

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is Tuesday morning, March 17, 2020, St. Patrick's Day. Yet, no St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Passover Seder family gatherings, Easter Day Parade. The world is not the same. Our everyday lives are not the same. Our routines, crazy as they so often are, have come to a screeching halt. The cause: COVID-19 coronavirus, an unseen and heretofore unknown force of nature, wreaking havoc here at home and across the globe. Yet, we are not alone and, as a society and a bar association, we will persevere and we will all get through this, as we hope and pray for each other's health and safety.

Effective today, our Suffolk County Court system has been consolidated, with all essential operations located in the Cohalan Courthouse Complex in Central Islip. The Suffolk County Bar Association has been working closely with our administration to keep abreast of the ever-shifting landscape and keep you all informed. We are most fortunate to have the strong and steady guidance of our District Administrative Judge, C. Randall Hinrichs, to navigate us through this mammoth, yet temporary, transitions in our system. Due to Judge Hinrichs' monumental efforts, dedication and wisdom, what could have turned into a disaster, is well and functioning. Rest assured, we are continuing to monitor the situation and advise you as to the evolving adjustments.

We need to remind ourselves that this too shall pass. When, we do not know. How, we do not know. As attorneys and judges, we are the ones who are used to calling the shots, directing, being strong for our clients, and having the answers. Now, we are not. Yet, we are all part of this human race. We can use our skills in our learned profession to help guide others through this, to remain calm, make safe and appropriate choices for ourselves, our clients and our families.

As difficult as these circumstances are, I think about the history of our civilization and the tragedies and calamities that our forebearers have had to endure, and I feel grateful that in my life I have not had to endure worse than the coronavirus. There is no minimizing the impact of this pandemic upon our livelihoods, our economy, our way of life and, most importantly, our health. There is no minimizing the loss of even one life. That is a tragedy that no one should

have to bear, and which we must strive to avoid. If it means we need to socially distance ourselves, give up our normal routines, and hunker down at home, it is a small price to pay to stem the tide of this rapacious virus. All of which I remind myself as I scour the shelves of Costco for 3 hours, traipse all over Suffolk County searching for that elusive 4-pack of toilet paper (I have given up on the hunt for Purell), and sing Happy Birthday to myself twice as I wash my hands.

For the foreseeable future, the Bar Association will be closed to the public. Although our attorneys are always welcome. We are still functioning with our staff at limited times, and we will not always be open. We have had to cancel or postpone many events that I know we have all looked so forward to. We have canceled our CLE seminars through March, and beyond, and are postponing other meetings. As unfortunate as that is, it is more important that we focus on staying healthy. Of course, our terrific staff, with Executive Director Sarah Jane LaCova at the helm, is keeping us functioning and abreast of all we need to accomplish.

When I began my year as President of this illustrious bar association last June, I asked you all to Do One Thing. So many of you have risen to the challenge and so graciously volunteered your time, expertise and good will to do just that. I have been overwhelmed with the outpouring of effort and commitment from you all. This bar association is truly a place to call home. We strive to be that home for you as we navigate through these trying times. To that end, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the bar association or myself. We are here for you. A calamity like this can bring out the worst in people or the best in people. I have certainly seen the best. I do believe we will come out of this stronger and better as individuals and as a nation. Together we can do what we could never do alone.

You can still do one thing through this health crisis. Take care of yourselves, think of others, appreciate what we have and love your family and friends (from a distance of six feet).

Be well and stay healthy,

Lynn