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## Cases We Handle:

- Personal Injury
- Car Wreck
- Wrongful Death
- Truck Wreck

# Australian Wombats in Charge

## SAVING LIVES ONE HOLE AT A TIME

**R**emember the Australian wildfires of 2019–2020? These fires ravaged large areas of the country, displacing and leaving countless animals to fight for survival. To make matters worse, swaths of the country have been dealing with drought. It's one challenge after another for humans and animals alike.

But one species has taken matters into its own "hands." Numerous wombats have been discovered digging holes in search of water — and they found it! According to Australia's ABC News, one group of wombats was discovered on a farm in New South Wales, which was situated over a large underground reservoir. So, the wombats went to work. One farmer, Ted Finnie, reported that wombats dug a hole roughly 4 meters deep by 20 meters wide (or about 65 feet). Their incredible work made this source of water remarkably accessible.



At this particular watering hole, Finnie captured all sorts of creatures on camera — birds, emus, possums, echidnas, and monitor lizards — congregating around the wombats' creation. What isn't known is how, exactly, the wombats discovered the water, but they surmise the animals likely picked up on environmental clues and dug until they found what they were looking for.

Interestingly enough, wombats have been known to help other animals in the past. During the Australian fires, countless animals were left searching for refuge, and they found it in wombat burrows.

While the wombats weren't exactly welcoming other species into their homes with open arms, they seemed to "tolerate" the visitors, as one ecologist with the University of Adelaide noted. It was a case of accidental heroism, much like their search for water, but it was heroism nonetheless.

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# A New 'Cycle' of Activity

## And We're Rolling ...

**I**n one way or another, we all had to adapt and pivot our lives because of COVID-19 over the last year. I had been going to the gym to work out in the mornings for the last decade, but like it did for many people, the pandemic disrupted my routine when my gym temporarily closed.

Like many establishments, when the gym opened back up, they required a mask to enter the facility and work out. Not a big deal under normal circumstances, but I tend to get my heart rate up when I work out, and wearing a mask during my exercises was problematic. It was getting in the way of a good workout, and I decided the gym environment just wasn't for me.

So, for my morning workout, I decided to get my cardio outside rather than go to a gym. I started running every day! However, Father Time is undefeated. I enjoy a slow-paced 5K jog a few times a week, but running every day has proven to be hard on my knees as I get older. This meant I needed to find yet another activity to supplement my workout.

I decided to explore cycling. I had never been much of a cyclist, but out of curiosity, I went to my local Trek bike store to see what they had. Turns out, I was not the only person looking to purchase a new bike because of COVID-19. The backlog on orders amounted to wait times of up to several months on some models. But I was determined, so I put in my order and waited a couple of months.

This month is National Bike Month, which makes this the perfect time to bring this up. Thankfully, the bike arrived and I've been able to cycle. It's been enjoyable — and even Alison decided she wanted to get in on the fun. We got her a bike and we've been riding together. We're not long-distance cyclists by any means, but we enjoy the occasional 30–60-minute ride around the neighborhood and surrounding area.

We've definitely had to learn more about riding in busier public spaces. We're careful to follow the laws and watch our surroundings when riding. Working in personal injury law, we see plenty of cases where motorists have collided with bicyclists, leading to serious injuries for the



cyclists. A 2-ton vehicle enclosed in steel versus a 20-pound bike enclosed in nothing is never going to be an even matchup.

As many people spend time outdoors and on bikes this spring, here are a few quick tips we follow, and we encourage you to do the same:

- Wear a helmet.
- Wear bright clothing.
- Obey traffic signs and signals.
- Ride in a group when possible.
- Have proper reflectors and use a headlight and taillight in the dark.

My house is only a couple of miles from the office, so I'll be riding to work on Friday, May 21 — National Bike to Work Day. It's not practical for everyone (and certainly not on scorching days), but if you can make it happen, I highly recommend it. And if you ever want to ride, reach out and let's make it happen!

Have fun and stay safe!

*-Matt Aulsbrook*

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**I COME TO FIGHT. I DON'T BARK. I BITE!**

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## The Bet That Spawned the Filet-O-Fish Sandwich

### Inside the McDonald's History Books

Every day, 68 million people dine under the iconic golden arches of McDonald's. If you're one of them, then you're probably intimately familiar with one of the most famous offerings on the menu after the McRib and the Big Mac: the Filet-O-Fish Sandwich.

This bestselling entree looks simple enough. It features a fried square of wild-caught fish nestled under a slice of American cheese and a smear of tartar sauce. But it has a contentious history. In fact, Ray Kroc, the owner of McDonald's who was immortalized in the 2016 movie "The Founder," didn't want the fishy offering on the menu. It ended up there anyway for one of the oldest reasons in the world: Kroc lost a bet.

The story starts back in 1962 in Cincinnati, Ohio. That year, an enterprising McDonald's franchisee named Lou Groen had a problem. His customer base was largely Catholic and abstained from eating meat on Fridays (not to mention during Lent!), and they weren't buying enough burgers to keep his restaurant afloat. According to the Smithsonian Magazine, on Fridays, Groen pulled in just \$75 per day. To combat that lack of sales, he masterminded a beef-free option, and the Filet-O-Fish sandwich was born.

The problem came when Groen pitched the entree to Ray Kroc. The founder didn't approve. In a 2006 interview with Business Courier, Groen recalled Kroc's reaction: "You're always coming up here with a bunch of crap!" he said. "I don't want my stores stunk up with the smell of fish." But at the end of the day, Kroc's motivation was profit. So, the two men made a bet. On Good Friday in 1962, select McDonald's would put both the Filet-O-Fish and a different meatless option, the pineapple-centric Hula Burger, on their menus. The entree that sold the best would stick around.

Since you've probably dined on a Filet-O-Fish and never heard of Hula Burger, you can guess what happened. Groen sold 350 Filet-O-Fish sandwiches. And Kroc? Well, he moved just six Hula Burgers. Fishy smell or not, the filet was there to stay.

Want to read up on more fast-food capers? Pick up the book "Drive-Thru Dreams: A Journey Through the Heart of America's Fast-Food Kingdom" by Adam Chandler. His KFC stories will blow your mind.

# REVVING BACK INTO REALITY

## 2 More Automotive Myths

Automotive myths are about as common as tumbleweeds on the open prairie. One rolls by and you can be certain there's another not far behind. We've recently tackled a few automotive myths, and we have a couple more!

**Rolling down the windows hurts fuel efficiency.** When the temperatures go up, the windows go down. But there's the myth that rolling down the windows (or putting down the top) is bad for fuel economy. Is that true? What about running the air conditioner — doesn't that hurt fuel economy, too? Thankfully, this is a myth that's been tested by Consumer Reports and Discovery Channel's "MythBusters."

The results are in: Rolling down your windows *does not* have any meaningful effect on fuel efficiency. It doesn't matter the type of car or your speed. That said, running the A/C on full blast on a hot day (85 degrees F or more) can drop your gas mileage by 1–4 miles per gallon. If you run your A/C on a lower setting, it doesn't make much of a difference in efficiency. So, if you want the windows down, go for it.

**Any towel will do when cleaning the surface of your car.** With dust and pollen in the air, people wash their vehicles more frequently in the spring and summer. And as part of the wash, they often reach for a towel to dab off the excess moisture to avoid spots. But the type of towel you use can make a big difference.

Certain types of cloth are more abrasive than others. Then there are those that trap particles right on the surface, which can lead to microabrasions on the paint. The worst type of "towel" to use is an old T-shirt. These can be highly abrasive. Instead, reach for a microfiber terry cloth towel. It will draw away excess moisture and bring particulates with it, helping you avoid scratches.



# Get Your Motor Runnin'

## 4 Things to Do Before (and During) Every Motorcycle Ride

**M**ay is National Bike Month, but it's also Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month. And in Texas, people love their motorcycles. But as with any motor vehicle, safety can never be understated. This is especially true when you're on the back of a mechanical beast, surrounded by other larger mechanical beasts. Here are four things every rider needs to do before they rev up and take off.

**Buy the right helmet.** Look for the DOT (Department of Transportation) sticker on the helmet's packaging. A DOT sticker or certification means the helmet meets required federal safety standards. The National Safety Council also recommends getting a full-coverage helmet. This gives riders more protection versus open-face helmets.

**Never buy a used helmet.** This applies to pretty much any safety helmet. This is because once the helmet has been involved in a collision, it cannot offer the same level of protection as it did when it was new.

**When riding, ride defensively.** Half of all motorcycle collisions happen at intersections. It's often due to another driver not noticing the motorcycle or not paying attention to the situation. Keep a close eye on traffic as you enter the intersection. Be prepared to slow down and stop, even if you have complete right of way, in order to anticipate any potential moves other drivers may make.

**Make yourself as visible as possible.** Drivers often miss motorcycles because they're not as easy to spot as larger cars and trucks. Doing what you can to increase your visibility can help mitigate this. Use headlights during the day and night and wear bright or reflective clothing. While many motorcyclists prefer darker colors, the brighter you are, the more likely you will be seen, which reduces your chances of getting in a wreck.



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# Texas-Sized LAUGHS



## HOME COOKIN'



### INGREDIENTS

- 5 tbsp uncooked Thai sticky rice
- 1 lb ground pork
- 1/2 tbsp chili flakes
- 1/8 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tbsp fish sauce
- Juice of 1–2 limes, to taste
- 4 small shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- Cilantro leaves, to taste
- Mint leaves, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

1. First, make toasted rice powder: In a frying pan over low heat, dry-roast the rice, stirring continuously until it turns golden brown and smells fragrant, about 15 minutes.
2. Let toasted rice cool, then grind into a coarse powder using a mortar and pestle, blender, or food processor. Set aside.
3. In a medium frying pan over medium-high heat, fry pork, breaking it into small pieces as you go, until fully cooked.
4. Remove from heat and add 1 heaping tbsp of toasted rice powder along with all other ingredients. Stir to combine.
5. Taste and adjust, adding more lime juice and herbs to suit your palate. Serve with rice.

Inspired by EatingThaiFood.com