



BY T. R. LANE

Dear ARIZONA ATTORNEY¹

I was going to enter your “2008 Creative Arts Competition,”

but then I thought otherwise. I began to take notice of varying suspicions² surrounding this so-called “competition.”

To begin with, why is the label *creative* attached to the title “Creative Arts Competition”? Is it possible to have art that is not creative? If it is not creative, can it really be considered art?

Secondly, in the advertisement found on page 35 in the January 2008 issue, submissionists³—or “creative” artists—are encouraged to “write outside the margins.” As I learned from my stern, ankle-skirt-wearing ninth-grade English teacher, writing outside of the margins does nothing but bring red, blood-like ink to one’s paper, shattering any remaining hope of being the valedictorian and riding on a float made of straw, sitting side-by-side with Attila⁴ the Queen of homecoming, thus forever altering my ability to make eye-contact⁵ with another adult for longer than three seconds and spinning me into an eternal dance of uncontrolled nervousness and uncontroverted cottonmouth around all women who wear crowns. No, ARIZONA ATTORNEY, I will not let you stoop me into such an endeavor.

Besides, if I were to truly write outside the margins, how could you possibly print it, as the words would not even appear on the page?

According to Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia—which, as

Michael Scott related, you know it is reliable because anybody can write on it—2008 is “the year of the rat.”⁶ Although I do not subscribe to the mysticism⁷ of astrology, I do not think it is a mere coincidence that this year’s competition falls on the year of the rat. The year of the rat is associated with “aggression, wealth, charm and order.” One has to wonder what aspirations the Editors of ARIZONA ATTORNEY have in mind by putting its “creative” artist competitors through the rat race.

Now, back to the advertisement found on page 35 of the January 2008 issue. This ad features an attractive young lady perched on a

boulder with a laptop balanced on her knees.⁸ As a young gentleman, I am not troubled by the presence of an attractive woman in the advertisement. Rather, I am troubled by the presence of a non-attorney in an attorney-targeted magazine.

**One has to
wonder what
ARIZONA ATTORNEY
is up to when it
places non-attorney
propaganda in
an attorney
magazine.**

WINNER Humor

(hence the title of your magazine, ARIZONA ATTORNEY). For starters, she is outdoors and not behind a cramped and darkened desk, which brings visions of eighth-grade history class and my classmates' persistent cries to hold class outside. Next, this young lady is wearing jeans and a turtleneck, obviously not partner-aspiring attire. Given the position of her hand on the laptop, it appears that she is more likely surfing eBay or Amazon than writing a memorandum of law or an appellate brief. Certainly no self-respecting attorneys that I know would succumb to such vulgar passions during working hours. Again, one has to wonder what ARIZONA ATTORNEY is up to when it places non-attorney propaganda⁹ in an attorney magazine.

Some¹⁰ might say that my refusal to enter your competition based upon my conspiratorial-type observations is merely a farce for some Freudian, deeper-seated, more troubling fear of rejection that developed because my father did not hug me or tell me he loved me enough when I was an adolescent. Some¹¹ might even say that writing this



Ryan Lane serves as a law clerk for Chief Judge John C. Gemmill of the Arizona Court of Appeals, Division I. Contrary to his winning letter, Ryan is not a “leech” who lives with his “momma,” as he is married to a beautiful woman, Nicole, and has two wonderful children, Claudio and Evan. When he is not serving alongside his favorite Judicial Assistant Linda McPherson, Ryan can generally be found on a nearby trout stream with a fly rod in hand, or at least dreaming up his next adventure. *Soli Deo Gloria.*



Humor

Dear Arizona Attorney

Ryan Lane

in letter-type format is merely a reflection of my deconstructive, postmodern upbringing. The truth is, though, that when I opened my word processor it opened under a letter template and, knowing little about computers, being too cheap to hire an assistant who does, and¹² being too stubborn to call my computer-savvy brother because doing so would require me to be the first to break a three-year silence over whether hobbits are superior in intellect than elves (I am of the persuasion that they are), I decided to simply keep the letter format.

In retrospect, I admit that some of my “observations” might be a bit far-reaching. *See supra* ¶ 4 (discussing the year of the rat). Ultimately, I guess I’m afraid that any submission I would make in your competition, such as this letter if it were an actual entry, would do nothing but garnish laughter from my colleagues in the legal field. For this reason,¹³ I will not be entering your competition.

Sincerely,
Submissionist
*T. R. Lane*¹⁴

endnotes

1. Even though this is written in letter format, I have an uncontrollable urge to include footnotes and follow proper Bluebook formatting. I am of the persuasion that this is so because of the poisoning of my blood that took place during the fiesta of law review training days.
2. I almost labeled your whole operation as a “conspiracy,” but that would make me a “conspiracy theorist.” Such people are themselves looked upon with suspicion. So, I avoid the use of such terms. I also ask the reader to ignore the fact that two of my uncles just happen to be General Jack D. Ripper and Dan Brown.
3. No, *submissionists* is not a real word, but I am hoping that a word such as this, which has so many of the letter “s” (5 to be exact), will become a trendy synonym in the subculture of attorney goo-roos for the word *author*.
4. Attila the Queen of homecoming should not to be confused with Attila the Hun, who was king of the Huns from 434 until 453. Attila the Hun, interestingly enough, was also known as “the scourge of God,” not altogether different from my experiences with such things as playing with fire, eating rat poison, skipping dessert and writing outside the margins.
5. I am roughly 5’ 11”, so this inhibition is not due to my being extremely tall or extremely short.
6. *See* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year_of_the_rat
7. Mysticism is a fun word, isn’t it?
8. How clever: a laptop on top of someone’s lap.
9. There are a number of methods for propagating propaganda. These include appeals to authority, fears and prejudice, *ad hominem* attacks, the common-man approach, stereotyping, presenting red herrings, using half-truths, and even creating euphoria. In setting out to write this letter, I was confident that I could nail down precisely which method you employed. Yet, the more I stared at the advertisement the more I began to believe in the message you were espousing. It’s as though my staring at the advertisement caused me to change my opinion. No, that would be just plain crazy.
10. More specifically, my psychiatrist.
11. *Id.*; *see also* my Foundations of Law Professor (Bruce Green).
12. I would like to dedicate this sentence to my ankle-dress-wearing English teacher, *see* discussion *supra* ¶ 3, who said that anyone who included more than one “and” or more than three commas in a single sentence, or who placed a footnote in the middle of a sentence, would never amount to more than a “pathetic leech” who lived with “momma” until he was 35 and would be incapable of holding down a steady job. Mrs. Wagoner: I am only 31 and I gave my mother notice last month that I intended to vacate her home and, with respect to holding down a steady job, I think you underestimate the difficulty of locating a law firm in the Phoenix valley that is willing to take on a junior associate who doesn’t require said associate to work at least 30 hours per week.
13. Upon further reflection, my spare time is evenly devoured by my obsession with reality TV, my addiction to Nintendo Wii’s *Guitar Hero*, and my adoration for maintaining a quality Facebook page. Thus, even if I overcame my fear of being laughed at, I’m afraid I don’t have the time to enter this year’s competition. I look forward to reading, though, the brilliance of this year’s winning submissionists.
14. *See* discussion, *supra*, note 3.