

# YOUNG LAWYERS



## Lawyer Lifestyles . . . . .Pg. 4

### The "Next" Big Thing: Earthy BYOB Offers Sophistication on South Street.

There's something just a little bit wrong about walking down South Street holding a big bottle of red wine. But now you're all grown up -- high heels or tie and all. And your destination, a BYOB called Next, is evidence that South Street might be trying to do the same.

## Pecking Order . . . . .Pg. 6

While there are distinct advantages of working late, there also are perils involved, including the most dangerous risk of all -- always working late. Most of us often stay late, though, so hopefully these tips will help if you find yourself in the office after dark, which arrives so early in our post-Daylight Savings sunsets. Molly Peckman offers her advice.

## Young Lawyers

### Find Ways to Balance

### The Best of Both Worlds...pg. 3



# Flexing

Young Lawyers Find Ways to  
Balance the Best of Both Worlds

# Their MUSCLES

BY MELISSA NANN BURKE

*Of the Legal Staff*

About five years ago, feeling somewhat isolated in her job as part-time lawyer and full-time mom, Deborah Epstein Henry e-mailed other Philadelphia part-timers and announced that she was starting an informal, brownbag lunch where they could gather monthly and talk about better balancing their work and home lives.

"One hundred and fifty lawyers e-mailed me back," Henry recalled.

Since then, Henry's group, called "Flex-Time Lawyers," has grown to include a chapter in New York, and her listserve of subscribing attorneys has topped 1,300.

She focuses on dispelling the negative perceptions of part- and flextime lawyering, and she has found a niche.

Attorneys come to the forum not only for guidance and support, but also to network. Some leave with job leads, client referrals—even nannies' phone numbers. Now somewhat of an expert on work-life

balance issues, Henry's been called to speak to groups of lawyers and other professionals in Los Angeles, Austin, Texas, Washington, D.C., New Haven, Conn., New Orleans and elsewhere. In her talks, Henry addresses attorneys' questions about going part time and employers' questions about how best to address attorneys' demands.

While Henry continues to do some business development work for her law firm, Schnader, Harrison Segal & Lewis, these days most of her working hours are dedicated to consulting legal employers, running CLE seminars on work-life balance issues and hosting monthly networking meetings for her Flex-Time Lawyers group.

"I joke that I've become a 'Dear Debbie' on these problems," Henry said.

"Certainly, when I sent that initial e-mail, I did not anticipate the overwhelming response I've gotten in the five years since."

Part-time attorneys at a law firm generally work a percentage of the number of billable hours required—an arrangement negotiated between the attorney and firm management.

At a nonprofit, government or in-house job, "part-time" usually means working one less day a week.

Flextime lawyers, on the other hand, work the same number of hours as their full-time colleagues, but those hours aren't necessarily worked at the office or between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Flex timers might come in early and leave the office early, or they might work from home, late at night or early in the morning.

Robyn Forman Pollack was introduced to Flex-time Lawyers in 1999 shortly after she had returned to Saul Ewing on an 80 percent schedule after her first son was born.

"Initially, it was recognizing there were other people out there like me—that I wasn't alone out there dealing with these issues," said Pollack, 35, who has been an associate in the firm's bankruptcy and reorganization division for eight years.

Pollack's been on a 60 percent schedule since her second son was born three years ago. Cutting back her hours was an easy decision, she said.

"I wanted the flexibility to be there for [my children] and still maintain a career," Pollack said. "Once they were born, they became my priority."

The number of attorneys like Pollack who have taken advantage of the part- or flextime schedules now available at most Philadelphia law firms has grown over the last 10 years.

But the part-time population is still slight—only 2.5 percent of Philadelphia partners and 8.2 percent of associates work part time, according to a 2003 survey of firms in Philadelphia by the National Association for Law Placement (the survey did not provide a breakdown between equity and non-equity partners).

"That shows there's something going on here," Henry said.

Stigma is still a barrier, she explained. "People are afraid of derailing their careers," Pollack said.

Some say alternative work schedules slow advancement to partner or that part-time

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### Work-Life Balance

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salaries don't match the actual work performed. Still others complain the work they're assigned is of a less exciting nature.

Legal employers are concerned too—they want happy lawyers, but they don't want to make flexible or part-time hours so easily attainable that everyone would feel entitled to take it.

There are also more practical barriers to working part- or flextime. A practicing lawyer's schedule is at times just plain unpredictable — deadlines change at the last minute, clients make unrealistic demands and wireless devices like the BlackBerry make it impossible to really ever "leave work."

What Henry strives for between her support group and her consulting business is to make the transition to part- or flextime easier for both lawyers and their employers.

Henry's own part-time story began when she moved with her husband to Philadelphia in 1997. She had been working full time at Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler in New York as a litigation associate for two years, but she hoped to "lateral in" to a Philadelphia firm on a reduced schedule, she said. She already had one child at home and another on the way.

"I wanted to be a more integral part of my kids' daily lives," explained Henry, 36. She found a home at Schnader, where she

worked part time for several years until she decided to formalize her consulting business in 2002 and make that and her networking lunches her primary day job — or, sometimes, might job.

"I've always worked extremely unconventional hours in order to maximize my time with my kids," said Henry, who has three boys, ages 3, 6 and 9. "I try not to work when they are home or awake."

Some days that means getting up very early or staying up late at night to work. She has the opportunity to re-evaluate her own work-life balance often — whenever she prepares for a seminar, a brownbag lunch presentation or a consulting session, she said.

A couple of trends seem to be driving work-life concerns at law firms and other legal employers, Henry said. Billable hour demands have increased. Clients expect more immediate responsiveness with wireless technology, so attorneys are getting calls at all times of day, on weekends and on vacation. But the demands of involvement at home are great too — birthday parties, coaching soccer teams and elaborate science projects.

"The problem is there is one fixed-hour limit: there's 24 hours in a day," Henry said. Her suggestion for proposing a part-time schedule to an employer is to make the argument an economical one.

"To be successful, it needs to be a mutually beneficial arrangement for both the legal employer and the lawyer," Henry explained. Often, when someone proposes a part-time

schedule, Henry said, an employer decides the person is more profitable at 100 percent than 75 percent. Henry sees it another way.

"It's not 75 percent better than not at all?" she said. Many people are walking out the door without these concessions and "that's a tremendous economic loss for a law firm."

More than half of recent graduating law school classes are female, she notes. The majority of people who contact her about Flex-Time Lawyers have small children.

"The legal profession cannot afford to operate without half the legal talent available," Henry said. "You want to make it in your employer's best interest to accommodate you."

Pollack said Saul Ewing accommodated her part-time request because she proved herself to be a hardworking, committed and dedicated employee in the two years she worked there full time. Her firm had no part-time policy when she proposed the schedule.

"If you're a good attorney, firms will do what they have to do to keep you," Pollack said. "They may not be thrilled about it, but they'll do it."

The firm viewed the arrangement as a "privilege and not an entitlement," Pollack said.

Pollack is fast approaching the point in her career where partnership is something she's thinking about. Saul Ewing has no set policy as to where part-timers fit into the partnership track, she said, although the firm does note that being part-time doesn't derail you. Henry recommends employers delay con-

sideration of part-time attorneys for partnership until they build up the requisite number of hours as full-time attorneys do. Beyond that, she encourages employers to be more open-minded when they examine other criteria for partnership, recognizing that part-timers don't always get the "plumb work," may not have trial experience as extensive as their colleagues, and have had less time for business development over the years.

However, Henry said as a side note, part- or flex-timers might find creative ways to go about business development.

"Business doesn't necessarily have to come in on the golf course or through rubber-chicken dinners," Henry said. For example, Henry has clients she's brought to Schnader that she's found through contacts made in her community and through her involvement in her children's lives through preschool, soccer-team coaching and other activities.

Henry feels the momentum behind work-life balance gaining. Legal employers are starting to pay attention to it. More are creating committees to address work-life balance concerns.

"Despite the fact that a lot of written policies are in place, the next step is breathing life into the policies," she said. "I'm for making this a win-win situation. To affect change, it has to be a positive approach."

Flex-Time Lawyers' next Philadelphia meeting is scheduled to be held Tuesday, Dec. 7, at 12:30 p.m. at the offices of Wolf Block Schorr & Solis-Cohen, 1650 Arch St.