

and boys play supportive roles in this female puberty rite. Virgin boys dance to 32 special Crown Songs on Saturday night. Men and boys build the sweat lodges in which they bless all of the items to be used in the ceremony. (This is a day-long process shrouded in secrecy, for women are not allowed to enter the sweat camps.) Male members of the tribe also cut the trees for the girl's prayer teepee and mix the ingredients for the sacred clay to paint her skin.

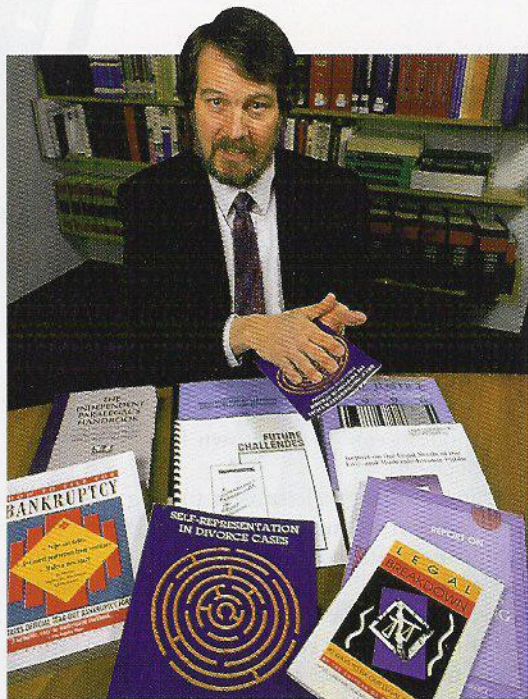
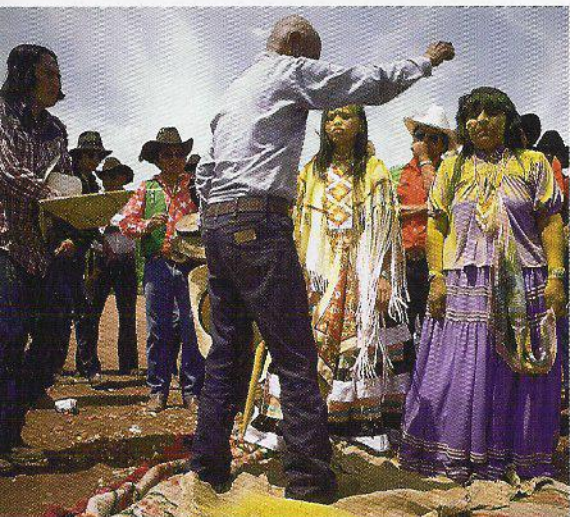
Begay describes Apache males' attitudes toward the Sunrise Dance as respectful and supportive. "Apache culture instills in all of us a belief in the past. Men are in support of what we still have left," she says—particularly since many of their own traditional roles, such as fighting and hunting, are becoming obsolete. Begay hopes that the Peabody exhibit will shed some light on a culture that for many people still consists of fuzzy grammar-school textbook memories or misrepresentations in movies. "We are all so different from each other," says Begay, "and I think many times people make judgments on another culture without knowing its belief systems. We need to learn what makes people tick." —*Alessandra Bianchi*

Do-It-Yourself Law

The ultimate lawyer joke: law without the lawyers. A growing number of Americans are handling routine legal matters themselves.

It's the high-tech equivalent of a Tijuana divorce. When many Arizona couples decide to separate, they not only forgo hiring lawyers but bypass the court clerk as well. Instead, a quick stop at the local computer kiosk provides entrée to a state-licensed software system that asks the would-be

After the girl has completed her ritual dances, guests form a line to bless her individually with pollen (from the basket), and sick people ask her to bless them.



"This is becoming a very controversial topic," says Gerry Singen.

divorcees for relevant information, then generates the court documents needed to present their case to a judge. The judge reviews the letter-perfect forms, hears the case, and presto—the marital bonds are broken. Welcome to the world of self-service law.

Today, record numbers of citizens are engaging in *pro se* litigation (the Latin legalism for representing oneself in court) and other types of lawyer-free legal practice: wills, bankruptcies, incorporations, and contracts, for example. These basic legal tasks, long the bread-and-butter of workaday attorneys, are fast becoming the province of do-it-yourselfers. But as more people try to navigate the legal system by themselves, will they be able to avoid judicial quagmires without lawyers to guide them? And can the American system of law withstand an onslaught of enterprising amateurs?

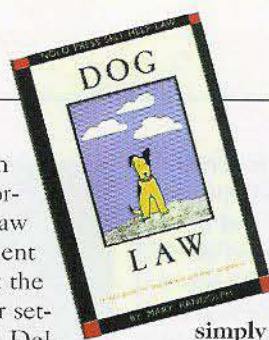
Probably so, says Gerry Singen, program coordinator of the Program on the Legal Profession at the Law School. "Numerous studies have found that *pro se* litigants exercise pretty good judgment—they seem to have a pretty reliable sense of when they need a lawyer and when they don't. It's also important to realize that 'pure' *pro se* is actually very rare," Singen says. "People talk to friends, go to the library, or even use a computer to get the information they need. In most cases, they're ultimately getting advice from someone."

These days that advice is in ready supply. Thanks to a burgeoning literature of do-it-yourself books, low-priced legal software, and the exploding popularity of on-line information services, Americans are demanding—and getting—

Can You Really Represent Yourself?

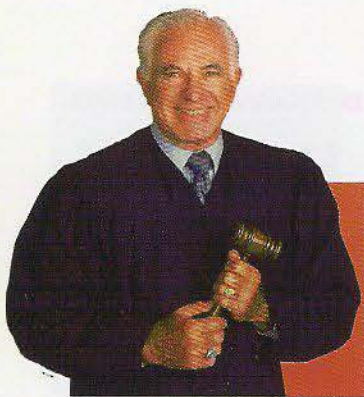
"Unless your case is unusually complex, the answer is yes—a resounding yes. You may not have all the legal training of a lawyer, but you do not need to go to law school to have common sense, to learn how to ask intelligible questions or to recognize what makes people and information believable. In the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes . . . 'The life of the law has not been logic, it has been experience.' As these words suggest, your everyday life experience is the foundation of most of what you need to know to present a coherent, convincing case. Besides, as former Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger was fond of pointing out, many lawyers are not such hotshots; they often come to court ill-prepared and lacking professional skills."

—from *Represent Yourself in Court*, by attorneys Paul Bergman and Sara Berman-Barrett (Nolo Press)



“You cannot leave money or other kinds of property to your dog. And it’s not just because he can’t see over the bank counter to open an account. The law says animals are property, and one piece of property simply can’t own another piece.”

—from *Dog Law: A Legal Guide for Dog Owners and Their Neighbors*, by Mary Randolph (Nolo Press)



RALPH EDWARDS WAPNER
BILLET PRODUCTIONS

Judge Wapner of “The People’s Court.” The well-known jurist may have helped demystify the law for his many viewers.

the kind of access to legal information once available only to practicing attorneys who knew their way around a law library. A *Wall Street Journal* advertisement promises dirt-cheap documentation, at the touch of an 800 telephone number, for setting up a corporation in tax-friendly Delaware. On the Internet computer network, users can seek out legal advice (at their own risk) through open-access bulletin boards and mailing lists. Several states have even started to mount full texts of their statutes on public-access electronic networks, where anyone with a computer and modem can do their own legal homework, free of charge.

But technology alone isn’t fueling this trend, says Singen. “Americans have undergone some fundamental attitudinal changes over the last couple of decades,” he says. “Look at the women’s movement, or the consumer movement of the seventies, or the civil-rights movement. All of these trends helped encourage citizens to speak up for themselves, to assert their own rights under the law.”

There may also be a less noble social dynamic at work: call it the “L.A. Law” factor. In recent years lawyers have fairly basked in the pop-culture spotlight, on the Court-TV cable television channel, in the tabloid press, and in scores of movies and television dramas. “I think there’s no question that pop culture has played an enormous role,” says Singen. “[TV lawyers] tend to remove that aura of special knowledge surrounding the law.” Of course, we all know that television and movie characters are one thing, real lawyers quite another—or do we? A recent public survey found that more Americans could correctly identify Judge Wapner of “The People’s Court” than Chief Justice William Rehnquist of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Some lawyers are starting to worry. “This is becoming a very controversial topic,” says Singen, who currently serves on the American Bar

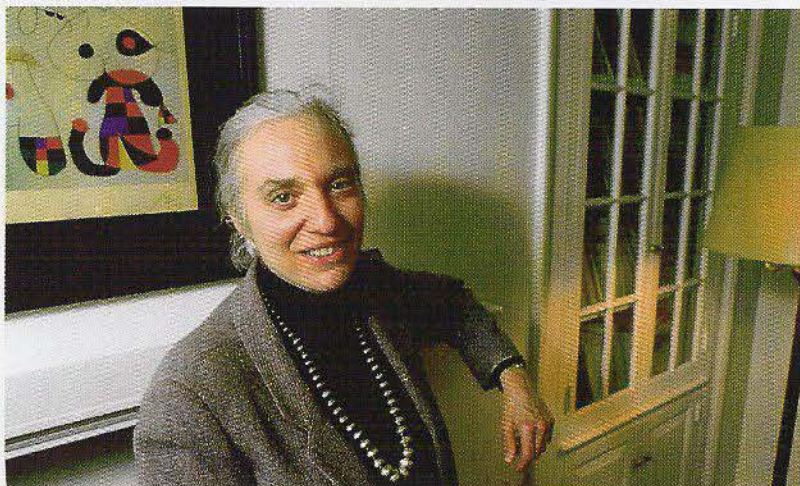
Association’s Commission on Non-Lawyer Practice, which has been holding deliberations on the subject for the last several months. “A lot of lawyers are very concerned about *pro se*.”

Will a more empowered citizenry put an end to lawyers’ monopoly over the law? Probably not, at least not for now. Most do-it-yourselfers will never have the expertise to take on convoluted legal issues or to argue effectively in a criminal court. But Singen predicts that “we will probably see a continuing decline in the use of lawyers to process routine transactions.”

Singen suggests that information technology will eventually facilitate transformations in the American legal system. “I think we haven’t even begun to see the extent to which computers will change the practice of law. Those changes have already been dramatic. And it’s all but impossible to predict the effect of technology, especially when you try to look two or three generations down the line. Just imagine being able to appear in court on interactive video. Why would anyone bother driving down to the courthouse?”

—A.G. Wright

Phyllis Stein. Attempting to understand how early sexual abuse manifests itself in the workplace, she and her colleagues entered uncharted territory.



JOHN CHASE

The Career Price of Sexual Abuse

The trauma of childhood sexual abuse has well-documented effects on the personal lives of its survivors. Radcliffe counselors are finding that it can have profound effects on survivors’ professional lives as well.

For Marion, too many sleepless nights finally got to her—that, and a depression that left her excessively prone to colds and flus. An occupational therapist for the last twenty years at a large veterans’ facility, she found herself taking too long to write reports, not paying attention at meetings, even asking her clients questions and not hearing the answers. But she loved her job. The Radcliffe alumna sought psychotherapy and uncovered an increasingly familiar trauma: when Marion was a preschooler, an “older male authority figure” outside her family had sexually abused her.

Now in her forties, Marion can look back and understand much about her professional life. Early on, she shunned male-dominated medical school for occupational therapy, a specialty made up most-