Welcome to the 2026 FOLA Fall Plenary

www.fola.ca/plenary

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1

Federation of Ontario Law Associations

Call to Order

Welcoming Remarks from the Chair Jennifer S. Rooke

Roll Call of the Presidents



2

the MIDDLESEX LAW ASSOCIATION

Welcoming Remarks

MLA President Greg Willson

3

Committee Chairs' Reports

Criminal – Karen Seeley
Estates – Andrew Keesmaat
Family Law –Logan Rathbone
Legal Aid Committee – Terry Brandon
Real Estate – Mark Giavedoni



4

Break

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5

Ahluwalia

Ahluwalia

6

Lunch

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Civility

9

Real Estate Roundtable: Armouries Ballroom (here)

Civil Litigation Roundtable: Officers Club

Associations HR: Gunnery Room



10

Federation of Ontario Law Associations

Mark's Real Estate Roundtable

Mark Giavedoni

11

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Kevin's Litigation Roundtable

Kevin Cooke

12

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Associations HR:
Hiring & Getting The Most Out of Your People

Laura Dickson
Ted Chadderton

13

Federation of Ontario Law Associations

In Camera

Hearing From The Presidents & Delegates

14

Treasurer's Dinner

LAWPRO Hospitality Suite



15

Happy Friday!

Please fill out the survey at fola.ca/plenary



16

Federation of Ontario Law Associations

General Meeting



Materials available at FOLA.CA/PLENARY

17

Law Society of Ontario

LSO Update

18

Legal Aid Ontario
Aide juridique Ontario

LAO Update

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Federation of Ontario Law Associations

19

LAWPRO Update & AI Update

LawPRO

20

Break

Check out and Return by 11:55 AM

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21

20 Tips in 20 Minutes

(ANYTHING GOES)



22

RED FLAG 1

You are not their second lawyer. You are their third, or fourth.

One lawyer leaving can be bad luck. Two or more is a pattern.

Ask why each earlier retainer ended, and listen for who gets the blame.



Photo: Wesley Tingey on Unsplash (a Getty Images company)

23

Fostering Trust & Confidence with Clients & Staff | While Also Managing the Lawyer's Time 1 / 5

Say "Yes, and" instead of "No, but"

Use in ADR and negotiation AND with clients and staff



"Yes" = acceptance
instead of "no" = rejection

"And" = expansion
instead of "but" = shutting down

Instead of...	Try...
"Your draft has problems, but it's a start."	"Yes, the draft covers the key issues, and the next step is tightening the argument."
"We lost the motion, but there's an appeal."	"Yes, we have options, and the strongest one is an appeal."

24

"I would have written a shorter letter, but did not have the time."

~ French mathematician and philosopher *Blaise Pascal* in "*Lettres Provinciales*," 1657

Use Large Language Models (LLMs) (a.k.a. AI) to edit your communication when you do not have time to write a short, concise, and persuasive letter/email.

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25



26



RED FLAG 2

A "helicopter parent" wants to give you instructions.

You act for the client, not for the person who drove them or is paying.

Meet the client alone. A third party in the room can put privilege at risk.

Photo: Julia M Cameron on Pexels

27

Continuously Build Rapport

Have photos or mementos around you

Show clients or staff something personal to spark conversation and connection.

For the lawyer, it is a reminder of outside life and helps maintain a healthy perspective.

Listen actively

Make notes after the conversation rather than during, especially on sensitive topics.

For the lawyer, this can help prevent misunderstandings caused by jumping to legal conclusions or ignoring subtle cues.

Remember and follow up

Note something the client shared and raise it at the next meeting. It shows you remembered and cared.

For the lawyer, an open client who is confident in you is easier to represent.

28

Engage Outsourcing Agencies to Help With Unexpected Volume or New Practice Areas

There are companies and individuals who are happy to work on a piecework/project basis. Allowing you to fill temporary gaps, surge in work, or for unfamiliar tasks.

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29

Use Pinpoint Hyperlinks

To pinpoint to a paragraph number: #par

Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia, 2026 SCC 16, at para. 200

To pinpoint to a section: #sec

Courts of Justice Act, RSO 1990, c C.43, at s. 11

30

RED FLAG 3

They want to “sandbag” the other side.

Holding back documents or “forgetting” evidence is not a strategy.

Disclosure is not optional, and you cannot help them hide it.

Photo: cottonbro studio on Pexels



31

Create a Comfortable Space

Why?

A comfortable **client** opens up and provides useful information.

Comfortable **staff** are more productive.



How? Consider:

Physical comfort is just the start: chairs, tables, room layout.

Calming colours & artwork especially for clients facing high stress or trauma.

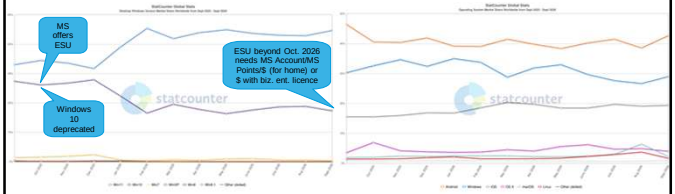
Add greenery. Real and artificial plants are both shown to reduce cortisol.

Reduce clutter. Closed cabinets hide papers and portray organization over chaos.



32

It is 2026. Do you Know What OS your Firm/Library is Running?



Based upon the above graphs over 8% of firms may be running Windows 10 (and it is probably higher as Windows is over represented on office computers). If your firm is still running Windows 10 you will need new hardware to run Windows 11 or consider a different OS (Some flavour of Linux, ChromeOS Flex, or etc.)

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StatCounter Global Stats - Windows Version Market Share
StatCounter Global Stats - OS Market Share
Charts are copyright by Statcounter and are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License (blue text bubbles added).

33



Bedside Caffeination Station = lifechanging

34

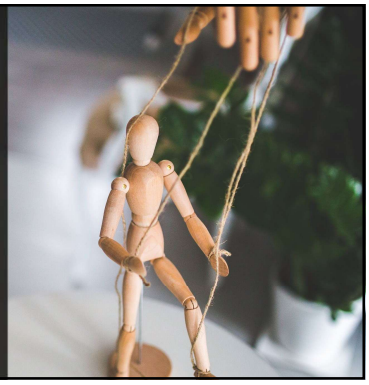
RED FLAG 4

They want a mouthpiece, not a lawyer.

They draft the letters and court documents. You just sign.

Your name goes on it, so your judgment has to go into it.

Photo: Karolina Grabowska on Pexels



35

Calming the Anxious Client & Managing Your Time

Do this…	…then
Set a next date, always	Manage expectations (the date may need to be moved)
Pick up the phone instead of replying to the long email	Summarize the conversation in an email
Provide hand-outs summarizing key steps	Have a short conversation to answer questions, if needed
Check in after key steps	Ask what you could have done differently, and implement it next time

Link to article: https://oba.org/client-management-for-the-young-lawyer-what-i-wish-i-had-known-sooner-53381f6245f6ad6eb57fad81478a4d4c/

36

"There are two types of hard drives: those that have failed, and those that will fail." ~ *IT industry saying*

"Two is one, and one is none." ~ *U.S. Navy SEALs saying*

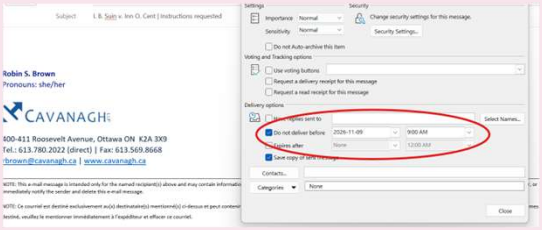
The recent Ukrainian attacks on Yandex server farms are a good reminder to check if our firms are following the 3-2-1-backup rule and not relying on one point of failure:

- **3 Total Copies:** Keep your original data plus at least two backups.
- **2 different storage types:** Save copies across different media (e.g., internal hard drive, external SSD, or network-attached storage).
- **1 offsite or cloud copy:** Keep at least one backup physically separate (in a different building or encrypted cloud storage) to protect against local disasters.

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37

Use "Delay Delivery" Function



38



RED FLAG 5

"My friend's cousin's neighbour got X. I want that too."

Every case turns on its own facts, not a story told third-hand.

Set or reset expectations at the first meeting, and confirm them in writing.

Photo: Ben White on Unsplash (a Getty Images company)

39

Close the Door Sometimes

Open-door policy

Builds trust.

Helps you spot and correct problems early on.

Disruptive, if not managed well.

Schedule uninterrupted blocks of time

Crucial for creative drafting, developing strategy, and discrete issue spotting.

Be realistic about how long you will need and make this scheduled time non-negotiable.

Context switching is costly. 8 x 15 minute blocks are not the same as 2 non-stop hours of work.



40

Law Library/Association Litigator & Researcher Snacks

Stock some granola/power/protein bars in your library/association for hungry litigators and researchers for when they cannot leave the courthouse for a proper lunch.

Extra helpful in rural courthouses where SkipTheDishes does not deliver.

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41





42

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The Voice of the Practicing Lawyer



43