



TLAP NEWS

SPRING 2009

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3



TENNESSEE LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LAWYERS NEVER NEED...HELP!!!!

By Mark Vorder-Bruegge, Jr.

As compared with overall population statistics, lawyers are at greatly heightened risk of suicide, depression, and addiction - to work, alcohol, and drugs. Many factors explain this. Good lawyers take "ownership" of critical and sometimes life-or-death matters for clients. A typical day, or year, can be an emotional roller-coaster of wins and losses. We regularly see situations where clients have gotten themselves into tragic predicaments with enormous sympathetic gravity. Client relationships are often long-lasting, so an abusive client wreaks havoc far longer than a jerk at the drive-through. And we are trained to be skeptical, find counters to every argument, and view everything as "cutting both ways." It's hard to stay grounded from such perspectives.

The basic work of lawyering has some inherent stress-builders and barriers to help. Much is hands-on, solo work, regardless of the practice setting. We aren't executives who set goals and send others forth to labor at them. Even for lawyers who practice in large firms or in teams, the writing or editing of a brief, the questioning at a deposition, doing a closing argument - all of these are matters of individual creativity and action. And even where portions of work can be delegated, lawyers are historically poor delegators. Do you know anyone who has waited so long to get help with a brief or document production that "it's easier now just to do it myself"? Moreover, solo work lends itself to isolation, and being a champion for clients lends itself to a self-image of "Superman". Who in this mindset would share or seek help for a problem?

I point these things out not to castigate law practice, but to observe that if lawyers are to stay happy, healthy, and grounded, we must first understand both the obvious and the subtle circumstances that affect us.

1. There is nothing wrong with hard work - even very hard work. Indeed, working hard to be fully prepared and stay on schedule can

reduce stress. Just be sure you are working hard for the right reasons. Achievement, happiness, and money are good reasons. If victories, raises, bonuses, pats on the head, or other "highs" from work become "fixes" you need for your self-worth, you may have an addiction just as toxic as one to alcohol, drugs, or gambling.

2. Keep your life rich. The busiest lawyers I know are the ones who also chair civic boards, do mission work overseas, and coach



school athletic teams. The lawyer who "doesn't have time" to spend with family, friends, or hobbies, and doesn't want to get out of bed in the morning, is probably depressed, not too busy.

3. Don't think passionate advocacy is inconsistent with detached professional judgment. My first legal employer, a federal judge, told me I would never have any client as valuable as whatever credibility and reputation I developed. Henry Hancock, a dean of the Memphis bar, used to refer to "White Hat Lawyers." Judges knew his citations were spot-on and his arguments never a path to reversible error. Be a "Lawyer's Lawyer." The integrity is good for your soul, not just your reputation.

4. Once you get on this roller-coaster, sometimes it will go too fast. You need support and help from other people, and you'd better stay open to that reality. Just because you can't solve a particular problem doesn't mean it's insoluble. Just because you represent doctors doesn't mean you are one. "Eat healthy food" and "get plenty of sleep" are not trite slogans to

TLAP Volunteer of the Year

Mark Vorder-Bruegge, Jr. a partner in the Memphis office of Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs LLP received the **2nd Annual TLAP Volunteer of the Year Award**. Mark's consistent willingness to serve combined with his many hours developing the William B. Cain Fund made him the unanimous choice for the award.

Congratulations To Our New Commissioners!

Judge Richard Baumgartner
Knoxville, TN

Andrew C. Branham, Esq
Memphis, TN

Cynthia A. Cheatham, Esq.
Manchester, TN

James M. Cornelius, Jr.,
Esq.
Knoxville, TN

Peter Rustin Harris, Ph.D.
Nashville, TN

Inside this issue:

Synchronicity and CAMP TLAP	2
Lawyers Never Need Help	2
Honoring Chief Justice Holder	3
Help Me! I've Been TLAPed	3
Go Yoga!	4

Synchronicity & CAMP TLAP

Written by: Tom Mabry, TLAP Member and Director, English Mountain Recovery

About ten years ago, a fellow who I met in an AA meeting contacted me about a major problem: he had been charged with a DUI; he was incarcerated in the Roane County Jail; and, as I later learned, he had little recollection of the self-defeating behavior that ultimately deprived him of his freedom.

After being retained to represent Bob, not much evidence was found on which to mount any viable defense. The officer who stopped and arrested Bob was not particularly swayed by my impassioned argument that there existed no probable cause to arrest and charge Bob, nor was the District Attorney favorably impressed.

But I knew Bob personally, and I knew that he had a simmering desire to stop drinking. Bob eventually found his way out of jail and into a halfway house. I continued to see him at meetings and noticed that the spark of sobriety had been lit. Bob managed to remain sober and eventually took a position at a treatment facility west of Nashville. He invited me to visit his place of employment, but due to distance and my schedule, I never made the trip.

At Camp TLAP 2009, a power greater than us all made that visit to Bob possible. At Montgomery Bell State Park, in the same small town of Burns where the treatment facility Discovery Place is located, I saw a familiar face, though initially I hardly recognized him.

As I was setting up the display for English Mountain Recovery, Bob Overton was preparing for the participation of Discovery Place as sponsor of Camp TLAP 2009. Bob looked great and I told him so. We had the chance to reminisce and the following day, Bob and Aaron from Discovery Place conducted their part of the seminar. Bob mentioned how his legal misfortune had been the catalyst of that psychic change necessary to change his life, and that my part, buoyed by guidance from that ubiquitous higher power, had been an influence.

I realized that by helping Bob he was able to help himself and contribute his expertise to lawyers. Bob Overton had come full circle. Camp TLAP presented, through synchronicity and grace, the opportunity for us to reconnect. Recovery is available to lawyers in 2009, thanks to the efforts of everyone affiliated with TLAP, and to the miracle that now defines the temporal life of Bob Overton. He now is a useful, productive person and Bob inspired my continuing recovery and that of my fellow recovering attorneys. Thanks to Laura and the staff for their efforts in having Discovery Place and Bob Overton participate in Camp TLAP!

LAWYERS NEVER NEED . . .HELP!

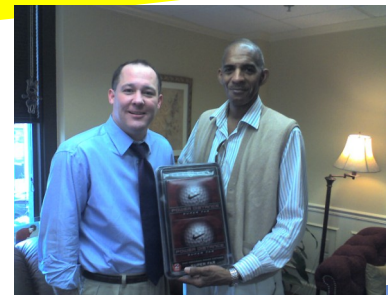
Continued from page 1

be dissected with your keen analytical mind.

- Finally, if you have a partner, associate, or colleague showing signs of depression, overreaction to stress, substance abuse or the like, use all reasonable coercion to get them help. I use that strong word, coercion, deliberately. Psychiatric studies confirm what we lawyers intuitively know: professionals are uniquely skilled at denial. A person in the isolating throes of depression or addiction will do anything to be left in status quo, and won't agree you are acting in his or her best interest. You may have to use very unpleasant leverage. You won't regret that, but you may regret not doing so.

We are not alone in attempting to achieve these serious aspirations. The only stigma, and real thing to fear, is going through life without making the most of it.

Camp TLAP golf tournament planners and participants Matt Eggleston of Nashville and Bill Ligon of Gallatin.



SAVE THE DATE!

Thank you from the TLAP staff to all the participants and MANY volunteers who helped make the 4th Annual CAMP TLAP the best to date! Let's see if we can make it even better next year.

CAMP TLAP 2010
Montgomery Bell State Park
March 19-21

Websites of Interest:

Alcoholics Anonymous Archival and Historical Materials Part 1
<http://hindsfoot.org/archives.html>

Site for lawyers with depression created by a lawyer with depression:
<http://www.lawyerswithdepression.com>

From the A.B.A.:
http://www.abajournal.com/news/high-functioning_alcoholic_lawyers_may_defy_stereotypes



The Memphis contingent: Mark Vorder-Bruegge, Andy Branham, Elizabeth Collins and Ken Shuttleworth.



Our honoree and Leading Lady Chief Justice Janice Holder.



TLAP staff member Marycarol "M.C." McDonough and "Chief Mom" Mrs. Sylvia Holder.



The "Boys of TLAP" Assistant Director Ted Rice, Outreach Directors Jay Ingram of Gallatin and James Corcoran of Knoxville.

On January 30, 2009, TLAP hosted a dinner honoring Chief Justice Holder for her vital contribution to the creation and development of our program. Chief Justice Holder was the "Leading Lady" of the evening, surrounded by a "Cast & Crew" of baby-blue sweatshirt donned people who have also been instrumental in TLAP. The evening featured a tempered roast of The Chief Justice by speakers who thought twice about their presentations by the time they reached the podium. The TLAP Commissioners presented a "big" check for \$1,500.00 to the William B. Cain Foundation in honor of Chief Justice Holder.



Bill Robilio of Memphis, TLAP Executive Director Laura Gatrell and Andy Branham of Memphis styling in their "Cast & Crew" hoodies.

Justice Holder accepts a check for the Judge Cain Foundation from past Commission Chair Chris Hall.



Our Leading Lady autographing Commissioner Dr. Kent Cox's sweatshirt.

Help Me! I've Been TLAPed

Nothing I have encountered in recent memory has caused me greater trepidation than getting into my car the morning of March 13, 2009 to head for Montgomery Bell State Park. I have skydived, swam with sharks, and bungee jumped off bridges not to mention the numerous occasions where I placed my life in jeopardy while in active addiction. I have never been accused of being risk averse, or for that matter, humble. Camp TLAP truly exposed me.

In five years, I have managed to always have a hearing set, a timely illness or some other convenient excuse not to attend the annual retreat. Sadly, at other times I was in no condition to attend. In spite of the ego and outward confidence I possess (of course I am unique there), I have always been unwilling to face the *perils of Camp TLAP*, namely: fellowship with people that have faced similar struggles I have; moments of laughter and humor with new friends; singing by a camp fire with a djembe (an African drum), maracas, something that looked like a ukulele (forgive me Tiny Tim) and a

quartet of deaf tone tenors; and probably more than anything an opportunity at acceptance and closure. No wonder I stayed away so long.

From the moment I arrived I was thrust forward into one event after another. The allure of retreating to my lodge hotel room and avoiding "you people" was always present. Fortunately for me, so were so many of you. With a smile or handshake I was enticed to "join us for a cup of coffee", play a hand of gin rummy or simply listen to some of the most entertaining stories I have ever heard. I was exposed; exposed to acceptance. I discovered an acceptance of myself and an acceptance of me by others. Of course none of this would have been possible had I stayed home. For that, I owe a great deal to the TLAP staff and volunteers. Without their encouragement, none of this would have been possible.

I was surprised at the opportunities that presented themselves at Camp TLAP. There were opportunities to make some much needed amends, to

express gratitude and to step outside of the safe haven of my isolation. Whether I was golfing in the 45 degree sleeting rain or forced into contortions in the 110 degree yoga "hospitality" suite, the day's events were always entertaining and encouraged the development of new bonds amongst the attendees. The evenings of games, speakers, movies and the ultimate bonfire/hootenanny made the nights events impossible to pass up. There was also plenty of late night storytelling and mischief in and about the hotel property. I was truly like a kid in a candy store.

Camp TLAP, like so many other things in life is what you make of it. Luckily, and with a great many gentle nudges, I decided to attend. The rest was easy. I cannot wait to see all of you next year. Bring your "bongo", golf rain gear, deck of cards, popcorn, yoga mat, a sense of humor and most importantly.....an open mind.

Anonymous

TLAP NEWS

200 4th Avenue
North
Suite 810
Nashville, TN 37219
(615) 741-3238
Call toll free at:
(877) 424-8527

**CoLAP
Annual Conference**

The 22nd Annual National Conference for Lawyer Assistance Programs will be held at the Arizona Grand Resort in Phoenix, AZ October 6-9, 2009. TLAP's Executive Director, Laura Gatrell will Co-Chair the event.

For more information: www.abanet.org/legalservices/colap/conference.html

For hotel reservations: www.arizonagrandresort.com



GO YOGA!

It is difficult to describe the benefits of yoga without gushing. It is impossible to state the truth without it sounding exaggerated! After my first Bikram Yoga (hot yoga) class, I felt exhausted for about ten (10) minutes, after which I felt an enormous surge in energy: the simultaneous vibration of millions of cells all over my body at once. Suffice it to say, it felt "good." That feeling still comes about ten minutes after every class: a sense of relaxation, peace, contentedness, pleasant exhaustion . . . followed by renewed energy.

Yoga Brings Balance

Recovering individuals have pasts in which they have swung too far in one direction. We have sought a purely physical (or hyper-mental) solution to a problem which has multiple facets. We have gone to extremes. *Yoga brings balance.* Periods of exertion are balanced by periods of rest, within the class itself. By introducing the practice into one's life, one introduces dedicated periods of focus on not-work, not-family, not-money, not-television, not-me talking. This period is itself balancing.

More importantly, I have experienced an overall calming, mellowing of my personality. I do not get upset as easily. I can focus for long periods. My mental clarity is stronger than ever. In short, yoga has returned me to a sense of balance while being in the world.

Yoga Brings Healing

The practice of yoga heals the body, clearing away the physical (and mental/emotional) blocks to health. In Western medicine, the spine is known to be the channel for the neural pathways: how messages are sent from the body to the brain. Yoga rejuvenates the spine, healing (or allowing healing) in the lower, middle and upper back. The Bikram Yoga postures are scientifically designed to systematically rejuvenate all the major muscles/cartilage, as well as to rejuvenate the internal organs and the bone structures which hold it all together.

After just three months of yoga practice, I am stronger—physically stronger—in a way that I can see in the mirror. I have actually learned how to stand without hunching over, and I have lost fifteen (15) pounds of the spare tire that was growing around my mid-section. My skin glows – especially after class.

People in recovery need yoga because we are people who are *fighting for our lives*. The evidence is in, and it overwhelmingly suggests that people who are diagnosed with the mental illnesses of alcoholism, addiction and depression, are living with fatal illnesses. Left untreated, these illnesses result in death.

The benefits which accrue from a yoga practice—physical, mental, emotional rejuvenation—these are all components of a healthful recovery plan. Awareness of yoga and its benefits means awareness of an incredibly powerful tool which can transform the participant on all the levels mentioned.

When you call TLAP, you can be sure that **complete confidentiality** will be maintained. The Tennessee Supreme Court has established TLAP as an approved impaired lawyers program pursuant to a Rule 33 of the Rules of The Supreme Court of Tennessee. By virtue of said rule, all communications with TLAP are confidential and members of TLAP are relieved of their duty to report ethical violations discovered as a result of their TLAP work. This means that any misconduct or ethical violation discovered or revealed to a member of TLAP will *not* be reported to any disciplinary board. Additionally, communications with TLAP are confidential and privileged by virtue of T.C.A. Sec. 23-4-101, *et seq.*

Problems are not a sign of failure, but an opportunity for growth.

Don't wait another minute – Contact Us Now!

TLAP mascot Judge Moody posing with commissioners Frank Pinchak and Dr. Tim Davis of Chattanooga.



Would you like to submit an article for the next newsletter? Have a topic suggestion? Call M.C. McDonough at 615-741-3238 or email submissions to: marycarol.mcdonough@tncourts.gov

'Be not afraid of growing slowly, be afraid only of standing still.'

--Chinese Proverb