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The coming year, starting in February



Bader

Donna Bader

By the time you pick up this issue of *Plaintiff*, it will be sometime in February. But I am writing this just shortly after the New Year. The life of an editor is a little odd because as we are working on one issue – here the February issue – the January issue is in the mail and will be the one people are talking about. Now that I have almost wrapped up the February issue, I am starting to think about March. It is amazing that I have any clue as to what day or month it is.

So while you are comfortably moving forward with the New Year, I am thinking about what we have accomplished in 2007 and looking over my New Year's resolutions, which had a specific section devoted to this magazine. I am certainly proud of what has been accomplished so far.

It's been over six months since our first issue was sent out in the mail. I think we've proven that we really are here to stay, and we want to fill a need shared by plaintiffs' attorneys . . . information based on practical experience and not just forms found in a law book. I have been told that the magazine fills a void, and we've gotten considerable feedback from attorneys who welcome and enjoy our articles. That hasn't stopped us from trying ways to improve the magazine to better serve the needs of our readers.

We are covering the legal news of today, whether it is Michele Magar's column on the subprime mortgage crisis, Daniel Karon's article on class action litigation, or Shirley Watkins and Jin Lew's article on calculating Medi-Cal Reimbursement Rights under *Arkansas Dept. of Health and Human Services v. Ahlborn* (2006) 547 U.S. 268. We also have Jim Sturdevant and Mary Bedard's articles on the preemption cases facing the United States Supreme Court. (As described in Bedard's article, oral argument in *Riegel v. Medtronic, Inc.* took place on December 4, 2007.)

While fun, but no less informative, we have an article by Katherine James of Act of Communication about costuming for the courtroom. I believe this area deserves a lot of attention. We can spend hours in case preparation, in trying to remember the facts of our cases or how to distinguish one case from another, but then forget to pay much attention to our wardrobe or how our clients dress for court.

James just sent over an article that appeared in the Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, which was also reported on that publication's blog at www.blogs.jsonline.com/proofandhearsay/archive/2008/01/09/the-clash-of-courthouse-dandies.aspx. Apparently, Milwaukee Assistant District Attorney Warren D. Zier got into trouble with Circuit Judge William Sosnay, delaying a hearing by three hours, because he wore an ascot to court, which the judge deemed to be an unsuitable replacement for a tie. Under local rules, a judge has wide latitude in prescribing what an attorney may wear to court. The conflict has become so heated that Zier has been warned that he may be found in contempt and has hired an attorney to represent him should that happen.

Perhaps believing that the interests of his client were more important than his personal choice in apparel, Zier has since taken off the ascot in favor of a tie. Judge Sosnay, who has a reputation for being a fastidious dresser, took Zier's ascot as an insult to the court which "borders on the contemptuous." The court announced, "This is an issue which I believe deals with the integrity of the court." (For those of you who may want to buck tradition and risk a contempt citation, the Web site even offers a handy guide to the proper technique in tying an ascot.)

Finally, we have the first part of a two-part article by technology columnist A.T. Kippes. If your list of New Year's resolutions is anything like mine, then you probably have an item that reads something like "1.) Remember to write down my hours for billing purposes." I know I probably lose a lot of money by forgetting to do just that; hopefully, Kippes will have an answer to this problem.

I hope we all have a great year in 2008 but don't forget to devote time to a life outside of work. For me, well, I have to sign off now because the dog wants to take me for a walk.

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