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AGGRESSIVE, ETHICAL REPRESENTATION FOR OVER 30 YEARS

# Too Close for Comfort

If you get rear-ended by another vehicle while driving, there's a one-out-of-three chance that tailgating was the reason, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Simply put, tailgating is the act of driving too closely behind a vehicle. The ability to react quickly enough to changes in traffic or abrupt circumstances becomes increasingly difficult—and dangerous.

Some drivers are simply oblivious to unsafe following distances. Others drive while distracted or impaired. Impatient, aggressive, or angry drivers may tailgate to try to compel you to change lanes or pick up the pace, or simply to intimidate. When safe to do so, get out of their way. Don't escalate the situation by purposely slowing down or "gesturing."

The "two-second rule" is generally recommended as the bare minimum safe following distance in optimum driving conditions. However, larger vehicles have longer stopping distances; everyone's reflexes are different; and inclement weather changes everything. A larger cushion is even more prudent.

Yes, in heavy multilane traffic, when you follow at a safe distance, it's practically an invitation to others to squeeze in front of you. Just bite the bullet and readjust. In the long run, any time you lose will be minimal.

In most tailgating accidents, the tailgater will be deemed at fault. However, in comparative-negligence states, a certain portion of liability might be assigned to the struck driver. For instance, if the car in front did not have functioning brake lights, its driver may be found 20 percent at fault for the accident, thus reducing their recovery by 20 percent.

If you are injured by a tailgater, contact an auto accident attorney to protect your rights. •





# Twice Baked Sweet Potatoes

Here's a healthier take on a warm, savory dish. Try it at your Thanksgiving table!

## INGREDIENTS

- 8 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 Tbsp. canola or sunflower oil
- ½ c. finely grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1/3 c. sour cream
- 2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground pepper
- ½ tsp. freshly grated or ground nutmeg
- Fried baby kale leaves for garnish, optional (other greens or herbs are fine)

## PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a large-rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Prick sweet potatoes in 3-4 spots with a fork. Rub them with oil and place on the baking sheet. Roast 45-60 minutes, until tender. Let them cool until they can be handled.
- Increase oven to 450 degrees F.
- Slice each sweet potato in half (horizontally) and scoop the flesh into a large bowl, leaving a ¼-inch border in the skins. Place the 12 best skins back on the baking sheet. Save or discard the remaining 4 skins. •



## November 2019 Notable Dates

**November 1** – National Cook for Your Pets Day    **November 6** – Saxophone Day

**November 11** – National Sundae Day    **November 13** – World Kindness Day

**November 15** – National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day    **November 21** – Great American Smokeout

**November 23** – National Eat a Cranberry Day    **November 30** – Small Business Saturday



## College Students and 'Blackout Wednesday'

Within the past decade, the night before Thanksgiving has come to be known as "Blackout Wednesday" (also "Drinksgiving"). In what has become a revered tradition, many college students return home for the holiday weekend, get together with hometown friends, and binge drink the night away. Recent statistics indicate that Thanksgiving Eve drinking has surpassed that of New Year's Eve and St. Patrick's Day.

With that comes a deadly surge of alcohol-related auto accidents. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, from 2012 through 2016 the Thanksgiving break produced more fatal auto crashes than any other holiday.

Blackout Wednesday kicks off the most dangerous stretch of the year for motorists—through New Year's Day. Impaired drivers, the sheer volume of holiday traffic, unpredictable weather, and deer on the move are all major contributors.

Young adults (and older ones, too) face serious consequences for DUI offenses, whether or not anyone was injured. Court costs, fines, loss of driver's license, license reinstatement fees, a hike in car insurance, potential civil damages, and possible jail time may be in store—perhaps emotional scars down the road as well. Community service and required alcohol/drug programs may put the squeeze on students trying to keep pace in the classroom.

For those who are going to imbibe anyway on Thanksgiving Eve, eat something before consuming alcohol; down a glass of water between drinks to stay hydrated (alcohol has a dehydrating effect); and utilize a designated driver, taxi, rideshare service, or public transportation.

If you or a family member is harmed by a negligent driver over the holiday season, contact an auto accident attorney to protect your rights. •



# The Disputed Election of 1876

In the 1876 presidential election, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden of New York ran against Republican Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio in a hotly contested affair. In the popular vote, Tilden outpaced Hayes by nearly 250,000 votes; however, he was one electoral vote shy of victory, pending the results in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina.

The outcomes in all three Republican-controlled states were disputed. The Democrats asserted that Republican fraud overturned Democrat majorities in each state. Republicans countered that many black Republicans had been forcefully blocked from voting. (Following the Civil War, during Reconstruction, federal troops had been deployed throughout the South. Among their responsibilities was enforcing laws regarding newly freed slaves, including the rights of black men to vote and hold political office.)

Each state ended up sending two contradictory certificates of election to Congress.

Congress established an electoral commission in January 1877 to resolve the dispute. After roughly a month of examination, the commission deemed Hayes the victor in each disputed state, giving him the presidency by one electoral vote.

Southern Democrats saw an opportunity to work out an unwritten agreement with Republicans: The Compromise of 1877. They would not attempt to block the congressional vote certifying Hayes' controversial presidential victory (Democrats controlled the House of Representatives; Republicans, the Senate); in exchange, the federal government would withdraw all federal troops from the former Confederacy, a sore spot for old-guard Southern politicians.

However, the compromise did not bode well for blacks in the South, whose newly gained rights were rolled back. They faced violence, intimidation, and state-sanctioned discrimination and segregation (Jim Crow laws) for the next 80+ years, until the breakthrough of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s. •



## Sailing on Beams of Light

This past June, the Planetary Society—a nonprofit space organization—launched LightSail 2, a loaf-of-bread-sized spacecraft that piggybacked its way into space on SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket. Once deployed in Earth's orbit, it successfully unfurled a 340-square-foot solar sail.

Solar sails are composed of gossamer-thin mylar, making them extremely strong and exceedingly light—critical elements in carrying out the straightforward idea behind them. The sun is constantly emitting photons. Photons have no mass, but they do possess momentum. As photons bounce off the solar sail's reflective surface, their momentum is transferred to the sail, nudging it and whatever is attached to it away from the sun. No onboard propulsion system is required. Sails can be steered by changing their angle.

In the near-vacuum of space, as more and more photons bounce off the solar sail, the sail will continue to accelerate. The farther a solar sail travels away from the sun, the fewer the photons available to exert their influence. The solar sail won't slow down, but its rate of acceleration will decline.

The ultimate goal is to use solar sails to gulf the vast distances between our solar system and neighboring stars, and transport small probes with them. A plan is also afoot to supplement the sun's photons with ultrapowerful, Earth-based lasers. If all goes well, solar-sail speeds could approach one-fifth the speed of light—roughly 37,000+ miles per second! Our closest star neighbor, Alpha Centauri, would be within reach (approximately 20 years).

The early returns are promising, but it may take a generation before solar sails go interstellar. If plans come to fruition, our immense universe will become a tiny bit smaller. •



Too Close  
for Comfort  
pg 1

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## ‘A Hunting We Will Go’

The fresh air, tranquil surroundings, dazzling autumn scenery, and thrill of the chase make hunting a gratifying experience for millions of hunters nationwide. Although most outings are enjoyed without incident, sometimes things go awry.

Tree stands account for more injuries to hunters each year than guns. According to market research, over 80 percent of deer hunters armed with guns utilize tree stands at least occasionally; deer hunters using bows, 90+ percent. Tree stands offer a broader view and make it easier to avoid detection. However, the elevation lends itself to falls and sometimes-devastating injuries, including fractures, traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord damage, and death.

Human error accounts for a significant percentage of tree-stand falls, but mechanical error is nearly its equal. Stands, straps, and steps/ladders sometimes break, putting hunters at risk. There have been at least 15 tree-stand related recalls since the year 2000.

Property owners who allow hunting on their property generally have a duty to warn hunters about dangerous conditions they are aware of, or should have been aware of—for example, an old well that may be obscured. Failure to do so may render property owners liable for subsequent injuries. Owners are also responsible for the condition of tree stands they install on their property.

All hunters are responsible for identifying their target before firing a weapon. Carelessness or recklessness (sometimes involving alcohol), miscommunication between hunters, and stray bullets from other hunting parties can lead to serious, sometimes fatal, injuries. Weapon defects/misfires can spell trouble as well.

If you suffer a hunting injury due to someone else’s negligence, contact a personal injury or product liability attorney to obtain the compensation you deserve. ●

