



It's time again for the annual 'Stella Awards'! For those unfamiliar with these awards, they are named after 81-year-old Stella Liebeck who spilled hot coffee on herself and successfully sued the McDonald's in New Mexico, where she purchased it. You remember, she took the lid off the coffee and put it between her knees while she was driving. Who would ever think one could get burned doing that, right?

That's right; these are awards for the most outlandish lawsuits and verdicts in the U.S. You know, the kinds of cases that make you scratch your head. So keep your head scratcher handy.

Here are the Stellas for this year:

SEVENTH PLACE

Kathleen Robertson of Austin, Texas was awarded \$80,000 by a jury of her peers after breaking her ankle tripping over a toddler who was running inside a furniture store. The store owners were understandably surprised by the verdict, considering the running toddler was her own son.

SIXTH PLACE

Carl Truman, 19, of Los Angeles, California won \$74,000 plus medical expenses when his neighbor ran over his hand with a Honda Accord. Truman apparently didn't notice there was some-

THE STELLA AWARDS

Submitted by Trader Dick

one at the wheel of the car when he was trying to steal his neighbor's hubcaps.

FIFTH PLACE

Terrence Dickson, of Bristol, Pennsylvania, who was leaving a house he had just burglarized by way of the garage. Unfortunately for Dickson, the automatic garage door opener malfunctioned and he could not get the garage door to open. Worse, he couldn't re-enter the house because the door connecting the garage to the house locked when Dickson pulled it shut. Forced to sit for eight, count 'em, EIGHT days and survive on a case of Pepsi and a large bag of dry dog food, he sued the homeowner's insurance company claiming undue mental anguish.

Amazingly, the jury said the insurance company must pay Dickson \$500,000 for his anguish. We should all have this kind of anguish!

FOURTH PLACE

Jerry Williams, of Little Rock, Arkansas, garnered 4th Place in the Stella's when he was awarded \$14,500 plus medical expenses after being bitten on the butt by his next door neighbor's beagle - even though the beagle was on a chain in its owner's fenced yard.

Williams did not get as much as he asked for because the jury believed the beagle might have been provoked at the time of the butt bite because Williams had climbed over the fence into the yard and repeatedly shot the dog with a pellet gun.

THIRD PLACE

Amber Carson of Lancaster, Pennsylvania because a

jury ordered a Philadelphia restaurant to pay her \$113,500 after she slipped on a spilled soft drink and broke her tailbone. The reason the soft drink was on the floor: Ms. Carson had thrown it at her boyfriend 30 seconds earlier during an argument.

SECOND PLACE

Kara Walton, of Claymont, Delaware sued the owner of a night club in a nearby city because she fell from the bathroom window to the floor, knocking out her two front teeth.

Even though Ms. Walton was trying to sneak through the ladies room window to avoid paying the \$3.50 cover charge, the jury said the night club had to pay her \$12,000... oh, yeah, plus dental expenses. Go figure.

Ok. Here we go!!

FIRST PLACE

This year's runaway First Place Stella Award winner was: Mrs. Merv Grazinski, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who purchased a new 32-foot Winnebago motor home. On her first trip home, from an OU football game, having driven on to the freeway, she set the cruise control at 70 mph and calmly left the driver's seat to go to the back of the Winnebago to make herself a sandwich. Not surprisingly, the motor home left the freeway, crashed and overturned.

Also not surprisingly, Mrs. Grazinski sued Winnebago for not putting in the owner's manual that she couldn't actually leave the driver's seat while the cruise control was set. The Oklahoma jury awarded her \$1,750,000 PLUS a new motor home.

While most of the Stella cases are for real, there are reports of the Winnebago one above being an Urban Legend. We're not sure; it's good entertainment either way. Here are some other frivolous lawsuits from legalzoom.com.

In 1992, 23-year-old Karen Norman accidentally backed her car into Galveston Bay after a night of drinking. Norman couldn't operate her seat belt and drowned. Her passenger managed to disengage herself and make it to shore. Norman's parents sued Honda for making a seat belt their drunken daughter (her blood alcohol level was 17 - nearly twice the legal limit) couldn't open underwater. A jury found Honda seventy-five percent responsible for Karen's death and awarded the Norman family \$65 million. An appeals court threw out the case.

In May 2003, Stephen Joseph of San Francisco sued Kraft Foods for putting trans-fat in their Oreo cookies. Joseph wanted an injunction to order Kraft to stop selling Oreos to children. Once the media caught wind of his lawsuit, the media blitz became too much for him to handle. He dropped the suit.

In 1991, Richard Harris sued Anheiser-Busch for \$10,000 for false advertising. Harris claimed to suffer from emotional distress in addition to mental and physical injury. Why? Because when he drank beer, he didn't have any luck with the ladies, as promised in the TV ads. Harris also didn't like that he got sick sometimes after he drank. The case was thrown out of court.

In 1996, Florida physical therapist Paul Shimkonis sued his local nudie bar claiming whiplash from a lap dancer's large breasts. Shimkonis felt he suffered physical harm and mental anguish from the breasts, which he claimed felt like "cement blocks" hitting him. Shimkonis sought justice in the amount of \$15,000, which was denied.

Palm trees wave, are you listenin'?

In the pool, water's glistenin',

A beautiful sight, we're happy tonight

Livin' in a FLORIDA Wonderland.

Gone away is the blizzard.

Here to stay is the lizard,

A warm sunny day, we like it that way,

Livin' in a FLORIDA Wonderland.

On the beach we will have a picnic.

Turtles, sand and seagulls and the sun.

Christmas dinner is an old tradition,

It's Grouper and Stone Crabs by the ton

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As temperatures rise, even higher,

A warm sunny day, we like it that way,

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3RG • 1-6 pm
Locals Favorite

Sunday, Dec. 13
ECLIPSE • 1-6 pm
Classic rock dance band

Sunday, Dec. 20
MR. NICE GUY • 1-6 pm
Staff Favorite

Sunday, Dec. 27
THE FLYERS • 1-6 pm
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Join us for
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(Not a raffle, everyone has
the same chance of winning.)

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Free Favors &
Champagne Toast
at Midnight

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

JACK SNIPES

PHOTO: THAD BOWLING

Jack Snipes ("Big Dick") passed away in October at age 72, but his legend lives on. There will be a memorial and celebration of life on **Sunday December 13th** at the Lorelei Restaurant in Islamorada from noon to 4 and at Woody's from 5 to 9.

Check this out - in December

1/2 Price Appetizers*

TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS

December 1, 2, 8 & 9 from 4-7pm

* Excluding Stone Crabs and Raw Bar items.
Limited time only, while supplies last, not valid with other discounts.

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Friday, December 4th, 7-11 pm
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