

# Snohomish County Bar Member Monthly Newsletter



## SCBA Calendar of Events



### APRIL

### MAY

16<sup>th</sup> – Newsletter Deadline

5<sup>th</sup> – Ethics CLE

16<sup>th</sup> – Board of Trustees Meeting

15<sup>th</sup> – Newsletter Deadline

21<sup>st</sup> – Board of Trustees Meeting

### 2026 SCBA Annual Golf Tournament

The SCBA is pleased to announce that our Annual Golf Tournament will be held on August 21st at the Nile Shrine Golf Club in Mountlake Terrace. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Please contact Cynthia at [director@snobar.org](mailto:director@snobar.org) to receive details.

Our registration site will go live next week; the link will be posted on the SCBA website, and the next email update.

Our beneficiary for the tournament is the Edmonds School District Athletic Alliance.

### Open Trustee Seat on the Snohomish County Bar Association’s Board of Trustees

The Snohomish County Bar Association is seeking applications and nominations for an open position on the board.

Responsibilities include:

- Attend monthly board meetings.
- Join one or more of the board committees.
- Participate in an annual planning session.

Nominations and applications must include name, area of practice, bar number, statement of interest and a current resumé.

Please submit your information to Cynthia Dasté, Executive Director at [director@snobar.org](mailto:director@snobar.org). Nominations and applications are due on April 16th.

## Inside this issue:

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## Bar Calendar

SCBA Board Meetings, 5:00 PM

Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81547773463>

### Board Meeting Dates:

~~2/19~~ 7/16

~~3/26~~ 9/17

4/16 10/15

5/21 11/19

6/18 12/17

# SCBA Team

Cynthia Daste' Executive Director  
Gregory Altringer Office Manager

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Bar News is published monthly by Snohomish County Bar Association, P.O. Box 5429, Everett, WA 98206.

Ads, articles, announcements and changes of address all go to [service@snobar.org](mailto:service@snobar.org). Submissions are due by the 15th of the month.



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“ As a fifty plus year member of WSBA, there was no question in my mind about joining the Justice Society and naming the Endowment for Equal Justice in my will. I want to make sure that people who need legal representation at critical times in their lives can access it, no matter how meager their resources. The Endowment is working to take some of the stress out of their lives with civil legal aid. The Endowment provides support in perpetuity for the Legal Foundation of Washington in making our communities more equitable places to live, work and raise a family. Please join me. ”



— **DICK MANNING**,  
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AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Criminal Justice Section

## BRIDGING JURISDICTIONS: THE TRIBAL WARRANTS ACT AND INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Join us to learn more about bridging the jurisdictional gap to find justice and protect Tribal Communities.

April 9, 2026

1:00 pm Eastern | 10:00 am Pacific

Zoom Webinar



**REGISTER TO ATTEND:**  
[AMBAR.ORG/WARRANTSACT](https://www.ambar.org/warrantsact)

## FEATURED SPEAKERS



### Speaker

Chelsea Sayles  
Tribal and County Pro  
Tem Judge and  
Tribal Attorney  
Quileute Tribe  
La Push, Washington



### Speaker

Melissa Simonsen  
Chief Prosecutor  
Swinomish Indian  
Tribal Community  
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## Associate Attorney Position

Hermes Law Firm, PS seeks an Attorney with 5 plus years of experience to handle business, real estate and estate planning/estate transitions. The ideal candidate will step in to a bustling 27-year old business, and will have the opportunity to build client relationships. Responsibilities will include providing direct legal representation to clients, prepare legal documents, and representing clients in Mediation, Arbitration and Litigation. The strong candidate will be an active WSBA Member with excellent communication and interpersonal skills, strong legal knowledge, social networking plans, and a passion for growth. Highly competitive compensation package, including employment benefits. Excellent lateral move opportunity in growing downtown Everett. Correspond to:  
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## Judge Michael T. Downes (Ret.)

is pleased to announce his availability for Arbitrations and Mediations.

### Carson Law Group, PLLC

Please contact Chloe Horner for scheduling with Judge Downes:  
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Tel: 425-493-5000  
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# CLE Announcements

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## ***Upcoming Ethics CLE***

*On May 5, 2026 we are offering a CLE from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on ethics. Our speakers at the present time are Snohomish County District Court Judge Anthony Howard, Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Richard Okrent, Jeanne Marie Clavere from WSBA ethics division, and attorney Aimee Lou Trua.*

*The CLE will address "Common Ethical Issues During Litigation" by Janne Matie Clavere, with a panel and discussion questions from 10:00 a.m. Until 11:00 a.m., followed by information and discussion on how to remain within ethical boundaries during presentations to the Court, and then our judges will discuss how failure to follow ethical guidelines regarding honesty to the tribunal and general treatment of the court has changed and effected the safety of members of the bench.*

*We intend to have other members of the bench be part of our speaker line-up, and will advise when the date gets closer.*

*We encourage attendance at this CLE not just for the ethics credits, which we are applying for, but for the information to assist in your practice to avoid ethical mis-steps and to assist in creating a more appropriate and respectful atmosphere in court to encourage respect which in turn will assist in the safety for our members of the bench.*

*When: May 5, 2026, from 10 AM - 1 PM*

*Where: The Health Dept. Bldg. at 3020 Rucker Ave., Suite 306 (NOTE: Please find street parking as non-county vehicles parked behind the building will be towed at the owners' expense).*

*A CLE Pass is required to attend this CLE.*

*Please contact Gregory at [service@snobar.org](mailto:service@snobar.org) to request an invoice for a CLE Pass.*

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*Washington State  
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McKinley Irvin proudly congratulates partners Mark Arend and Brent Bohan for their election to leadership positions within the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Their service reflects McKinley Irvin's longstanding commitment to leadership, integrity, and excellence in family law.



**McKINLEY IRVIN**  
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**The Ghost in the Room  
The Role of Legal Counsel in  
Mitigating Childhood Trauma During and After Divorce**

**Monthly Resource for the Snohomish County Bar Association Newsletter  
By Tio Jorge,**



**I. Introduction:  
The Empty Chair at the Table**

In the world of family law, we often talk about "the parties." We speak of the Petitioner and the Respondent, the assets and the liabilities, the 60/40 splits and the right of first refusal. But in my years of walking alongside families, I have noticed that the most important person in the case never actually sits at the counsel table.

I call this person the Ghost in the Room. The Ghost is the six-year-old boy who is suddenly having "accidents" at school. The Ghost is the teenager who has become a master of silence, retreating into a world of video games to drown out the sound of her parents' voices. When a legal battle becomes high-conflict, these children are not just witnesses; they are the primary casualties.

As a lawyer, you are the first responder. Before the judge ever sees a motion, you see the family in its rawest state. You have the power to decide if you will be a gladiator who levels the field or an architect who builds a bridge. This article is about how to see the Ghost, and how to lead your clients out of the wreckage of "winning" and into the peace of co-parenting.

**II. The Mechanics of the Shift**

**1. The Adversarial Trap: Why "Winning" is a Myth in Family Law**

The traditional legal system is built on a "zero-sum" game. For one side to gain, the other must lose. While this works for a breach of contract case, it is toxic for a family. When a client comes to you wanting to "expose" the other parent's flaws to get more time, they are often operating from a place of deep betrayal or fear.



# ROUND 2

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Tio's Wisdom: If you help a client "crush" their ex-spouse in court, you haven't won; you've just handicapped the other half of that child's support system. A child is 50% Mom and 50% Dad. When we attack one parent, the child feels like we are attacking 50% of them.

Lawyer's Strategy: \* The "Audit of Intent": When a client asks for a restrictive clause or a punitive measure, ask them: "How will this look to your child in ten years?"

- Redirecting the Narrative: Move the conversation from "What did they do to you?" to "What does the child need from both of you right now?"

## **2. The ACEs Connection: The Science of High Conflict**

We must look at the science of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Research shows that chronic exposure to high-intensity parental conflict is one of the most significant predictors of long-term health issues in children—ranging from depression and anxiety to physical ailments like heart disease later in life.

The court decree may end the marriage, but if the conflict continues, the child's brain remains in a state of "fight or flight." This is "Toxic Stress."

- The Emotional Relocation: Children shouldn't have to "pack away" their love for one parent when they enter the home of the other.

The Loyalty Bind: High-conflict litigation forces children to choose sides. This is a form of emotional trauma that can stunt their ability to form healthy relationships as adults.

## **3. Building the Collaborative Bridge: Practical Tactics**

How do we move a client who is "out for blood" toward a collaborative mindset? It starts with the professional boundaries you set.

- Communication Coaching: Teach your clients the BIFF method (Brief, Informative, Friendly, and Firm). If a client sends you a 10-page angry email intended for their ex, don't just file it. Use it as a coaching moment to explain that high-conflict communication only serves to prolong the legal bill and the child's suffering.

- The Parenting Plan as a Living Document: Instead of a rigid "police report" style agreement, encourage "Child-Focused" language. Instead of "The Father shall have the child," try "The child will spend time with their Father." It's a subtle shift that puts the child at the center.

- Neutral Exchanges: If the handoff is a flashpoint for conflict, suggest neutral locations or "school-to-school" transitions where the parents don't have to interact, protecting the child from the "Ghost" of tension.

### **Summary: The Peacemaker's Checklist**

For the attorney looking to make this shift, keep these four questions on your desk:

1. Is this action child-centric or ego-centric?
2. Am I treating the other parent as a "party" or as my client's "partner in parenting"?



# Family Law Mediation & Arbitration

Wayne Pellegrini

Third Street Mediation

PO Box 246  
Silvana, WA 98287  
360-386-2047

Mr. Pellegrini is an experienced family law attorney whose practice began in Seattle and has expanded to include continuous case actions in Snohomish, Whatcom, King County, Skagit and Island counties

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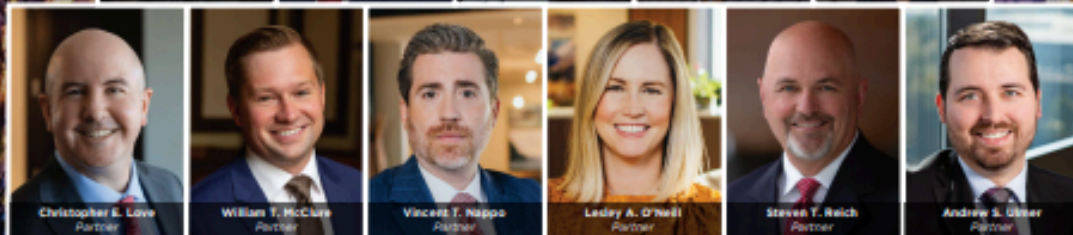
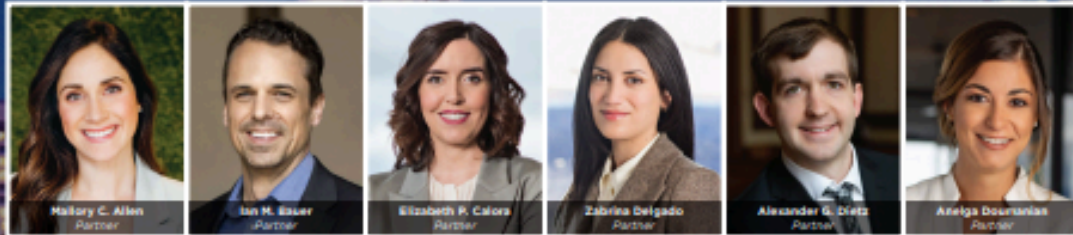
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1. Does this legal strategy increase or decrease the "Toxic Stress" in the child's life?
2. Have I provided my client with the educational tools (like the Successful Co-Parenting class) to survive the life after the litigation?

## **Call to Action (CTA)**

Don't Just Settle the Case—Stabilize the Family. The best outcome for your client isn't a "favorable" ruling; it's a quiet home and a thriving child. We invite you to refer your clients to the Successful Co-Parenting Class. This program is designed to take the "combat" out of the equation and give parents the practical, emotional, and communication tools they need to stay out of your office and in their children's lives.

## **Conclusion: The Legacy of the Peacemaker**

At the end of your career, you won't remember the billable hours from the motions you filed. You will remember the families you helped save. When a child can grow up and see both parents at their wedding, standing on opposite sides of the room but sharing the same smile of pride—that is your true victory. You are more than a lawyer; for that child, you are a guardian of their peace.

## **About Tio Jorge and the Successful Co-Parenting Class**

Tio Jorge is a dedicated family advocate and educator who believes that every child deserves the love of both parents, regardless of the status of the marriage. Through his Successful Co-Parenting Class, he has helped thousands of families transition from the "battlefield" to a "business-like" partnership that prioritizes the emotional safety of children. His approach is rooted in empathy, cultural wisdom, and the latest research in childhood development.

Court-Approved: The official, required parenting seminar provider for Snohomish Superior Court since 2017, with acceptance in Skagit, Island, and various other counties.

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Help your clients turn on the light of effective communication. For dates, details, and registration, please visit: [www.SuccessfulCo-Parenting.com](http://www.SuccessfulCo-Parenting.com)

### **Expert References & Further Reading**

To further explore the intersection of law, trauma, and co-parenting, Tio Jorge recommends the following leading voices and resources:

- Christina McGhee, MSW: Author of Parenting Apart and a world-renowned coach specializing in minimizing the impact of divorce on children.
- The ACE Study (Felitti & Anda): The foundational research on Adverse Childhood Experiences and their long-term health implications.
- Dr. Bill Bernet: Professor Emeritus at Vanderbilt University and a leading expert on parental alienation and high-conflict family dynamics.
- Bill Eddy, LCSW, Esq.: Developer of the BIFF communication method and founder of the High Conflict Institute.
- Robert Emery, Ph.D.: Author of Two Homes, One Childhood and a leading researcher on family mediation and child custody.

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