

AFTER HOURS

By Barbara Lyne

An Unbillable Christmas

Highlights of the Season's Brightest Bashes

The economy apparently hasn't dampened holiday revelry at Manhattan firms this season. Lawyers all over town are attacking the festivities with the same fervor they usually reserve for year-end deals.

Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy kicked off the holiday season on Dec. 4 at the Plaza Hotel when the firm's (amateur?) theatrical group, The Milkweed Mighty Art Players, gave its 53rd annual performance to almost 1,000 Milbank employees and alumni.

This year's show . . . *A Milkweed Carol (or Anything Goes)*. After the matinee performance, which was held for non-lawyers, spouses and children of lawyers, the administrative staff waltzed off for cocktails, dinner and dancing at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The firm's evening celebration included dinner for all Milbank lawyers worldwide and an 8:30 p.m. second show.

The reviews? Partner Peter Herman, the show's director, said he received bundles of fan mail from people who thought this was the best show in a decade, an accolade some members of the audience attribute to its shorter length. "The 53rd annual production was far more professional than *Les Miserables*, *Cats* or *Teddy & Alice*," wrote one alumnus of the firm.

KAYE, SCHOLER'S THREE HOURS AND THE ELVES OF CLEARY

Kaye, Scholer, Fierman, Hays & Handler, on the other hand, wasn't willing to sacrifice too many billable hours to celebrate the holidays. The firm rented the Copacabana for all of three hours on Dec. 8. The festivities, which included dinner and dancing, were scheduled from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. — just time for a quick fox-trot before heading back to the office.

At Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton, the "Elves of Cleary" were hard at work on the 9th, carrying on an annual tradition. The elves, who are first-year associates, are in charge of buying, wrapping and delivering gifts, in full elf regalia, on the day of the Christmas party to all support staff (except secretaries, who normally receive gifts from the lawyers with whom they work).

Associates are assessed \$50 to fund the gift-buying spree. Elf czar Frank Eppes, a first-year litigation associate, reported that his committee of 11 delivered more than 390 gifts and came in \$3 under budget. How does it feel to be elf czar? "Pretty damn hectic," said Eppes. Cleary later feted all employees with dinner and dancing at The Wall St. Club.

Four firms celebrated the holidays on Dec. 11. Cahill Gordon & Reindel invited support staff and lawyers to the Sheraton Centre, and in Cahill tradition, the firm's new lawyers, including laterals, provided entertainment in the form of skits. Cravath, Swaine & Moore chose the observation deck of The World Trade Center for its celebration. Donovan Lei-



LAWBILL was the program for Milbank, Tweed's Christmas show.

sure Newton & Irvine held its "lawyers-only" black-tie dinner at the River Club of New York, but will host a separate party for support staff in the firm's main conference room on Dec. 18. And Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler, in a gesture of largesse, invited all employees and their spouses or dates to dinner at The Halloran House.

Christmas will come on the 16th of the month for Chadbourne & Parke and Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft. Chadbourne's resident band will strut its stuff for all employees with a Bruce Springsteen medley at the Hemisphere Club in the Time-Life Building. Band leader and litigation associate Lawrence Savell won't reveal the band's name — that will be unveiled at the bash. But the same ensemble entertained the troops at the summer outing under the name "The Breach Boys and the Chadbournettes."

At Cadwalader, all employees have been invited to the Plaza Hotel for holiday dinner and dancing. Several partners costumed as reindeer or Santa Claus are expected.

EVERY BREATHING EMPLOYEE

Partner Marc Dreier said every "breathing" Rosenman & Colin employee is invited to his firm's Christmas bash. Dreier reports that Rosenman will be celebrating at 1 p.m. Dec. 18 at the Pierre Hotel. "In the past," Dreier said, "the party was held on a Thursday, but no one could look at each other the following Friday, so this year we moved it up a day to give everyone the weekend to recover."

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison will be fering all employees at the Sheraton Centre on Dec. 17. But the firm will also entertain the children of Paul, Weiss employees with a party at its offices the week before Christmas. Tax and Erisa partner Donald Moore will be clad in a large red suit and will distribute gifts to the guests.

In better-late-than-never style, Dewey, Ballantine, Bushby, Palmer & Wood will host its party Dec. 29 at the City Midway Club. Not only are all employees invited, but all alumni also receive an invitation — just for auld lang syne. □