**A LITIGIOUS SOCIETY**

Several years ago, I came across a Valentine’s Day card that was cutely risqué. That is not, however, what caught my eye. There was a drawing on the front of the card of a man and a woman with the names of Valerie and Ted. Those were my parents’ names! That is what caught my eye. How exciting and delightful! What are the odds that these two not-so-common names would be used, especially together?

I just had to write a letter to the card company. I needed to let them know that seeing that card, which I did purchase, put a smile on my face and made my day. I wanted to let whoever designed that card know how much it meant to me.

The response that I received back from the card company was both disappointing and offensive because it came from the legal department. Not only was there a letter denying any responsibility for the use of the names, there was also a form that I was asked to sign that would release the card company from any responsibility in using those names.

For three days, I pondered what to do. The easy thing would have been simply to tear up the letter, throw it away, and ignore it. I could not do that. The more I thought about the letter from the legal department, the madder I got. Therefore, I wrote a straightforward, factual letter, sending it certified, return requested to the president of the company. In the correspondence, I explained what had transpired from the time of sending my letter to the time I received the letter from the legal department.

In the letter to the president, I closed with “It is a sad commentary on our society that it is so litigious that people automatically assume lawsuits and feel that they have to protect themselves. How sad that someone cannot simply say, ‘Thank you. You made my day.’”

Two days after sending my letter, I received a letter from the president of the card company. He understood what I was trying to say. He indicated agreement with what I was saying, and he assured me that he would personally let the designer of the card know how much the card meant to me.

Following the rescue from the cave of the soccer team in Thailand, I speculated that if there were any lawsuits, there would be very few. Out of curiosity, I googled “lawsuits relating to Thai soccer team.” This is what came up.

“Parents are not likely to sue Chanthawong over his leading their children into the cave…. [But one local authority](http://www.khaosodenglish.com/news/crimecourtscalamity/calamity/2018/07/03/coach-faces-charges-for-leading-boys-into-cave/) suggested they may seek a lawsuit. Chanthawong spent a decade in a Buddhist monastery, and parents are [crediting him](https://www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/1497502/online-flame-wars-over-boys-actions) for keeping their children calm and safe during the two-week ordeal.”

I suspect that if this incident had occurred in our country, lawsuits would be flying right and left. We seem to have a need to cast blame. We cannot accept the fact that sometimes accidents just happen. We seem to forget that all of us at one time or another have made a “not-so-good” decision.

No doubt about it, there definitely is a time and place for a lawsuit. It is one thing, however, to hold an individual, an organization or a company accountable. It is an entirely different matter to take advantage of a situation. We need to reserve litigation for those cases in which culpability is truly the issue.