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# Remembering a Wild West Icon: Calamity Jane

Few stories of the Old West are complete without a mention of Calamity Jane, a sharpshooter and storyteller famed for her daredevil ways. On the anniversary of this famous Missourian's death on August 1, 1903, her legend is worth remembering.

Calamity Jane was best known for her shooting, heavy drinking, brash manner, and preference for men's attire, as well as a rumored relationship with the legendary frontiersman James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok. Among her reported heroics was saving passengers in an overland stagecoach by diverting a band of pursuing Indians and taking over the reins after the driver was killed.

Less widely known is her legacy of compassion to the sick and needy. During the smallpox epidemic of 1878, Calamity Jane tended to many sufferers with no apparent concern for herself. She also nursed back to health a family stricken by a contagious strain of diphtheria. A journalist of the era called her "generous, giving, kind-hearted, sociable, yet when aroused, has all the daring and courage of a lion or the devil himself."

Born Martha Jane Canary in Princeton, Missouri, on May 1, 1852, Jane was the oldest of six children. After the death of both her parents, she became head of her family in her teens and moved her siblings to Wyoming, where she worked in jobs ranging from dishwasher and dance hall girl to ox-team driver and Army scout. She even reportedly worked as a prostitute.

Separating truth from fiction in Calamity Jane's legend is difficult. Her autobiography is the source of much of the lore surrounding her life, and she was, after all, a storyteller. She claimed to have received her nickname from an Army officer whose life she saved during an Indian uprising. Although her story was challenged by another officer who called Jane



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# A GOOD REMINDER

## Focusing on Empathy So We Don't Lose It

Empathy is important in pretty much all interactions. It is no different in trial practice. I have heard it said that people are tough to dislike up close. Meaning that if you really get to know them and see them, you will understand and like them.

My office has tickets to some Cardinals games. They are great seats. Sometimes, I take my kids with my wife. Last night was one of those nights. As we drove there, we passed a veteran on the side of the road with a sign asking for help. Cardinals fans walked by as we drove by. The heat was still pretty strong in St. Louis at that time.

I didn't think much of the man sitting there as we drove by. About 10 seconds later, my wife looked back and asked, "What's wrong? Are you okay?" to one of the boys. He couldn't speak, and tears streamed down his face. His hat was pulled tightly over his eyes. He was quietly sobbing. I didn't know what to think and thought something was wrong. He kept crying and finally got his breath and said, "No one is helping him. They are just walking by him, and he's just sitting there. Why won't anyone help him?" I am rarely left speechless or without words. I had nothing. I could not say anything that was true or authentic. I had to sit with my son's pain. There was nothing I could do. I still cannot think of something to say that would make him feel better.

I know that in life, there are times when there are no real answers. There are times when you cannot explain what is happening or why. This felt like one of those times. It's a feeling of being adrift and untethered. It's rough.

I thought about that man on the road. Obviously, I still am because I am writing this. I know if we took the time to know him and see him up close, we would like him. We would see him. We would know who he is and how things went this

way for him. But you can only do that when you are free of judgment and arrogance. The temptation to say I would do that differently or he should have done this and he would never be there if he did is a dangerous one. Circumstance has much to do with where you end up. I still believe in making the right choices, but if I am truthful to myself, sometimes the right choice for some is so much easier than for others. I don't know why that is. I wish I did. It is probably one of life's mysteries. I feel strongly that it is because of circumstances and environment.

As my brother once told me when I was younger and made a crass remark about the choices someone had made — he said, "You didn't grow up where he did. You have no idea what it is like for him or what he learned." It stung me. And it hung with me. It still does, decades later. My brother was talking about empathy. Not sympathy. But empathy. Understanding. It is tough.

As a trial lawyer, sometimes I lose my empathy. It is not helpful. Sometimes, I fail to see where a client is coming from. My patience runs thin, and I cut them off to move the conversation along. I dislike that. I've got to see them up close.

As we drove home from the game, I couldn't help but wonder: How do I cultivate that empathy and concern my son showed? How do I instill that into him so he never loses what he has, that he always remembers others like he did this night? The gift of empathy is a powerful one. We should talk more about it. And how to grow it. I, for one, really need it.

*Ch.*





# Exploring the Farmers Market

## ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

This time of year, we harvest fruits and vegetables in abundance, and farmers markets across the country are brimming with locally grown goods. Taking advantage of these wonderful events where local farmers and artisans sell the fruits of their labor is a great way to support local small businesses and explore all your area has to offer. Moreover, it is a perfect opportunity to share some wholesome fun with your family, as there are activities and attractions at farmers markets suitable for all ages.

### Learning Firsthand

Your local farmers are a treasure trove of agricultural know-how. Many farmers will happily talk with you or your children about their favorite crop, what's in season, and their recommendations for recipes that incorporate their produce. It's a great way to grow your kids' social skills and get them interested in gardening and farming.

### Scavenging for Samples

There is no shortage of variety regarding the fruits and vegetables offered at farmers markets. Engaging your family in a scavenger hunt to discover various produce among the local farmers' stands is a great way to broaden their minds and keep them entertained. Plenty of farmers will offer you and your kids samples of their wares, allowing you to try before you buy.

### Homeward Bound

After enjoying the farmers market, you may want to take what you learned home. Starting a small garden and growing starter plants with your kids is a great way to bond and create lasting memories. Growing and caring for plants and vegetables is a wonderful experience for children and helps them connect more with nature. Do yourself and your family a favor: Explore the farmers market and discover the flavor of your local area.

# America's Wackiest Traffic Laws

## Steer Clear of These Oddities on Your Next Road Trip

As you buckle up and hit the road across the U.S., you might want to brush up on more than just your driving skills — some local traffic laws are as quirky as the attractions dotting the country. From the bizarre to the downright hilarious, cruise through four of the weirdest traffic laws that could have you scratching your head or chuckling all the way to your next stop.

### California's Speedy Ghost Cars

Head to California, where no vehicle without a driver may exceed 60 mph. Yes, even those futuristic self-driving cars have to obey the speed limits. It's an interesting precaution against our potential AI driver's need for speed and flipping into joyride mode.

### Denver's Color Coordinated Sundays

In Denver, Colorado, black cars are banned on Sundays. The origin of this law is murky, but it adds an extra layer of consideration for your Sunday drive. You'd better pick a different color for a leisurely weekend cruise.

### Oklahoma's Driving Distractions

Put down the comic books if you're driving through Oklahoma. It's illegal to read them while driving, which sounds reasonable enough considering the focus required to operate a vehicle safely. Save Spider-Man and Superman for later, and keep your eyes on the road!

### Drunk Driving ... by Association?

Strangely enough, in Texas, any driver who is within arm's reach of alcohol while driving is breaking the law, and this includes a passenger's bloodstream! So, Texas

drivers must think twice before offering their tipsy buddies a ride home. As for Virginia, drunk passengers can also receive a DUI if they're riding with an intoxicated driver! So, always call an Uber if you and your buddy have had a drink or two.

Whether born from safety concerns or legislative sessions that got wildly out of hand, these rules add a dose of humor to road-tripping across the U.S. Remember these oddities as you navigate the highways and byways — they're not just funny anecdotes but actual laws that could impact your journey!



# TRAGIC TOLL

## Fatalities Surge After Helmet Laws Relaxed

Riding a motorcycle is both thrilling and dangerous. And the odds of getting injured or killed while doing so are rising for riders in Missouri.

Motorcycle deaths have risen 47% since Missouri repealed its universal helmet law in 2020, with a record 174 riders killed in 2023 alone, according to state data. The trend runs counter to a decline in other kinds of highway fatalities over the same period.

Missouri's current law exempts motorcyclists over age 26 from helmet requirements as long as they have health insurance. Before 2020, motorcyclists were governed by a 1967 law requiring every person driving or riding on a motorcycle to wear a helmet.

Although the Governors Highway Safety Administration recommends that all states pass universal motorcycle helmet laws, many other states also have repealed or modified them. Currently, 17 states have universal helmet laws, and 29 states have laws for specific riders. Only Illinois, Iowa, and New Hampshire have no helmet laws.

Federal highway safety officials say wearing a helmet is the single most important way to protect yourself on a motorcycle. In 2020, 80% of the 123 fatal motorcycle crashes in Missouri involved riders who weren't wearing a helmet, federal data show.

Motorcycles offer minimal crash protection for riders, and other motorists often do not see them on the



road. Concussions and other traumatic brain injuries are a major risk. While a rider who survives a motorcycle crash may suffer only a concussion that heals within weeks, they also may be paralyzed for life.

If you have been injured in a motorcycle accident caused by someone else, an experienced personal injury attorney can identify your legal options and present the strongest case possible on your behalf. The attorneys at Finney Injury Law have years of experience helping personal injury victims receive fair compensation for medical bills, pain, suffering, and lost wages. Don't hesitate to contact us for a free consultation.



## Legendary Stuffed Peppers

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 bell peppers (any color), halved and seeded
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 14-oz can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup cooked rice
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. Line a baking dish or baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the bell pepper halves in the baking dish.
3. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the ground beef, onion, and garlic until the beef is browned, then drain excess fat.
4. Stir in chili powder, cumin, diced tomatoes, rice, salt, and pepper.
5. Fill the 8 bell pepper halves with the beef mixture, then top with the shredded cheddar cheese.
6. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the peppers are tender and the cheese is melted.

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"simply a notorious character, dissolute and devilish," the sobriquet stuck. She also said that she married Wild Bill Hickok, but probably only actually knew him for a few months in Deadwood, S.D.

Jane was a beloved crowd-pleaser at Wild West shows of the era but inevitably drank away her earnings. She died of alcoholism at age 51.

Although Wild Bill Hickok was married to another woman when he died, Calamity Jane was buried beside him — perhaps at her request. Some historians say locals placed her there as a tourist attraction. Others say Hickok's friends arranged the placement as a posthumous joke because Hickok found Jane so annoying.

Whatever the case, throngs of friends and onlookers made their way up Deadwood's Boot Hill at Calamity Jane's funeral to pay last respects to one of the Old West's most colorful characters.