

"Musings to the Very End"

by Warren Kraft

About four years ago, the able and articulate Don Knight, an assistant city attorney with the City of Dallas, began to pen a bi-monthly ListServe column for this magazine. Its intended purpose was to introduce IMLA members to the Municipal Attorney ListServe, another valuable service, which was co-sponsored by the Municipal Code Corporation. The idea grew from one of the then-recent gatherings of listserve members attending the annual IMLA conferences. Writing about the various topics discussed by its members, Don provided a periodic "snapshot" of this resource for municipal attorneys.

A couple years ago, Don stepped aside and this column also included an insight into the companion Water Cooler, a Yahoo! Group administered by attorney Bill Kearns of New Jersey. If the listserve was the resource for quick legal checks, the Water Cooler was a place to gather for the other stuff that life provides us, and hence the name. Like the water cooler that used to occupy a corner of the office in bygone days, here was a communication tool to put the "human face" on Internet messages.

But, it is time to move on and return this space to the *Municipal Lawyer* magazine. Both groups have reached that "critical mass" of members to sustain the groups. So, while this column becomes infrequent, the need for such tools and the resourcefulness of its participants will not cease. Those who use these resources are grateful for their sponsors. As the Internet continues to bring people "closer together," the need for such conversations grows exponentially.

For instance, on the listserve this autumn, one of our members returned from a medical leave to the great relief of those chiming in. Granted, the messages were not about a legal issue, such as "Regulating Occupy Protests," Garrity Warnings, or Guide Dog matters, but it was surely part of that human face that enables us to practice our profession with empathy. And recently on the Water Cooler, we discussed TV nostalgia, the usual array of recipes, and reunions... all those things that enable colleagues to become friends.

At the IMLA Conference in Chicago this fall, we paused to recognize our colleagues for their achievements, and honored those who mean much to us personally. We celebrate publicly and privately those who can achieve a life/work balance. Sooner or later, we come to realize that much of our professional pride and satisfaction comes from those with whom we surround ourselves.

So, as my work on this column ends, it seems appropriate to share the musings of John "Kelly" Addy, deputy city attorney from Billings, MT. Attending a Hall of Fame induction for a fraternity member into the Montana State University Hall of Fame, Kelly talked about the physical changes and the maturing perspectives that flowed from the first reunion in 40 years:

> It's not that I learned something new or lost an old misconception, but that I am more okay with what life is and with what life isn't. If you try to live it as it isn't or balk at living it as it is, it's a lot harder. It is what it is. And what it is isn't so bad. Not at all. So put a saddle on it, stick your left boot into the left stirrup, and swing that leg over. There's still plenty of daylight for ridin'.

I add this quote that appeared on my Facebook page for a "spell:"

> Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather, to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, champagne in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming "WOO HOO what a ride!"

Until next time ...

Editor's Note: IMLA thanks Warren for his dynamic and insightful contributions to this magazine over the last year. Warren was honored by IMLA recently as the recipient of its Brad D. Bailey Assistant City/ County Attorney of the Year Award. Congratulations and thank you, Warren, and, to pick up on your references, Happy Trails!

For those of you who would like to join the listserv, go to http://www.municode.com and select the *Listservs* link to get the page on *Mailing Lists*. Click on *Municipal Attorneys* to bring up the subscription page. Fill it out and hit *Subscribe*. To sign up for the Water Cooler, send an e-mail to MunicAttyWaterCooler@yahoogroups.com that identifies you and the local government you represent. You will get a response from YahooGroups asking if you want to join. Respond to the message as directed.

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