



# Ways to get the most out of “free time”



Bader

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Believe it or not, there is more to life than practicing law. Well, okay, I can mumble those words with the best of them, but if you ask me about the last time I took off an *entire* weekend, you will see that I am perhaps just giving lip service to this statement.

I think if we took a poll, we would find that many lawyers are overworked and stressed out. Every time I talk to a colleague and ask how he or she is, the response is almost the same, “Not enough hours in the day; just trying to keep up with the tidal wave of work,” etc. Of course, their responses prevent me from complaining about my life.

I recently read an article that was posted on the State Bar’s Web site about how young attorneys are fighting the billable hour, which includes fighting for their weekends off. Imagine that! And they actually have the energy to work through the weekend! Maybe we can learn a few things from the youth, after all.

Then I read a recent article by Justice William H. Bedsworth. He writes a humorous column entitled *A Criminal Waste of Space*, but this time there was more truth sprinkled in with his humor. After reaching the exalted position of *justice* of one of our California Courts of Appeal, he found he loved his “state-funded Treo” because it enabled him to receive e-mails no matter where he was. So he, too, was working on weekends! Here is an excerpt of a justice experiencing an epiphany:

Think about it. Thanks to my Treo, I don’t just check my e-mails when I’m at my desk at the court. I check them every evening. I respond to them all weekend. When I’m watching a ballgame, I reply to e-mails from Justice Moore or Justice Rylaarsdam or Justice Ikola about opinion drafts. I try – between innings – to answer questions about writs from Justice Sills or Justice Aronson or Justice O’Leary. Those dirty batards<sup>1</sup> at the Adminis-

trative Office of the Courts have completely outsmarted me. They’ve got me working nights and weekends!

That’s why you will find a balance of articles in *Plaintiff* magazine. Perhaps it is a matter of intention: As I publish, therefore I am. Not that you can forget about work. After all, it pays the bills. So, articles about *doing* are important.

In this issue, trial-practice columnists Shirley Watkins and Jin Lew offer more tips on voir dire and Matthew Kumin encourages attorneys to take on civil rights cases. Marie Pecot presents a short piece on *Hailey v. California Physicians’ Service*, a recent case where the appellate court criticized insurers’ practices of investigating applications *after* a claim has been made. Jorge Mendoza authors an article about environmental factors in accident reconstruction, which illustrates his use of 3D animation during trial. Michele Magar reports on equal rights in gay marriages in Spain – of all places – and how we might be able to duplicate that success here. (Notably, the California Supreme Court will be hearing arguments on same-sex marriage on March 4.)

We also have a new columnist, Jeffrey Krivis, who is going to offer tips on mediation. Krivis is widely published in this area, and we welcome him as a new contributor. If you get to trial, economist Davina Ling will help you decipher damages for lost earnings.

For those of you who want to take a little breather, why not read Pat Sullivan’s article on the spirit of the law. It provides some recommendations and sources for rejuvenating yourself and developing a new outlook on your practice that can help with stress and dissatisfaction.

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>This is not a misprint. It is the name of a kind of French bread. As far as I know, this magazine has no rules about calling people “loaves of French bread.”