

THE VIP LOUNGE | TY LAW

Clearing a busy mind, by the sea, with the kids

Ty Law is known for being one of the best defensive backs ever to wear a New England Patriots uniform. The Lincoln, R.I., resident, who also has a home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., played in the NFL for 15 years, and helped the Patriots win three Super Bowls in his 10 years with the team. When he retired five years ago, he had played with five NFL teams. Now 41 and a father of five (ages 5 months to 15), Law has taken his high-energy approach to football into the business world, as cofounder of Launch Trampoline Park. There are six locations, with two in Massachusetts (Norwood and Watertown), and Law hopes to be running 10 by the end of the year. We caught up with the Pennsylvania native to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation spot? I like to go to the Caribbean. Turks & Caicos is one of my favorites because it's so laid back

and just a great place to go to clear your mind and unwind. I also love Atlantis in the Bahamas — especially for the kids. I'd say for adult time, it's Turks & Caicos, and for the kids, it's Atlantis.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? I try to go to local places and try local foods. I'm a big fan of conch salad when I'm in the Caribbean. I like to order things off the menu that locals like and drink what they drink, to kind of blend in. In Turks & Caicos, I like rum. I'm big into rum when I'm there.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't? I'm almost embarrassed to say this, but I have not been to Europe. I'm thinking about taking my oldest daughter, who is 15, there this summer. I've heard great things about Florence — especially the shopping, and she's going to love that — and also Spain. We'll visit a few countries and



Ty Law, cofounder of Launch Trampoline Park, at one of the company's six facilities.

when we do, we are going to do it the right way.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling? I guess the obvious answer is my cellphone, but my iPod too. I've got to have my music when I'm traveling. I also take my travel hookah; it's very calming to me.

Aisle or window? Definitely window because I like to lean my head against the wall and go to sleep. I refuse to sit in the middle seat. I will say "thank you" and get off the plane before I'll sit in the middle seat. I've got a huge fear of flying, so it's best for me and everybody around me if I just pull the shade down and go to sleep.

Favorite childhood travel memory? Taking road trips — and really whatever I did — with my grandpa. I was raised by my grandparents in Aliquippa, Pa., and I used to take fishing trips with him and we'd sing songs and just have fun driving together. I also remember the first time when I went on a plane — I was about 8 or 9 — and I took a trip to California to visit an aunt who lived there and we went to Disneyland.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Hookah and flavored tobacco.

Best travel tip? If you know you have a long plane ride, try to stay up as long as you can so you can relax and go to sleep on the plane, then wake up and be at your destination. That works for me.

JULIET PENNINGTON

Devices 'n' apps to collect, connect you

By Kari Bodnarchuk
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Many of this year's new travel gadgets help you observe your home, yourself, or the world at large. You can control your house and property from the other side of the globe, monitor your physical activity and travel plans en route, and capture your adventures or your destination down to their microscopic details. Other devices just make your travels extra fun or easy. Here are a few of our top picks for 2015.



Capture and share shots instantly

Mini video cameras that capture little snippets of life abound, but a new one by ION makes it a cinch to share your travel shots instantly. The SnapCam remains in standby mode for up to seven days, but wakes up and starts shooting with a simple tap of the finger. The social imaging camera, which launches in July, takes 720p high-definition videos and 8-megapixel photos, and can even stream video live through your Wi-Fi-connected smartphone, so you can share events as they happen. The SnapCam measures 1.5 inches square, weighs just over 1 ounce, and clips to your shirt, hat, or bag, for instance. It can shoot 5,000 photos in time-lapse mode, record up to two hours of video, or live-stream for an hour on a single charge. Use the ION SnapCam app to save, organize, and upload your photos and videos, or to share them on Facebook and other social media sites.

\$149.99. 855-411-4466, www.ioncamera.com

Don't get soaked by utility bill

Protect your lawn and garden — and water bill — while you're traveling using Blossom, a new smart watering controller that hooks up to your current irrigation system. The device takes data from your local weather station and orchestrates a watering schedule based on real-time conditions. That way, your sprinkler system doesn't start cranking on rainy days, and it stays on long enough on dry scorching days. You can also override the auto feature and manually control Blossom through a free app available on Apple and Android smartphones and tablets, letting you tinker with the irrigation schedule. The device, which came out this month and is now available on Amazon.com, can be installed on an inside or outside wall, and connects to your home network using Wi-fi or Powerline, a technology that turns electrical outlets into Internet connections and therefore extends their range.



\$199. 855-976-5315, www.myblossom.com

Put the world under a microscope

One of Celestron's newest devices will keep children of all ages captivated on their travels. The FlipView LCD Digital Handheld Microscope magnifies objects up to 120 times and proved simple enough for my kindergartner to use. The 7.2-ounce microscope has easy-to-operate controls for zooming in and out and for adjusting focus, and a 3-inch color LCD screen that flips open and rotates so kids can easily view all the critters and curious objects along their path, from caterpillars to quartz rocks. A ring light with eight white LEDs illuminates objects under the viewfinder. Take 5-megapixel photos (and even time-lapse images) and videos that capture up to 30 frames per second; use the attached kickstand or the included metal stand to keep the microscope steady while shooting. Then upload your images to a PC or Mac. The Celestron Micro Capture Pro software lets kids analyze and measure objects, and write notes about their discoveries on the images.

\$159. 800-421-9649, www.celestron.com

A handy gadget wallet

Ditch that bulky wallet filled with credit, debit, store, and gift cards. Instead, transfer the information for all of those cards onto LoopPay, a secure plastic gadget that looks like a tiny one-button remote control, and use it to pay for goods and services at approximately 90 percent of retailers nationwide — anywhere that has a magnetic stripe card reader. To use this clever device, co-created by MIT-graduate Will Graylin, download the free LoopPay app onto your phone, verify your identity using your Social Security number, and then set up a secure PIN-accessed account. Use the card swiper that comes with your LoopPay device to input and encrypt the info from your cards. Then take photos of those cards so you can identify them on the app, and in case a merchant asks to see one. When it's time to pay, hold the LoopPay device near the store's magnetic stripe reader and push a button, causing LoopPay to wirelessly transmit data from your default credit card to the machine for payment. Select a different card to use through the LoopPay app. Ingenious!



\$49.95. www.looppay.com/products

Keep travel-everythings organized

Now that I use TripIt, I can finally keep track of my travel documents, trips, mileage plan numbers, points, and always-traveling husband. I even found 46,000 points I didn't know I had. TripIt keeps your past, present, and future travel info in one place for quick and easy reference, whether you're booking an RV for a gals-gone-wild road trip or flying to Los Angeles for business. Connect with other TripIt members and your travel plans automatically get shared between accounts. A new Traveler Profile section lets you store info from important documents, such as your passport and driver's license, or for your work, family, doctor, baby sitter, or pharmacy, for instance, in a secure PIN-accessed spot. Link your e-mail accounts to TripIt and the program automatically pulls travel info from your confirmation e-mails, or forward these e-mails to TripIt and your flight, rental car, hotel, and dining reservations get loaded onto your account within minutes. TripIt Pro members can use the app or online site to set seat tracker alerts, and track rewards points for flights, hotels, rental cars, and credit cards. They also get new discounted access to CLEAR, a members-only program that lets qualified travelers breeze through airport security.

Annual fee for TripIt's basic service, free; for TripIt Pro, \$49. www.tripit.com

Activity tracker with serious bling

Your travels may take you to business meetings, client dinners, or fancy events where sporting a bulky activity tracking device wouldn't fit the scene, or your wardrobe. Misfit Wearables has teamed up with Swarovski to produce the classiest activity tracker on the market this year. The Swarovski Shine Collection, which starts shipping in June, comes with a dazzling faceted crystal slightly larger than a quarter that fits in a crystal pendant necklace, a crystal and leather string bracelet, or a crystal watch band. The jazzy-looking tracker measures your physical activity and your quality of sleep. Just tap the crystal and lights illuminate to tell you the time and how close you are to achieving your daily fitness goals. Each Swarovski Shine collection also comes with a slim sporty watchband, so you can swap the crystal over and go for a run in between work and travel commitments. The Shine crystal synchs with your smartphone or tablet, works with Apple and Android products, and most importantly, is splash resistant so it can fend off a few drops from your margarita.

\$169-\$249. www.misfit.com



Versatile bag charges on the go

Keep your phone, tablet, camera, Kindle, or any other USB-compatible device charged while on the go with the Phorce Freedom bag. This versatile water-resistant bag comes with a built-in 15,000mAh dual-USB charger that can recharge two devices at once, whether you're sitting on an airplane or riding the T to an after-work event. The clever bag also converts from a messenger bag to a backpack using the same shoulder strap, and has pockets galore, all lined with micro-fleece to protect your valuables. It can even function as a briefcase. Each of the main pockets has two zippered openings so it's easy to access in messenger bag or backpack mode. The Freedom fits a 13-inch laptop, and has space for papers, snacks, and smaller gadgets; however, the main compartment isn't big enough for a change of clothes, for instance. The charger provides the correct voltage for your devices, and stops charging once batteries reach full capacity.

\$199. www.phorce.com/freedom



A tablet with a nice touch

Toshiba's new Encore 2 Write tablet comes with terrific graphics, Dolby Digital Plus sound, and 8 hours of battery life for watching your favorite movies while traveling (11 hours of battery for non-video applications). It also offers some fun and unique features. The tablet, available in 8- and 10.1-inch versions, comes with a pressure-sensitive pen for making crisp and accurate strokes, a super-responsive screen, and handy apps that let you doodle, draw, and paint colorful scenes on your adventures, take notes during meetings, and even record tour guides and business conversations for easy review and playback. Lefties can switch the menus to the right side of the screen for easier use. The tablet has 64GB of storage for uploading vacation photos and movies, a micro SD card slot that accepts cards up to 128GB, an HDMI port, and a built-in GPS, accelerometer, e-compass, and gyroscope.

\$349.99 (8-inch model), \$399.99 (10-inch), includes a free one-year subscription to Microsoft Office 365 Personal. 800-867-4422, www.toshiba.com



Bring a big screen on your adventures

Turn your hotel room, campground, or vacation cabin into a theater space with Celluon's new PicoPro, a high-definition laser pico projector. The super-portable device weighs less than 7 ounces, measures a little larger than a Samsung Galaxy S5, and sets up without any fuss. It produces a stunning display up to about 21-feet wide for a big-screen viewing experience. The projector's most endearing feature: It stays in focus all the time, so no fiddling with focus dials or buttons. The PicoPro connects to your iOS device, laptop, or TV by HDMI cable or wirelessly to Miracast-enabled Android devices. Plug an external speaker into the 3.5mm audio jack for a sound boost. The PicoPro has a battery life of up to 3.5 hours, and comes with a handy little adjustable stand.

\$379.99. 800-399-5260, www.celluon.com

You'll find plenty of cool gadgets and apps to keep you entertained on your travels and connected to the world around you. If you get a little homesick on the road, just remember you can always check on the sprinkler system through your video doorbell, or live-stream a message back to the cat.

Kari Bodnarchuk can be reached at travewriter@karib.us.



Answer your door while you're away

Communicate with your UPS delivery man, Girl Scout cookie saleswoman, or anyone else who knocks on your door even if you're halfway around the world. Attach the Ring Video Doorbell by your front door (no fancy tools or circuitry knowledge required), connect it to your home wireless network, and then download the Ring app to your Apple or Android device. When someone rings the doorbell, the device sends a signal to your phone, giving you the option to accept or deny the call. The doorbell offers two-way talk and one-way video, so if you accept the call, you can see the visitor standing on your doorstep and hold a conversation without the person knowing you're away. The waterproof device comes with night vision and motion detection features, so you can monitor anything within range of its wide-angle view; it also sends motion alerts to your phone. Hook the doorbell up using your house's existing wires or rely on the device's internal battery, which can be charged by USB. For \$3 per month, you can save up to six months of recordings to a cloud service.

\$199. 800-656-1918, www.ring.com

