

NHCBA

Encouraging Each Other to Excess...

MARBLE CHIPS

THE NEW HAVEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION APRIL 1, 2003

CONNECTICUT BAR CLOSES DOOR: New Applications to Practice Law No Longer Accepted

The Bar Examining Committee today announced that, effective immediately, new applications to practice law in Connecticut would not be accepted. This moratorium will continue until further notice.

"There are just too damn many lawyers in this State," an anonymous Supreme Court Justice stated when queried. "You can only cut the pie so many ways," he added. This decision obviously shocked members of the New Haven Bar when the notice was posted in the Clerk's Office.

"It could have been me," many young lawyers were heard to announce. Others were concerned about the large student loans the now-deflated candidates would carry about on their financial records like bloated albatrosses.

At present, there are 30,000 lawyers licensed to practice in Connecticut (no fooling!). This averages out to one lawyer per 10 BMW's, or one lawyer to every five criminal defendants (who are not lawyers). A recent poll indicated that so many lawyers now have full-page ads in the Yellow Pages that a special volume just for lawyer advertising will be published next year. Lawyer jokes are so

plentiful that the New Haven Public Library has devoted a room to the volumes devoted to such humor.

Many local restaurants, seeking to improve the quality of their clientele, have banned attorneys from dinner hours or holidays, and anyone wearing a tie is immediately suspect. °

Elm City to Change Name

Frustrated by previous efforts to obtain funding from the governor for various municipal projects, City of New Haven Mayor John DeStefano just announced that he has changed the name of our fair city to Waterbury.

Upon receipt of this name change, Governor John Rowland immediately authorized full funding for a new Courthouse in the city formerly known as New Haven, renovations to the Courthouse at 121 Elm Street, and the selection of ten new judges from the City.

"There's more than one way to skin a cat," said civic activist Cheever Tyler. "By a simple name change we, too, have become the center of the universe, with all the benefits distributed from Hartford that the other Waterbury receives".

Although some immediate confusion is anticipated, most agree that the benefits in state largesse far outweigh the detriments, such as the continuous grand juries convening on municipal matters. The city formerly known as New Haven will continue to house Yale University, however, and zip codes will remain the same, although NHCBA members are urged to obtain new stationary as soon as possible with the new city name.

Former New Haven Alderman Steven Mednick applauded the name change, but filed a lengthy written protest on behalf of his client, the New Haven Feline Preservation Society. °



The Proprietors of the New Haven Green review the City's recent name change.

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NEW HAVEN COURTS RESPOND TO BUDGET CUTS

Responding to the impact of severe budget cuts on the Judicial System, Presiding Judges in the New Haven Courts have implemented a number of innovative changes designed to generate additional income for State coffers.

Beginning on April 1, 2003, GA 23 will sponsor a weekly Tuesday Night Bingo from 7:00–10:00 pm at the stately courthouse at 121 Elm Street. Courtroom G will be open to residents of East Haven, Branford, North Branford, Guilford and Madison. Courtroom A will be open to residents of New Haven, Woodbridge and Bethany. No estimates of projected income were announced, but sources indicate that those responsible for the plan are very optimistic.

As a further cost-cutting measure, it was announced the elevators will in the courthouse at 235 Church Street will operate only on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday afternoons. Further, the hours of the County Bar Library will be reduced. Beginning today the library will be open from 7:00–10:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It was also announced there will be no access to the courthouse on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays between the hours of 7:00 and 10:00 pm.

A spokesperson for the presiding judges of the New Waterbury Courts said, “We know it’s not much, but it’s the least we can do.”

Doctors Support Sentencing Caps in Criminal Cases

The American Medical Association today proposed legislation limiting penalties in all criminal cases to three years. The Association announced it was reacting to the effects of the extremely high sentences imposed by judges across the country. The AMA has formed a political action group to lobby for this proposed legislation, Physicians Helping Unemployed Convicts and Underprivileged Prisoners (PHUCUP).

Former Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders will chair the group. Dr. Elders said, “Judges are simply out of control. Unless something is done the criminal justice system as we know it will collapse.”

Just as in its support for capping medical malpractice verdicts, the AMA has once again taken on the legal establishment. “Longer sentences mean higher fees for lawyers. This is money that could be better spent on proper health care. Lawyers have exploited criminal defendants long enough, improperly using the fear of extreme sentences to extract exorbitant fees from those who, through mere happenstance, find themselves called before the bar of justice. This three year maximum legislation will stop all that,” said Elders.

She also said the high costs of incarceration is a direct cause of reducing funds available for vital medical research in fields

such as liposuction, male pattern baldness and rhinoplasty.

The AMA’s proposal continues a movement initiated in Alabama, Mississippi and Texas where extremely high sentences linked to significant legal fees generated in strong anti-lawyer sentiment resulting in criminal cap maximum bills in the legislatures of those states.

When asked to comment, former Connecticut Trial Lawyers President William Gallagher said, “You can always count on physicians to put self-interest aside and act to protect the public at large”.

LOCAL LAWYER TO OBTAIN \$25 BILLION FROM NIGERIA

Responding to a recent e-mail, an anonymous local attorney estimates that he will receive \$25 billion by assisting a Nigerian official in freeing up \$100 billion in escrowed funds.

“I was told by e-mail that \$100 billion was being held in a Swiss bank and that I could receive one-quarter of this if I wired \$125,000 to the account of Onzwiga Samusian, the Deputy Associate Foreign Minister for Economic Development for Nigeria, to cover their escrow costs,” he said.

The lawyer, who prefers to remain anonymous to avoid publicity, wired the \$125,000 to the specified overseas account last month but has yet to receive the \$25 billion promised.

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MARBLE CHIPS

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NEW HAVEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

APRIL 1, 2003

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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This is an April Fool’s issue, obviously, and any relationship to persons living or dead was intended to be humorous. The stories are fictitious, and, if you missed the point, consider medical school.



OVER THE COUNTER



News and Information from the Clerks of the New Haven Courts

Court to Hire Professional Jurors

The Judicial Department has decided to hire professional jurors to combat the perceived ignorance and naiveté of current jurors as well as extremely high-cost verdicts. The new system will do away with individual voir dire and is expected to greatly reduce the lengthy backlog which delays cases getting to trial.

In order to qualify to serve as a professional juror, an individual must be over 60 years old; have never suffered an

injury; never initiated a law suit; and favor caps in medical malpractice cases. Candidates for criminal jurors must favor the death penalty and believe that anyone arrested is presumed guilty.

Recent State budget concerns required the Judicial Department to seek private funding to institute the new procedures. The Allstate Insurance Company has agreed to underwrite the project. ◦



Bar Foundation to Dissolve

The Bar Foundation, the charitable and fundraising arm of the New Haven County Bar Association, announced today through its spokesperson, Michael Sulzbach IV, that it was dissolving and would be distributing most of its substantial assets towards renovations of the Lawyers' Lounge on the 7th floor of the Superior Court.

"It's about time we did something nice for ourselves," Attorney Sulzbach noted. "What better beneficiary of this beneficent largesse than our brethren at the bar," he added.

The bulk of the funds will go toward physical renovations at the Lounge, such as a 42 inch high-definition flat-screen plasma television with a 600 amp Bose sound system, a heated hot tub with surround jets, and a fully-stocked bar. Chief Family Judge Herbert Gruendel has requested the construction of a professional boxing ring with immediate access from the Third Floor for the use of certain domestic litigation counsel.

The tax consequences to the many contributors to the Foundation remain unclear. °

New Curriculum at Yale Law School

In a move that threatens to shake the foundations of American legal education, Dean Anthony Kronman has announced major curriculum changes at Yale Law School. The changes, announced by Kronman to coincide with the arrival of pitchers and catchers to Spring Training sites in Florida and Arizona, constitute a complete change in philosophy at the nation's oldest law school.

Beginning in the 2003-2004 academic year, Yale Law will offer courses in Contracts, Torts, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law (American) and Evidence. "This marks a major change in philosophy for the Law School," said Kronman. "Now, with these changes, especially with the addition of an entirely new subject area—evidence—there is a distinct possibility that graduates from this institution will actually be taught to practice law."

As part of this change, the Law School will no longer offer courses in "Law and Anthropology", "Music of the Lesser Antilles", "MTV and the Law", "Doonesbury and the Law", "Pilates" and "The Impact of Chief Justice John Marshall on the History of American Ballet".

Other prestigious institutions have yet to formally respond to these changes, but experts who monitor the American legal education system expect Yale's move will have a nationwide impact. When contacted for a comment by this publication Professor Alan Dershowitz of the Harvard Law School said, "I will, of course, be happy to offer my opinion and will do so as soon as Geraldo Rivera can schedule me in." Former President Bill Clinton, a YLS graduate, voiced concern about his *alma mater*: "This is awful. I bet the next thing is they'll do away with the pass-fail system and implement actual grades." °

LETTERS To The ASSOCIATION



Dear Editor:

Is there no end to the rubbish you choose to print? I am a member of the Bar and for many years a member of NHCBA. I am also a serious student of the law. In fact, the law is my life. Your publication makes a mockery of our profession. Each edition of this publication is replete with mindless drivel, most frequently penned by you or your so-called "Guest" columnist. Please consider replacing these items with excerpts from the New Haven City Charter and the minutes of the Board of Aldermen. I assure you, your readership will increase dramatically and, most certainly, will be better informed.

Very truly yours,
Bernard Christianson, Esq.

Dear Editor:

Why do they call it Special Proceedings? It isn't so special. After all, it isn't rocket science. No one there is performing brain surgery. They're not solving global warming. They're only lawyers, you know. Maybe it could go faster and become Fast Proceedings or even Half-Fast proceedings.

Sincerely Yours,
Hon. Lynda Munro
Judge, Superior Court

Dear Editor:

I wish to call to your attention a significant safety concern. The elevators in the Courthouse at 235 Church Street travel at a breathtaking speed that endangers the life and limb of passengers brave enough to risk travel above the Third Floor. More than once have I entered the close confines of one of the two cars that operate prior to 10 am only to leave light-headed and disoriented upon departure. Surely there is something that can be done about this. What am I paying dues for if your organization cannot do anything about this problem? In closing, I should note that I am a serious student of the law.

Very truly yours,
Bernard Christianson, Esq.

News Briefs, *continued from page 2*

"I'm not concerned," he said. "I was told that I could take down my funds in tranches, whatever that is, and since the letter came from a foreign minister of Nigeria, it must be legitimate."

An inquiry to the local Better Business Bureau revealed that Temporary Chief Operating Officer Joseph Rini had not heard of any persons receiving such large funds from Nigeria, yet had heard rumors of such e-mails and similar letters being circulated.

The e-mail indicated that upon payment of the \$125,000 to the Nigerian source, the funds in the Swiss bank account would be released and \$25 billion would be forwarded to the sender. The \$100 billion apparently was placed in the Swiss account by the government of Nigeria, but it could only be released to a non-resident who had proof of a significant bank account. °

NEW HAVEN BAR LEFT WITT-LESS!

Carolyn Breen Witt, Executive Director of the New Haven County Bar Association, has announced that she is resigning her position in order to accept the reins of the New England chapter of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club.

Formerly a paralegal at the law firm of Wiggin & Dana and for the Independent Counsel on Iran/Contra, Ms. Witt noted that, "Not only is this an opportunity to have my life take a little different direction, but I'll get to ride my Harley more often with those sweet leather outfits."

As newly appointed director of the renowned motorcycle club, she plans to host monthly cookie parties, outings to Goodspeed Opera and an occasional personal appearance from Martha Stewart. A proposed merger between the Junior League and the Hell's Angels is an unfounded rumor, she notes, and there are no plans to place doilies on motorcycle seats either.

"I will miss my friends at the bench and bar tremendously," Witt said, "but this is where I'm needed." Fortunately, the seminars given by the motorcycle club evidently are better attended. ◦



Recent file photo

Dow Appointed Pskov Public Defender: Takes Two Year Leave of Absence

Prominent New Haven attorney and NHCBA Executive Committee member William F. Dow, III announced today that he was taking a leave of absence from Jacobs, Grudberg, Belt & Dow, PC to accept an appointment as Public Defender in Pskov, Russia. "I've had more than three good decades in private practice," said Dow, "and I've become incredibly famous in the process. It's about time that I started paying my dues."

Dow denied rumors that his departure from the firm had anything to do with disenchantment with partner Ira Grudberg. The court- *...it's about time that I started paying my dues.* house had been abuzz with rumors that the two had argued bitterly over Grudberg's seemingly interminable speech introducing Judge Jonathan E. Silbert at CTLA's presentation of its 2001 Judiciary Award.

"I've forgiven him for that," Dow snapped. "Silbert didn't deserve the award anyway. The fact is that here, I'm just another defense attorney. In Pskov, I'm a celebrity. Frankly, I crave the publicity."

Asked whether he planned to study Russian in preparation for his new career, Dow said that he did not. "How could there not be reasonable doubt," he exclaimed, "if judges and jurors can't understand a word I'm saying?" ◦

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