

refuses to strike a law requiring them to verify the age and identity of people in sexually explicit films or photographs and keep the records on file.

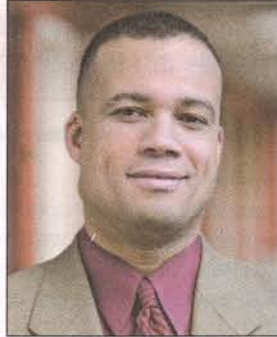
• **N.J. DOT**

A Bergen County judge throws out condemnation complaints against two Little Ferry land owners, finding the state did not negotiate in good faith.

• **GALILEE BAPTIST CHURCH**

The Trenton church and Pastor John H. Harris Jr. will pay \$50,000 to settle a Division on Civil Rights complaint that an employee was sexually harassed, then fired.

DeCotiis' Man in the Gulf — When most people think of the BP oil spill, they envision environmental problems. But the mess has also created legal questions, and that's where **Steven Mannion** comes in.



STEVEN MANNION

The U.S. Coast Guard Reserve lieutenant and legal officer — also a partner at **DeCotiis, FitzPatrick & Cole** in Teaneck — was called for a 60-day deployment at a command post outside Houma, La., beginning on July 14.

It's a sort of "legal triage," Mannion says. The issues he is handling range from cutting through legalities so an oil-cleanup contractor can enter protected marshland to counseling Coast Guard members on powers of attorney and employment matters.

Mannion is one of 3,000 Coast Guard reservists called for Gulf deployment — on four days' notice.

His partners in the firm's litigation, labor and employment practice groups are handling his cases, a move that enabled him to go, he says. And judges have been accommodating, he adds.

It's not the first time he's been called up. Shortly after 9/11, he helped provide waterside security as a member of the New Jersey State Guard. Most years, Mannion devotes 42 days to the Coast Guard, supervising a Staten Island-based law enforcement unit. That means spending extra time at DeCotiis to bolster billable-hour totals, he says.

investigate *U.S. News & World Report's* law-school rankings and the magazine's push to rate law firms.

The inquiry into the school rankings is still going on, but the committee charged with reviewing those rankings has concluded that they have some negative effects on law schools, but there is little to be done about it.



"We believe that, for better or worse, *U.S. News* rankings will continue for the foreseeable future to dominate public perceptions of how law schools compare, and that there is relatively little that leaders in legal education can do to change that in the short term," the committee's report reads.

ABA President **Carolyn Lamm** had instructed the panel to review literature and research on the law school rankings during the past 20 years and report to the Council on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, which will consider the findings on Aug. 6.

The report criticizes the heavy weight given to median grade point averages, LSAT scores, student-to-faculty ratios and spending per student.

The committee concluded that the best source of information is the Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools, produced by the ABA and the Law School Admissions Council.

— By *Mary Pat Gallagher, David Gialanella, Michael Booth and Karen Sloan (National Law Journal)*



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