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Review of Kanter on Hiring: A Lawyer's Guide to Lawyer Hiring

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*Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison,
New York City, chairman-elect of the
ABA Section of Taxation.*

**Kanter on Hiring: A Lawyer's Guide
to Lawyer Hiring.**

**By Arnold B. Kanter.
LawLetters Inc.; Chicago.
\$29.75. 153 pages.**

On reading *Kanter on Hiring*, the reader cannot help but appreciate the author's wry wit, his clever style and his facile ability to turn a phrase. In fact, one may conclude that Arnold Kanter is

Books for Lawyers

the closest thing the legal profession in this country has to a true humorist. His pieces have appeared in *Chicago Lawyer*, the *ABA Journal*, *Barrister* and *NALP Notes*, to name a few. His previous book, *The Secret Memoranda of Stanley J. Fairweather*, recounts the foibles of the fictitious law firm Fairweather, Winters and Sommers and its ubiquitous senior partner, Stanley J. Fairweather.

The problems encountered by Kanter's Fairweather firm and the solutions attempted by its lawyers strike a chord of familiarity with anyone acquainted with the practice of law. *Kanter on Hiring* deals with the continued saga of Fairweather, Winters & Sommers, its lawyers and leader; however, it is in the area of legal recruitment and hiring that Kanter is at his best. Perhaps because he spent many years as a hiring partner at Chicago's Sonnenschein Carlin Nath & Rosenthal, Kanter observes the hiring process with unusual clarity. He seems almost painfully aware that the system at its best barely works, and at its worst is disastrous.

In part because of his experience, in part because of his humor, he is able to point out the flaws in the hiring system in a way his readers both understand and accept. An underlying theme of much of *Kanter on Hiring* is that there must be a better way, and that those who participate in the process must find it. "After all, how long can one talk to law students at twenty-minute intervals and maintain one's sanity . . . ? Eventually, I began to have flashes of conscience over what I was doing to these interviewees, flashes whose more frequent recent recurrence has led to my premature retirement from The Committee."

Large firm problems

Kanter on Hiring does not break any new ground, however, or say anything that has not been said before or that is not readily apparent to most individuals who are sophisticated about lawyer recruiting. At times Kanter's more serious short essays get in the way of the Fairweather, Winters & Sommers pieces and vice versa. The reader is con-

stantly torn between wanting to find out more about Fairweather's problems and Kanter's ideas. This minor organizational flaw will not dampen the enthusiasm of Kanter's many loyal fans for this book.

Let there be no doubt: *Kanter on Hiring* is about lawyer hiring in large firms, like Fairweather, Winters & Sommers, or the firm where Kanter practiced, Sonnenschein Carlin Nath & Rosenthal. Kanter's experience and perspective are rooted in the recruitment process of campus interviews at prominent schools, summer clerkships, pedigreed and pampered law students and going rates.

Out of some 19,000 law firms in the United States, perhaps 1,000 participate in the annual law school recruiting wars. These law firms hire no more than 10 percent of the law students who graduate from law school each year. In fact, only about half of all law graduates enter private practice in firms of any size. In short, the problems of Kanter's Fairweather firm are not the problems of most legal employers. This limitation

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does not take away from the quality of Kanter's work, but it does mean that his audience is, by definition, narrow.

Reviewed by Gary A. Munneke, assistant professor and assistant dean at the Delaware Law School of Widener University and chairman of the ABA Committee on Professional Utilization and Career Development.
