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## *Personal & Professional Legal Service – delivered expeditiously*

Blackman Legal operates on values of personal service and reliable and cost effective representation. We are proud to offer sound legal expertise and a dedication to the long-term legal, financial and personal satisfaction of our clients. We aim to deliver value to our clients and to meet their needs with common-sense advice and friendly service. Our relaxed office and handy location in Lindfield makes a visit to us a pleasant experience.

At Blackman Legal we will work with you to obtain optimum results, taking the time to explain legal procedures clearly and frankly. We realise the importance of keeping you well-informed at all stages of the process and understand your need for sensitivity and discretion.

It is hard to believe we are well into our second month of 2012 already! It has been a very busy two months so far! We hope 2012 is treating you well.

We wish to welcome Suzanne Fitzpatrick who is a qualified Solicitor from Northern Ireland into our office. Suzanne was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in Northern Ireland in 2011 and decided to venture far afield to gain experience and skills working in the Australian legal system which is very similar to that in her home country. Suzanne is proving a great help in our office.

In this newsletter for the sake of providing some light entertainment (particularly given our current political situation) we have included some reports on recent US cases. Luckily our system is a lot more sound !!

We would like to let everyone know that Alan will deliver a free Family Law Seminar on this Thursday 1 March at 6pm in Lindfield (and monthly from then on). Alan will provide information and advice in regard to what options are available to someone going through a relationship breakdown particularly in respect of separation, divorce, finances and children. No one should burden themselves alone with the stress and anxiety which they may be subject to should they find themselves in such a difficult situation. Alan's experience in these matters enables him to guide someone through the stormy seas ahead.

Numbers are strictly limited, so if you or any of your friends or colleagues are interested to attend please call us to reserve your place ASAP.

**Phone 9415 6344**  
Suite 16/12 Tryon Road  
Lindfield NSW 2070  
[info@blackmanlegal.com.au](mailto:info@blackmanlegal.com.au)  
[www.blackmanlegal.com.au](http://www.blackmanlegal.com.au)

### The US Legal System !!!!



Amanda Blackman is the principal of Blackman Legal and was admitted to practice law in 1987. Amanda has extensive experience in property and commercial law and possesses a common-sense, efficient yet personal approach to the resolution of client's problems. She is skilled at demystifying the legal process with advice that is easy to understand. She is a fierce protector of her client's interests and anticipates in advance issues of concern that may arise. Amanda is also Notary Public which is an international legal recognition which enables her to assist clients in overseas jurisdictions.

We were astonished to read about the judgment delivered in respect of a Manhattan bridegroom (Remis) who married in 2003 and later divorced. 6 years after his marriage ended he decided to sue the photography studio as he was not happy with the fact that the photographers had failed to capture the last dance and the bride tossing the bouquet. Remis sought not only the photographers' costs but of the entire wedding, so that the ceremony could be re-photographed! Surprisingly, the Judge allowed the case to proceed!! As you can imagine this sparked great fury amongst New York taxpayers...let's hope such a decision is never made in similar situations within our state!

Stella Liebeck spilled hot coffee on herself after the drive-through at a McDonald's in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was sitting in the passenger seat of her grandson's car. The spill caused severe burns over 6 percent of her body. She spent a week in the hospital, underwent several skin grafts, and ended up with permanent scarring on 15 percent of her body. Liebeck sued McDonald's only after the company refused to pay her medical expenses. Her bills added up to \$11,000, but McDonald's offered to pay only \$800. A mediator recommended a \$250,000 settlement, which McDonald's turned down. One of the issues in the trial was that Liebeck's lawyers said there had been several hundred similar cases that McDonald's had ignored and that the company had refused to reduce the temperature of the coffee machines. A jury gave Stella Liebeck \$160,000 but also fined McDonald's a punitive damage of \$2.7 million. A judge later reduced that amount to \$480,000 then McDonald's settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.

Kathleen Robertson of Austin Texas was awarded \$780,000 by a jury after breaking her ankle tripping over a toddler who was running inside a furniture store. The owners of the store were understandably surprised at the verdict, considering the little boy was Ms. Robertson's own son.

19 year old Carl Truman of Los Angeles won \$74,000 and medical expenses when his neighbour ran over his hand with a Honda Accord. Mr. Truman apparently didn't notice there was someone at the wheel of the car, when he was trying to steal his neighbours' hubcaps.



Alan Blumberg assists clients going through the breakdown of a personal relationship with discretion, understanding and empathy. He has an interest in estate planning and the creation of strategies to ensure client's assets are protected into the future. He brings his extensive real-world experience in business to the resolution of commercial disputes. Alan understands that a trip to a lawyer can be a daunting experience for many people but his calm and confident manner reassures clients in distress. Alan works hard to resolve disputes and achieves outstanding results for clients by providing advice that is practical and by only recommending solutions that are achievable.

Terrence Dickson of Bristol, Pennsylvania was leaving a house he had just finished robbing by way of the garage. He was not able to get the garage door to go up since the automatic door opener was malfunctioning. He couldn't re-enter the house because the door connecting the house and garage locked when he pulled it shut. The family was on vacation. Mr. Dickson found himself locked in the garage for eight days. He subsisted on a case of Pepsi he found, and a large bag of dry dog food. He sued the homeowner's insurance claiming the situation caused him undue mental anguish. The jury agreed to the tune of half a million dollars.

Jerry Williams of Little Rock, Arkansas was awarded \$14,500 and medical expenses after being bitten on the buttocks by his next door neighbours' beagle. The beagle was on a chain in its owner's fenced-in yard. The award was less than sought because the jury felt the dog might have been just a little provoked at the time by Mr. Williams who was shooting it repeatedly with a pellet gun.

A Philadelphia restaurant was ordered to pay Amber Carson of Lancaster, Pennsylvania \$113,500 after she slipped on a soft drink and broke her coccyx. The beverage was on the floor because Ms. Carson threw it at her boyfriend 30 seconds earlier during an argument.

Kara Walton of Claymont, Delaware successfully sued the owner of a night club in a neighbouring city when she fell from the bathroom window to the floor and knocked out her two front teeth. This occurred while Ms Walton was trying to sneak through the window in the ladies room to avoid paying the \$3.50 cover charge. She was awarded \$12,000 and dental expenses.

In November 2000 Mr Grazinski purchased a brand new 32 foot Winnebago motor home. On his first trip home, having joined the freeway, he set the cruise control at 70 mph and calmly left the driver's seat to go into the back and make himself a cup of coffee. Not surprisingly the Winnie left the freeway, crashed and overturned. Mr Grazinski sued Winnebago for not advising him in the handbook that he couldn't actually do this. He was awarded \$1,750,000 plus a new Winnie. (Winnebago actually changed their handbooks on the back of this court case, just in case there are any other complete morons buying their vehicles.)

**For further information and updates please visit our:**

#### **Our Services**

We offer a broad range of services across a range of legal disciplines:

- Property Law, Conveyancing and Leasing
- Wills and Administration of Estates
- Powers of Attorney and Appointments of Enduring Guardian
- Family Law
- Commercial Law
- Notary Public Services
- Intellectual Property
- Local Government and Planning

**Our Website:** [www.blackmanlegal.com.au](http://www.blackmanlegal.com.au) and

**Our Blog:** <http://blackmanlegal.blogspot.com/view/classic>

A title or caption about the photograph.

