

Potpourri of Law

By Reg P. Wydeven
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Ever since I was four, I always wanted to be a lawyer. I remember going to church or to the grocery and watching people come up to my dad to thank him for helping them with their legal issues. I had no idea what he did exactly, I just remember thinking it was cool how much people appreciated what he did for them.

That's why in fifth grade I was so excited for our class field trip to the state capitol in Madison. We would get to see where the state legislature created the laws that my dad used in his job. What was most memorable, however, was leaving a student behind. Apparently the buddy system isn't infallible. We went back and got him and he received a hero's welcome on the bus.

Like we did, thousands of students visit the capitol each year, hopefully many with dreams of becoming lawyers. Like my son, several of these students are allergic to peanuts. That's why the Division of State Facilities recently asked people to refrain from feeding squirrels at the state capitol. In a letter sent to tenants of a downtown Madison office building, the DSF asked its tenants to stop feeding the squirrels on the capitol lawn because they might inadvertently harm a child with a peanut allergy.

As a youngster, in addition to dreaming about becoming a lawyer, I dreamt of other things as well, like Farrah Fawcett. The inspiration, of course, was the famous poster of her wearing a red swimsuit with her feathered back blonde hair cascading her shoulders. Well, Fawcett recently filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles County over the set of photographs used for the poster and she is seeking a minimum of \$100,000 in damages.

The suit was filed against Bio-Graphics inc., Pie International Inc. and author T.N. Trikalis and claims that the companies have "falsely asserted to third parties that [Fawcett] does not own any rights in the photographs." Additionally, in the lawsuit Fawcett asserts that she "owns and possesses all the photographs and negatives of all the photographs taken at the photo shoot" accusing Trikalis and executives at Pie of reproducing the photo and selling it.

After all, if someone worked hard to establish an image or brand, they will try to prevent others from profiting from it. That's why FremantleMedia North America, which owns the TV show "American Idol," recently filed suit in federal court against Palazzo Men's Club out of Austin, Texas.

In the lawsuit, FremantleMedia hopes to obtain an injunction against Palazzo to prevent it from hosting its weekly "Stripper Idol" event, in addition to seizing the profits from the amateur stripping contest. The suit claims "Stripper Idol," which features amateur women dancing topless for 1 minute and the winner is chosen by audience applause and receives \$500, violates FremantleMedia's trademark rights to "American Idol." FremantleMedia asserts Palazzo's use of the name could mislead the public to believe that the TV show sponsors the event.

The suit further alleges that Palazzo advertises for the event using a logo with a "color scheme, design and font" similar to American Idol's.

So while many kids may dream of becoming a lawyer, many lawyers could never dream up some of the cases that might come across their desks.