

COPLAN+CRANE CHRONICLES

BIKE SAFELY THIS SUMMER!



This time of year brings great weather for bicycling. It's important to take precautions to stay safe out on the road.

Here are some tips:

-  Make sure your bike is well-maintained.
-  Check tire pressure and brakes before each ride.
-  Always wear a helmet.
-  Wear bright, reflective clothing so drivers can see you.
-  Don't wear headphones or earbuds.
-  Make eye contact with drivers.
-  Obey all traffic signs and signals. Use hand signals when turning.
-  Ride with traffic – never against it.
-  If you're in a group, ride single file.

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\$600,000 SETTLEMENT FOR MAN WHO LOST VISION IN LEFT EYE

At Coplan + Crane, we make the effort to increase our medical knowledge in order to provide effective representation for clients harmed by medical malpractice. This effort allowed us to recover financial compensation for a man who lost functional vision in one eye due to negligence.

In 2015, Matthew went to see a doctor about cloudy vision he was experiencing in his left eye. He was diagnosed with a vitreous hemorrhage – there was bleeding in the gel of the eye which was interfering with his vision. Matthew was referred to a retinologist, who determined that he would need a surgical procedure called a vitrectomy to remove the blood and determine the source of bleeding.

Matthew underwent the procedure a month later. During the surgery, the retinologist encountered fresh bleeding and ended the procedure without determining the cause of the bleeding. Matthew was referred to an ophthalmologist for further evaluation and treatment.

The ophthalmologist performed surgery the following month and discovered a “giant” tear in Matthew’s retina. After the surgery, the ophthalmologist wrote a letter to the retinologist and requested a copy of the operative note – a standard report after every surgery describing details of the procedure.

Matthew consulted an attorney, who referred the case to Coplan + Crane, know-

ing our reputation for being able to handle complex cases.

“Our understanding of medical issues and previous experience allowed us to properly evaluate the case, find the right experts and ask the right questions during depositions,” said **Ted Jennings**, who worked on the case with **Ben Crane** and **Erv Nevitt**.

During the deposition of the retinologist, we wanted to learn more about the procedure that was done. The retinologist claimed not to know how Matthew’s retina was damaged and insisted it was intact at the time of the surgery. The retinologist speculated that the retina must have “spontaneously degenerated” by the time Matthew was seen by the ophthalmologist.

We did not find this credible, and the ophthalmologist confirmed during another deposition that the surgery performed by the retinologist was the most likely cause of the damage to Matthew’s retina.



As a result of the retinologist’s negligence, Matthew was left with no functional vision in his left eye.

As the case proceeded, we prepared for different defense

strategies. For example, Matthew had diabetes, which can lead to a similar eye condition called diabetic retinopathy. This can result in bleeding and damage to the retina. The defense could have argued that this

\$600,000 SETTLEMENT FOR MAN WHO LOST VISION IN LEFT EYE (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

might have caused Matthew's vision loss.

"But from experience with previous cases and learning about the retina, we knew that wasn't what we were dealing with here," says Ted. "So we were ready for that defense if it was presented."

Before the case was set to go to trial, the defense agreed to a settlement of \$600,000.

While Matthew will not regain vision in his eye, we were able to hold a negligent medical professional accountable.

"We thought this was a good settlement," says Ben. "We were able to get a positive result for our client without the need for years of additional litigation. And we were able to do that because of our knowledge of medical issues, which helped us build a good case." ■

\$175,000 SETTLEMENT FOR MAN INJURED IN ELEVATOR ACCIDENT

People take elevators every day, and usually don't think twice about it – unless something goes wrong. We were able to help a client who was injured after an elevator malfunctioned because it wasn't being properly maintained.

In 2015, our client Rodney got on an elevator from the upper floor of a building in downtown Chicago. After the doors closed, the elevator experienced what is called an "over-speed incident." In short, the elevator began dropping down at a very high speed. Fortunately, the governors – a safety mechanism on the elevator – engaged, bringing the elevator to an abrupt halt.

When the governors engage, it results in a tremendous amount of force that is felt by passengers on the elevator. That force resulted in Rodney suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee.

This injury had a significant impact for Rodney, who is a world-class martial artist. He needed surgery and faced months of recovery. He missed time from work and was unable to teach students the martial arts.

Rodney turned to Coplan + Crane.

The owner of the building, Alliance Partners, had hired Thyssenkrupp Elevator Corporation to maintain the elevators at the building. We discovered that Thyssenkrupp had failed to provide preventative maintenance, and only worked on the elevator when called in for repairs.

"The elevator company, like many companies, chose money over people's safety," says **Erv Nevitt**, who



represented Rodney.

We discovered that a year earlier, Allied Partners hired a company to conduct a vertical transportation audit. The audit identified multiple problems. Thyssenkrupp claims they fixed all the problems, but could provide no documentation to support that claim.

The audit determined that Thyssenkrupp was not providing any preventative maintenance, and only worked on the elevator to fix any problems that arose.

In addition, the company that conducted the audit called for a complete modernization of the elevators in the building. They noted the current elevators were old and obsolete, and it was very difficult to find replacement parts, but the elevators were not replaced.

After the audit, Thyssenkrupp recommended that Alliance Partners buy new drive motors for the elevators, but Alliance Partners decided not to purchase them.

As a result of this inaction, the old elevators were still in use on the day that Rodney used one.

We built a strong case that demonstrated both Alliance Partners and Thyssenkrupp were negligent. About a month before the trial was scheduled to begin, the case was settled for \$175,000.

"Their inaction was unacceptable," says **Ben Crane**. "We take these cases to send the message that it's not acceptable to take risks with people's safety." ■

FIRM HAPPENINGS



Coplan + Crane has been named one of “Chicago’s Best and Brightest Companies to Work For®” and will be honored at a ceremony at the Renaissance Chicago Downtown Hotel in September. A program of the National Association for Business Resources, the Best and Brightest Companies to Work For® evaluates companies based on many factors, including communication, work-life balance, employee education, diversity, recognition and retention. It recognizes companies that “deliver

exceptional human resource practices and an impressive commitment to their employees.” The program is based on the idea that making a company better creates richer lives for employees and builds a stronger community as a whole.

“We’re humbled to be named to this list,” says **Ben Crane**. “We couldn’t do what we do without the great work of our employees. So we try to make our firm a place where they are proud to work.” The ceremony will be part of the inaugural Best and Brightest National Summit, which is designed to build employee enrichment and enhance company culture. ■

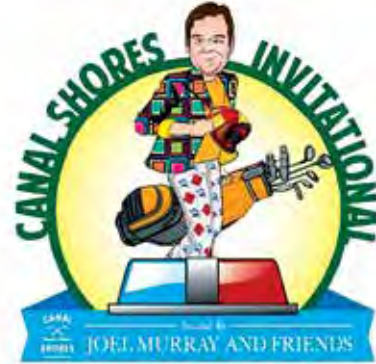


Emma Florian

Paralegal **Emma Florian** has written an article titled “The Healthy Balance: Litigation & Life” that appears in the June 2019 issue of *Paralegal Voice*. Emma begins by noting that while working as a paralegal to help clients is extremely rewarding, it can also be stressful. The article makes the point that

it’s important for everyone to have “a place, hobby or passion that reminds us of who we are and brings joy to life that we all deserve.” Emma discusses how a love of horses has helped her manage stress throughout her life. She currently runs a horse training and boarding facility while also working full-time for Coplan + Crane. This situation gives her the best of both worlds, she says – a job that she loves and a hobby that she loves. “We all need a healthy work-life balance and doing something you enjoy regularly will make you more productive at work as well as make life more enjoyable,” she writes. ■

Coplan + Crane is sponsoring the 7th Annual Canal Shores Invitational at Canal Shores Golf Course in Evanston on August 5th to raise funds for the First In Foundation.



The First In Foundation (FIF) was formed in 2017 to support first responders in their time of need through events and entertainment. It offers creative outlets for those who struggle with anxiety, depression and PTSD due to the overwhelming stress experienced as a firefighter, police officer or EMT.

This year’s event also features a fundraising party at Joe’s on Weed Street, hosted by Joel Murray & Friends. ■

On July 11th, Coplan + Crane hosted “Legal Libations,” a monthly social gathering for local attorneys in Oak Park and surrounding areas. Legal Libations began with Ben and friends Lynn Conniff and James Keleher back in 2014, and is usually hosted in local restaurants and pubs. This was our first official gathering in our newly renovated office space; it was a pleasure to welcome our colleagues and celebrate! ■



Chris Norem and Ben Crane



Stephen Blecha and Lauren Buchanan

...SUPPORT STAFF SPOTLIGHT...



ALEXANDER KRAMER, a summer law clerk, graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in environmental studies. He is entering his final year at Northern Illinois University College of Law and is scheduled to graduate in 2020.

As an undergraduate, Alexander took a required environmental law class that piqued his interest. He had taken other classes with the professor, who was also an attorney, and knew him well.

“Based on my experience in the class, and conversations with the professor, I decided the law was something I’d be interested in,” he says.

Alexander previously was a legal intern for the City of Lake Forest, where he assisted city attorneys with legal research and data collection.

A native of Hoffman Estates, he enjoys watching sports and playing hockey and lacrosse. While still interested in environmental law, he is looking forward to gaining more legal experience before deciding on a practice area. ■



BRITTANY SHAW, a summer law clerk, graduated from Bradley University with a degree in political science and government/philosophy. She recently graduated from the Saint Louis University School of Law.

She says she was inspired to study the law because she used to watch a lot of “Law & Order” when she was growing up. “It was one of our favorite shows,” she says. “My mom and I would always try to argue the cases as if we were lawyers.”

Brittany has previously served internships with ArchCity Defenders, Rosenblum Schwartz & Fry, the Federal Public Defender’s office, U.S. District Court and other organizations. She also served as a Rule 13 student attorney while in law school.

A native of Bellwood, Brittany enjoys working out, especially kickboxing and taekwondo. She is interested in the practice areas of criminal defense, civil rights and personal injury. She is taking the bar exam this summer. ■

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