

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

So Long, Farewell...



By Jeff Scalzi & Melissa Hoff

He Said (One Last Time)

As I sit on yet another plane, iced coffee between my feet and the latest celebrity gossip blaring through my earphones (thanks, JetBlue!), I author my final “He Said” contribution. Surely this last column should be my *pièce de résistance*! It’s the perfect coda to two years’ worth of substance-filled, action-oriented essays, each oozing nuggets of wisdom. Sure, my recent descent into the world of schnitzel trucks and Facebook mishaps was likely the result of the pace of my professional life. But I still have it, right? I can dazzle the legal marketing masses one more time.

Who am I kidding? Above me in the overhead is a duffel bag the size my seven-year old would take to an overnight sleepover. When I went to pack this morning for this latest multi-day trip, not a suitcase could be found in my tiny New York apartment. Apparently, my fleet of travel gear has finally landed all in one place: Massachusetts, where I was not. Excellent. All dressed up with nowhere to put my clothes, I safely zipped and tucked into a properly folded and organized package that resembled a picnic basket.

As another year in the legal industry comes to an end, it occurs to me that there isn’t much these days that is wrapped in a nice, neat package. While the pall of the economic downturn has lifted and cautious optimism has returned, our industry still faces a multitude of challenges. Marketing and business development planning in the age of Wikileaks and Dodd-Frank is akin to a proverbial picnic basket: The compartment where you used to keep the potato salad might be empty, or filled with something else altogether. Translated: Yesterday’s bet-the-company litigation matters that made the firm millions might be replaced today with hundreds of wage-hour disputes.

The proceeding assertions are not news to you. I know this as I have, for the last two years, been on the receiving end of the best creative thinking and innovation our industry has to offer. This has come to me in the form of your contributions to *Strategies*. With each passing month, I grew increasingly amazed at the accomplishments of my peers. My pride swelled with the enthusiasm shown by each Issue Editor, knowing I was but a small part of a tremendous effort. And it was my high honor to work hand in hand with my friends and colleagues, Jennifer Smuts and Melissa Hoff—two of the brightest stars in our industry. Theresa Wojtalewicz, what a dedicated talent you are, and an invaluable asset to SmithBucklin and to LMA. Thank you. When I arrive at my destination tonight, an ironing board is surely in my future. But that’s OK, I will make due. My familiar Samsonite may be in a basement 1,200 miles

away, and there is no picnic basket-like satchel to unpack. I will encounter the same tomorrow in the office, for sure, but I have the knowledge and ability to succeed because of the many things I have learned from my colleagues in LMA through the pages of *Strategies*. And remember, so do each of you. New York Chapter, here I come. ■

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She Said

After the craziness that befalls us in September, October and most of November, I relish the relative calm (at least on the work front) of December. There is still a lot to do—isn’t there always?—but people start to slide into holiday mode. Budgets are done, holiday cards are sent, and we shift our focus from legal seminars to holiday parties. Maybe it’s just my imagination, but I swear that people are nicer this time of year.

While the economy continues to impact our firms, I perceive a greater sense of optimism than at this time last year. As we gear up for 2011, I think we’re going into it with our eyes open to the challenges, but with a bit more perspective on how to prioritize and allocate our resources. The industry is still proceeding with caution, but we seem to be settling into a “new normal.” We are approaching the new year with that potent combination of confidence and realism, which is the basis for a resolve to succeed.

Speaking of new beginnings, I want to acknowledge my friend and partner-in-crime, Jeff Scalzi. Jeff completes his two-year term as co-editor of *Strategies*, and is now on to his next challenge, that of chapter president for LMA-New York. Our loss is their gain. Jeff brings energy, creativity, humor and great ideas to all he does. Jeff, best of luck in the next phase of your LMA participation and thanks for always making me look early by getting your “He Said” submissions in even later.

I will be joined next year as co-editor by my long-time friend and former-colleague, Steve Conley. A talented and conscientious worker, he’s a great addition to the *Strategies* team. If Jeff and I have been known for our 11th hour submissions, Steve will be known as Johnny-on-the-spot. I’m hoping that some of his punctuality will rub off on me. Welcome, Steve!

So enjoy all this season brings, personally and professionally, and here’s wishing you the best in the coming year! ■

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