



ON BEING CIVIL

First, for those “niggling hegemonies” (From the Editor, “The End of Action,” April 2008), try Benedryl or Gold Bond anti-itch powder.

Regarding “When Lawyers Behave Badly: The ‘Z’ Word, Civility & the Ethical Rules” (April 2008):

Foul language, hostility and general boorish behavior are childish. These behaviors are antithetical to those of an educated person. Regulation of these behaviors does not belong in the ethical rules. Regulation belongs with the court and the criminal justice system. That we have to rein in this conduct by reminding lawyers of their oath is a sad commentary on the degradation of the profession. The judicial system exists to prevent street fights, not to provide a forum for them with court reporter present. Tragically, the courts will be reduced to dealing with its officers for misconduct. However, a heavy hammer is what cleans up acts. The conduct described is far beyond an ethical question and requires more than a censure to stop.

—*Marianne M. Jennings, Professor of Legal and Ethical Studies
W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University*

A DRESSING DOWN

The irony in the title of your February cover story is painful (“Working Class: What Seasoned Lawyers Will Never Tell You”). I expected a sore-

ly needed reminder to lawyers about who does the real work of society, with precious little help from our profession; or maybe an explanation that, for all their white shirts and brown shoes, associates are just wage slaves, too, their labor milked by partners and the cream skimmed off as profits.

Instead, I found a paean to pandering, instructing young lawyers to send an e-mail or “make appearances” after hours, study up for parties, and select my coffee cup, all to please “the big bosses” “who can affect my future.”

Please! If I’d believed stuff like this when I started practicing I’d have ended up another insincere, miserable minion for the Owning Class. Instead I have worked 25 years in jeans and boots, sending late e-mails because my regular Joe and Jane clients need the help, and carrying whatever

cup (and contents) I damn well pleased. Yet I’ve still managed to rack up the accoutrements of success—a solid reputation, a seat on an appellate bench (tribal), and a comfortable life.

So, to all those associates out there, ignore the article’s advice. Follow your heart. And dump the Bosses off your back!

—*John Sledd, Seattle, Wash.*

I would like to thank ARIZONA ATTORNEY for reminding me that my success depends upon wearing pantyhose and avoiding jeans, and that my desk must be organized but look “worked in.” I also am grateful for the reminder that while law firms tout their family-friendly policies during recruitment, my career will actually be limited for mentioning how important my family is.

While keeping a spare pair of pantyhose in the office is a useful tip for

women attorneys, I find it interesting that this nugget of information was listed well before the actually helpful tips on how to interact with the people in a law office. The article’s order highlights a presumption that the successful practice of law is available only to those who fulfill a preordained expectation of what an attorney should look like or how the attorney should act. Unfortunately, this preordained mold has not been modified to reflect the diversity of the current practice of law.

Therefore, despite the helpful tips in the article’s latter half, I am ultimately only reminded that the idea of successful lawyering remains a limited, gendered vision of practice that I had intentionally forgotten.

—*Samantha Blevins
Phoenix*

Editor’s Note: Some readers disagreed with our advice regarding success at law firms. The week after we published, though, an *ABA Journal* online story reported how firms nationwide are gripped in a generational divide over appropriate office attire. It reported one instance in which a firm “passed over a brilliant associate for a plum assignment because he had refused suggestions to improve his attire. Instead the job went to someone who was more professional looking.”

Don’t shoot the (well-dressed) messenger.

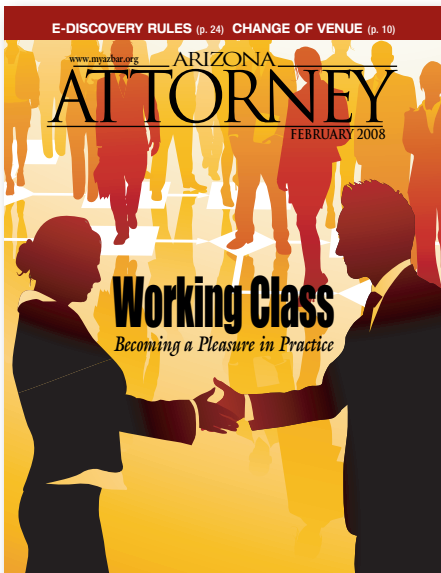
YEARN TO BREATHE FREE—ELSEWHERE

A letter writer in the February ARIZONA ATTORNEY suggests that illegal immigrants be called “undocumented workers” or “refugees.”

First, to call illegal immigrants “undocumented workers” is like calling drug dealers “unlicensed pharmacists.”

Second, to call illegal immigrants “refugees” is, in effect, asserting that Mexico (or other country of their origin) is in the throes of some political upheaval or war which has driven these people out, which is not the case. They come here of their own volition, and to call them “refugees” trivializes the actual hardships suffered by millions of people after the War (World War II, to the younger generation), who truly were refugees.

—*George E. Reeves
Denver, Colo.*



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