



MELDON

LAW TALK

NEWSLETTER FROM THE LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY MELDON & ASSOCIATES

Lawyer Jokes (Inspired by The SKY's Bob Rose)

The judge admonished the witness, "Do you understand that you have been sworn to tell the truth?" "I do." "Do you understand what will happen if you are not truthful?" "Sure." said the witness, "my side will win."

The defendant stood up in the stand and said to the judge, "I don't recognize this court!" "Why?" asked the judge. "Because you have had it decorated since the last time I was here."

Taking his seat in his chambers, the judge faced the opposing lawyers. "So," he said, "I have been presented, by both of you, with a bribe." Both lawyers squirmed uncomfortably. "You, attorney Leon, gave me \$15,000. And you, attorney Campos, gave me \$10,000. "The judge reached into his pocket and pulled out a check. He handed it to Leon... "Now then, I am returning \$5,000, and we are going to decide this case solely on its merits."

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New Year's Resolutions—*A bit of Ben's wisdom may help...*

January is the season for New Year's resolutions for 40 to 45% of American adults. The tradition of New Year's Day resolutions dates back to the early Babylonians. They believed that what a person does on the first day of the new year affects the entire year.

While a lot of people who make resolutions break them (97 %), research shows that people who explicitly make resolutions are ten times more likely to attain their goals than people who do not. We have all heard the tips aimed at helping us keep our resolutions: don't go overboard; keep them obtainable; be realistic; and post them on the bathroom mirror. But, yet we still fail. Possibly, we can learn from Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin is credited with many things, including a plan/list of 13 virtues (resolutions) that he developed at age 20, to cultivate his character. Franklin did not try to work on them all at once. Instead, he worked on one each week, "leaving all others to their ordinary chance." While Franklin did not live completely by his virtues, by his own admission, he fell short many times. He believed the attempt made him a better man, contributing greatly to his success and happiness. In fact, in his autobiography he devoted more pages to this plan than to any other single point.

So, no matter your resolution whether to: lose weight; exercise more; quit smoking; be more organized; put the toilet seat down; clean out closets; be more thrifty—don't give up! As, Ben Franklin wrote, "I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit."

May you and yours have an inspirational, fruitful, joyful, healthy, and safe New Year!

Office Reminder—*Start the new year with peace of mind.*

Make sure law enforcement can contact you or your loved ones in the event of an accident. The Emergency



Contact Information (ECI) database allows families, friends, and loved ones to be contacted at times when every minute is critical. We urge you to take advantage of ECI and sign up today by inputting your emergency contact information online. It is easy, and your information is secure. For more information and to sign up, visit <http://www.fhsmv.gov>

A Note From Jeffrey: *Welcome and Thank You!*

My Staff, Associates, and I welcome our new clients that joined the Meldon Law Family this past month and send our personal thanks to all that referred friends and family and have gone out of their way to send notes of appreciation. The Law Office of Jeffrey Meldon is proud to represent people in the "Heart of Florida" for accidents, personal injury, wrongful death, medical malpractice, dog bites, slip and falls, and criminal defense. Consultations are always free. My thank you's go out as well to those that took the time to request topics they would like to see addressed in the Newsletter. Thank you and please, feel free to call the Office if I can be of assistance.

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Community Spotlight: *Starke...not a wilderness anymore.*



In honor of our clients and subscribers from North Central and Central Florida—a new column, Community Spotlight.

Here are some interesting tidbits and facts about Starke:

- The Florida Railroad, which once connected Cedar Key to Fernandina, utilized Starke as its midpoint, officially giving rise to the town of Starke in 1857.
- In 1887, the area was described as, “A wilderness, a vast unbroken pine forest, where the deer, bear, wildcat, and stealthy panther roamed at their own free will. There was not a single house, worthy of the name, only a few shanties occupied by railroad hands.”
- Timber, citrus, and cotton were the area industries. After the “Big Freeze” of 1895 and the boll weevil 20 yrs. later—strawberries became prominent and are known as, “The Sweetest This Side of Heaven.”
- **Florida State Prison**, in Starke, is Florida’s only prison that is officially called a “prison” - other like structures are called, “Correctional Institutions” or “Correctional Facilities”, if privately contracted.
- Just outside of Starke is **Florida’s National Guard Base, Camp Blanding**—the primary training site for most of the state’s military units. The movie, “G.I. Jane” with Demi Moore was also filmed there.
- **Starke is the County Seat of Bradford County**, which includes Brooker, Graham, Hampton, and Lawtey.
- Starke and Lake Butler fought over the location of the county seat of Bradford County until 1921 when the county was divided, and the western portion was renamed Union County with Lake Butler as its Seat.
- **Starke is 6.7 square miles—all of it land!**

Jeffrey Meldon/TV20 Scholar Athletes of the Week: *Congratulations!*

Every week during the school year a deserving high school senior is awarded the “Scholar-Athlete of the Week” title, a \$100 scholarship, and a plaque. The award is announced on TV 20’s Thursday evening sports news @ 6:00 pm and includes a video clip of the student and their achievement. **Here are the recent winners:**

Nov. 18—**Tina Toghiyani** from Oak Hall High for Volleyball—“**Tina is the Eagles biggest offensive weapon!**”

Nov. 26—**Tressa Jepsen** from Newberry High for Volleyball—“**Tressa is a prayer in disguise!**”

Dec. 2—**Dallas Stubbs** from Gainesville High for Football—“**When Dallas, aka “Golden Leg,” isn’t on the field he is working to maintain his respectable GPA.**”

Dec. 9—**Caroline Welch** from Forest High for Swimming—“**Caroline is the whole package and a fish in the water when it comes to the classroom as well.**”

January is National Blood Donor Month—*Have you donated yet?*

Start the new year off right by donating blood to the Red Cross or your local blood bank in honor of National Blood Donor Month. Donation only takes an hour of your time and results in lifesaving platelets or pints of blood for those in need.

In general, to donate blood you must meet these basic donor requirements:

- 17 years of age and 110 pounds;
- Healthy—meaning no infection;
- Not donated within 8 weeks.



Please, contact your local American Red Cross Office or Life South Community Blood Center today for more information or to schedule an appointment. Your donation may save a life.

Wondering what you should do after an accident or injury?

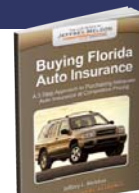


Now available on audio CD!

Consumer Protection
Accident Guide Book

Most people think it will never happen to them. However, statistics show that one in five will be involved in a traffic crash. **How can you protect yourself and your family?**

Be safe, be educated, be adequately insured, and be prepared!



Insurance Guide



1-800-373-8000

Have your **free** accident kit, including camera and guide at hand!

Office Blog: *Turn signals—use them—NO EXCUSES!*

Have you ever wondered why drivers don't use their turn signals? If you have you're not alone. In 2005, a Response Insurance survey found that 57% of U.S. drivers surveyed consistently fail to signal when changing lanes. The number one reason cited—they're in a hurry! Subsequent reasons for not signaling are increasingly disturbing.

1. **No time.** About 42% of drivers say they don't have enough time. Really? It only takes a second to signal!
2. **Lazy.** Approximately, 23% say they are just too "lazy."
3. **Hassle.** About 17% don't signal because when they do, they forget to turn it off.
4. **Tedious.** Some 12% admit they are changing lanes too frequently to bother.
5. **Unimportant.** About 11% say it's trivial.
6. **Others Don't.** Another 8% say they don't signal because other drivers don't.
7. **Exciting.** Most shockingly, 7% say not signaling "adds excitement to driving."



Forgoing a turn signal is not just irritating, it's illegal—and potentially fatal. Turn signals alert motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians of an immediate turn or lane change, while on the roadway.

As fellow motorists and an office that deals with serious injuries resulting from crashes, **we urge all motorists to signal—no excuses.** If you need a reason, just look at the statistics. **In Florida, improper passing and lane changes contributed to roughly 4,200 injuries and 42 deaths among motorists, according to the 2009 Florida Crash Reports.**

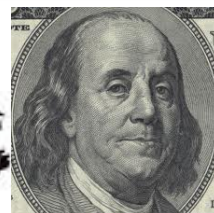
Heads up—Failure to use turn signals can result in a traffic violation and ticket. **In addition, if failure to properly signal is found to contribute to an accident, you could be found to be "comparatively negligent" for the accident and be held liable for your portion of fault.**

Meldon & Friends' "Trivial Pursuit" for January

Q: Ben Franklin's birthday is January 17, 1706. His picture is on the _____ dollar bill. On the reverse side is an image of _____. The bill is one of two current notes that does not feature a President of the United States; the other is the \$10 dollar bill featuring _____.

Q: The California Gold Rush began on January 24, 1848, when gold was discovered by _____ at _____ in the foothills of the _____ mountain range.

Q: The 2011 Super Bowl will be on _____ at what new stadium? _____



Answers: \$100, Independence Hall, Alexander Hamilton, James Marshall, Sierra Nevada, Feb. 6th, Dallas Cowboys,

Recent Accident Case—A picture is better than a thousand words!

Just because you are innocent in a crash, don't be surprised when the other driver says you are at fault. Here is a recent case:

- Our client was driving in her lane when a truck abruptly changed lanes in front of her to avoid hitting a car that had suddenly stopped in front of him. The crash resulted in serious low back injuries and surgery for our client.
- At the scene, the truck driver admitted he had changed lanes illegally. However, when he reported the crash to his employer, the story changed. To his boss, he blamed the accident on our client, saying he had completely changed lanes and the girl that hit him wasn't paying attention.
- Fortunately, the truck driver's employer sent an investigator to the scene to photograph the skid marks and the wrecked truck. Our client only had a picture of her damaged car.
- With these pictures, our accident reconstruction expert, determined that our client's story was indeed true.

MORAL OF THE STORY

Without these pictures, it might have been difficult to prove our case. **If you are in an accident, take pictures of all the damaged vehicles at the scene, and any skid marks, or other evidence. Remember, once the vehicles are towed and the accident scene cleared, you may never get another chance to prove your case.**

Note: This publication is intended to *educate* the general public. **It is not intended to be legal advice.** Every case is unique.

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THE LAW OFFICE OF
JEFFREY MELDON
ASSOCIATES

TOLL FREE
1-800-373-8000

703 NORTH MAIN STREET SUITE A
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32601

Happy New Year!

MELDON LAW TALK NEWSLETTER

Phone: (352) 373-8000
Toll Free: (800) 373-8000
Fax: (352) 373-8400
Email:
jmeldon@meldonlaw.com
On the web:
MeldonLaw.com

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- ECI—have you signed up?

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Ask Jeffrey: **What is drugged driving?**

“Drugged driving” means taking the wheel, while under the influence of any illicit, prescription, or over-the-counter drug. The problem is more serious that you may think—it has become a public health crisis. Here is the info:

- It is estimated that 20% of all crashes are attributable to driving while “drugged.” Plus, more than 16% of weekend, nighttime drivers tested positive for illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter medications, according to a 2007 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report.
- Drugs affect the brain and central nervous system, resulting in possible disorientation, drowsiness, memory loss, or “sleep driving.” Drugs are especially dangerous for drivers when mixed with alcohol.
- Teens are most at risk. Studies show that teens who reported having conversations with their parents about alcohol and drugs were more likely to stay drug-free.
- Older drivers are extremely susceptible to medication side effects because they often mix multiple medications. Older drivers should consult their pharmacist or doctor before driving. Look on the label for warnings: “May cause drowsiness” or “Do not operate machinery while taking this medication.”

Remember, DUI stands for Driving Under the Influence. A DUI charge does not necessarily imply alcohol consumption. A person can be “under the influence” of legal or illegal drugs or anything that causes a persons’ normal faculties to be impaired, including alcohol.
Drugged driving can result in a DUI arrest, carrying the same long term consequences.

Jeffrey Meldon is a proud Life Member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum, a prestigious group of trial lawyers throughout the country. Membership is limited to attorneys that have won million dollar verdicts, awards and settlements for their clients. Less than 1% of U.S. lawyers are members!



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