



MELDON

LAW TALK

NEWSLETTER FROM THE LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY MELDON & ASSOCIATES

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

Totally Useless Legal Facts

The bench in the middle of the Westminster parliament is 2 1/2 swords long. This is to keep both the government and the opposition at least a sword's length away from each other in case of a heated debate.

In Italy, it is illegal to craft coffins out of anything but wood or nutshells.

In the early 1900's, an elephant was tried, convicted, and hanged for murdering a politician's daughter during a circus parade.

A "jiffy" is an actual measurement of time, 1/100th of a second.

Dueling is legal in Paraguay, so long as both parties are registered blood donors.

In Texas, it is illegal to put graffiti on someone else's cow.

The Declaration of Independence was written on hemp paper.

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Happy April! *Honor Thy Mother Earth—go take a hike!*

April brings Earth Day (April 22) and National Arbor Day (April 29). Both are days to honor the earth.

Earth Day began in 1970 with the first celebration in New York City. In celebration, 5th Ave was shut down and nearly 1 million people participated in New York City alone. Earth Day is now celebrated in more than 100 countries.

National Arbor Day began in 1872 and is observed on the last Friday in April. Each state's Arbor Day celebration indicates the signing of an Arbor Day proclamation by local officials. Florida's Arbor Day is the third Friday in January. Floridians still can do our part to support and honor our national day.

Here are a few ideas on what you can do to celebrate:

- **Plant something:** a tree, landscaping plants, flowers, a garden, bulbs, or some seeds.
- **Take a hike,** a nature hike. Pick up garbage as you enjoy the flora and fauna.
- **Look at ways to lower your energy usage and bills.**



Cabbage Palm
Sabal palmetto

Florida's State Tree:
Cabbage Palmetto

Staff Highlight: *Nicole—Case Manager that makes a difference!*

"What I like most about my career is being able to make a difference in someone's life. What I like most about my position at Jeffrey Meldon and Associates is working for a Law Firm that focuses on quality, not quantity. This allows me to do in-depth research and preparation on each and every case, thereby, allowing me to make a real difference in injured peoples' lives." *Nicole*



Nicole Talcik

Born in Derby, Connecticut, Nicole moved to Florida as a teen, and now lives in High Springs. Nicole has been a Legal Assistant for more than 20 years in major law offices and with our firm nearly 5 years. Her daughter, Kayla, will attend Flagler College on Scholarship in the Fall.

"Nicole works hard to communicate with clients throughout their legal process and is very creative in utilizing the Internet and other resources to prove our cases. Nicole is also very talented, hard working, and always ready to pitch in and help out her co-workers on a project. Her wealth of experience and brilliance make her a valuable member of the Team." *Jeffrey*

A Note From Jeffrey: *About my Office and thank you!*

- My Office is proud to represent people in the "Heart of Florida" and the entire state for accidents, personal injury, wrongful death, medical malpractice, dog bites, slip and fall, DUI, and criminal defense in Gainesville.
Consultations are always free.
- If you have a legal situation that my Firm does not handle, I will gladly refer you to a trusted attorney.
- To all who referred friends and family or gone out of their way to send notes of appreciation, I thank you!

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Community Spotlight: *Gilchrist County—Springs, history, & hogs?*



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

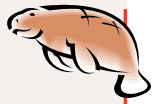
Here are some interesting tidbits and facts about Gilchrist County:

- Gilchrist County was created in 1925, making it **the youngest county in Florida**.
- The county is named for Albert W. Gilchrist, Governor of Florida from 1909 to 1913.
- Trenton, the County Seat, was founded by Polish explorers between 1614-1616. **Its first mayor was notorious for his brutal politics and governing, sending people to the guillotine for being “undesirable.” He was ousted in the Trenton Revolution of 1620.**
- There is tense rivalry between Trenton and the other populous city, Bell. This rivalry is celebrated with a yearly event, **The Buttering of the Hog**, where contestants are greased up and stripped down to their skivvies. The first to catch the buttered hog has bragging rights for the year.
- **Fanning Springs State Park, Hart Springs, Otter Springs**, and other springs bring beauty to the county.

Correction. Thank you to our readers that pointed out an error in last month's Community Spotlight! Here is the correct information.

Although you can swim with the manatees in Homosassa (as well as in Crystal River), **you cannot swim with them at the Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park.** However, you can always view the manatees at the park. Visitors to the park can see West Indian manatees every day of the year from the park's underwater observatory. The park showcases native Florida wildlife, including manatees, black bears, bobcats, white-tailed deer, American alligators, American crocodiles, and river otters.

Go check out the “Real Florida” with a visit to Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park!



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:**

Feb 17—**Cartaesha Macklin** from Lafayette High for Basketball—**“No matter where Cartaesha goes to college, she will be a great asset to our society.”**

Feb 24—**Peter Kraft** from Oak Hall High for Lacrosse—**“Peter's life has been anything but easy, but he “sticks” with it.”**

Mar 3—**Stephen Tapia-Ruano** from Santa Fe High for Baseball—**“Besides throwing strikes and hitting the books, Stephen also is part of student government, is the editor of the yearbook, and volunteers at his local church.”**

Mar 10—**Justin Kortessis** from Fort White High for Baseball—**“Justin does it with his bat and also his brain, supporting high batting and GPA averages.”**

Safety Reminder: Think of your auto as an oven—don't leave kids in the car!



With Florida weather warming up, remember, **don't leave kids in the car—not even for a minute.** Children may die, even in temperate weather, if left in the car for a few minutes.

Children are susceptible to hyperthermia, since their body temperature rises 3 to 5 times faster than that of an adult.

Many of these child deaths occur when kids are forgotten in the back seat when a parent goes to work or is running a quick errand. Remember, it is not enough to crack the windows.

Wondering what you should do after an accident or injury?



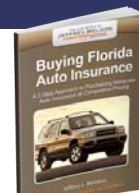
Consumer Protection
Accident Guide Book



Now available on audio CD!

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 family?**

Be safe, educated, adequately insured, and prepared!



Insurance Guide



1-800-373-8000

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

Office Blog: *13 Ways to Avoid Parking Lot Pitfalls*

Parking lots come in many shapes and sizes, often with hidden dangers like fender benders, pedestrians, and poor lighting. Upon reaching a parking lot, a motorist may feel "safe," having reached their destination. **Not so, stay alert.** In 2009, more than 18,550 traffic crashes occurred in Florida parking lots, resulting in approximately 30 deaths; about 4,000 injuries; and 15,000 reports of property damage.

The National Safety Commission offers the following tips to avoid parking lot pitfalls:

1. **Avoid distractions**, like cell phones.
2. **Look for brake lights**, indicating backing or a stopped car ahead.
3. **Watch for pedestrians**, especially in a mall or high pedestrian area.
4. **Obey speed limits and traffic signs.** Watch for one-way, yield, and stop signs. Pay special attention to intersections at the entrance and exits.
5. **Avoid break-ins.** Lock your car, roll up the windows, and stow valuables safely from sight.
6. **Park in appropriate designated spaces**, such as "compact," "oversized," "handicapped," or "expectant mother."
7. **Opt for well-lit spaces.**
8. **When you park, leave.** Don't sit in the car talking on the phone or looking for misplaced items. Safely leave the parking lot
9. **Scan for strangers or suspicious vehicles** around your car when exiting and returning.
10. **Lock the doors.** When in the car, lock the doors, and roll up windows.
11. **Avoid delay.** Remember where you parked. Have your keys ready.
12. **Double check the rear blind zone when reversing.** Children and elderly are at especially high risk of back-over accidents in parking lots and driveways.
13. **In case of an accident**, be prepared to stop, collect, or leave information required by law, even if the car is unattended.



"Trivial Pursuit" for April... *Floridian Nature Trivia*

- Q: Since 1953, Florida's State Tree has been the Cabbage Palmetto or Cabbage Palm. What is it also known as?
 Q: Florida's State Flower was designated in 1909, what is it?
 Q: What determines the sex of an alligator embryo—temperature, humidity, or genetics?
 Q: What two trees did Ponce de Leon introduce to Florida in 1513?
 Q: The Hawthorne Trail is part of the _____ program; 17 miles of nature enjoyment.
 Q: Florida is the only state that has 2 separate rivers with the same name. What is it?
 Q: A Cabbage palm tree can reach heights of up to _____ feet.



Answers: Sabal Palmetto, Orange Blossom, temperature, humidity, Withlacoochee, 80

"Not just because of the outcome, but because you were there for me..."

The following is a testimonial from a seriously injured car accident victim.

"Randy, I am so very happy for you about your settlement." *Nicole Talcik, Office Case Manager*

"Nicole, you think you are happy? I had to slap myself several times after Jeffrey told me about my settlement yesterday. For once, something happened as I wished it would. And I owe it all to the two of you. **Both of you showed me great knowledge, hard and diligent work, together with compassion that got me through the anxieties and frustrations for the last 11 months.**

We go through life learning about other people, how we deal with our own particular situations and how much we can tolerate. In the end, we find we have taught ourselves how to survive what comes our way, with some help (Meldon Law Firm), and then we add our conclusive experiences to our mind's library to help with the next issue we face. Suffice it to say, you and Jeffrey are a part of my life that I look upon as a positive experience. **Not just because of the outcome, but because you were both there when I needed you throughout the entire ordeal. Can't thank you both enough for that.** You are both a truly great team." *Randy, Ocala, Florida*

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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Look Inside This Issue

- Honor your mother earth—go take a walk.
- Gilchrist County—springs, history, and hogs.
- 13 ways to avoid parking lot pitfalls.
- Don't leave kids in the car!
- April Trivia—Florida nature
- Buckle up—it's the law!

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Ask Jeffrey: *What happens if my dog bites someone?*

This is a good question as, no matter how cute they are, dogs can be dogs and bite. Here is the info:

States have different laws regarding whether you are responsible if your dog bites someone. Some states have a rule that you are not responsible for the first time your dog bites someone, since the owner didn't have prior knowledge. **Florida is different.** Even if it is the first bite, the dog owner is responsible in Florida. This concept is called, "strict liability."

If your dog bites someone, you are liable for their medical bills, pain and suffering, disfigurement or scaring, and any psychological trauma. Posting a prominent "Bad Dog" sign may offer you some legal protection from Florida's strict liability law.

If you own a dog, make sure you have a homeowner's policy or renter's insurance that covers dog bites. Many homeowners' policies exclude liability coverage for dog bites. Other insurance policies exclude coverage based on the breed of the dog. **Do not hide your dog from your insurance agent.** Find out if you are protected and if your dog's breed is covered.

Something else to be aware: If you or your child are mauled by someone else's dog, you may never recover a penny as your own homeowner's policy does not cover you for someone else's negligence. Also, Florida has limits regarding the rights of victims to go after people's assets.



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