-year-old Clark was about to use his sister's cup to rinse his mouth. Cora was not interested in sharing her cup, and chaos erupted as she yanked her cup out of his hands. Water spilled all over both of them. Naturally, I responded, "Oh, she tickled the cup? Cups are very ticklish; that's why they spill water everywhere." They burst into laughter, and humor turned this everyday frustration into a moment of connection.

April is National Humor Month, a perfect reminder that laughter isn't just for fun; it's essential for a healthy life. Humor can diffuse tension, unite people, and make life's little messes more bearable. In the great water spill incident with my children, I was able to lighten the mood with my silly "misunderstanding." It does come at a cost though, for I have a constant program running in my head that generates terrible puns and dad jokes. My friends and family would be surprised to know that I actually filter out about 80% of the jokes.

Laughter is a fantastic medicine. It can alleviate awkward, painful, and uncomfortable moments. Life is too important, so don't take it too seriously. My usual response in difficult situations is to poke a little fun at myself. I really try not to make a joke at the expense of others, but a little self-deprecation never hurt anyone. I spilled my drink at a restaurant recently, and it landed right in my lap! It landed in just the right way to make it look like I had completely wet my pants! Instead of panicking or being dramatic, I burst out

laughing and said "Good thing nobody will notice!" What else could I do? I embraced the humor of the moment, turning it from an embarrassing situation into a silly memory.

So many frustrating experiences come at the most unexpected times. If you are backing up traffic because of a flat tire, it's easy to spring to anger or embarrassment. However, you could instead reach for laughter. If that were a scene in a movie, I think we'd all chuckle watching it. We can choose to laugh at ourselves, or get angry and defensive. Choosing to laugh is golden and will extend your life. Finding a little lightheartedness in a challenging situation is just mentally and socially healthier.

Along with the humorous mishaps we experience as humans, I love some clean comedy. When a comic can make people laugh without resorting to raunchy or dark humor, that's a true talent. Jerry Seinfeld is the first person that comes to mind. He can joke about typical, everyday experiences, and your kids could watch it. I think I got a bit of that love for this style of comedy from my father. I'm a sucker for the kind of jokes that make you giggle and roll your eyes at the same time. My daughter and I even found a dad joke app to fuel hours of laughter. I particularly love pirate jokes; the cornier, the better.

Humor has always been a core part of who I am, and anyone who's spent a little time with me knows I have a knack for jokes. When I share a really lousy good pun or intentionally misunderstand a situation, I don't expect a full-on belly laugh, I just need a slight acknowledgment of the humor. (It's actually one of my love languages.) Laughter is one of our simplest joys — free, contagious, and powerful. So, remember to tell Dad jokes. He, like all of us, needs a good laugh.

—Michael Packard



1. Life's Better When You Laugh at It  
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Classic Fish Fry
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Mastering the Art of Nature Photography

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## Capture Nature's Beauty Like a Pro

### Quick Tips for Better Outdoor Photos

Nature photography offers a great way to get outside and capture the beauty of the natural world. Whether you're new to this hobby or have been snapping photos for years, you can always enhance your skills with these four tips for producing compelling outdoor photos.

#### Plan Ahead

Before heading outside with your camera and other gear, research your chosen location and the subject you aim to photograph. Understanding the local wildlife, plant life, and weather conditions can inform your equipment selection. Timing is also key. Early morning and late afternoon, known as the "golden hours," offer soft, diffused light that enhances natural scenes.

#### Master Your Equipment

Be sure to familiarize yourself with your camera's settings. Some of the most important include aperture, shutter speed, and ISO, which control exposure and depth of field. For instance, a wide aperture (low f-stop) can help create a shallow depth of field and isolate your subject from the background, which is particularly effective for wildlife photography.

Conversely, a narrow aperture (high f-stop) is ideal for landscape shots because it increases the depth of field and helps keep more of the scene in focus.

#### Consider Composition

In photography, composition is key. When taking nature photographs, apply compositional rules such as the rule of thirds (placing subjects off-center), leading lines (guiding the eye with pathways or rivers), and framing (using natural elements to highlight the subject). Experimenting with different perspectives and angles can also add depth to your photos.

#### Be Respectful

Whenever you're out in the field, respect the environment by following local guidelines, maintaining a safe distance from wildlife, and minimizing your impact on natural habitats. Always stay on designated paths and never remove any natural objects. Following a few simple rules protects wildlife and the landscape and maintains the integrity of your photography.

With these tips in mind, you're ready to enjoy the outdoors while capturing images that reflect the beauty of the natural world.





# Rome's Awesome Aquatic Battles

## THE COLOSSEUM'S WILDEST SPECTACLE

The Roman Colosseum is famous for its gladiator combat, but did you know it was once flooded with water for full-scale naval battles? While this might sound like Hollywood fiction, it actually took place and is one of the more epic tales from Roman history.

Known as *naumachiae*, a Greek term that translates to “naval combat,” these battles were a feat of ancient engineering and showcased Rome’s appetite for over-the-top entertainment. For a society captivated by lions and gladiators, transforming the iconic Colosseum into an aquatic battlefield was the ultimate flex — a bizarre yet undeniably brilliant display of Roman ingenuity and excess.

### The Spectacle of Naumachiae

Imagine thousands of spectators cheering as tiny warships clashed in a flooded arena. Dating back to the third century B.C., these mock sea battles weren’t small staged skirmishes; they were elaborate naval reenactments complete with ships, soldiers, and condemned criminals and prisoners of war forced to play the role of combatants.

In some cases, these spectacles recreated historical battles or mythological scenes. One *naumachiae* held by Nero in 57 A.D. even included seals and hippos. So, why did Romans go to such lengths? More than entertainment, *naumachiae* was a statement of imperial power. Such Roman spectacles entertained the masses while reinforcing the empire’s might.

### The Challenge of Arena Battles

Of course, flooding the Colosseum was not easy. It’s believed the same aqueducts used to supply the city with water were also used to fill up the arena, and special flat-bottomed ships capable of navigating shallow waters made the events possible. The discovery of an ancient drainage system also provided new insights into how Roman engineers may have efficiently removed water from the arena to prepare it for other events.

### Why It’s More Than Just a Weird Story

The logistical challenges of flooding an arena to a depth sufficient for floating ships eventually led them to abandon the *naumachiae* after only a handful of events. Yet, these extravagant displays reveal much about Roman culture. They highlight the empire’s unmatched ability to combine practicality and imagination to create spectacles that continue to captivate and inspire us centuries later.

# BUILDING A WORLD OF ACCESSIBLE FUN

## Morgan’s Wonderland Needs Your Help!

Imagine being a little kid at an amusement park, watching the exciting rides and fun from afar, unable to join in because you have a disability. San Antonio homebuilder Gordon Hartman witnessed his daughter, who has cognitive and physical special needs, miss out on the city’s many attractions because they weren’t accessible. So, in 2010, he built the first theme park designed for people with special needs in his daughter’s honor. Morgan’s Wonderland is an incredible organization in our community, offering 25 acres of rides and activities.

April is National Volunteer Month, and I can speak from firsthand experience about how rewarding it is to lend a helping hand to Morgan’s Wonderland. In addition to their amusement park, they have a multi-access center where families with special needs members can access essential services in one place, like social workers and health care services. I’ve volunteered at their legal clinic, my church has done community service there, and my children have all volunteered their time to help this cause. It’s gratifying to contribute to this one-of-a-kind organization that has brought joy, support, and fun to deserving families for 15 years.

If you are looking for a way to give back this April, Morgan’s is a worthy cause, and they can’t do this vital work without the support of volunteers. This year, they are looking for ride assistants, safety monitors, helpers for their various programs, and volunteers for their special events. They also allow groups to come and help with various tasks like park beautification and event preparations. You can, of course, also support Morgan’s through a donation.

Morgan’s Wonderland not only provides a wonderful volunteer opportunity but also allows you to witness the profound impact that accessible spaces and services have on families. Whether you donate your time, skills, or financial support, you’re helping to create lasting memories for individuals who might otherwise miss out on the joys of fun experiences like amusement parks. This April, I encourage you to get involved and support your community. Morgan’s Wonderland is a beautiful organization that proves a little kindness can make a world of difference.

To learn more about Morgan’s Wonderland and volunteer opportunities, visit [MorgansWonderland.org](http://MorgansWonderland.org).

—Michael Packard



# Going Above and Beyond

## Success Stories That Speak for Themselves

We’re a family at the Packard Law Firm, and we treat all our clients as though they are family, too. We are dedicated to getting people the results they deserve so they can move forward after a traumatic accident or workplace injury. We strive to go above and beyond, ensuring you feel heard and well-represented every step of the way. Here are some of our recent success stories!

*“I would highly recommend everyone use Packard Law Firm! From the very beginning to the very end, I had their complete attention for any questions I might have had or concerns I might have had, and they explained them in detail. Throughout the entire process, they clarified anything I just didn’t understand. They were also always quick to respond to my messages. Everyone who works there is extremely nice and cooperative at all times. They were completely dedicated, very understanding, and highly concerned about my specific needs and situation. They worked tirelessly on my case, and because of their hard work and dedication to me and my case, they won for me! I’m so grateful to them. They have changed my entire life for the better. If you need an attorney who is dedicated to winning, call the Packard Law Firm.” —Retta*

*“Excellent job keeping me informed with every step-by-step process. I always felt I was in the right hands. I highly recommend The Packard Law Firm. Bravo! Thank you.” —Kimberly*

*“It would be difficult to find better legal representation than The Packard Law Firm. Their integrity is stellar. Their knowledge and skills are top notch.” —Merilyn.*

*“I had an amazing experience with Packard Law Firm. Their team was professional, knowledgeable, and truly cared about my case. Tara is the best paralegal around, and she handled everything flawlessly! She kept me updated every step of the way and made the process a lot smoother.” —Brianna*



# TAKE A BREAK



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|----------|-----------|---------|
| ARBOR    | CHOCOLATE | GARDEN  |
| ARIES    | DAISY     | KITE    |
| BASEBALL | DIAMOND   | RAINBOW |
| CHERRIES | FOOLS     | SHOWERS |



# Classic Fish Fry

We’re in the middle of Lent, so there’s no better time to host your own fish fry for your loved ones!

### Ingredients

*Inspired by FoodNetwork.com*

- Vegetable oil
- 2 lbs fresh cod
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup all-purpose unbleached flour
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tbsp water
- 2 cups plain bread crumbs
- 1/2 tsp mustard powder
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- Lemon wedges

### Directions

1. Pour 2 inches of vegetable oil into a large skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Cut cod into 4 servings and season with salt and pepper.
3. Place flour into a pie tin. Whisk egg and water in a second pie tin. Combine bread crumbs, mustard powder, and cayenne in a third pie tin.
4. Coat your fish in the flour tin, then the egg tin, then the bread crumb tin.
5. Set coated fish in hot oil and fry for 5 minutes on each side.
6. Serve with lemon wedges and enjoy!