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Triple threat

Aronberg, Goldgehn sends five teams to swim, bike and run in city triathlon

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The flying elbows, kicking, jostling and pushing through traffic will be the hardest parts to work through.

We're not talking about your morning commute.

"Right when you start a race, you're all corralled together. You're so close to the other people," said Amy M. Rapoport, an associate at Aronberg, Goldgehn, Davis & Garmisa.

"And when you start running, there's elbows flying and sometimes it gets a little claustrophobic. But once you disperse and people start naturally going faster or slower, it's not as congested."

Nearly one-third of Aronberg, Goldgehn's 44 attorneys will compete in the Life Time Tri Chicago triathlon along the lakefront on Aug. 25. The 13 attorneys and two paralegals signed up for the race in March.

Co-managing member Christopher J. Bannon said he initially spoke with a few people about doing the triathlon to gauge interest. After he sent out a firmwide e-mail, he was pleasantly surprised to get a large response.

"We thought it would be a fun thing to do together as a team as opposed to everyone doing it individually," he said.

Five teams of three will compete, with each member taking one leg of the race, whether it's swimming, biking or running.

There are two different courses. Some teams will navigate the shorter race



Aronberg, Goldgehn, Davis & Garmisa attorneys (from left) Kari E. Hoelting Kaplan, associate; John M. Riccione, co-managing member; Christopher J. Bannon, co-managing member; Amber Oleson LaFevers, associate; and Shaun D. Sperling, associate, cross the Wabash Avenue bridge to access the lakefront bike path Tuesday morning as part of their training for the Chicago triathlon. Thirteen attorneys and two paralegals at the firm signed up for the event. *Natalie Battaglia*

consisting of a half-mile swim, 15-mile bike ride and a 3.1-mile run; the other teams will take on a 0.9-mile swim, 25-mile bike ride and a 6.2-mile run.

The group ranges in age from 29 to 70 and varies in experience. A few team members have done triathlons, some have run in marathons or bike races, while others are participating in their first formal race. The triathlon team members have been training individually and the firm has also scheduled group training sessions.

Bannon said he tried to balance the teams based on experience, as well as mixing up the partners, associates and paralegals among others who are in different practice areas.

"I will say that we are probably pretty heavily weighted in litigation attorneys. I don't

know if that says anything about competitiveness or anything, but we do have many more litigators in the group than transactional lawyers," Bannon said with a smile, with chuckles coming from Rapoport, Kristine M. Kolky and Adam M. Vail — three attorneys who all practice in commercial litigation.

All three have experience running road races. Rapoport ran a marathon in 2005 and did the Soldier Field 10 Mile race. Vail has competed in one triathlon and recently participated in Tough Mudder, a road race with a military-style obstacle course. Kolky is running the Big Ten 5K in a few weeks.

Bannon, Kolky, Rapoport and Vail all said that exercise and training for races helps them as lawyers because it helps them

manage stress and maintain sharp minds. Rapoport and Vail said preparing for the triathlon as a group is great for developing camaraderie in the office, promoting better communication and team building.

"We're a very collegial and friendly firm," Bannon said. "People here really get along well with each other and this kind of thing adds to that. It gives people something to talk about, to laugh about, to maybe throw some trash-talking in there as well, to have a friendly rivalry within the firm."

On race day, the biggest challenge will likely be the beginning, when competitors are trying to get a strong start and position.

For Rapoport, who is running, it will be the flying elbows. Vail and Bannon are both swimming,



Amy M. Rapoport



Christopher J. Bannon



Kristine M. Kolky



Adam M. Vail

which Bannon said means “getting in the water with hundreds of people at the same time and the jostling and inadvertent kicking and hitting and swimming over people. You really have to be ready for that and not let that affect you.”

Kolky will be trying to navigate the traffic and crowds in the bike race.

“I’ve also been having this horrible nightmare that my tire pops halfway through the race, but I’m sure that that won’t happen,” Kolky said with a laugh. “And I think there are people to help if it does.”

All four attorneys said crossing the finish line and rooting for fellow team members will be the best part of the experience. Other attorneys, staff and family members will also be there and are planning a post-race picnic.

“It’s going to be fun because there are so many firm participants,” Vail said. “It will be fun to see everyone once they’ve completed the race and being able to talk to them about their experience during the day and cheering them on.”

Joining Bannon, Kolky,



Aronberg, Goldgehn, Davis & Garmisa co-managing members Christopher J. Bannon (left) and John M. Riccione meet at the Chicago River and Wabash Avenue to train Tuesday morning for the Life Time Tri Chicago triathlon. *Natalie Battaglia*

Rapoport and Vail in the triathlon are Lisa J. Brodsky, Jay A. Frank, Laura Geis, Mary Vidal

Hays, Kari E. Hoelting Kaplan, Anthony Leon, Amber Oleson LaFevers, Nathan H.

Lichtenstein, John M. Riccione, Ned S. Robertson and Shaun D. Sperling.