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by Robert Yates • Executive Editor

This issue marks our 10th annual diversity survey. After years of halting, but fairly steady progress in increasing the diversity among lawyers, we were curious to see if last year's economic woes would translate into serious layoffs of minority and female lawyers.

It doesn't appear by the numbers that law firms are deserting the issue, but when firms cut back on their recruiting and hiring, the reductions fall disproportionately on minorities. But numbers can rise and fall.

The real concern, as expressed in Amanda Robert's excellent article, "Some firms fail to retain diverse attorneys" (starting on page 18), is captured in the phrase "window dressing." That is, firms make the effort to demonstrate their commitment to diversity with the creation of diversity partners, diversity committees and the like, but the guts of the firms — the decision making, the high-profile, high-dollar matters, the important client relationships — remain apart from minorities and women.

In this month's "Closing Argument" Rory Smith, director of diversity at The John Marshall Law School, takes a look at how the legal community is dealing with diversity issues, and challenges each member of the legal profession to do more. Find his volunteer suggestions at www.jmls.edu/diversity/Volunteers.shtml.

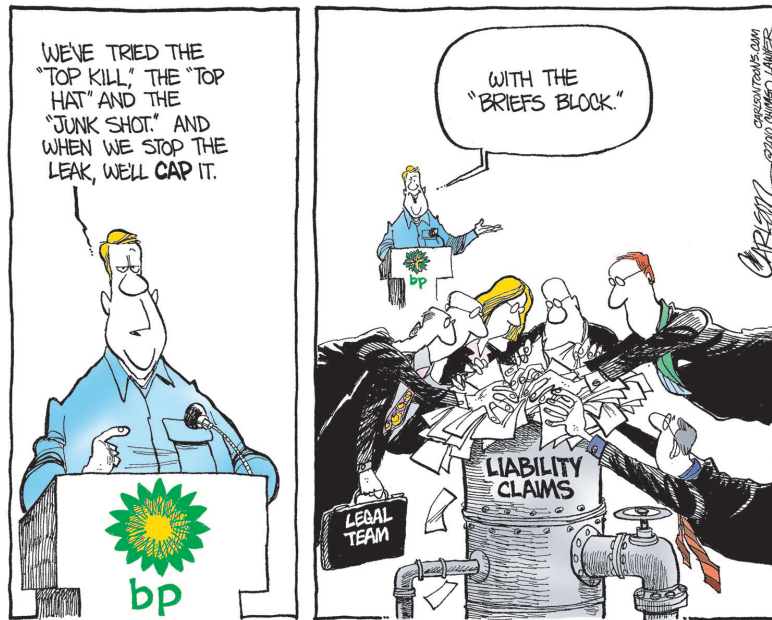
We occasionally get letters to the editor and here is one we'd like to share:

Dear editor:

I was pleased to see Bob Clifford take a stand in his June column on the need to ban aluminum baseball bats in youth leagues.

I have been on the forefront of this issue for three years, since a friend of mine called my attention to the problem. Christina Russo's son, who was 14 at the time, was seriously injured when a line drive off a metal bat struck him directly in the face. He has since needed two plastic surgeries to repair the damage, but he and his family are doing fine, considering all the physical and emotional trauma they have faced.

I told Christina I would do what I could to help and approached state Rep. Bob Molaro, who introduced a bill in the state legislature



that would have banned the use of these bats by youth leagues. Unfortunately, the bill never got out of committee. Last year, Alderman Bob Fioretti was extremely supportive of our efforts to have the Chicago City Council ban metal bats in youth leagues, but the metal bat "cartel" brought in their big guns, and, sadly, we struck out.

Currently, only New York City and the state of North Dakota have succeeded in passing legislation to ban metal bats in youth leagues. The latest state to step up to the plate is California. In May, a bill was introduced in the state legislature to ban metal bats as a result of a Marin County teenager who suffered a serious head injury when he was hit in the head by a ball hit off a metal bat. The boy's team actually switched to wood bats to honor the injured player.

There are signs that the baseball industry is beginning to wake up. Beginning on Jan. 1, 2011, the National Collegiate Athletic Association will enforce only BBCOR-approved bats. BBCOR ratings, which are considered a more direct measure of bat performance, ensure the metal

bats "perform like wood bats" with no extra bounce or faster exit speeds.

But high school leagues and Little Leagues have taken no such steps. Those leagues are still able to determine at the local level whether or not to use potent metal bats or safer wood bats.

We simply must make our "national pastime" safer for children. Local and state governing bodies have been reactionary in that they only pass or consider laws after a young player is hurt or killed. Elected public officials in Chicago and Illinois have a chance to be proactive rather than reactive, and prevent such tragedies from occurring in the first place.

Antonio Romanucci

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Corrections from the June issue's Large Firm Survey: Beermann Swerdlove has a total of 30 lawyers, not the 56 reported in the survey. The firm reports six equity partners; 13 income partners; nine associates; and two of counsel. And Vedder Price has 215 lawyers, not the 230 reported in the survey. ■

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