



Rockland County Bar Association

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NEWSBRIEF

MARCH 2026

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From the President

“Beware the ides of March”

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, (Act I, Scene 2)

The month of March is named for Mars, the Roman god of war. For centuries, March marked the start, or resumption, of military campaigns which, apparently, it still does. It's an historically bad month for tyrants and dictators. Julius Caesar, Attila and Joseph Stalin each died in March. March weather is decidedly unpredictable. Equally unpredictable are the finals of the NCAA's college basketball tournament, hence, “March Madness.” Some March days will provide the very best cure for cabin fever. And, we're all of us Irish on March 17th! By month's end every fan's hope for a long-awaited championship baseball season is rekindled as your favorite team leaves spring training and returns north. March is a quirky, hopeful month of awakening.

“Breaking Up Is Hard To Do”

Neil Sedaka, 1962

Brooklyn born Neil Sedaka (1939-2026), was a gifted, Julliard trained, musician, composer, performer and producer. His passing this week reveals a legendary career, spanning seven decades of resilience and perseverance in a demanding industry. Shortly after he had attained the pinnacle of the pop/rock n' roll music charts with a series of “top 40” hits, (*Calendar Girl* was my favorite in '61), culminating with 1962's No.1 hit, *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*, those “four lads from Liverpool” (a/k/a The Beatles), exploded onto the pop music scene and changed everything. While his popularity (and musical style) tanked after the “British invasion” – his talent never diminished. It would take a decade – and relocating his family to England, (where, as it turned out, music fans still loved American pop recording artists), for Neil Sedaka to resurrect an amazing career, which he did in the mid-seventies, composing music (including a classical piece) and performing concerts around the globe well into his eighties. Sedaka was recently quoted as saying, “it's nice to realize that the songs will continue after you're gone.” Yes, they do.

CLE Alert: RCBA is presenting several informative CLE programs during the month of March including *Pre-Nups – Soup to Nuts*, on March 18, 2026, which could help make “breaking up less hard to do” (with apologies to Neil Sedaka). There's a *Mortgage Foreclosures* program scheduled for March 24, 2026, and on March 26, 2026, *Ethical Legal Research With Generative AI*, will discuss the proper employment of and impermissible pitfalls to avoid in using AI as a legal brief writing tool. These RCBA on-line CLE programs are *free to RCBA members*. So, please join Bar Association or renew your RCBA membership today.

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Lunch with Hon. John P. Collins, Jr., J.S.C. RCBA's "Lunch With A Judge" program is continuing at the Rockland County Sheriff's Training Facility on April 21, 2026 at 12:30 p.m. Our guest will be recently elected (Nov '25) and Rockland assigned State Supreme Court Justice John P. Collins, Jr. A graduate of Columbia University ('95) and Yale Law School ('98), Judge Collins is no stranger to the Rockland County Courthouse having worked here as a court attorney-referee in 2017. From 2019 through his November election to supreme court, Judge Collins sat in the City Court for the City of White Plains. Space at the sheriff's facility is limited and I recommend signing up early to join us in welcoming back Judge Collins to Rockland.

Save The Date: On April 14, 2026, from 2-3 p.m., the annual *Yom Hashoah 2026* (Holocaust Remembrance) candle lighting ceremony will be conducted at the Rockland County Courthouse in the central jury room on the second floor. This year's keynote speaker is our colleague and current president of the Westchester County Bar Association, Brian S. Cohen. The program's theme is "The Truth Matters." For more information and to RSVP please write to: Holocaustrcc@gmail.com or call: (845) 574-4099.

In Memoriam

On Saturday January 31st, I joined a standing room only celebration of life at St. Paul's R.C. Church in Congers to send Hon. William ("Bill") Kelly, a fond farewell. Beginning a professional lifetime of dedicated public service, Bill Kelly became a legendary homicide prosecutor in the Bronx County district attorney's office. He was first elected in 1982 to the Clarkstown Justice Court and moved on to the Rockland County Court and Supreme Court serving there through mandatory retirement in 2015 or '16. A naturally gregarious man who greeted you with a smile and a handshake, I last saw Bill Kelly maybe four years ago while I was out for a walk and he was peddling a bicycle on the road near Rockland Lake with (also) retired Judge Victor Alfieri. A loud "*Richard!*" and an unsteady wave, (while he steered the bike with one hand), was both, "hello" and "goodbye," as we passed and continued on. May he rest in peace and it is said that, "his memory should be for a blessing."

West Nyack, New York

March 4, 2026

Respectfully,

Rick

Richard A. Glickel
RCBA President, 2025-26
rglickel@glickelaw.com



THE PRACTICE PAGE

PLEADINGS

Hon. Mark C. Dillon *

I've been contemplating this column for quite some time. Years, in fact.

Pleadings are both an art and a science. That is true whether we focus on complaints, answers, cross-claims, affirmative defenses, counterclaims, replies to counterclaims, third party complaints and answers, or intervenors. Wow, everyone gets to jump in. The primary purpose of a pleading is notice (CPLR 3013; *Rapoport v Schneider*, 29 NY2d 396, 403).

The priorities of an attorney differ depending on how the client is postured in a litigation. Let's start with complaints. In drafting a complaint, counsel must consider all of the conceivable non-frivolous causes of action applicable to the facts. Once conceived, each cause of action must be spelled out in the complaint. In drawing the specific causes of action, counsel must provide notice of the transactions or occurrences intended to be proven, and address the *elements* of each separate cause of action (CPLR 3013). For instance, if a claim is for defamation, the complaint should allege each of the relevant elements --- the statement, its untruth, its defamatory character or defamation *per se* when applicable, its publication to a third party, the intent to defame, the knowledge of the defamer that the statement was false, and damages (unless the action involves defamation *per se* in which damages need not be pleaded and proved) (e.g. *Arsenault v Forquar*, 197 AD2d 554). If the complaint fails to allege a necessary element expressly or by at least by inference (*Johnson ex rel. Freddo v Verona Oil, Inc.*, 36 AD3d 991, 992-93), it is vulnerable to a motion by the defendant to dismiss under CPLR 3211(a)(7) for its failure to state a cause of action (e.g. *Willis v Kepner*, 109 AD2d 950, 951). Why should any plaintiff's attorney take the risk of a dismissal, if information is available for conscientiously alleging facts addressing each necessary element? And if an element cannot be ethically alleged, the cause of action should not be asserted in the first place.

Defense attorneys wear a different hat. The elements of the cause of action should be closely examined to assure that the complaint states a compensable claim. Defense counsel must consider each defense that might be available to those elements --- for defamation, for example, truth of the statement, or its lack of publication to a third person. Each defense should be asserted as a separate affirmative defense per CPLR 3018(b) to preserve its grounds, prevent later surprise to the adverse party, and permit the assertion of those defenses at the trial. Defense attorneys must guard against the failure to assert a viable affirmative defense. That is underscored by CPLR 3211(e), which enumerates various affirmative defenses which are waived if not affirmatively pleaded in the answer (CPLR 3211[e]). Avoid that nightmarish conversation with the client where you might have to say "Yes, you have a great defense, but I failed to allege it as an affirmative defense in your answer two years ago, and we can't raise it now since the trial is this Monday. My bad."

There is a peculiar difference in how to respond to counterclaims and cross-claims. Counterclaims absolutely require a responsive "Reply" (CPLR 3011), which is an answer by a different title. Cross-claims, by contrast, are "deemed denied" if not answered, unless the cross-claim specifically demands an answer to it (CPLR 3011), in which case the responding party must serve an answer to avoid a pleading default (CPLR 3011; *Giglio v NTIMP*, 86 AD3d 301). Beware of those distinctions. Parties serving cross-claims have no downside to demanding an answer to it, and responding parties are off the hook absent such a demand. But if the demand for an answer is made within the cross-claim, pay attention to it and answer it accordingly.

Be mindful of the need for verifying the pleading. When a pleading is verified, each responsive pleading shall be verified as well, except for the answer of infants or for matters subject to a privilege (CPLR 3020[a]).

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Some forms of pleadings require particularity. CPLR 3015 demands particularity for certain *matters* such as the performance of conditions precedent, corporate status, and the licensure to business with consumers in the counties of Long Island, New York City, Westchester, Rockland, and Putnam Counties (CPLR 3015[a], [b], [c]). Specific types of *claims* must be pleaded with particularity including but not limited to defamation, fraud or mistake, separation or divorce, the applicability of the law of a foreign country, the existence of a threshold injury in automobile-related personal injury actions, and the itemization of labor, material and services in claims involving the sale or delivery of goods and services (CPLR 3016[a], [b], [c], [e], [f], and [g]). Pleadings which fail to contain the requisite particularity, where required, are subject to CPLR 3211(a) dismissals.

Punitive damages are not to be pleaded as a free-standing cause of action, but are instead a prayer for relief to be included within the Wherefore clause (*Pisula v Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York*, 201 AD3d 88, 102).

As for *ad damnum* clauses, relief shall be demanded absolutely or in the alternative (CPLR 3017[a]). The demand for damages helps assure that the action is within monetary jurisdictional limits of the court of commencement. However, in actions involving personal injury or wrongful death, there shall only be a prayer for general relief (e.g. “money damages”) which is intended to curb exaggerated demands (*Braun v Ahmed*, 127 AD2d 418, 428), unless the answering party requests a supplemental demand requesting the total amount of damages that the claimant seeks (CPLR 3017[c]). There is no downside for answering parties to make such a request, as knowing the specific amount of a demand can help define the seriousness of the action, aid settlement in certain instances, and determine whether an action falls within the scope of the responding party’s general and excess insurance coverages. Actions for declaratory judgments should specify the declaration of rights that is requested, along with any further or consequential relief that may be claimed and its nature and extent [CPLR 3017[b)]. On this point, a motion to dismiss a declaratory judgment action presents only the issue of whether a cause of action for declaratory relief is set forth, and not necessarily whether the plaintiff is entitled to a favorable declaration (*Jacobs v Cartalemi*, 156 AD3d 635, 637).

Happy pleading.

*Mark C. Dillon is a Justice of the Appellate Division, 2nd Dep’t.,
is an Adjunct Professor of New York Practice at Fordham Law School,
and is a contributing author of the CPLR Practice Commentaries in McKinney’s.

The Tradition Continues

For over four decades, the Rockland County Bar Association has offered its Spring CPLR Update presented by Patrick M. Connors, Distinguished Professor of Ethics and New York Civil Practice at Albany Law School and author of the treatise “David D. Siegel & Patrick M. Connors, New York Practice”, which is often cited as the “Bible” for New York litigation.

Professor Connors’ live (and lively) 3-hour webinar is an indispensable fast-paced update of the most recent developments in New York civil practice and procedure that is appreciated by both experienced litigators and less seasoned practitioners.

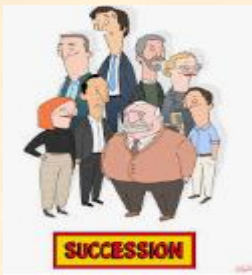
Mark the date and register on the RCBA website for Professor Connors’ 2026 CPLR Update presented by the Rockland County Bar Association’s Committee for Continuing Legal Education.

Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Time: TBD

Where: Via Zoom

See you May 13!



Succession

Setting Up Your Exit: More time means more value

By Judith Bachman

At the recent New Jersey State Bar Association Solo and Small Firm Conference, Ayesha Hamilton of Hamilton Law Firm PC and Craig Aronow of Aronow Law, P.C. and I delivered the afternoon session called “Build. Grow. Transition: The Business of Law Workshop.”

In discussing succession planning my message was: Law firm transition does not begin at retirement. It begins years earlier.

The single greatest asset in succession planning is time. Ideally, lawyers should begin thinking about exit no later than three to five years before a hoped-for transition. That window is not simply about logistics. It is an opportunity to increase value deliberately. More time allows a firm owner to improve systems, strengthen revenue streams, deepen client relationships, and position the firm in a way that creates options. Without time, succession becomes reactive. With time, it becomes strategic.

Building value during that planning period requires reducing dependence on the owner. A firm that cannot operate without its founding lawyer is far harder to transition.

That work begins with the book of business. Are client relationships personal to the attorney, or transferable to the firm. A multichannel digital marketing strategy, consistent branding, and thoughtful use of trade names can help position the firm as an entity rather than an individual.

Systems are equally important. The goal is to move from a law practice that depends entirely on the attorney to a law business supported by documented processes. Written procedures for intake, billing, case management, and client communication allow the owner to step back from daily operations. Systems create confidence for any successor.

Staff development is another pillar. Building a pipeline of well-trained lawyers and staff who own their responsibilities enhances continuity and stability. Succession is far smoother when talent is already embedded in the firm.

Financial organization cannot be overlooked. Clean books and transparent cash flow matter. Buyers and banks evaluate law firms using the same business frameworks applied to other enterprises. Strong financial discipline increases credibility and value.

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Finally, technology should be viewed not just as an efficiency tool, but as an asset. Digital systems, organized client data, and secure platforms enhance transferability. The paper rolodex of the past does not translate into marketable value.

Succession planning is not about selecting a departure date. It is about using time intentionally. The earlier the planning begins, the greater the opportunity to build a firm that stands on its own and preserves the value you have worked so hard to create.

NOMINATIONS FOR AWARDS

We have a membership composed of many outstanding attorneys. Each year we recognize those that are nominated by their peers for outstanding service to the organization, the community and the law. **If you would like to nominate someone for one or more of our awards, please fill out this form and e-mail it to veronica@rocklandbar.org.**

Final decisions are made by our Board of Directors at an upcoming Board Meeting. Please submit your nominations as soon as possible.

THE LIBERTY BELL AWARD This award is presented on Law Day to a member of our Community for outstanding service in promoting a better understanding of or respect for the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and our institutions of government. Generally this award is given to a non-lawyer.

I wish to Nominate: _____

THE STERNS AWARD Given in the memory of Richard Sterns to a RCBA member who has made significant contributions to the Bar Association and the People of Rockland County over the year - service above self on behalf of the association. This award is presented at the Installation Dinner in June.

I wish to Nominate: _____

THE JOSEPH G. BALSAMO AWARD This award is presented at the June Installation Dinner in memory of Joseph G. Balsamo, Esq., to an RCBA member who has gained significant respect from the members of the Bar and the public for his or her personal and professional contributions to both, while maintaining the highest form of integrity and professionalism while advocating for each.

I wish to Nominate: _____



For Women's History month the DEI committee is spotlighting Stefany Ovalles, Esq., Deputy Program Officer at the Center for Safety and Change.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Dominican Republic and came to the United States when I was one-and-a-half years old. The family lore is that I learned to walk in Newark Airport.

What is your current hometown?

I grew up in Jersey City and live there to this day with my husband Brett, daughter Emma and our yorkie, Jake.

Where did you go to Law School/College?

I went to Rutgers University, New Brunswick where I majored in English & Political Science with a minor in Latino/Hispanic and Caribbean studies.

I then attended law school at Rutgers Law in Newark, New Jersey where I focused my studies on immigration law.

What is your current job/title?

Currently I am the Deputy Program Officer at the Center for Safety and Change. In my role I am tasked with ensuring department productivity and efficiency. I also supervise the immigration law practice and the human trafficking practice.

What has been your career path?

When I graduated law school, I clerked for a family court judge in New Jersey. The Judge mostly heard Juvenile Delinquency and Special Immigration Juvenile Status cases. I gained invaluable experience and knew that after my clerkship I wanted to focus my practice on immigration law. I next worked at a boutique immigration law firm doing removal defense. It was during this work that I

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started to have the feeling that I was perhaps advocating on the “wrong side.” I had always wanted to work in the nonprofit sector but there were not many nonprofit organizations doing immigration work. I fortuitously applied and was offered a job at the Center for Safety and Change where I was hired as an immigration attorney working on humanitarian immigration claims like U visas (for victims of crimes) and T visas (for trafficking victims). I was grateful to shift my practice and work at the Center not only because of its humanitarian focus on immigration practice but also its holistic approach to providing services to victims/survivors of domestic violence.

In my work at the Center not only have I had the opportunity to do impactful work for survivors of human trafficking and abuse, I have also been able to mentor young women through an organization the center sponsors called Wonder Girls. Wonder Girls mentors young women giving them access to mentors in various disciplines/professions and provides training, workshops and information to empower young women to seek out and pursue their passions. Wonder Girls is a female-led youth empowerment group, and I feel so fortunate to be able to mentor these young women and inspire them to pursue careers in the legal profession.

What is your favorite thing about Rockland?

Rockland is a small, tight-knit county where people show up for one another. I have seen that strong sense of community in action and I believe that it truly is an asset to the clients that we serve.

Who is your inspiration/hero?

My mom and my daughter.

My mom is my hero because she provided me with a strong foundation and a freedom to become anyone I wanted to be. As a 0.5 immigrant (referring to the fact that I came here so young that even though I am technically an immigrant, I have lived here for pretty much my entire life so my experience in some ways also resembles a first-generation experience) I remember vividly the hard work my mom put in to ensure that I could be successful.

My daughter is my inspiration because she pushes me and reminds me to be the good that I want to see in the world. I want my daughter to be proud of me!

What good advice have you received?

Don't make rubber balls glass balls. Meaning as attorneys we are often on a perpetual hamster wheel. We end one case and immediately start the next one. It can feel exhausting and leads to burnout. Discern what needs to be done now and what can wait... or what can bounce (rubber ball). Dedicate focused and intentional time so that you don't feel that you can't get off that hamster wheel when you need to. And yes, this great advice came from my mom.

What is your favorite TV/Streaming Book or show?

I am a sucker for anything true crime and I LOVE Bridgerton!

What is your guilty pleasure?

I love food. Better yet, make it a great food/wine pairing. Invite me to indulge in a dining experience and I'm there!

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YOM HASHOAH 2026 AT THE COURTHOUSE

**THE TRUTH MATTERS:
"THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND
NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH"**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: BRIAN S. COHEN, ESQ.

LACHTMAN COHEN & BELOWICH LLP

CO-CHAIR, NYSBA TASK FORCE ON COMBATING ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-ASIAN HATE
PRESIDENT, THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

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Randy Perlmutter and Kate Carballo.

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 * N.Y. Bar
 + N.J. Bar
 • FLA. Bar
 ++ N.J. Cert. Civil Trial Attorney

COMMERCIAL LITIGATION ISSUES OF INTEREST

Submitted by Joseph Churgin, Esq. and Susan Cooper, Esq.*

Your client, an LLC located in Bronx County, was sued along with several of the LLC's affiliates. You answered for the LLC and negotiated with plaintiff's counsel for discontinuance of the claims against the affiliates, who were improper and unnecessary parties. Three years of litigation ensued, during which time the plaintiff did not move for default judgment against the affiliates, and you inadvertently did not file answers for them. However, once discovery was complete, you moved to extend the time for the affiliates to answer, offering an amended answer asserting the same defenses for the affiliates as previously asserted in the LLC's answer. The answer and amended answer were verified by you. You did not submit an affidavit of merit from your client. The plaintiff was not prejudiced by the delay, since no further discovery was needed and all defendants were insured under the same policy. The plaintiff opposed the motion, citing a Court of Appeals case that unequivocally requires a party to submit an affidavit of merit in support of a motion to extend the time to file a pleading, if the motion is made after the time to file the pleading has already expired.

Will your motion be granted?

The answer is *maybe yes* – but *only* if your case is pending in a First Department court.

In *Dellicarpini v. JMDH Real Estate of Newburgh, LLC* (Docket No. 812027/2021E, N.Y.L.J. January 9, 2026 [Sup. Ct. Bronx Co., December 5, 2025]), only one defendant – RD America, LLC ("RD") – served a timely answer. RD and plaintiff's counsel discussed the voluntary discontinuance of claims against the other five co-defendants, who were all corporate affiliates of RD. Although no stipulation was signed, the plaintiff never moved for default judgment against the non-answering defendants. After the co-defendants were in default for three years and discovery was virtually complete, RD moved to amend its answer to appear on behalf of the co-defendants. The motion was denied due to RD's failure to submit an affidavit of merit.

RD timely moved, pursuant to CPLR §§2201, 2221(a), and 5059(a), to reargue and renew its motion to amend its answer to appear for its affiliated co-defendants, and to vacate the order denying the earlier motion. RD argued that the failure to answer was an oversight resulting from a turnover of lawyers within the law firm representing RD. In addition, the plaintiff would not be prejudiced by the delay because the amended answer on behalf of all defendants asserted the same denials and affirmative defenses as RD's original answer. No additional discovery would be needed. An affidavit of merit signed by RD's counsel was submitted, although RD argued that no affidavit of merit was required to extend the time to plead, as no motion to dismiss or for default was filed.

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Plaintiffs countered that an affidavit of merit was required to support a motion to extend the time to answer under CPLR §3201(d), unless the time to serve a responsive pleading had not yet expired, as expressly ruled by the Court of Appeals in *Tewari v. Tsoutsouras*, 75 N.Y.2d 1, 11-12 (1989). Moreover, argued plaintiff, an affidavit by counsel without personal knowledge of the underlying facts is insufficient to verify facts.

The Court examined the decision by New York's Court of Appeals in *Tewari*, and acknowledged that *Tewari*, consistent with the high court's prior decisions, expressly holds that a party who has defaulted in timely filing its pleading *must* submit an affidavit of merit in support of any motion to extend its time to file, irrespective of the discretionary considerations provided under CPLR 2004 for courts to extend deadlines generally.

The Court also examined the decisions of the Appellate Division First Department issued both before and long after the 1989 *Tewari* decision, which the Court noted are more lenient than the Court of Appeals' cases require. The First Department deems an affidavit of merit unnecessary for an extension of time under CPLR 3012(d) where there has been a relatively brief delay that is not willful or prejudicial. Citing *Emigrant Bank v. Rosabianca*, 156 A.D.3d 468, 472-73 (1st Dept. 2017), the Court explained that the First Department applies a five-factor test for determining whether to grant an extension of time to file pleadings. The five factors are: (1) the length of delay, (ii) the excuse offered, (iii) the extent to which the delay was willful, (iv) the possibility of prejudice to adverse parties, and (v) potential merits of any defense.

The Court acknowledged that it "struggles to fully reconcile the seeming disparity between Court of Appeals and First Department jurisprudence on this issue." The Court noted that "[t]his apparent incongruity" was described by the Second Department in *Juseinoski v. Bd. of Educ. of City of New York*, 15 A.D.3d 353 (2d Dep't 2005), which opined that the First Department line of cases alleviating the requirement of an affidavit of merit was irreconcilable with Court of Appeals precedent requiring an affidavit of merit once the time to serve the pleading has expired.

Although the Court found "that line of reasoning to be highly persuasive," it nonetheless granted the motion based on "the mandatory authority established under the First Department." The Court agreed that there was no affidavit of merit by a party with knowledge, and proceeded to weigh the five factors.

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Although the more-than-three-year delay was “particularly egregious,” the Court found that the neglect amounted to law office error, explaining that CPLR 2005 “requires that the ‘extent of counsel’s negligence must instead be weighed against the merits of the claim and the lack of prejudice to the other side,” quoting *LaValle v. Astoria Const. & Paving Corp.*, 266 A.D.2d 28 (1st Dep’t 1999). Although the defendant failed to establish the merits of its defense, the plaintiff failed to establish prejudice (the amended answer asserted the same defenses as RD’s answer, no further discovery was needed, and any damages would be paid by the same insurance policy). The delay was careless, not willful. Thus, said the Court, all considerations weigh equally in favor and against.

The Court ruled, “[I]n view of the consistent reasoning of the First Department in similar matters, and of New York’s strong policy of resolving cases on their merits, given the absence of a prior default judgment and the nonprejudicial effect of the delay upon the adverse parties, this motion should be granted under the established First Department jurisprudence.”

The lesson? If you represent a defendant who has been served with a summons, or a plaintiff who has been served with a demand for a complaint, it goes without saying that the best practice is to file a responsive pleading within the prescribed time. Failing that, obtain *and document* the adversary’s consent to file a belated pleading. And failing that, move to extend your client’s time to file a responsive pleading supported by an affidavit of merit by someone with personal knowledge of the salient facts. Otherwise, even in the First Department, you face denial of your motion for failure to file an affidavit of merit.

Editor’s note: The reported case is a personal injury action arising from a slip and fall. However, the law concerning motions to extend the time to file a responsive pleading applies to all civil actions governed by the CPLR.



How To Use Mindfulness In Your Daily Living

By: Stan Popovich

Mindfulness is the practice of becoming more fully aware of the present moment rather than dwelling in the past, projecting into the future, or what's going on around us. It involves a heightened awareness of sensory stimuli such as our breathing and being "in the now."

Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind.

- 1. Find a comfortable place:** You'll want to find a comfortable seat in a relaxed and stress-free environment. Sit on a couch or chair with your feet on the ground. Allow your head and shoulders to rest comfortably; place your hands on the tops of your legs with upper arms at your side. Put your upper arms parallel to your upper body. Rest the palms of your hands on your legs.
- 2. Focus on your breathing:** Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and relax. Keep your attention on the sensation of the inhale and exhale of your breath. Focus on the air moving through your nose or the rising and falling of your stomach and chest.
- 3. Reduce wandering thoughts:** It's normal to have wandering thoughts or distractions, so don't judge yourself if you start becoming distracted. Instead of wrestling with your thoughts, let them pass by, without focusing on any thought. Thoughts will try to pull your attention away from your breathing. Notice them, but don't pass judgment. Gently return your focus to your breath.
- 4. Tune into your senses:** Sometimes, when we are stressed, focusing on what's happening right in front of us can be a challenge in and of itself. Our minds are drawn to thinking about the future and all the bad things that are or could happen.
- 5. Live in the present:** Focus your attention on what is happening right now, actively engaging with the current moment instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.
- 6. Focus on one thing at a time:** Multitasking can leave you feeling distracted, so concentrate on one task with your full attention.
- 7. Pay attention:** It's hard to slow down and notice things in a busy world. Take the time to experience your environment with all your senses including touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste. For example, when you eat a favorite food, take the time to smell, taste, and enjoy it.
- 8. Enjoy the small moments:** Small moments in our lives include those that we do not typically notice and those we take for granted. A small moment may be having a cup of coffee or a cool glass of water, spending a moment with a child or pet, or performing any everyday activity that goes by without our attention. Enjoyment, peace, and serenity in life happen in the small moments.

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9. Create a safe place: Similar to guided imagery, create a place that is safe and comfortable. It may be your favorite room or a cabin in the woods. Use your senses to fully enter the safe place. Stay in this place for a while and go there whenever you need to soothe and calm yourself.

10. Go outside: Spending time outdoors is a great way to live in the moment and observe the sights, sounds, and sensations around you.

BIOGRAPHY Stan is the author of "A Layman's Guide to Managing Fear" which covers 200+ techniques that can drastically improve your mental health. For more information, please visit Stan's website at <http://www.managingfear.com>



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Display your work in RCBA's Attorney Art Exhibit

RCBA artists will be featured in the
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Jury Selection Room from
August through December 2026

Email
veronica@rocklandbar.org
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exhibiting



Tips for Technology

Google Ads vs. Local Service Ads: Which One Should Your Law Firm Use?

If you've searched on Google for an attorney (or a number of other business types) you've probably noticed ads at the top of the screen that show reviews, and say something to the effect of "Google Screened" or "Google Verified". While these are "Ads" that run on Google, they are different from "Google Ads".

These are in fact called "Local Service Ads" and function in a completely different way to traditional Google Ads.

What's the Difference?

Let's start with the basics.

Google Ads (the old "AdWords") are the traditional pay-per-click (or ppc) ads that show up below the Local Service Ads and above the organic search results. You bid on keywords, write ad copy, and pay every time someone clicks your ad, whether they call you or not.

Local Service Ads are the newer pay-per-lead ads that appear at the very top of the search results, above everything else. You don't bid on keywords. Instead, Google shows your profile based on your location, practice area, reviews, and responsiveness. And you only pay when someone actually contacts you through the ad, either by phone or message.

The biggest difference? With Google Ads, you're paying for clicks. With LSAs, you're paying for leads.

When Google Ads Make Sense

Google Ads give you control.

You choose the keywords, write the ad copy, set the budget, and send people to a landing page where you can track exactly what happens after they click.

Continued...

This makes Google Ads ideal when you want to target specific, high-intent searches that might not fit neatly into LSA categories. For example, if you handle a niche practice area or want to test messaging for a new service, Google Ads will let you do that.

Google Ads also works well when you have a strong website and conversion tracking in place. If you're already optimizing landing pages, running A/B tests, and tracking which keywords actually turn into paying clients, Google Ads gives you the data and flexibility to scale what works.

The downside? You're paying for every click, even if the person never calls. And in competitive legal markets, cost-per-click can get expensive fast. Sometimes \$50, \$100, or more per click depending on the keywords and the competition in your area.

When Local Service Ads Make Sense

LSAs are built for one thing: connecting you with people who are ready to hire a lawyer right now.

Because you only pay when someone contacts you, there's less waste. You're not paying for tire-kickers or people doing research. You're paying for direct inquiries.

LSAs also come with a "Google Screened" or "Google Guaranteed" badge, which adds credibility. And because they appear at the very top of the page (above everything else), they get maximum visibility.

The catch? Google controls who gets shown. Your LSA ranking depends on your reviews, responsiveness, proximity to the searcher, and how complete your profile is. You can't just throw more money at it to rank higher.

And not all practice areas qualify. LSAs are available for personal injury, criminal defense, family law, estate planning, and a few others. But if your practice doesn't fit into one of Google's predefined categories, you're out of luck.

|

The Fine Print

Here's what most law firms don't realize until they're already spending money:

With Google Ads, you need strong conversion tracking and a solid landing page, or you're just burning cash. Without knowing which clicks turn into clients, you're flying blind.

With LSAs, not all leads are qualified. Google charges you for every contact that meets their basic criteria, even if it's a wrong number, spam, or someone outside your service area. You can dispute these charges, but the process isn't always transparent, and many firms just eat the cost.

Both platforms require ongoing management. Google Ads need constant keyword refinement, bid adjustments, and negative keyword lists. LSAs need regular profile updates, consistent review collection, and fast response times to stay competitive.

The Bottom Line

The real question isn't "Google Ads or LSAs?" It's "which one fits your firm's goals and resources right now?"

If you want control, targeting flexibility, and detailed performance data, start with Google Ads. Just make sure you have conversion tracking set up and a strong landing page to make the clicks count.

If you want immediate visibility, credible leads, and a simpler pay-per-lead model, LSAs are worth testing. Especially if your practice area qualifies and you have the intake capacity to respond quickly.

And if you have the budget and infrastructure? Use both. Google Ads can capture broader, high-intent searches while LSAs dominate the top of the page for urgent, local inquiries.

The firms that win aren't the ones picking sides. They're the ones that utilize both platforms and use them strategically.

**Sean
Gough**

President

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SEARCH SITE MARKETING



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2026 CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Program Date	Time	Program Title	Speakers
Wednesday, March 18, 2026	Virtual 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	<i>Pre-Nups: <u>Soup to Nuts</u></i>	Nicole DiGiacomo Jay Motta
Tuesday, March 24, 2026	Virtual Time TBD	<i>Mortgage Foreclosure</i>	Ron DiCaprio
Thursday, March 26, 2026	Virtual 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	<i>Ethical Legal Research with Generative AI</i>	Tiffany Martinez, Esq. Aanchel Shah, Esq.
Thursday, April 16, 2026	Virtual 12:30 pm-1:30 pm	<i>War Stories from the Grievance Committee and how to avoid becoming one</i>	Forrest Strauss
Wednesday, May 13, 2026	Virtual 9:30 am – 12:30 pm	<i>CPLR Update 2026</i>	Professor Connors
Thursday, June 4, 2026	Sheriff Training Facility 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	<i>Personal Injury</i>	George Coffinas
Thursday, June 11, 2026	Virtual 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	<i>1031 Exchanges</i>	Ryan Vassar



We're Hiring

Commissioner of Human Rights

This leadership role involves administrative and professional responsibilities for developing, coordinating, and implementing policies and initiatives that advance civil and human rights within the County. The Commissioner advises leadership on matters related to human rights in Rockland County and works collaboratively with community organizations, governmental agencies and other stakeholders.

Minimum Qualifications*

- Bachelor's degree and six (6) years of full-time paid work experience investigating and reporting human rights or civil rights issues or complaints, at least three (3) years of which must have been in an administrative or supervisory capacity;

OR

- Juris Doctorate (JD) and four (4) years of full-time paid experience in civil rights, discrimination, labor, or employment law, which must have included conducting investigations and/or litigation of such matters, at least three (3) years of which must have been in an administrative or supervisory capacity.

Salary and Benefits:

- Competitive salary
- 40-Hour work week
- Medical, Dental and Vision
- New York State Pension eligible



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RCJobs@co.rockland.ny.us

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We're Hiring

Principal Assistant County Attorney

The Rockland County Office of the County Attorney is seeking candidates for two full-time, Principal Assistant County Attorney positions on the Department's **Litigation Team and Transactional Team**.

Both the Litigation Team and Transaction Team roles include responsibility for independent legal work on matters of moderate to complex nature representing the County of Rockland. These include legal research and writing; preparing correspondence; drafting and/or handling affidavits; and reviewing documents for completeness, legal sufficiency, and accuracy.

Minimum Qualifications*

- Possession of a license to practice law in New York State; and
- Provision of a current certificate of good standing;
- License to practice law in the State of New York must be maintained throughout the course of employment in this title
- As a public officer one must meet all current requirements of Section 3 of the Public Officers Law, including, but not limited to United States citizenship and applicable residency requirements.

Salary and Benefits:

- \$108,247
- 40-Hour work week
- Medical, Dental and Vision
- New York State Pension eligible



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RCBA Cares

The following resources are provided to you courtesy of the Lawyer to Lawyer Committee.*

Lawyer Assistance Programs

New York State Bar Association: 1-800-255-0569; lap@nysba.org

New York City Bar Association: 212-302-5787; <https://nysba.org/attorney-well-being/>

Suicide Prevention

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988

Crisis Text Line: Need help? Text START to 741-741

Chemical Dependency and Self-Help Sites

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA): 212-870-3400; www.aa.org

International Lawyers in A.A. (ILAA): www.ilaa.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA): 818-773-9999; www.na.org

Nicotine Anonymous (NA): 1-877-TRY-NICA; nicotine-anonymous.org

Mental Health

Depressed Anonymous: depressedanon.com

National Mental Health Association (NMHA) - 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center;
Text MHA to 741741 at the Crisis Text Line

Source: Andrew Denney, Bureau Chief of NYLJ and the New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

****For more information about the Lawyer to Lawyer Committee,***

please email: office@rocklandbar.org

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with their contact information so we can reach out to them about these opportunities.

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We receive several calls each day from clients looking for local representation. We welcome all members to participate but are especially in need of attorneys in these practice areas:

Civil Appeals

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Corporate Law including business formation, dissolution & franchises

Education law

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Environmental Law

Insurance Law, including automobile, home, disability, long term care

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CLASSIFIED ADS

RCBA Members – free, up to 50 words; 51 to 100 words, cost is \$75.00.

Non-Members, cost is \$50 for up to 50 words; 51 to 100 words, cost is \$100.

PLEASE NOTE:

NEWSBRIEF IS NOT PUBLISHED IN JULY

CALL Jeanmarie @ 845-634-2149 or send email to Jeanmarie@Rocklandbar.org

TO ADVERTISE IN NEWSBRIEF

Advertising & articles appearing in the RCBA Newsletter does not presume endorsement of products, services & views of the Rockland County Bar

Association.

All advertisements and articles must be reviewed by the Executive Committee for content.

MEMO**TO ALL RCBA COMMITTEE CHAIRS & VICE – CHAIRS**

The Association is seeking articles from your committee for publication in the Bar's monthly Newsletter. The membership would greatly benefit from your input and would appreciate it. The article does not have to be complicated or long- a succinct piece of general interest and importance would be best.

If you are able to submit an article for the Newsletter it should be sent via email to Jeanmarie@rocklandbar.org by the 15th of the month so that the Executive Board may review it.

Thank you!



Monthly
Newsletter



OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

Private office with/without workstation for support person. Ideal for sole practitioner. Includes use of large conference room, kitchen, WiFi, parking. Fully furnished, flexible terms. Possible professional collaborations.

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Neimark Coffinas & Lapp LLP (New City) seeking attorney with 3 to 5 years' experience in personal injury litigation. Salary commensurate with experience. Generous benefits package.

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LOOKING TO RETIRE OR SELL YOUR PRACTICE?

If you are a solo or small firm attorney considering retirement or selling your practice, contact Judith Bachman, 845-639-3210 or judith@thebachmanlawfirm.com. As a professional courtesy and seeking colleague to colleague conversations, she will help you evaluate options and talk about practice acquisition.

Matrimonial/Family Law Attorney

Rockland County, NY law firm specializing in matrimonial and family law is seeking a full time associate. Excellent writing skills, trial experience and fluent Spanish speaking a plus. Starting salary range is \$55,000.00 to \$85,000.00+. Please call 845.639.4600 or fax resume to 845.639.4610 or E-mail: michael@demoyalaw.com

Full Time or Part Time Attorney

The Bachman Law Firm is seeking a Full Time or Part Time Associate Attorney. The ideal candidate has specific experience (5+ years) with corporate and contracts matters and/or commercial litigation. Typical projects include corporate asset purchases, commercial contracts for the sale of goods or services, corporate formation documents, commercial real estate sales, and business lawsuits. Full Time Salary \$90,000-\$150,000 (depending on experience and qualifications) (to be pro-rated for part time schedule). Benefits included are retirement account, group health insurance (premium contribution), PTO, and Professional Development assistance.

To apply, please submit a detailed resume to Kristine@thebachmanlawfirm.com and answer this question. What is your favorite food and why?

PARALEGALS AVAILABLE

Rockland Community College ABA approved Paralegal program can assist attorneys with filling their open job positions for both part and full time employment opportunities. We have students that range from entry level to experienced Paralegals. Paralegals are not permitted to practice law, which means they cannot give legal advice, represent clients in court, set a legal fee or accept a case. All RCC students are trained to work virtually and proficient in virtual computer programs. Contact Maria Repic-Placement Coordinator at (845) 574-4418 or email at maria.repic@sunyrockland.edu

IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY WANTED

Rockland County, law firm is seeking a full time associate with immigration experience. Trial experience, Spanish speaking, admitted to SDNY and willingness to assist with bankruptcy and loan modifications a plus. Starting salary range is \$55,000.00 to \$85,000.00+.

Call 845.639.4600 or fax resume to
845.639.4610 or

E-mail: michael@demoyalaw.com

Part Time Paralegal / Legal Assistant

In person and/or virtual; Surrogate filings personal injury matters; complex personal injury matters; salary commensurate with experience.

Contact: jeff@injurylaw-nv.com

ADA Positions Available

The Ulster County District Attorney's office is seeking two (2) experienced full-time ADAs and one (1) entry level, i.e., newly admitted ADA. They are seeking ethical lawyers who have a stake in this community and possess the fortitude for criminal trials and related proceedings. Anyone hired will be paid a salary with enviable benefits and gratitude of the community.

If you are interested in pursuing this opportunity, contact Jodi Longto, Confidential stant, at jodl@co.ulster.ny.us for additional information.

Office Space Available

Beldock & Saunders, PC, located in New City, has a private office with a separate workstation, for support staff, available to sublet. Access to conference rooms, reception area, kitchen & plenty of parking. Rent terms are flexible. Contact Steve at (845) 267-4878 or email sbeldock@beldockandsaunderslaw.com .

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