

The Road To Justice Starts Here

Exclusively Representing Women in Divorce, Custody and Support Matters and the Injured through No Fault of Their Own.

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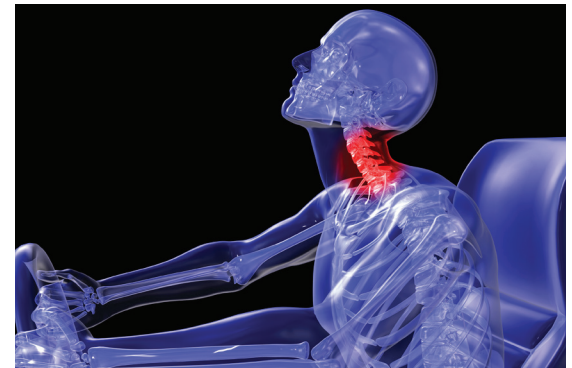
Car wrecks can wreak havoc on the human body, especially in the case of more vulnerable areas such as the neck.

The neck consists of the top seven vertebrae of the spine, along with soft tissues—muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves (which generally affect the shoulders, arms, and hands), and blood vessels. Between each vertebrae is a spongy disc that provides flexibility and shock absorption for the spine as we go about our daily activities.

The bones of the cervical spine are small and thin, support the head—no small feat, as the average head weighs 15 pounds—and receive limited muscle support. All told, this renders the neck vulnerable to sudden, strong movements (whiplash) that jar the cervical spine, causing injury.

Common neck injuries caused by car accidents include:

- **Neck sprain**, stretching or tearing of neck ligaments.
- **Neck strain**, stretching or tearing of neck muscles.
- **Pinched nerves** (cervical radiculopathy)



may occur due to bone spurs or herniated discs applying pressure to a nerve, resulting in pain, numbness, or weakness in the shoulders, arms, and/or hands.

- A **herniated disc** may crop up when a disc has been subject to too much pressure. The jelly-like material inside the disc emerges from the rupture and can press against spinal nerves, causing pain, weakness, or numbness. The disc obviously loses its cushioning capability as well.

Other symptoms of a cervical injury include headaches, reduced range of motion, muscle spasms, and sluggish reflexes in the arms and hands.

If you've incurred a neck injury due to the actions of a negligent driver, contact an auto accident attorney to protect your rights. ■



challenging a DRUG-POSSESSION CHARGE

By Matthew Sullivan, Esq.

If a person is charged with possession of illegal drugs, their attorney may seek to challenge the prosecution on one or more grounds: refuting the stated facts, testimony, or evidence; zeroing in on procedural missteps; or pressuring the prosecution to provide all necessary evidence at trial.

A defendant has the right to due process of law, including search-and-seizure protocol that is carried out properly. For example, if drugs were spotted “in plain view” in their car, they can be used as evidence. If a trunk was pried open without the defendant’s consent, that’s another matter altogether.

A defendant can also claim they hadn’t the foggiest idea that the drugs were in their residence or vehicle, and that the drugs must be someone else’s. A skilled defense attorney can put the squeeze on the prosecution to prove “ownership.”

An experienced defense attorney will force prosecutors to produce, in court, the actual drugs involved in the case. This isn’t always a lock, as drugs are often transferred a number of times before reaching the evidence locker. If they can’t be produced, the case may be dismissed. The prosecution must also be able to prove that the seized drugs have been checked out identity-wise, which means crime-lab analysis and analyst testimony.

Other less common defenses include entrapment, which is extremely difficult to prove; planting of drugs – equally problematic; and medical marijuana use, which may become more prominent as more states legalize it.

A charge of drug possession is serious but not hopeless. A good defense attorney in your corner could make all the difference.

Matthew Sullivan is an experienced criminal defense attorney representing clients throughout the Bay Area and Northern California. You can reach the Law Offices of Matthew Sullivan at 415-879-1256. ■

FAMILY DISPUTES AND cyberstalking

Family disputes and divorce proceedings sometimes involve substantial financial assets and/or complex child-custody issues. If



relationships have soured to the point of all-out acrimony, some parties may wield technology and social media—including e-mails, text messages, Facebook, and Twitter—in an effort to intimidate, frighten, and cause emotional distress from afar. Harassment tactics may include the spread of malicious information via the internet, the creation of bogus accounts to dispense or post slanderous material, and ad hominem written attacks carried out in chat rooms or other social sites.

But victims have at their disposal a legal provision extended through the courts to curtail cyberstalking and harassment – a “non-molestation order.” This injunction shelters the victim from direct cyber-harassment, abuse, and threats of violence (or actual physical violence) from an “associated person”—in essence an electronic restraining order. An “associated person” includes family members, extended family members, in-laws, stepfamily members, as well as cohabiting couples and couples who no longer live together and may have had children together. Disobeying a non-molestation order is an arrestable offense, with penalties ranging up to five years in prison.

The courts consider a host of factors when determining whether a non-molestation order should be issued, in particular the health, safety, and well-being of the victim. Anyone who is harassed by a cyberstalker should keep accurate and comprehensive records of the events to present to the court.

If you are the victim of cyberstalking, contact a family law attorney to protect your rights. ■

Paul's hike of the month

This month instead of a recipe of the month I am telling you about a phenomenal hike I recently completed in Marin County with my two dogs, both rescues. Lucy is the brown and white pit bull we rescued from Animal Care and Control in Contra Costa and Vinnie is the black and white Heinz 57 (god only knows what his breed makeup is).

We hiked Cataract Trail near Mt. Tam. This is a beautiful hike with waterfalls and picnic benches at the top.

Dogs on leash are permitted on the hike. Enjoy!

I'll be back next month with a new recipe.

Distance, category, and difficulty:

This 2.6 mile out and back hike is short but moderate.

Trailhead elevation is about 680 feet. The trail climbs to about 1100 feet in 0.5 mile, then continues to a high point of about 1400 feet in another 0.8 mile. Some sections, mostly sets of steps, are very steep, and both trails and stairs can be slippery when wet. A trekking pole is a good accessory any time of the year,

particularly if you've got troublesome hips or knees.

Getting there:

- From US 101 in Marin County, exit San Anselmo/Sir Francis Drake. Drive about 5 miles west on Sir Francis Drake to the town of Fairfax. Turn left on Pastori, right on Broadway, and left onto Bolinas Road. Drive about 8 miles (on the way the road becomes Fairfax-Bolinas Road), to a small roadside parking area immediately before a sharp hairpin curve to the right (a short distance past Alpine Dam). The nearest mileage marker is 8.13.
- From US 101 in Marin County, exit Mill Valley/Stinson Beach. Drive on Shoreline Highway to the junction with Almonte, about 1 mile (a bit less if you've exited southbound). Turn left and drive about 2.5 miles to the junction with Panoramic Highway. Turn right onto Panoramic and drive about 1 mile to the junction with Muir Woods Road; continue straight (right lane) to stay on Panoramic. Drive about 4 miles to the junction with Pantoll Road, then turn right onto Pantoll and drive 1.5 miles to the junction of East and West Ridgecrest. Turn left and continue about 3.7 miles on West Ridgecrest to the junction with Fairfax-Bolinas Road. Turn right and drive downhill on Fairfax-Bolinas Road about 2.2 miles, to a small roadside parking area immediately after a sharp hairpin curve to the left. The nearest mileage marker is 8.13. ■



June 2014 Important Dates

June 15 – Father's Day

June 14 – Flag Day

June 1 – Atlantic Hurricane Season Begins

June 21 – First Day of Summer

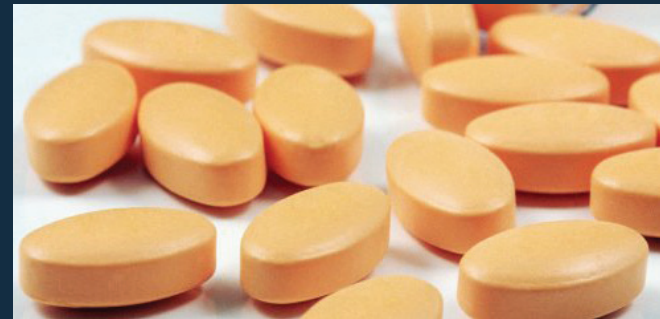
have you heard?

Scientists at California-based Gilead Sciences Inc. have developed a daily-dose pill that is being hailed as a breakthrough cure for hepatitis C, the liver-destroying disease that affects more than 3 million Americans.

The drug, Sovaldi, has cured about 90 percent of patients in just 12 weeks during national trials while producing far fewer side effects than the traditional yearlong treatment regimen of pills and injections that has been used since the early 1990s.

One drawback—cost. Sovaldi currently runs at \$1,000 per pill, or \$84,000 for a 12-week supply. Private and government insurers are still trying to figure out coverage levels and criteria for the drug, a process that could take until the end of the year.

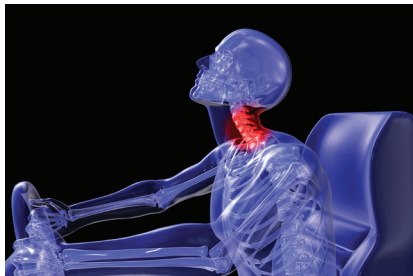
Chronic hepatitis C causes between 8,000 - 15,000 deaths per year in the U.S. ■





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anatomy of an AUTO CRASH NECK INJURY



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This publication is intended to educate the general public about personal injury, medical malpractice, and other issues. It is for information purposes only and is not intended to be legal advice. Prior to acting on any information contained here, you should seek and retain competent counsel. The information in this newsletter may be freely copied and distributed as long as the newsletter is copied in its entirety.

dog bites and owner liability

In the United States, nearly 800,000 people sustain dog bites each year that require medical attention. Laws that determine liability in dog-bite cases vary from state to state, but essentially come down to two sets of laws: “one bite” laws and “strict liability” laws.

Under one-bite laws, the key point is determining whether the owner knew or should have known that their dog would bite, and if proper precautions were taken based on that knowledge. If the owner had no reason to believe their dog would sink its teeth into someone, they may be off the hook (i.e., their dog was granted one free bite). Otherwise, they are likely liable.

The breed of dog, neighbors’ eyewitness accounts of the dog’s behavior and the owner’s treatment of the dog, and restraint measures utilized, among other factors, may be taken into consideration.

Strict liability laws make determining liability much more clear-cut and favorable to the plaintiff. A dog owner is liable for any dog-bite injuries if the plaintiff was legally allowed to be where he/she was when the bite occurred, and did not provoke the dog. Strict liability laws may vary a bit from state to state.

A dog owner found liable may be responsible for the plaintiff’s medical bills, lost time from work, and pain and suffering. Measures must also be taken to prevent a recurrence, including possibly destroying the dog.

If you have been the victim of a dog bite, contact a personal injury attorney to safeguard your rights. ■



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