

Jeffrey Meldon

# MELDON

# LAW TALK

NEWSLETTER BY THE LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY MELDON & ASSOCIATES

May 2010 Volume II, Issue VII

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## Lawyer Jokes

(Inspired by The Sky's Bob Rose)

### Pity for the Husband

The local courtroom was packed as testimony began in the sentencing hearing of a woman convicted of murdering her husband of 20 years by poisoning his coffee.

The defense attorney knew he had his work cut out for him trying to make his client appear more sympathetic to the Judge, especially since she had been so "matter-of-fact" about the whole thing all during the trial.

"Mrs. Roth," he began, "was there any point that morning where you felt pity for your husband?"

"Well.... Yeah.....I guess...." she replied.

"And when was that?" pressed the attorney.

"Well....," she replies, "when he asked for his third cup."

## Welcome To Our May Newsletter: *We remember and honor them*

**Memorial Day is Monday, May 31.** This day of remembrance is for those who died defending our country. First called Decoration Day, this is an important day to come together as a nation and honor those who gave their all. Memorial Day was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate Soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

Over the years, many have forgotten the true meaning of Memorial Day and see it only as a long weekend and the start of summer. To remind Americans of the true meaning of Memorial Day, in December 2000, the "National Moment of Remembrance" passed. This resolution encourages Americans at 3 p.m. local time, "to voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of Remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to Taps."

Currently, the U.S. Senate is considering a bill to restore the traditional day of observance of Memorial Day back to May 30th instead of the last Monday in May. Many believe that when Congress made the

day into a three-day weekend as part of the National Holiday Act of 1971, it made it easy for people to forget the meaning of the Day. In fact, the VFW stated, "Changing the date merely to create three-day weekends has undermined the very meaning of the day. No doubt this has contributed greatly to the general public's nonchalant observance of Memorial Day."



*May we all take time on Memorial Day to remember and be grateful for those who have given their lives in service for America!*

## Office News: *Who will the Scholar Athletes of the Year be?*

The annual Jeffrey Meldon/WCJB TV20 Scholar Athlete Program banquet will be held Thursday, May 20, at the Gainesville Women's Club. At the banquet, 36 weekly scholar athletes from the year will be honored with a plaque and a \$100 scholarship. At the end of the evening, one male and one female Scholar Athlete of the Year will be announced. They will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship and a glass trophy, acknowledging their achievements. Last year, Chloe Mann from Eastside (volleyball) and Greg Gantt from Gainesville High School (basketball) were selected. **Previous Scholar Athletes of the Year are:** John Brantley (football), Andrew Miller (baseball), C.J. Spiller (football), Marcia Hampton (volleyball), Bobby Gates (golf), Brittany Davis (basketball), and Hillary White (track/cross country). *For more info see pg. 2*

## 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 we can be of help.**



THE LAW OFFICE OF  
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**Tom Copeland  
Attorney at Law**

**The Scholar Athletes of the Week; North Central Florida's Best and Brightest!**

**March:**  
3/25—Kasey Fagnan from Dunnellon High for Softball.

**April:**  
4/1—Matt Duval from Santa Fe High for Baseball

4/8—Brittany Hendrix from P.K. Yonge for Softball.

4/15—Stephanie Cameron from Forest High for Softball.

4/22—Tiebout McCrae from P.K. Yonge for Baseball.

**Congratulations Scholar-Athletes of the Week!**

**Tom on "Torts:" *The value of our civil justice system.***

This is a new section of our Newsletter that will be devoted to educating you on the value of our civil justice system and why it is in our collective and individual best interests to preserve the right of full access to the Courts through the jury system.

My goal will be to provide you objective and verifiable information so that you can make up your own mind about whether the system we currently have in place is in need of "reform" as that term has been used time and time again. I'm not promising that my opinion won't find its way into future articles because it is a subject about which I have passionate beliefs. I will however, try to make it clear when I'm stating my opinion as opposed to a verifiable fact. **Let's get started!**

"Tort reform" is a phrase and rallying cry that has been bantered about in the media since at least the mid-1980's. The primary purveyors of the call for "tort reform" are the some of the richest groups/organizations/corporations in the United States and many of the politicians they support. These same entities would be the primary financial beneficiaries of the so-called "reforms." **The primary cost or burden of tort reform would fall on "you," the individual citizen.**

Are these previous statements "facts" or just my "opinion?" In the coming months, I'm going to provide you with information that will allow you to decide for yourself.

Let's start the examination by defining some terms. What is a "tort"? Black's Law Dictionary, 9th edition, defines it as "A civil wrong, other than a breach of contract, for which a remedy may be obtained, usually in the form of (money) damages."  
*Continued on page 3*

**Jeffrey Meldon/WCJB TV 20's Scholar Athlete Update... Congratulations Students!**

The Jeffrey Meldon/WCJB TV 20 Scholar-Athlete program has been in existence since 1997. Every week during the school year a deserving high school senior is awarded the title of "Scholar-Athlete Of The Week" and receives a \$100 scholarship and a plaque. The award is announced on TV 20's Thursday evening sports news @6:00 and includes a video clip of the student and their achievements. In the column to the left are the latest winners.

**Meldon & Friends' "Trivial Pursuit" for May**

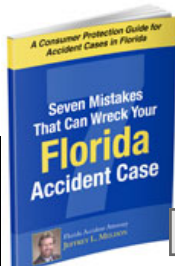
**Q:** May 12, 1820, is Florence Nightingale's birthday. She is named for the place of her birth, Florence, Italy. True/ False. Florence is best known for pioneering modern nursing. A little known fact is that she was also a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Q:** On May 29, 1953, \_\_\_\_\_, a New Zealand beekeeper, was the first to climb Mt. \_\_\_\_\_, the tallest mountain in the world. This mountain is part of the \_\_\_\_\_ mountain range and is located on the borders of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Q:** Cinco de Mayo is not Mexico's Independence Day, bur rather a party that celebrates freedom and liberty gained through defeating the French on the morning of May 5, 1862. True/False

**Answers: True Mathematician Sir Edmund Hillary Everest Himalayan Nepal & Tibet True**

**Have you read your Consumer Guide Accident Book yet?**



**Now available on audio CD!**

**Good news!** In an effort to make it more convenient to get the information in Jeffrey's Consumer Guide Book, *Seven Mistakes That Can Wreck Your Florida Accident Case*, Storm Roberts of KTK has read it on audio CD. With the help of many others, the book on CD is now available and complimentary to our readers. To request yours, call the Office and request that a copy be sent for you @ (800) or (352) 373-8000. **Be safe and be prepared!**



**Consumer Protection Accident Guide Book**

**Thanks to Storm Roberts, the book is now available on audio CD. Request yours today!**

## The Office Blogs: *Car seat safety is for everyone! Did you know?*

**Did you know** that car seat safety isn't just for kids? **Did you know** that if a car's seat rating or positioning is poor, whiplash injuries may occur during an accident? A driver's seat safety has serious consequences for spinal, neck, and back injuries in a crash.

The National Safety Commission (NSC) recommends that drivers take these safety steps:

- **Check the head rest position.** It's all about geometry. A head rest should reach approximately the midpoint of the skull (about 9 cm, or 3.5 inches, below the top of the head).
- **Put your seat in an up-right, locked position.** If a seat is too far reclined, the greater the distance the body travels, and the more violently the neck snaps back in a crash. Don't recline your seat, it's dangerous.
- **Position the seat at least 10 inches from the airbag.**
- **Buckle the seatbelt low around your waist.** Adjust the height of the seat belt, if necessary, and wear the shoulder harness across your chest.
- **When purchasing a car,** check the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's (IIHS) car seat safety ratings.



A car seat protects a driver or passenger in the event of a crash. While a seat may be relaxing and comfortable, reclining a seat too far could actually lead to "drowsy driving" when tired. **Did you know** that car seat safety is so important that the IIHS tests the seat independently from the rest of the vehicle? Crash test dummies with a realistic spine and neck are buckled into a seat then crashed at 20mph. This simulates a common rear-end crash scenario that often results in whiplash.

## Tom on "Torts": *The value of our civil justice system—continued...*

(Continued from page 2.) This is a very simplistic definition of a subject that is so complex that it has its own class in law school. Suffice it to say that when most ordinary people think of "tort" claims they envision a system in which a person sues to collect money damages for injuries received in an automobile accident, a slip & fall accident, or a medical malpractice claim. It is those things to be sure, but, it is also much broader and includes business torts, environmental torts, property torts, and toxic torts, among others.

So, what is "tort reform?" Again, according to Black's Law Dictionary, it is, "A movement to reduce the amount of tort litigation, usually involving legislation that restricts tort remedies or that caps damages awards." In layman's terms, "tort reform" proponents seek to limit, or in some cases, eliminate the right of a potential claimant (whether it is an individual, company, or government) to file a suit for damages for certain types or categories of cases. It also includes efforts to put an absolute limit on the amount of damages that can be awarded in a case regardless of the facts of the case.

Starting with next month's issue, I will get into some details of the points discussed in this segment and provide an example in each future article of cases from across the nation that illustrate how both society and individuals benefit from the tort system currently in place.

*Tom Copeland has been a Fla. Trial lawyer Litigator since 1986. He represents ordinary people who have been hurt by the negligence of others. Born and raised in Valdosta, GA., he joined our Office in 2002. When he is not in the Courtroom or the Office, he enjoys being a Gentleman Farmer on his 15-acre Alachua farm with his family and their horses, cattle, and big garden.*

## Case of the Month: *PIP is more valuable than you may know!*

People often think that Personal Injury Protection (PIP) only covers accidents in their car or truck. This is not so. Here is an example: Recently, a bicyclist crossing Main St. at 8th Ave. was hit by a car and seriously injured. He was transported to the hospital and required follow up medical care. The bicyclist's medical bills alone were over \$30,000. The man had no insurance (health or auto), did not own a vehicle, and didn't live with a relative that owned a vehicle. The person that hit him was insured. Even though the victim was on a bicycle, the at-fault driver's PIP covered \$10,000 of bicyclist's medical bills, and the driver's Bodily Injury Liability Ins. covered the rest.

**How could this be? Doesn't PIP only cover your own medical care?** Florida law provides that if you are a pedestrian or a bicyclist, and are hit by a vehicle, the PIP coverage of the person that hit you offers you protection, if the following two criteria are met:

1. You do not own a vehicle and
2. You do not live with a "resident relative" that owns a vehicle.

**Important point:** Your auto insurance provides valuable protection for you and your family, even when you are out of your vehicle.

**Heads up:** This does not apply to motorcyclists. **PIP does not cover motorcycles.**

**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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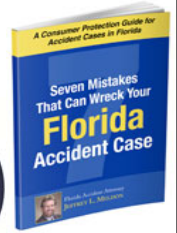
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## Look Inside This Issue

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- ▲ Tom on "Torts."
- ▲ We remember and honor our fallen soldiers.
- ▲ Car seat safety... did you know?

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### Ask Jeffrey: *What is the difference between Collision and Comprehensive Ins?*

**A:** Collision and Comprehensive insurance are often confused. **Both protect your vehicle in different ways.**

**Collision insurance** covers damages to your vehicle caused by an accident (collision).

- Collision insurance pays even if you caused the accident that damaged your car.
- Collision coverage is especially valuable because one in four Floridians drive illegally without any insurance.
- Even if the driver that was at fault for the accident had the required insurance, the required amount of property damage liability insurance is only \$10,000 in Florida.
- The recommended amount of Collision coverage varies depending on the age and value of your vehicle.

**Comprehensive** insurance is also known as "other than collision" insurance or "OTC". It covers damage done to your vehicle from things other than collisions, such as: vandalism, disasters, theft, fire, impacts with animals, etc.

- Comprehensive does not cover any damage as a result of a collision.
- If you live in a high crime area, have a newer model vehicle, or a vehicle that is a common target of theft, Comprehensive insurance is highly recommended.

*For more tips and information on auto insurance, please see Chapter 12 of Jeffrey's book, Seven Mistakes That Can Wreck Your Florida Accident Case, or listen to it on CD!*

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