

HAVE YOU THANKED YOUR LAWYER LATELY

Last year Drake, Hileman & Davis secured a \$235,000 settlement against the manufacturer of a defective tree step. Our client only secured that settlement after we filed suit in federal court in Scranton and produced a report from an expert metallurgist that the product was not strong enough to hold the weight of the average man. Discovery in that case revealed that 13 other hunters had fallen and been injured using the same tree step.

Did you know that products liability suits have made all of our lives safer by forcing companies to make safer products? For example:

Children's pajamas - Dayton Hudson was aware that children could be severely burned by their pajamas but chose not to treat them with flame-retardant chemicals. A \$1 million punitive damage award by a jury forced their product off the market.

Tampons - Playtex disregarded studies and medical reports showing that its super-absorbent tampons could cause Toxic Shock Syndrome. Women who died from the condition were awarded punitive damages of \$10 million and the product was taken off the market.

Tylenol - when mixed with alcohol destroys the liver. Johnson & Johnson knew of the danger but refused to put a warning on the product until after it was hit with an \$8.8 million jury verdict.

Football helmets - manufacturers knew for years that inadequate padding led to numerous spinal injuries and deaths to children using their helmets. Improved design spurred by liability claims resulted in no deaths for the first time in 60 years.

Automatic transmissions - Ford knew that its faulty design caused vehicles to lurch out of control but did nothing until it was hit with a \$4 million punitive damage award.

Pinto - Ford knew it had made a dangerous lemon but sold millions of them until it was hit with \$125 million in punitive damages.

Asbestos - manufacturers knew it was deadly for years, but concealed its danger to workers and the public. Because of thousands of claims, asbestos is no longer a danger in our society.

Crib deaths - Bassett Furniture stopped making cribs once it learned babies were being hanged to death on the headboard. Only after it lost a lawsuit did it notify owners of the hazard and begin a recall.

IUD - Dalkon Shield's intrauterine device was known to cause pelvic disease and septic abortions. Only after a \$7.5 million punitive damage award did the manufacturer pull the product from the shelves.

So next time someone insults trial lawyers, tell them some of your best friends are trial lawyers.