

ADVICETALK

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AdviceScene Monthly Newsletter

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Expansion & New Look for AdviceScene

We are working on improving the function and look of AdviceScene to improve your experience on the site. In the next few weeks you will notice some changes while we improve the functionality. In the meantime we are working on a whole new site that will look and feel a lot different, but will still have the same basic components. There will be a main landing page for advicescene.com and from there you will be able to access other advice sites on other topics in the future.

We appreciate the fact that all of you have stuck by us while we go through the necessary growing pains of a start up company. Part of our expansion has been the addition of the [American legal forum](#). As expected, American lawyers are as committed to democratizing the law as their Canadian colleagues. We are pleased to announce that we now have over twenty American lawyers and counting, waiting to answer legal questions and help people understand how the law works in the US.

Advice-A-Thon & AdviceScene: a Great Fit



In September AdviceScene sponsored an “[Advice-A-Thon](#).” We and Island FX were at the Victoria event conducting video interviews of the event organizers and the volunteer lawyers. Volunteer lawyers were on hand to help people with low to moderate incomes with their legal troubles. The event was a great success and the organizers managed to exceed their fundraising goals.



Advice-A-Thon organizers received a lot of positive feedback from both the clients and the lawyers and they look forward to hosting the event again next year. AdviceScene has already committed to helping with next year’s Advice-A-Thon and looks forward to working with Pro Bono Net in the future to improve access to justice and better legal education for all.



Could there be a Chill in the Air?

Along with the now-chilly fall weather it seems there is also a chill on giving free online legal information. The Canadian Bar Association recently sent out its “[Guidelines for Ethical Marketing Practices Using New Information Technologies](#)” to all its members (Canadian lawyers). These guidelines are just that, guidelines, as [David Canton](#) of slaw.ca reminds lawyers. The Canadian Bar Association does not make rules about what lawyers can and cannot do: that is up to provincial law societies that regulate the legal profession. However, the CBA is a highly influential organization made up of lawyers. We’re hoping that the guidelines do not scare lawyers away from offering to help people understand the law and legal system in Canada.

Of course we agree that it is not ethical or wise for a legal professional to give a legal opinion based on the few facts that a person gives in an online post; and that he or she should only give general guidelines of steps the anonymous poster might want to take to solve their legal problems. We also accept that it is not possible to answer some questions posted on our forum because some people really need to consult with a lawyer face-to-face in certain situations. However, helping someone to understand the legal process and their rights and obligations

under the law can never be a wrong thing to do.

Often, just hearing from a lawyer or judge on our forum helps people. People are genuinely surprised that lawyers and judges would do this sort of thing. Even if the advice is, “you must consult with a lawyer right away,” people are left with the impression that our legal profession is made up of helpful, caring people that aren’t just out to make money—they’re out to make a difference.

In our opinion, giving advice or information online, where the legal professionals identify themselves as being qualified to do so, is a good thing and is not something to be afraid of. After all, wouldn’t our legal system be the laughing stock of the world if a lawyer could be sued successfully or punished by their law society for offering legal information or advice on our forum to an anonymous poster in exchange for nothing other than the pleasure of helping someone in dire need of legal understanding and education?

It’s time for the legal profession in Canada to really get into the online world and stop being afraid of it. Is there really a difference between advising and explaining the law to someone you’ve just met on the golf course, and doing the same online? We don’t think so. It’s time for the legal profes-

sion to open up and help the general public to understand how our very complex legal system works.

In fact, in an ironic turn of events, the president of the CBA just this year stated that lawyers [share the responsibility](#) for improved access to justice in this country. There are so many opportunities for lawyers, judges and law students to make the most of their elite education by helping to improve access to justice and legal understanding, offline and online. The AdviceScene legal forum is one new way to do that and we hope that lawyers, judges, law students, and other legal professionals will continue to answer questions about the law well into the future.

We’re on to something and we hope that lawyers will not be scared off by far-fetched lawsuit & disciplinary scenarios that would likely never happen. The Canadian legal forum is about sharing legal information and expertise—democratizing the law. We hope we will continue to have the support of legal professionals in Canada.

New American Lawyers to Join AdviceScene



Donna Seyle
[Freelance Law Firm](#)

Donna gladly joins the American legal forum to help improve access to justice and better legal understanding in her home country.

“I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to study law, which enables me understand how law can both protect and harm us. It is a privilege to be able to educate and assist others as situations arise where the law can protect them or provide recourse for them against harm inflicted upon them by others, or where they feel oppressed by laws that have taken away their rights in some way. I think it is important for people to have access to this information online because often, they do not know where to turn for help.

I hang my hat in Santa Cruz, CA, a small community of enterprising and creative professionals who enjoy the culture and the beauty of the Central Coast. Professionally, my 22 years of experience in real estate and business law is a unique blend of traditional firm practice (litiga-

tion and transactional), business and real estate entrepreneurship and commercial lease management.

My strength and passion is legal research and drafting, including, pleadings and motions, pre-trial and trial documents, business formation documents, purchase and sale agreements, contracts, real estate agreements, residential and commercial leases, landlord-tenant forms and other related documents. I am relentless in my research, creative in my thinking, talented in the art of written persuasion and a perfectionist in my composition. I bring to the practice not just a solid foundation in legal analysis and writing, but also a practical perspective in drafting transactional documents that facilitates ways to get around objections to language and ease of understanding, all leading to positive outcomes.”



R. David Marquez, Esq
<http://rdavidmarquez.com>

Here is what David Marquez has to say about his belief in democratizing the law.

“I have been practicing law for 25 years as a litigator and trial attorney. More often than not I have represented the interests of the under dog, plaintiffs in civil actions or criminal defendants. I am interested in helping people learn more about the law and its impact on their lives because ignorance of the law is not a mitigating factor. From criminal defendants who are unaware that they are breaking the law to business people who omit to read the fine print in the contracts they execute, ignorance of the law carries a heavy penalty.

Living in a society where the law constitutes the rules of the road, compels each of us, whether lawyers or not, to know at

least the basic concepts that govern our social co-existence. Using the Internet to communicate and educate individuals and businesses in need of legal services seems like the most direct method of getting to know potential clients and disseminating vital information.

I have been engaged by various different law firms at different times, as an Of Counsel trial attorney. I currently practice from my office located at 111 Great Neck Road, Ste. 206, Great Neck, New York 11021. My practice areas include, civil law, criminal law and criminal defense of N.Y.S. sales tax fraud.”

MoralityMeter

We've asked some polarizing questions in the last month; and we've had some extreme results:

Texting While Driving: 8 out of 10

People thought that emailing or texting while driving is really bad and should not be legal.

Comments on this question: simply check out the topic “#texting while driving” on twitter to get inundated with opinions on this one!

How morally bad is it for a 24-yr old teacher to have sex with his/her 17 yr-old student?: 8 out of 10

Most people felt very strongly about this one: a person in authority should not get involved with a 17-year old.

Check out comments on our own page because I wouldn't recommend trying to search this one twitter--too many inappropriate posts come up!

How morally bad is it to buy illegal drugs to treat a real medical condition? 6 out of 10

From the comments we received, this one appeared to be tied to the legality of buying drugs. Rather than people being concerned about using drugs they appeared to care more about breaking the law. Perhaps then, if the law allowed of the use of drugs in this situation people would not feel that it was so bad.

Take a look at all the comments on the results page!

How morally wrong is it to shoot to kill an intruder during an armed home invasion? 3 out of 10

This one surprised us a little, but after over 119 votes, the meter remained at 3 out of 10, meaning that people feel strongly about the right to protect their property, themselves, and their families.

Links and Contact Info

To Register on our forum (free):

<http://advicescene.com/canadian-legal-forum>

To Register on our Directory (free):

<http://advicescene.com/lawyers>

Email us:

info@advicescene.com