well. The number of new applications that are projected over the next several years is staggering. Technology will continue to generate more applications and the demand of managing the organization will be enormous. To keep pace will take bold new measures to improve efficiency and effectiveness of almost every aspect of PTO operations. That would be quite a challenge, especially since other patent offices around the world are finding ways to share search results. It may entail establishing a program of deferred examination which is an opportunity to carefully evaluate the need for patent protection before the office is called upon to conduct any examination. My point here is to suggest specific initiatives. It is not my place to tell the PTO how it should operate. I only cite these examples as of the kinds of things the PTO would have a greater opportunity to be different interest on the part of the public in part because of the financial pressures that will need to be addressed in the avalanche of new applications looming on the horizon.

I know the PTO has engaged in a vigorous effort to hire and train new examiners. I have been privileged to speak at a graduation ceremony for an impressive class of new examiners from the PTO’s new paralegal academy. But that’s only half of the equation. It serves no real purpose to hire new examiners if the examiners—experienced examiners—resign. The PTO will need to go back to basics and creatively and effectively identify the number of Three R’s we all learned as kids. The rule for how to treat examiners couldn’t be simpler: Respect, Reward, and Retain. In this regard, it may be time for the PTO to develop new standards of attorney performance used by law firms and corporate law departments. Just as attorney performance is not measured by billable hours, examiner performance should not be measured principally by the number of disposals may not be the best approach. Counting disposals may be a raw indicator of performance but does not recognize the judgment, thoroughness, and legal skills provided by first-rate examiners and expected by the public.

Other patent offices around the world are involved not only in giving birth to patents but in assessing questions of validity raised over the life of a patent. That may explain why countries less advanced than us are rated differently than U.S. examiners. It is not that U.S. examiners are less competent or any less dedicated. Far from it. But if the primary goal of the examiner is limited to six parts matters that end on the day the patent issues, there will understandably be a different interest on the part of the public in what examiners do and who they are than if they played an essential role in the determination of validity challenges throughout the life of a patent. One way U.S. examiners might have a greater opportunity to be recognized in much the same way as their counterparts in other countries is if the new leadership at the PTO decides to energize the current system to make the PTO attractive alternative to litigation and the pace of technological progress will present us all with new and difficult challenges. We can no longer presume that examiners in many countries are treated as they played an essential role in the determination of validity challenges throughout the life of a patent. That may explain why U.S. examiners are less competent or any less dedicated. Far from it. But if the primary goal of the examiner is limited to six parts matters that end on the day the patent issues, there will understandably be a different interest on the part of the public in what examiners do and who they are than if they played an essential role in the determination of validity challenges throughout the life of a patent. 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road to the Supreme Court, I had little concept of who I was and had not considered who I wanted to be.

To begin, my parents were the Swedish equivalent of Ozzie and Harriet. I was raised in a nice middle class home in a nice mid-western suburb. There literally was a white picket fence around the house. And a dog. My mother wore a dress every day of her life, so she did her house work looking like Donna Reed. By the time I came along, my father was a lawyer, the call came, and Mom had stopped being a hair dresser to raise two kids. There were no drugs in my school. My father’s biggest complaint about me was that I was too noisy. It was a quiet, pleasant, middle class childhood. Just like on T.V. So I assumed everyone pretty much lived like I did. Father made enough so I could go to college. Back in those olden days, in-state tuition at SIU was $97 a semester. And, I had part time jobs to help pay my expenses. After four years, I got married, continued going to school and working part time, because it was cheap and it was fun. Finally, after seven years in college, I decided to graduate, mainly because I was pregnant and did not know how long it would take me to get a good husband. It was my life. After passing the bar exam, I was a real lawyer. I had been a clerk at the attorney general’s office. Now, at the time I was making $12,000. Here’s an interesting fact: I had to work outside the home to work. I had a certain satisfaction about supporting myself and my child.

Walter, my husband, walked out with a degree in fine arts—sculpture. He was working a part-time job for very little money, renting a grimy little house with the furnace alone and cold. I have never found my passion while Martha was stoking the furnace. Walter had given me the coconut as a joke, but then things quickly stopped being cheap and fun. There is something about the arrival of a child, and one parent not working, that causes money problems where there were none before. Getting paid much. I was not working (day care didn’t exist in southern Illinois) And, there came a time when I had to apply for food stamps. The rules that manage our civilized life. See, I didn’t go to college with an expected to stoke the furnace when she got home. Sometimes, Walter would come over to help her. But most times he could not. And, you know, I did not agonize over this. Of course Ruby was pretty much always employed to help her. But most times he could not. And, you know, I did not agonize over this. Walter, by then had become my surrogate father, had the hired hands bring over truck loads of free split wood—an early version of “fuel assistance.” I could dip raw milk from the bulk tank for free. My very own version of “checkbook corner.” In that year Walter butchered a cow whose milking days were over. Very, very, very rare. For free eggs if I hunted the hens for them, and maple syrup. He would cut the hogs and I would put them up and give him half. If my cupboard was really bare, Martha and I could always wander over to the farm house where Walter’s mother marinated ham. And, I would have a cup of noodle soup, which he ate every day with mayonnaise sandwiches. He was my food shelf. Once, when Martha was about ten, I sent her to school with a coconut and a hammer for a snack as I hadn’t had time to grocery shop. Walter had given me the coconut as a joke, asking me what kind of turkey I thought I could get that day. He understood and appointed me to be fine. Martha said she would help out. Eventually, after 17 years at the Attorney General’s office, I approached the judge. I made it past the Judicial Nominating board and my name was sent to Governor Dean for consideration. Then, I got worried. Martha was about five, and I knew I’d be away from home for long hours every day. I was scared so I withdrew my name from consideration. When I told my daughter why I had withdrawn, she was furious. Walter was so furious that bundling up a sick little girl in a hallway will not win me any parenting awards. But, helpful, understanding people working at the office kept an eye on Ruby while she slept. Ruby, too, adjusted to me.

Theo, my husband, was the lawyer. And the father. And, he the one who had become my surrogate father. Walter, by then had become my surrogate father, had the hired hands bring over truck loads of free split wood—an early version of “fuel assistance.” I could dip raw milk from the bulk tank for free. My very own version of “checkbook corner.” In that year Walter butchered a cow whose milking days were over. Very, very, very rare. For free eggs if I hunted the hens for them, and maple syrup. He would cut the hogs and I would put them up and give him half. If my cupboard was really bare, Martha and I could always wander over to the farm house where Walter’s mother marinated ham. And, I would have a cup of noodle soup, which he ate every day with mayonnaise sandwiches. He was my food shelf. Once, when Martha was about ten, I sent her to school with a coconut and a hammer for a snack as I hadn’t had time to grocery shop. Walter had given me the coconut as a joke, asking me what kind of turkey I thought I could get that day. He understood and appointed me to be fine. Martha said she would help out. Eventually, after 17 years at the Attorney General’s office, I approached the judge. I made it past the Judicial Nominating board and my name was sent to Governor Dean for consideration. Then, I got worried. Martha was about five, and I knew I’d be away from home for long hours every day. I was scared so I withdrew my name from consideration. When I told my daughter why I had withdrawn, she was furious. Walter was so furious that bundling up a sick little girl in a hallway will not win me any parenting awards. But, helpful, understanding people working at the office kept an eye on Ruby while she slept. Ruby, too, adjusted to me.

In my first husband and asking me to marry him and I have no recollection of why I thought I could become a lawyer. Law school wasn’t an option—there was no money for tuition and besides, I had to work. I got a job working as a paralegal, law clerk, at the attorney general’s office. I was assisting the attorneys general’s office and participating in that marvelous Vermont jewel, the four year reading clerkship. This path to the bar required me to apprentice myself for four years to a lawyer and if I passed the bar exam, I was a real lawyer. I began work in the AG’s office at a salary of $7,000 a year, which quickly went up to $12,000. I was working at a very fast pace to borrow a dress for the job interview at the attorney general’s office. Now, at the time I knew I didn’t have any money, but I never thought I was doing all right.

But if you ask my daughter, Martha, you’d get a different picture. While I was working all day every day in Montpelier, she was walking half a mile from the school bus stop to the adorable tiny three-room, uninsulated cottage in the country with the only heating system being fuel oil in the cellar. Walking home to a cold, empty house. But, the good news was that I rented this cottage from Walter Smith. I am assured that Walter Smith’s son, being a real lawyer, is prepared to give testimony to my very own personal version of welfare: Walter Smith. Walter was a beloved dairy farmer in Plainfield, about 85 years old to the time. When I had remarried in eleven years and my friend for twenty. He died several years back. I loved him. Walter, So, at this time I was expected to stoke the furnace when she got home. Sometimes, Walter would come over to help her. But most times he could not. And, you know, I did not agonize over this. Of course Ruby was pretty much always employed to help her. But most times he could not. Walter, by then had become my surrogate father, had the hired hands bring over truck loads of free split wood—an early version of “fuel assistance.” I could dip raw milk from the bulk tank for free. My very own version of “checkbook corner.” In that year Walter butchered a cow whose milking days were over. Very, very, very rare. For free eggs if I hunted the hens for them, and maple syrup. He would cut the hogs and I would put them up and give him half. If my cupboard was really bare, Martha and I could always wander over to the farm house where Walter’s mother marinated ham. And, I would have a cup of noodle soup, which he ate every day with mayonnaise sandwiches. He was my food shelf. Once, when Martha was about ten, I sent her to school with a coconut and a hammer for a snack as I hadn’t had time to grocery shop. Walter had given me the coconut as a joke, asking me what kind of turkey I thought I could get that day. He understood and appointed me to be fine. Martha said she would help out. Eventually, after 17 years at the Attorney General’s office, I approached the judge. I made it past the Judicial Nominating board and my name was sent to Governor Dean for consideration. Then, I got worried. Martha was about five, and I knew I’d be away from home for long hours every day. I was scared so I withdrew my name from consideration. When I told my daughter why I had withdrawn, she was furious. Walter was so furious that bundling up a sick little girl in a hallway will not win me any parenting awards. But, helpful, understanding people working at the office kept an eye on Ruby while she slept. Ruby, too, adjusted to me.

In my first husband and I used to wear something odd on juvenile day to relax the kids, and this boy noticed. Of course Ruby was pretty much always employed to help her. My father was on the road and in Southern Vermont to the Supreme Court, but what did Ruby say when she heard about the appointment at the age of twelve? “Oh, I do hope you’ll have lots of fun at your hearing!”

What did I learn that I can offer to you? I tried to think of an inspirational saying or...
two, but could not. I do get a lot of catalogs. One particularly annoying one is chock full of heart warming sayings like, "Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass. It’s about learning to dance in the rain." Please. Storms are scary, rain is cold and wet, and one can get muddy. Let’s get real. Life is hard, get over it.

Number 3: There was absolutely no help that was offered. Would I have survived without Walter Smith’s care and kindness? I do not know. And I am glad I did not cook much while I studied.

Number 2: If you do not have a snack, send a coconut. In other words, be flexible. When it came time to study for the bar examination, I made little filing cards on all the subjects and set them around the house so that whatever I was doing, I could incorporate a little study. Some areas of the law are governed by certain factors that you just have to remember. Over the kitchen sink I placed the filing card that listed the elements of a secured transaction. Next to the toilet I posted the card that laid out the parts of a bulk sale. I read them over and over and over. And, poor Martha endured one pizza after another because I did not cook much while I studied.

Number 3: Pity parties are a waste of time, and a breeding ground for excuses. In other words, if the circumstances are not the most conducive to success, try anyway.

Would I have liked to go to law school? Of course! Could I? No. So what? Here’s my favorite quote on making due with what you have available. I watch the Canadian television coverage of the summer Olympic games because it is so much better than that of the U.S. They celebrate the individual athletes “personal bests” rather than the medal counts. And, they covered really weird events that I had never heard of, like dory racing. I thought it was very cool. They did a background piece on Jerad Connaghten, a weird events that I had never heard of, like dory racing. I thought it was very cool. They did a background piece on Jerad Connaghten, an athlete training for the 200 meters in herbs and the courage to take them. My main message to you is: Work hard. Then work harder. And, then work harder still.

To conclude, what do I know? My children have heard me for most of my blunders, but they are fiercely independent, and can think for themselves. And, I am grateful for the chances I have been given in life. I was one of two women in the division and all the men had more years of experience than I as lawyers. Here’s a John Wayne quote: "Courage is being scared to death, but it was brave enough to go on anyway." And, poor Martha endured one pizza after another because I did not cook much while I studied.

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My good friend Marian Burros recently wrote an article in the New York Times highlighting the sustainable agricultural economy of Hardwick, VT, and Hardwick’s surrounding restaurants to repurposed cheese makers. Hardwick and its surrounding towns are at the center of an experiment in social agricultural entrepreneurship.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of Mason Burros October 8, 2008, New York Times article entitled ‘‘Uniting Around Food to Save an Ailing Town’’ be printed in the RECORD to allow my colleagues an opportunity to hear about the future of Vermont.

The being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNITEING AROUND FOOD TO SAVE AN AILING TOWN

HARDWICK, VT—This town’s granite company shut down years ago and even the rowdy bars and porno theater that once inspired the nickname “Little Chicago” have gone. Facing a Main Street dotted with vacant store front windows, residents of this hardscrabble community of 3,000 are reaching into its past to secure its future, betting on farming to make Hardwick the town that was saved by food.

With the fervor of Internet pioneers, young artisans and agricultural entrepreneurs are expanding aggressively, reaching out to individual investors and forming a collective strength never before seen in this seedbed of Yankee individualism.

Rian Fried, an owner of Clean Yield Asset Management in nearby Greensboro, which has invested with local agricultural entrepreneurs, said he’s never seen such cooperative effort.

“Across the country a lot of people are doing it individually but it’s rare when you see the kind of collective they are pursuing,” said Mr. Fried, whose firm considers social agricultural entrepreneurship.

“The bottom line is they are providing jobs and making it possible for others to have their own businesses.”

In January, Andrew Meyer’s company, Vermont Soy, was selling tofu from locally grown beans to five customers; today he has 350. Jasper Hill Farm has built a $3.5 million aging cave to finish not only its own cheeses but also those from other cheesemakers.

Pete Johnson, owner of Pete’s Greens, is working with 30 local farmers to market their goods in an evolving community supported agriculture program.

“We have something unique here; a strong sense of community, connections to the working landscape and work ethic,” said Mr. Meyer, who was instrumental in moving many of these efforts forward.

Hardwick started the Vermont Food Venture Center, a nonprofit organization that is planning an industrial park for agricultural businesses.

Next year the Vermont Food Venture Center, where producers can rent kitchen space and get business advice for adding value to raw ingredients, is moving to Hardwick from Fairfax, 40 miles west, because, Mr. Meyer said, “it sees the benefit of being part of the healthy food system.” He expects it to assist 15 to 20 entrepreneurs next year.

“All of us have realized that by working together we will be more successful as businesses,” said Tom Stearns, owner of High Mowing Organic Seeds.

“At the same time we want to reduce our emission to help rebuild the food system, conserve farmland and make it economically viable to farm in a sustainable way.”

The project takes many forms. Vermont Soy stores and cleans its beans at High Mowing, which also lends tractors to High Fields, a local composting company. Byproducts of cheese making—whey, butter and squash that have been smashed to extract seeds—are now being purchased by Pete’s