

# GLASSGAZETTE

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*A monthly publication of lighthearted stories and information from your friends at BenGlassLaw, a leading personal injury and disability firm*

## A Day in the Life of a School Teacher in Japan



By:  
**Mary  
Bruniary**

***After college, I had the opportunity of a lifetime to live and work for two years in Taiki, Japan, as an English teacher through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program. Aside from teaching English, part of my job was to share lessons about American culture -- but I ended up leaving Japan with a wealth of knowledge and appreciation for Japanese culture in exchange. I'm most grateful to have witnessed and participated in Japan's everyday practices of gratitude. I'll explain by taking you along with me for a day in the life of a schoolteacher in Japan.***

My workday would usually begin with English class. Every lesson started with a customary classroom ritual where the students would stand, greet me, and bow in unison to show respect. At the end of class, the ritual would repeat. This time, the students would thank me for the lesson and say goodbye. (I taught them to say, "see you!" in exchange for "sayonara" because, hey, it was English class, after all!)

I'd often return to my desk after class to find a small gift (called omiyage as a token of appreciation to the people in your life) from another teacher waiting for me. By the end of my time in Japan, I had a dedicated omiyage drawer packed with snacks and treats from all over the country.

At lunchtime, I would head back to the classrooms to eat lunch



*The staff and I  
Taiki Elementary*

with my students. They would don aprons and serve lunch to each other (made with vegetables grown from the student-tended gardens). We would place our hands together and say, "itadakimasu." This means "I humbly receive," and expresses reverence for the life of the food ingredients, and gratitude to the people involved in cooking the meal.

At the end of the day, I would leave the teacher's office and

offer the customary exit-greeting for coworkers, which is, "Osaki ni shitsureishiamsu!" This literally translates to, "It is rude of me to go home before you." But awkward translation aside, what this phrase really conveys is an appreciation for your colleagues who are staying behind and continuing to work after you go home for the day.

I am grateful that my time in Japan helped me to find gratitude for the teachers in my life, my colleagues, the food I eat, and the memories I've made. And if reading this article made you appreciate just a bit more about Japanese culture, then I guess that means I'm still doing my job. Class dismissed! ■





**HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
FROM THE  
BENGLASSLAW TEAM!**

## Upcoming Holidays

- Dec. 21: Winter Solstice
- Dec. 25: Christmas
- Dec. 26: Boxing Day
- Dec. 26: Kwanzaa
- Dec. 31: New Year's Eve
- Jan. 1: New Year's Day

## Out in the Wild

*Our team living their best lives outside the office.*



*Autumn, a BGL Personal Injury Paralegal, and her husband attended the Marine Corps Ball. Happy 248th birthday, Marines!*

## Did You Know?

*As of the end of October, 41 U.S. states have sued Meta for allegedly building addictive features into Facebook and Instagram that target children.*

# FRESH from the FIRM

CURRENT EVENTS & STORIES OF THOSE WE'VE HELPED

Ben and Brian rocked the stage at the Great Legal Marketing Summit in Orlando, Florida.



Attorney Melissa settled her first case since joining the BGL Personal Injury team.



A bunch of our team members attended the annual Paralegal Conference hosted by the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association.

Ben spoke at the Virginia Trial Lawyer Association's invitation-only retreat of the best worker's compensation lawyers in Virginia. He taught "What Every Virginia Lawyer Needs to Know About Long-Term Disability Claims."

Our Long-Term Disability Team won a big life insurance appeal. The insurance company tried to tell a widow that her husband's death was of "natural causes" after an accident hospitalized him for a year. We said: NO!

## Shoutout to Mary on our LTD team for this well-deserved review from a provider:

"The Ben Glass law firm continues to be exemplary with the utmost detail and timely support. In particular, Mary Bruniany has been wonderful to work with."

**- Dr. Maneesh Sharma** (Interventional Pain Institute)

## AS A REMINDER

*Our business is built on referrals. If you or someone you know can relate to the stories above or need help after being injured in an accident or whose long-term disability or life insurance claim has been denied, we'd love the opportunity to use our years of experience & compassion to help them.*

# Inside the Mind of LISA DERCO

Personal Injury Attorney, Wife, Boy Mom  
& Lover of Travel, Food, & Wine



## Christmas Giving

*This is my favorite time of year. I look forward to all of the family activities we can do together after a busy couple of months filled with lots of sports for the boys. It is easy to get caught up in all of the gift buying, decorating, etc., but last year I added to my ever-growing list and tried to recapture some of what this season is all about to me – feeling grateful for the life we have and to help others. I want to raise our boys to appreciate all that we have and to take the time to give back. I want to challenge you to do the same this holiday season. I promise that you will get back even more than you give! Here are some ideas of how you can help:*

- **Reach out to schools to see if they have students in need.** Most schools have resource officers who have already identified families in your community in need. We adopt a boy to shop for each year and the boys love shopping for him.
- **Volunteer for the Salvation Army to ring a bell for a few hours.** I used to have to do this in high school and we always had so much fun.
- **Contact your local children's hospital.** Last year we sponsored a family who had a child going through cancer treatment during the holidays. We rallied our neighbors to help, and we got everything off of their wish list for the entire family. It was the highlight of our Christmas to be able to load up an entire van full of presents for them.
- **Food banks and soup kitchens are always in need, but especially this time of year.** Our preschool gives us a bag and a list of what to include so that a family can have a complete holiday meal. It is an easy way to really impact someone who otherwise may not have a special holiday dinner this year.

There are many more opportunities to help. I hope that you take some time out and create some lasting holiday memories by helping those in need. ■



### Q&A OF THE MONTH

**If you could go back in time and pick a different career, what would it be?**

*I would have been a party planner. Nothing makes me happier than to have all the people we love together in our home having a great time with a party that I put together. I love all of the details!*



### LISA LOVES...

I love decorating for Christmas. If you are local to Northern Virginia and have not checked out Lucketts Holiday House, you must go. They professionally decorate a house with a different theme for each room and you can purchase everything they use. It is such a fun outing around the holidays. There are a lot of vineyards and breweries nearby so you can make a day out of it!





# Inside the Mind of BEN GLASS

*Disability Attorney, Entrepreneur, Business Coach, Author,  
Soccer Referee, Husband, Father to Nine, Grandfather to Seven*



## Confrontation

**Recently, amidst a discussion among friends over a wide range of social topics, one in the group said to me: “I’ll bet you like confrontation, don’t you?”**

What an interesting question!

One might think that one would need to “like confrontation” in order to practice as a trial lawyer for 40 years. Or to referee soccer games for 50 years. Or be married for 42 years (just kidding, Sandi!).

I don’t “like” confrontation, if by “confrontation” we mean arguing with someone for argument’s sake, just to create a ruckus.

That would be “time wasting” in my book.

Having said that, I do like discussing big issues with people. (In refereeing, my job is not to create or foster confrontation, but to REDUCE it. I don’t go looking for fights there, either.)

I like trying to figure life out and get to answer about things such as:

1. What can I do to increase the odds that my life will be happy and fulfilled?
2. How can I help others (if they want help) to do the same.

I like trying to understand the opinions of people who are on the opposite side of the “fence” from me, whatever fence we may be talking about. The conversation referenced above took us to politics, “nationalism”, welfare payments, child rearing, Christianity, the role of government and probably a few other places. It was a blast!

But I recognize that there are questions I ask that can be seen as “confrontational.” Questions like:

1. Can we get a clear definition of the term you just used?
2. Are you saying that you are in favor of the government using



*I love a great discussion with smart people.*

force to take money from someone who has earned it and giving it to another person based on their need?

3. If you say that the goal is “the common good,” then who gets to decide what “good” means and what is the standard they will use to determine “the good?”
4. If you are critical of an author I respect (Ayn Rand and Joel Osteen, among others, come to mind) can you show me what

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### Want to talk about the vision of your life or business over lunch?

*If you were to sit next to Ben on an airplane, we guarantee that he would lean over to ask you what your 'superpower' is within the first five minutes. Investing in people's stories and being a cheerleader for their future is one of the things that Ben does best. The 'Lunch with Ben' Program is for mentoring people from all walks of life, particularly business owners, young people, and those who are just starting their careers. Learn more and schedule a lunch at [lunchwithben.com](http://lunchwithben.com).*



# Life With Latte

**Greetings everyone from the Glass household, where things never stop moving and changing, including ME! My family can't believe how fast I've grown. When I arrived, I was smaller than their smallest dog and now I'm the biggest dog on the block! Which allows me to reach things I shouldn't be reaching. Like newspapers on tables and books on shelves. I see my people always digesting the written word...how was I to know you're supposed to read it and not eat it??**



We have gone on lots of field trips this month – PETCO, the Halloween Store and Bark Bash at Loudoun One. I have never seen so many furry fellows! It was very hard to resist pulling to get closer to meet them all. You see, I'm not supposed to touch any dogs when I'm on leash, a skill I'm still working to perfect! We all have things we need to work on and so we will return to the classroom a few times this month to polish up those skills. Remember, I am still a puppy even though I look like a mature dog.

Speaking of looks, shout out to Leah Glass for always keeping me looking my best! It's very handy having a groomer in the family. My beautiful coat is a lot of work to maintain knot free. Brushing daily is the key to success. You can find my grooming human at Paws and Spa in Centreville if you want to look your best too!

Wishing you all a happy holiday season, I hear the Christmas tree will be fun with lots of presents to eat, errr...open!

Happy Fall,  
Latte 🐾



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in their writing or speeches you object to? (Most people spend more time criticizing an influencer than they do actually studying that person.)

5. What books should I go read to better understand your opinion? (Since most people do not read books, this is usually a showstopper.)
6. Do you believe that America is the greatest country ever? (Sadly, this triggers some people.)

I love a great discussion with smart people, which is why most “social media discussions” are NOT great.

I don't try to “win” discussions as much as I am trying to figure out if my opinions are based on the facts of reality.

Sometimes I change my mind.

## Follow me on social media

If you want to see what I really think, I've been posting a lot of "life advice" videos on **TikTok** (@benglass\_renegadelawyer) and **Facebook**. ■



## PODCAST EPISODE OF THE MONTH

### Lessons from a Transformative Year at Ben Glass Law

Listen to an engaging role-reversal discourse as I sit in the guest seat to discuss the transformative year my firm experienced. Trace our journey from experiencing its most significant year to moving into a new space, all while celebrating law firm success stories.



## Business Lesson of the Month

If your team can't explain "how it works around here," accurately, you are screwed. But remember, all problems are leadership problems.



## Q&A OF THE MONTH

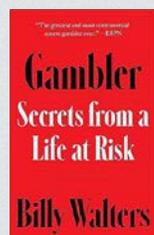
### If you could go back in time and pick a different career, what would it be?

*Had I not been pursuing a legal career and had I not been married, I would have pursued a professional soccer refereeing career. There are many more opportunities available today than there were in the early 1980's but most professional officiating opportunities, then and now, are not compatible with a robust family life, in my opinion. It would have been a full-time effort!*



## BEST THING I READ THIS MONTH

**Gambler:  
Secrets from  
a Life at Risk.**





# Inside the Mind of BRIAN GLASS

*Personal Injury Attorney, Entrepreneur, Business Coach,  
Husband, Father to Three Boys, & Avid Traveler*



## Redefine Your Success

**What if, instead of trying to be the best...  
Or the smartest...  
Or the fastest...  
Or the strongest...  
You just tried to have more fun than anyone else?**

We're in Greece this month because my idea of fun is flying across the ocean to run 13 miles of muddy obstacles with friends. And today was an asskicker. My watch measured the 12-13 mile race as 17. There was a 60 lb. sandbag carry followed by an 80 lb. chain carry followed by another sandbag carry (not on the race map). Every failed obstacle was met with a heavy carry penalty loop.

But the course was breathtaking.

And it's hard to be down if you prioritize smiling, gratitude, and cheering for everyone else.

If you don't clearly define for yourself what success looks like, I promise you that someone else will define it for you. What happens to too many lawyers is that they get ten years in before recognizing that what they've achieved is someone else's version of success. And when they pick their heads up after all those years of grinding, they realize that



the practice they've built is actually preventing them from living the life they want.

Life by design only happens for you when you deliberately design it. Don't let the world dictate to you what it means to be successful.

Craft it for yourself. ■



### Q&A OF THE MONTH

**If you could go back in time and pick a different career, what would it be?**

*This month, I put this one to my team: what did THEY think I'd pick? I got business coach, car salesman, karaoke bar owner, and business coach (again). Thankfully, the attorney thing worked out.*



### PODCAST EPISODE OF THE MONTH

#### The Power of Consistency: CJ Flood's Approach

Embarking on an extraordinary journey, we connect with CJ Flood, an entrepreneur, leadership and consulting coach going to great lengths for a vital cause. CJ shares wisdom on breaking through mental and physical obstacles to achieve one's goals. In this captivating narrative, he inspires us with his personal journey of transformation and undying passion for promoting health and wellness.



### GLASS BROS BANTER

We were doing the early morning commute to a game, and I could tell that somebody just wasn't feeling it. Turns out all he needed was a little encouragement to remember that anything worth getting up early for is worth giving it his all. Remember – enthusiasm is contagious.



# Inside the Mind of DAMON MILLER

Long-Term Disability Attorney,  
Husband, Storyteller, & Dragon Slayer



## Take a Hike!

***Lately my wife Emily has had to work weekends. So, I've been going out and hiking on Saturdays! I made a list of state and national parks in the area. And every weekend I've been picking one and hiking for hours. I'll pack a lunch and stay out all day, going on 12-15 mile hikes. It's great exercise and a wonderful way to enjoy the outdoors!***

Here's some stats from my latest hikes:

**Hardest Hike:** Old Rag in Shenandoah National Park

**Longest Hike:** 16.42 miles (in Rocky Gap Canyon State Park, MD)

**Highest elevation gain:** 2,605 ft (Old Rag)

**Total elevation gain in October:** 7,448 ft.

**Total miles hiked in October:** 62.55 miles

I haven't hiked this much in 10 years. Literally. In 2013, I went backpacking for 10 days in New Mexico, hiking over a hundred miles with a 50lb backpack on my back. It was an amazing experience. But that was the last time I did any serious hiking. Between college and law school, I just haven't hiked as much as I used to. It feels great to be getting out there and stretching my legs again.

My wife (rightly) thinks I'm crazy because I'll get up at 4 in the morning just to drive to some park 3 hours away. But part of the fun is just getting out there and exploring. I'll turn off highway routes on my GPS, and my phone will take me on beautiful backcountry drives through Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia.

It's always an adventure! ■



### FREE DENIAL LETTER REVIEW

Did you know that if you or a loved one have been denied disability or life insurance benefits by the insurance company, our team will review the denial letter for free? We provide feedback and inform you whether hiring an attorney could strengthen your claim. Visit the **QR code** to simply upload your letter straight to our team for review.



### Q&A OF THE MONTH

**If you could go back in time and pick a different career, what would it be?**

*Without a doubt, I would be an author. I haven't given up on that – I still write every day and I'm going to be published one day!*

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### Inside This Issue...

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## Get those paws a'paddlin

***According to the New York Times, dog parks are quickly falling out of fashion. It makes sense – it can be stressful for more sensitive dogs, and you can't always trust strange canines (and their owners) to be on their best behavior. It only takes one incident to turn a day at the park into a trip to the vet. So, what are your options when your pup needs some exercise, and the standard walk won't do?***



**Look for dog-friendly pools in your area (visit [AquaticPaws in Chantilly](#) or [Falls Church](#) if you're in Northern Virginia).** With individual underwater treadmills and a pup-perfect pool, swimming is a great option for exercise and stimulation that's easy on the joints.

**Scope out SniffSpot.** Whether you're looking for a quiet yard or a pond party, renting some private space for a romp might be just what you and your dog need (stress free).

**Take a class together.** If agility isn't your pup's strength (or you're like me and you're the one who can't keep up), try nosework classes. Plenty of places in Northern Virginia offer beginner classes where your dog can learn the basics of using that sniffer for mental stimulation. ■