

LAW OFFICES OF KIM MICHAEL CULLEN, P.A.

LIFE, LIBERTY,
AND THE LAW

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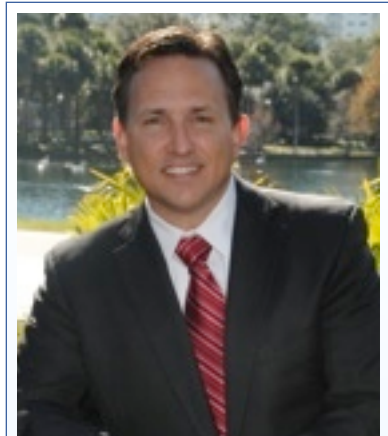
BABIES DO IT, SO WHY CAN'T WE?

Like an infant learning its way, we welcome you to an exciting first step for our firm

This is the first of what we hope will be many issues of Life, Liberty, and the Law – our new firm newsletter. You might notice that the law is the third – and last – part of the name. This is intentional. While we are obviously a law firm, and the main function of our business is representing accident victims, we want this newsletter to be more than just a regurgitation of legal cases and legal advice. It is our plan to provide our readers with a variety of material that they can use in their daily lives. We hope to provide useful pieces about health, families, technology, and self-improvement, among other topics

We also hope that Life, Liberty, and the Law will serve as a way for our readers to get to know us a little better. In this month's edition, you will meet Emely Canto-Flowers, the newest member of our team, and learn more about her and her family. In subsequent issues you will likely learn more about my wife and our four children (ages 14 to 7), my struggles coaching four youth sports teams in three different sports, and my decision-making process surrounding whether to attempt my sixth marathon this year. You'll also likely learn more about Terry and his much-loved-and-cared-for cars, and Stacie's adorable young daughter.

As we start this project, my goal is to publish an issue each month. I have to tell you that the idea of coming up with new story ideas each month is already somewhat intimidating. For that reason, please consider this an open invitation for story or content suggestions. For example, if there is a personal injury legal topic that you are curious about, please let us know. Similarly, we welcome your feedback regarding what you liked about the newsletter and what you didn't. None of us has ever worked at a newspaper or magazine, nor did any of us major in Journalism, so we are open to suggestion. Feel free to e-mail me any time at kcullen@cullen-law.com and let me know.



We Thank You
You are receiving this newsletter because we value your contact with our law firm. It is our small way of reaching out to those who have supported us and shown interest in our firm over the years. If you wish not to receive future editions of this newsletter, please contact Stacie McCamie at smccamie@cullen-law.com, and we will make sure we remove you from our list.

LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE LAW

New Study: Media Overload for Teens

A new study published by the Kaiser Family Foundation indicates a connection between heavy media use by teenagers and social problems. However, most alarmingly, the study indicates that today's teens consume more media than teens did just 5 years ago – when experts believed that kids could not possibly consume more media.

According to the study, the average child aged 8 to 18 years spends more than 7.5 hours per day watching television, surfing the internet, or using a smartphone or electronic device such as an iPod. In addition, these children spend an average of 1.5 additional hours texting or talking on their mobile phones. Because many of these kids are adept at multi-tasking and consuming more than one media at a time, they actually pack about 11 hours of consumption into a daily 7.5 hour period.

The study found that increased media consumption is generally associated with behavioral problems and lower school grades.

Parents are obviously faced with challenges about how to deal with the explosion of devices and ways to access media. Here are some tips:

- Take time to monitor your child's media usage.
- Determine whether your child's media usage is affecting his interest on other activities.
- Set strict time limits on media usage.
- Prohibit media consumption during meals, particularly dinner.
- Restrict television watching and/or internet use to a public area in the home.
- Do not allow children to have televisions or internet access in their bedrooms.
- Make media consumption dependent on reaching certain reading or exercise goals.



FitBit -- New Health Gadget Provides a Wealth of Useful Information

I recently came across a new device called the FitBit that I have not yet used, but that looks really cool. As you can see from the image above, the FitBit is about twice the size of a quarter and clips easily on your clothing or slips into your pocket. Apparently this tiny device holds a 3D GPS motion-sensor -- similar to the one used in the Nintendo Wii video game unit that many of our kids use.

Once in place, this tiny thing measures every move you make throughout your day -- recording steps taken, mileage traveled, and calories burned. Most interestingly, the FitBit also records data about your sleep patterns so that you can track the quality of the sleep you are (or aren't) getting each night. It comes with a wireless base unit that automatically downloads all of your data to your computer whenever you get within a few feet. If any of you know anyone who has actually used the FitBit, I would love to hear about it. Find out more at www.fitbit.com.



New Kid On The Block

This month we turn our spotlight on the newest member of our staff, Emely Canto-Flowers. Emely came to the firm after having taken some time off to have her second child, Maxwell Jeryko (10 months). Before that, she worked for a diverse mix of law firms specializing in areas ranging from real estate to personal injury insurance defense.

Emely recently earned a Bachelor's degree in Legal Studies from Everest University. Her next goal is to someday tackle law school.

In addition to Maxwell, Emely is also a mother to Kiyara Natasha (17), a Senior at Haines City High School, and is married to her high school sweet heart, Neil.

Emely has relatives from the Dominican Republic and spent summer vacations there as a youngster. As a result, she became immersed in the culture and is now bilingual in English and Spanish. This is a real asset for the firm because Emely allows us to now more easily service our Spanish-speaking clients.

We look forward to having all of our clients benefit from Emely Canto-Flowers' experience and talents.

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Pedal to the Metal: Toyota issues historic vehicle recall



The world's largest automaker, Toyota Corporation, recently announced a product recall that will ultimately affect over 5 million vehicles. It seems that multiple Toyota models have problems with accelerators that stick or that do not release quickly enough, causing cars and trucks to continue gaining speed while the driver actually intends to slow. The latest recall comes on the heels of a recall instituted by Toyota due to floor mats trapping accelerator pedals. Apparently, this latest problem can be cured by installing a dime-sized metal piece to the back of the accelerator pedal. The latest recall involves 2009-10 RAV4 crossovers, 2009-10 Corollas, 2009-10 Matrix hatchbacks, 2005-10 Avalons, 2007-10 Camrys, 2010 Highlander crossovers, 2007-10 Tundra pickups and 2008-10 Sequoia SUVs.

Meanwhile, officials from the federal government have determined that the majority of the accelerator pedals involved in these recalls have been manufactured by a company called CTS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana. Apparently, CTS manufactures accelerator pedals for a number of automakers, so federal officials are trying to determine whether recalls need to be ordered as to these other companies as well.

Locally, officials at David Maus Toyota announced that their mechanics and technicians were hurriedly receiving training from Toyota factory technicians so that the new parts could be installed as quickly as possible. Once the local technicians and mechanics are properly trained, David Maus Toyota will reportedly keep its service department open 24 hour-a-day until all affected vehicles have been serviced.

News of the product recall has not been kind to sales of Toyota vehicles. Toyota has halted vehicle production in several of its factories. Toyota's overall vehicle sales have dropped nearly 16% in the last year, while Ford and GM reported sales increases of 24.4% and 14.6%, respectively.

Perhaps making matters worse, as this newsletter goes to press, reports are multiplying that there may be problems with the braking systems on the very popular Toyota Prius hybrid. Toyota is purportedly looking into these reports at this time.

What to do if you are a Toyota driver? First, check the Internet to see if you are driving one of the affected cars. Second, if you have any doubt that your accelerator is sticking in any way, take your vehicle immediately to your nearest Toyota dealer. If you find yourself on the road with an accelerator problem hit the brake pedal hard and hold it. Don't start pumping or pounding on the brakes. That negates the vacuum assist and makes the brakes less effective. After hitting the brakes, shift the transmission into neutral. After getting the engine into neutral, pull safely off the road, turn off the car and park it. If you have any questions about your legal rights, call us or e-mail me at kcullen@cullen-law.com.

Insurance doctors finding job tougher

In Orange County, balance is being brought to the world of so-called "independent" medical examinations requested by insurance companies and their lawyers. As many of our current and former clients know, insurance companies and their lawyers have the right to order injured people to be evaluated by doctors of the companies' choosing. One famous (or infamous) local doctor has admitted under oath that he is paid approximately \$800,000.00 each year to do evaluations for insurance companies.

Recently, a couple of Circuit Court Judges have adopted a written set of guidelines pertaining to these examinations. For example, under the new guidelines the insurance company can no longer insist that our injured clients carry a pile of their own medical records with them to the examination. Similarly, the new guidelines limit the kind of questions that the insurance company doctor can ask during the examination. Before the guidelines, the

insurance company doctors would many times use an examination as a second chance to take the injured person's deposition. The injured person would oftentimes face questions about who caused the accident, when they first retained an attorney, and the circumstances under which they selected their attorney. Under the guidelines these kinds of questions are no longer allowed.

Another example is the limitation placed upon the examining doctor's waiting room. Under the new guidelines, our clients cannot be made to wait more than 30 minutes in the waiting room.

The judges' new guidelines were only issued in November 2009, so it will be interesting to see how the insurance companies will react. Nevertheless, it is a great step in the right direction. If you are curious and would like to receive a copy of the guidelines, please do not hesitate to e-mail me at kcullen@cullen-law.com.

LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE LAW

Saudi Sheiks Soon In Panic Mode

Tired of gas prices escalating at a rapid pace and coming down much slower?

Here's a good answer for that problem.

Nissan is releasing the first mass-produced fully electric car later this year. It is actually out now in some sections of the country and will be in full swing by 2012.

Initial concerns about safety have been addressed with the battery being housed under the seats in the mid section of the car.

The battery is expected to last 5 years before needing replacement. Maintenance should be a breeze since the vehicle has no transmission, motor, or significant moving parts to replace.

Charging/fueling at the house will be accomplished with a 220 line, the same one a clothes dryer uses. Full charging will take 8 hours -- you do sleep at night, don't you? The charging station is weather proof for those soggy Florida days. A quick charging system now in development will charge to 80% capacity in 26 minutes.

This is a 5 passenger vehicle with acceleration similar to a V-6. It has 100% torque at ZERO rpm. Top speed is 90 mph - fast

enough for the I-4 crowd! On a full charge, the Nissan Leaf will travel approximately 100 miles.

Now the clincher, costs are expected to be in line with any similar sized passenger vehicle. It will be interesting to see what kind of splash the Nissan Leaf makes.



Many of you know that our Case Manager, Terry McCamie, loves cars. I have asked Terry to contribute to the newsletter with an article each month having something to do with cars, driving, safety or automotive technology. This is his first one. I feel like we should give Terry's column a formal title, but I can't figure one out. If you have a good idea, please e-mail me at kcullen@cullen-law.com.

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