

Breathing easy

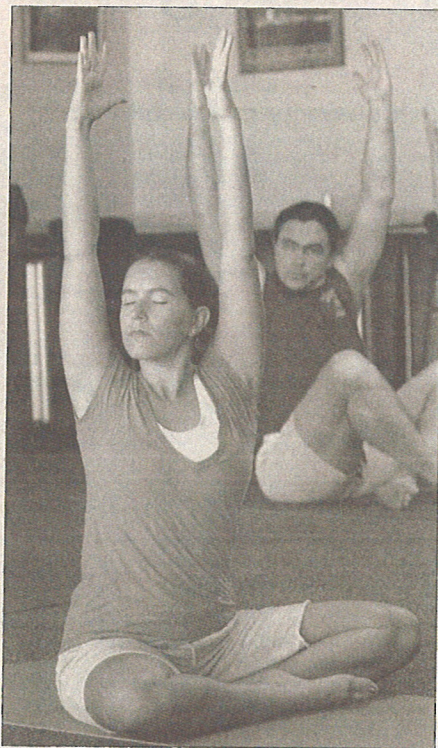


Photo by T. L. Witt

Caroline Newman of St. Louis participates in a yoga class that is offered twice a week at the Thomas F. Eagleton U.S. Courthouse. The health unit for the courthouse started the lunch-hour yoga program several years ago to help employees at the courthouse relieve stress, said Mary Pisarek, a registered nurse who is coordinator of the program. The fees for the class vary according to the number of participants, who chip in to pay instructor Michelle Maue. About 20 people usually attend.

New payment twist

Blackwell Sanders Peper Martin attorneys have a new payment source for their fees in the Tony Twist litigation. In a July 27 order, an Arizona bankruptcy judge authorized client Todd McFarlane Productions Inc. to use money from a settlement with insurer Travelers Indemnity Co. in the Twist case to pay the law firm. Judge Charles Case II also approved Blackwell's most recent request for \$222,500 in attorney fees for work on two Twist cases and two other lawsuits.

The former St. Louis Blues hockey player's lawsuit over a comic book character with a similar name in McFarlane comic books ended in February with a \$5 million settlement, but other insurance companies still are in court over who will pick up the \$4 million tab for the defense. Blackwell Sanders attorneys are working on that matter, and billed for work on the settlement of the original Twist case in their latest request for fees.

Intellectual property and litigation partner Michael Kahn is billing at the highest hourly rate — \$390 — for Blackwell attorneys involved in the cases. Since December 2004, Blackwell Sanders has billed \$473,000 for the original Twist litigation and the insurance case, according to bankruptcy court records.

— Heather Cole

Out of the penalty box

The license of St. Charles attorney Del Phillips has been reinstated after it was suspended in August 2006. Phillip had held onto \$17,000, part of a client's portion of an automobile accident settlement, a bit too long — more than four years, according to the Chief Disciplinary Counsel's response to Phillips' application to have his license restored. Phillips' license was reinstated July 6 on a one-year probationary period, with the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel noting that the case didn't merit a full investigation and that Phillips had made complete restitution to the client. During probation, Phillips has to submit quarterly reports on his practice to the Disciplinary Counsel office and undergo audits of his trust accounts.

The withholding of the client's money was due to poor bookkeeping, not dishonesty, said Martin Green, an attorney with Green Jacobson & Butsch representing Phillips. "He has employed people to work with him in the office. You're not going to see anything like this again with Del."

— Heather Cole

Political Consultant must seek new lease

Kansas City law firm Lathrop & Gage has terminated one of its office leases, a move that will put some distance between the firm and Republican consultant Jeff Roe.

Roe's political consulting firm, Axiom Strategies, has been a subtenant on Lathrop's lease since December 2005.

But when Lathrop recently terminated that lease, the firm gave notice to Axiom that its sublease would subsequently be dropped, said Joel Voran, the newly named chief executive of the firm.

Roe said he maintains a good relationship with Lathrop and has used the firm for 15 years in a personal capacity and on behalf of his campaigning clients.

He is now interested in directly leasing with the building's owners.

A spokeswoman for Lathrop said no other subtenants would be affected by the change.

Roe, who maintains a Republican political blog called The Source, has a reputation for going for the political jugular. He was the chief of staff for former state representative and current U.S. Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo., until 2006.

— Allison Retka

In The News

With help from Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, 34 Bosnian refugees were among 321 people sworn in as American citizens during a naturalization ceremony June 22 at Harris-Stowe State University. Legal Services, along with the Catholic Legal Assistance Ministry and the Saint Louis University Legal Clinic, filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Bosnians in U.S. District Court in March to force the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency to approve the Bosnians' citizenship applications. The lawsuit claimed that because of their disabilities, the Bosnians faced repeated delays in their efforts to become American citizens.

The Kress Law Firm moved to larger offices at 5624A S. Compton Ave. in south St. Louis city. The new office is in a rehabbed building.