



MELDON

LAW TALK

NEWSLETTER BY THE LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY MELDON & ASSOCIATES

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

Courtroom Quotations

Lawyer: "Was that the same nose you broke as a child?"

Witness: "I only have one, you know."

Lawyer: Now, Mrs. Johnson, how was your first marriage terminated?"

Witness: "By death."

Lawyer: "And by whose death was it terminated?"

Lawyer: "Can you describe what the person who attacked you looked like?"

Witness: "No. He was wearing a mask."

Lawyer: "What was he wearing under the mask?"

Witness: "Er...his face."

Lawyer: "This myasthenia gravis—does it affect your memory at all?"

Witness: "Yes."

Lawyer: "And in what way does it affect your memory?"

Witness: "I forget."

Lawyer: "You forget. Can you give us an example of something that you've forgotten?"

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Whatever Your Traditions or Superstitions—Happy Halloween!

Halloween's origins date back thousands of years and is a night of superstition and tradition:

- The most common tradition is dressing up in costume. The Celts believed that ghosts of the dead returned to earth. **To avoid being recognized by ghosts, Celts wore masks and dressed in animal skins.**
- The Welsh believed that when you sneezed, you blew the soul out of the body—the origin of "God bless you." **If you sneezed on Halloween, it was especially dangerous as the devil could capture your soul.**
- Other cultures believed that owls swooped down to eat the souls of the dying on Halloween. **If an owl was heard hooting, it was believed that turning your pockets inside out would make you safe.**
- Witches and black cats are images of Halloween. Folklore tells of witches gathering each year on Halloween, arriving on broomsticks, to celebrate with the devil and cast spells on unsuspecting people. **One superstition said that if you wanted to meet a witch, you had to put your clothes on inside out and walk backwards on Halloween night, and one would appear at midnight.**



Wishing you a safe October full of treats and few tricks.

Office Reminder: *Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with!*

National Fire Prevention Week is Oct 3-9! Nationwide, about 8 people died in home fires every day in 2008. Here are some more home fire facts from the National Fire Prevention Association (nfpa.org):

- Cooking is the #1 cause of home fires and fire-related injuries;
- Smoking is the leading cause of home fires and fire-related deaths;
- Heating is the 2nd leading cause of fire deaths and fire-related injuries in the home;
- Electrical malfunctions and overloaded circuits are factors in approximately 50,000 home fires each year;
- **Working smoke detectors cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half!**

Many potential fire hazards go undetected because people simply do not take steps to fireproof their home. In addition to not smoking and keeping matches and lighters away from children, here are 3 simple steps to help in creating home fire safety:

1. **Install and maintain** a working smoke alarm outside of every sleeping area. (Change batteries yearly!)
2. **Designate 2 escape routes** from each bedroom and practice them.
3. Teach and practice, "Stop, Drop, and Roll" in case clothing catches on fire.



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.**

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

Community Spotlight: *Ocala—Horse Capital of the World, plus!*

Here are some interesting things you may or may not know about Ocala:

- In 1883, much of downtown Ocala was destroyed by **The Thanksgiving Day Fire**. Buildings were then rebuilt with brick, granite, and steel, instead of lumber—giving it the name, “**The Brick City**.”
- Ocala was an important center of citrus production until **The Great Freeze** of 1894-1895.
- In the 1940’s and 50’s, Ocala became known as a horse breeding and training center.
- In 1956, “**Needles**,” was the 1st Fla.-bred horse to win the **Kentucky Derby**, boosting Ocala’s reputation.
- In 1978, “**Affirmed**,” a Marion County-bred and raised horse, won the **Tippie Crown**.
- Ocala is one of only 5 cities in the world to earn the title, “**Horse Capital of the World**,” based on annual revenue produced by the horse industry.
- East of Ocala is the 607-square-mile **Ocala National Forest**, the **2nd largest U.S. National Forest**.
- **Silver Springs**, just outside of Ocala, is a 350-acre-nature park that surrounds the headwaters of the Silver River, the **largest artesian spring in the world**.
- John Brantley, quarterback for University of Florida Gators, is an Ocala native.
- According to 2009 Florida Traffic Crash Statistics, Marion County, as a medium population county (100,000—500,000) ranks: **#1 in alcohol-related deaths**; **#2 in crash-related fatalities** (behind Pasco County); **#6 for total crashes** (behind Pasco, Leon, Escambia, Alachua, and Manatee Counties); and **#1 for motorcycle fatalities**.
- Ocala is seat to Marion County, which includes Belleview, Citra, Dunnellon, McIntosh, Reddick, etc.

Jeffrey Meldon/TV20 Scholar Athlete Program Resumes

It’s that time of year—**The Jeffrey Meldon/TV20 Scholar Athlete Program!** 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. The year ends with a Sports Banquet, honoring each scholar athlete, at which a male and female “Scholar Athlete of the Year” is selected and awarded a \$1,000 scholarship and trophy. In existence since 1997, **this is one of Jeffrey’s favorite community services**. Previous “Scholar Athletes of the Year” are: (2007) John Brantley of Ocala, Quarterback for the Gators and (2006) C.J. Spiller of Union County, who recently signed a \$25 million contract with the Buffalo Bills and was #9 overall in the NFL draft.

Safety Reminder: *New Safety Seat Guideline for Toddlers!*



Turning baby’s car seat around is the only milestone to delay as long as possible.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends toddlers remain seated in a rear-facing convertible seat at least until age 2. Previously, experts recommended that a baby graduates to a forward-facing seat at age 1 and 20 pounds. That is not the case any more. Studies cited by the AAP show that toddlers are at least 5 times safer riding in a rear-facing safety seat until their 2nd birthday. (Biomechanically, a child’s neck is flexible to help with the birth process—and the neck may remain vulnerable up until age 12.)

Studies show that as a child moves through the various car seat stages, each stage offers less protection than the prior phase. **So, delay your toddler’s graduation—keep them buckled in a rear facing seat as long as possible.**



Consumer Protection
Accident Guide Book



Now available on audio CD!

Wondering what you should do after an accident or injury?

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!



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

The Office Blog: *Driving with your pet could be a deadly mistake.*

You probably wouldn't down shots of tequila before getting behind the wheel, but would you let Fido sit on your lap?

Statistics show that driving with your pet could be as deadly as driving under the influence of alcohol.

80% of respondents polled by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, reported driving with their pet on leisure trips or to work, but only 17% reported properly restraining their pet while driving.

Not only are unrestrained pets a distraction, you could be found comparatively negligent, or at-fault, for damages caused in an accident. If your pet contributes to the cause of a wreck by distracting you, the driver, then you may be liable for a portion of the damages. **We urge you to protect yourself, your pet passenger, and fellow motorists by properly restraining and securing your pet (cat or dog) before getting behind the wheel.** Plus, remember that anything unsecured, including a pet, may become a missile in a crash.



Experts recommend using car barriers, carriers, or restraint devices to secure pets while driving. **Here are some types:**

- **Seat belt restraints:** These are fitted to the size of your animal and attach to your vehicle's seatbelt system.
- **Carrier:** Use a properly sized carrier, secured with a seatbelt in the back seat or with bungee cords in the back of an SUV.
- **Safety barriers:** Install barriers between the front and back seat or the trunk and back seat—these won't protect your pet, but, may protect others in the vehicle and prevent an accident.
- **Booster seats:** A seat, secured by a seat belt, is an option for a dog 40 lbs. or under.

Meldon & Friends' "Trivial Pursuit" for October

Q: Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the 1871 Great Chicago Fire that killed 250, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed over 17,400 structures, and burned 2,000 acres. According to legend, this tragic fire was started by Mrs. O'Leary's _____ kicking over a lantern in the barn.

Q: Celtic priests called _____ built bonfires on Samhain, the origin of Halloween, for protection.

Q: Carving pumpkins originated as a Celtic tradition. However, they carved _____ instead.

Q: The common little brown bat of North America has the longest life span for a mammal its size, with a life span averaging _____ years.

Q: Columbus Day, Oct. 11, celebrates Christopher's sailing the ocean blue in _____ and discovering America.

Q: The names of Columbus' 3 ships are The _____, The _____, and The _____.

Q: Though Columbus is credited with the discovery of our country, actually, the Norse explorer, _____, came to America 500 years before landing in what is now Newfoundland.

Q: _____'s Birthday is Oct. 16, 1758. He is credited with compiling the American Dictionary.

Answers: Cow, Druids, Turnips, 32, 1492, Nina, 1492, Santa Maria, Pinta, Leif Erickson, Noah Webster



More than one person can be at-fault for an accident—Heads up

Determining fault in any type of accident is critical! Florida became a **comparative negligence** State in 1973. Before 1973, if a person was found to be the slightest bit at fault for an accident, they would not be entitled to recover anything for their injuries or losses. With comparative negligence, more than one person can be at-fault in an accident and may be held responsible for their portion of fault—a fairer system of justice.

How is this portion or % of fault proven? Under Florida law, a jury may apportion fault. Often, it is typical for one party to blame the other, becoming a "he said/she said" scenario. **Therefore, it's vital to immediately investigate an accident before the "evidence gets cold."** Accident investigators and reconstruction specialists can investigate the scene, vehicles, and review witness statements. (*This is something an experienced accident attorney can help you with.*)

Heads up: Just because a police officer gives one person a ticket, citing them at-fault, does not mean that person is 100% at-fault, or even at-fault. Nor does it mean that person's insurance company will accept responsibility for the wreck. Insurance companies may even blame the victim for causing or contributing to the crash.

Moral of the Story? 1. Take pictures of the scene, cars, and injuries. 2. Get witness contact information.

"Accidents are often not black and white with one person being 100% at-fault and the other person 100% fault-less."

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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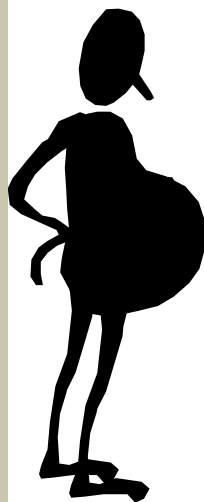
- Are you and your pet safe on the road?
- Community Spotlight: Ocala
- Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with!
- New toddler car seat recommendations.
- Happy Halloween!

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Ask Jeffrey: *I'm pregnant—is it safe to drive?*

This is an excellent question as car crashes are the leading cause of death for pregnant women and fetuses. However, there are ways to make driving safer when pregnant. **Here are things you should know if you are pregnant and on the road:**



- **Experts agree** that it is safer to ride as a passenger than to drive while pregnant. Riding in the back seat is the safest way to avoid contact with the steering wheel or the dash.
- **Wear your seat belt.** Buckling up is the single most effective way for you and your fetus to survive a wreck. Use a 3-point system, meaning it has a lap belt and shoulder strap:
 - *Secure the lap strap **BELOW** your belly.
 - *Place the shoulder belt across your chest and away from your neck—the shoulder strap may keep the wheel from crushing your belly in an accident.
- **Keep airbags activated**—airbags are no substitute for a 3-point safety restraint.
- **Position your seat as far rearward** as is safe to avoid contact with the steering wheel or the dash.
- **If you are in a crash, it is very important to call your doctor right away, even if you feel fine immediately after the wreck!**

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