

Electronic Newsletter

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The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC

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Greetings!

Best wishes to you and your family for a happy, healthy and safe holiday season, and a great New Year.

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The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck Sues Norwich Physicians for Death of Nursing Home Patient

[Attorney Scott D. Camassar](#) has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Norwich Internal Medicine & Multispecialty Care LLC and three of its member physicians on account of the death of 87-year-old Jennie C. Woodruff, who died on June 28, 2007 following a heart attack.

Ms. Woodruff, who suffered from kidney disease and was at risk for heart conditions, was admitted to Haven Health Center of Jewett City for physical therapy and rehabilitation on June 10, 2007. During the course of her stay at the nursing home, Ms. Woodruff developed chest pain, which became progressively worse. By June 17th, she was complaining of epigastric pain and related symptoms. Her complaints continued over the next 10 days as her pain increased despite being treated for indigestion, nausea, and stomach upset. On June 27th, Ms. Woodruff's son took her to Backus Hospital in Norwich, where tests determined that she had suffered a heart attack. She died the next day, her death attributed to cardiopulmonary arrest due to myocardial infarction (heart attack).

According to the expert retained by the [Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck](#), Mrs. Woodruff's complaints were typical heart symptoms in older patients suffering from an acute cardiac event, and the physicians caring for Mrs. Woodruff failed to recognize these well known symptoms of heart dysfunction. By the time her complaints of epigastric (chest) pain intensified, "a diagnosis of coronary insufficiency should have been considered, at which time reasonable standards of care would have required at least a new electrocardiogram and a troponin level [test]. Had that standard been followed, it is more likely than not that Mrs. Woodruff would have been transferred much earlier to Backus, where intervention would, more likely than not, have saved her life." By failing to provide her with adequate diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, "Mrs. Woodruff experienced a premature death."

National Standards Discourage Human Target Games in Gym Class

Games Like "Everybody's It" Easily Get Out of Control

A recent [article in the Day](#) about a Waterford boy who was seriously injured in gym class inaccurately characterized the game in question as one of "tag", implying the benign game we all recall from childhood. Instead, the game in which young Zachary Cash was injured was called "Everybody's It Tag", which is essentially a free-for-all in which students are allowed to run around in a chaotic atmosphere of hitting and shoving, hardly an appropriate activity for "physical education" class. Physical education is supposed to involve activities that are developmentally and instructionally appropriate, teaching useful skills that help to promote a healthy and physically active lifestyle. "Everybody's It Tag" is just another human target game that allows and even encourages aggressive behaviors toward other students in the class, which is why physical education experts and national [standards](#) have discouraged such games for decades.

There is a difference between physical activity and physical education. Allowing middle schoolers to run around like idiots is not educational--it's an invitation to a foreseeable and preventable injury.

Some Retailers To Offer Alternatives to "Clamshell" Packaging

Inability to Open Packages Leads to "Wrap Rage"



A number of retailers and manufacturers, including Amazon.com, Sony, Microsoft, and Best Buy, will begin offering "product packaging that will not result in lacerations and stab wounds." The companies "have

Attorney Spotlight



Attorney Scott D. Camassar has filed a wrongful death lawsuit against three Norwich physicians on account of the death of an 87-year-old patient. "We want to make nursing homes safe for those who need to be there."



New Report on RI Elder Abuse

Report is First to Focus on Abuse of Older Women

A new [study](#) of domestic abuse of older women in Rhode Island, the first statewide study of its kind, indicates women in their 50s are more likely than older females to be abused by spouses or other partners, while women over 60 are most often abused by their grown children and grandchildren. Researchers also found that out of hundreds of cases of domestic abuse reported each year, many never go to court, and even the few prosecuted rarely receive prison time. Read [more](#).

Note to Self: Gift Cards Worthless if Company Goes Bankrupt



When a retailer files for bankruptcy protection, the consumer is considered an unsecured creditor in the bankruptcy, which means the store's gift cards have no value. Bankruptcy filings in retail tend to peak in January. "So if you do get a gift card for the holidays, use it as quickly as possible." Read [more](#).

Toxins in U.S.-Made Toys

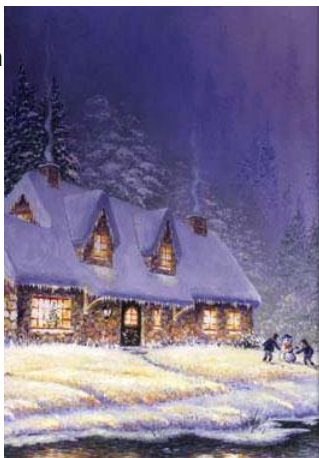
Healthy Toys, a Michigan nonprofit group, reports that 1/3 of the toys tested were found to have significant levels of toxic chemicals. "While products made in China were often found to have higher lead levels than those made elsewhere, a toy's "Made in the USA" status was no guarantee that it was lead-free." Read [more](#).

begun to create alternatives to the infuriating plastic 'clamshell' packages and cruelly complex twist ties that make products like electronics and toys almost impossible for mere mortals to open without power tools." According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, "impregnable packaging" sends about 6,000 Americans each year to emergency rooms with "injuries caused by trying to pry, stab and cut open their purchases." Read [more](#).

CPSC Gift-Buying Recommendations

The [CPSC](#) guidelines warn parents and other gift-givers to stay away from toys and other items that fall in five categories: riding toys, small balls and toys with small parts, balloons, playthings with small magnets, and battery chargers and adapters.

The CPSC attributes the majority of kids' deaths to be "the result of airway obstructions caused by swallowing small toys, drownings that resulted from children falling into swimming pools while riding on toys, and injuries after being struck by motor vehicles while riding toys." According to the CPSC's own estimates, "170,100 children under the age of 15 were treated in emergency rooms for toy-related injuries," in 2007, and "there were 232,900 toy-related injuries among all ages."



To read about recent recalls and product safety news from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, click [here](#).

Obama Likely to Enhance Consumer and Worker Safety Regulations

President-elect Barack Obama has indicated that his administration will beef up regulations at federal agencies that oversee consumer products, environmental policy and workplace safety. In addition to naming people to his transition team, "Obama has indicated in a series of pre-election letters to a big federal employee union that he intends to take a more pro-union approach on labor questions than his predecessor, and give agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency more money." Obama's team is reportedly looking at a number of "activists and advocates" to lead agencies such as Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). "The new administration has said it favors doubling of the [CPSC's] budget, a streamlining of the nation's product-recall system that reduces companies' say in the process, and higher fines for safety violations." Read [more](#).

Soldiers, Agents Hurt by Faulty Grenades



FBI agents and soldiers in Iraq have been injured by defective "flash-bang" grenades made by Pyrotechnic Specialties, Inc., based in Byron, GA. Flash-bang grenades, nonlethal weapons that emit a bright flash and deafening bang, are used to shock and disorient criminal suspects or enemy fighters in combat situations. Earlier this year, PSI, its chief operating officer, David Karlson, and three other defendants were indicted in federal court for fraud, conspiracy and money laundering.

According to the indictment, PSI had a \$15 million contract to supply flash-bang grenades to the military before it supplied them to the FBI. The company allegedly knew its flash-bang grenades were defective and even knew how to fix them, at a nominal cost of just \$3.72 per unit. Instead, according to the indictment, many of the defective grenades used by the military were simply relabeled and then sold to the FBI and other local law enforcement agencies.

Dean Wagner (pictured above), a master sergeant in the Army, was just days away from finishing his second tour in Iraq when he was severely injured by an exploding flash bang. His injuries were so severe that his right hand was amputated.

Read [more](#).

Local Business Sees Run On Natural Baby Products



Still concerned about lead paint in your babies' toys? Or harmful BPA in plastics? Or other dangerous products for babies and kids? You're not alone. [Papoose](#), the maternity, babies and kids store in Norwich, CT says business is booming because they have the products parents want, including an array of natural toys and products for your family. Check out their website and extensive on-line [store](#).

International Community to Address Consumer Safety

China and the European Union last month signed an agreement to better cooperate on consumer safety following scares involving contaminated Chinese milk and dangerous toys. Their agreement follows a pledge between U.S. and Chinese officials to work together as well. After the agreement was signed, consumer affairs officials from China and the EU were joined by Nancy A. Nord, head of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, to consider further three-way cooperation, including possible common safety standards for toys.



"Superbugs" Resistant to All Antibiotics

The latest so-called "superbugs" are gram-negative bacteria, which means they fail to pick up the dye in a Gram's stain test (gram-positive organisms, which include Streptococcus and Staphylococcus, have a different cellular structure). While the most well known superbug, *Staphylococcus aureus*, can be treated with antibiotics, there are no known treatments for gram-negative bacteria such as *Klebsiella pneumoniae*. Read [more](#) about this major public health threat.

Barcode Medication Systems Less Effective Than Hoped

New [research](#) suggests that the use of bar codes to identify medications in hospitals may not prevent errors as was intended. Problems in implementing the bar code systems have often caused nurses to create shortcuts,



Baby With Rare Disease Needs Your Help

Matthew is an 18 month old boy from Avon, CT who was born with [Menkes Disease](#), a rare neurological degenerative disease afflicting only one in 300,000 children. He is currently "beating the odds" and is smiling, laughing, and thriving. To extend his life expectancy as well as quality, he is to undergo an experimental treatment on January 10, 2009. Please consider what your small donation could do for this young boy and his family, who are faced with exorbitant costs for expensive treatment, medicines, therapies, and travel for Menkes research. If you would like to make a donation, please send it to:



MATTHEW COLE YOUNG
C/O THE SIMSBURY BANK
27 Dale Road
PO Box 819
Avon, CT 06001

On behalf of Matthew and his family, thanks for your generosity, thoughts, and prayers.

Seasonal Work Hazard



Bad Behavior Blamed For Medical Mistakes

Surveys not only show that hospital staff members "blame badly behaved doctors for low morale, stress and high turnover." Now, "recent studies suggest that such behavior contributes to medical mistakes, preventable complications and even death."

One survey of health care workers found that 67% thought there was a link between disruptive behavior and medical mistakes, and 18% said they knew of a mistake that occurred because of an "obnoxious doctor." Another survey showed that 40% of hospital staff members reported having been "so intimidated by a doctor that they did not share their concerns about orders for medication that appeared to be incorrect. As a result, 7% said they contributed to a medication error." Dr. Peter B. Angood, chief patient safety officer at the Joint Commission, the nation's leading independent hospital accreditation agency, said that "a hostile environment erodes cooperation and a sense of commitment to high-quality care," which "increases the risk of medical errors." Read [more](#).

Surgeons' Experience Linked to Success of Heart Pumps

A study by Duke University researchers, published online in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#), indicates 52% of

decreasing the effectiveness of the safeguards.

Baucus Releases Paper on Healthcare



Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, describes his vision for healthcare reform in a recently released paper called *Call to Action: Health Reform 2009*. Get the report [here](#).

Spending by Business Lobbyists Increases



The Center for Responsive Politics expects that spending on lobbying will be about \$3.2 billion for all of 2008, up 13% from the \$2.83 billion spent in 2007. This projection was based on a recently completed analysis of third quarter lobbying forms, which are required to be filed with Congress. According to the Center's analysis, "the top spending organization this year so far is the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which has spent \$57.9 million on lobbying." The Chamber is a staunch anti-plaintiff group. Read [more](#).

72 Vehicles Win 2009 Top Safety Pick



The [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#) has announced the winners of its Top Safety Pick award for 2009. Get the report [here](#).



All Who Hate Lawyers, Raise Your Right Hand

the people given mechanical heart pumps designed to avoid transplant surgery died within a year. "At hospitals installing at least five pumps a year, the risk of death dropped 31 percent," suggesting survival rates improve with physicians' practice. "The devices have great promise but are being used too often in the wrong patients and at the wrong hospitals -- in people who are too sick to benefit, and at hospitals that do not treat enough patients to gain the expertise needed for their complex care." Read [more](#).



"I will not rest until every German sees that it is a shameful thing to be a lawyer." -- Adolph Hitler

Anti-Lawyer Food Industry Group Suggests Christmas Cookie Waiver

Protect Yourself From An "Obesity Lawsuit" by Santa



[The Center for Consumer Freedom](#) believes leaving a plate of cookies for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve could expose you to a lawsuit. "In today's era of frivolous lawsuits, serving the already obese Saint Nick baked goods could put you on the receiving end of a devastating lawsuit if he has a trial lawyer elf on retainer." So the good folks at the CFF suggest leaving Santa a "[Christmas Cookie Liability and Indemnification Agreement](#)." By signing, Claus agrees not to sue for failing to provide him with nutrition information and a list of ingredients; failing to warn him of the potential for overeating; failing to offer "healthier" cookie alternatives; failing to warn him that cookies may be habit-forming and/or irresistible; or failing to notify him that eating too many cookies may lead to even greater levels of obesity.

Our legal system may not be perfect, but it's the best one out there. As trial lawyers, we are committed to upholding the rule of law, fairness and accountability, and giving a voice to those who otherwise might not be heard. We think lawyers play a vital role in society. Dictators don't.



Freedom Isn't Free



George Washington's Christmas Eve Crossing of the Delaware River

America's military has always been willing to sacrifice for the common good, even during the holidays. [The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck](#) salutes the men and women of our armed forces helping to keep America safe and free. Thank you.

Proudly Serving Connecticut and Rhode Island

The trial attorneys at The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck, LLC represent individuals in all types of personal injury cases throughout the state of Connecticut and the state of Rhode Island, including, in Connecticut: New London County, New Haven County, Middlesex County, Hartford County, Tolland County, and Windham County; and in Rhode Island: Bristol County, Kent County, Newport County, Providence County, and Washington County.

Referrals Welcome



About Our Firm

At [The Law Firm of Stephen M. Reck](#), justice is our mission. Our firm is well known and well respected for its ability to handle personal injury, wrongful death, and professional malpractice cases in Connecticut and Rhode Island. Call us today or visit us on the web at www.stephenreck.com.

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