

# THE DAILY NEWS

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SELF-HELP

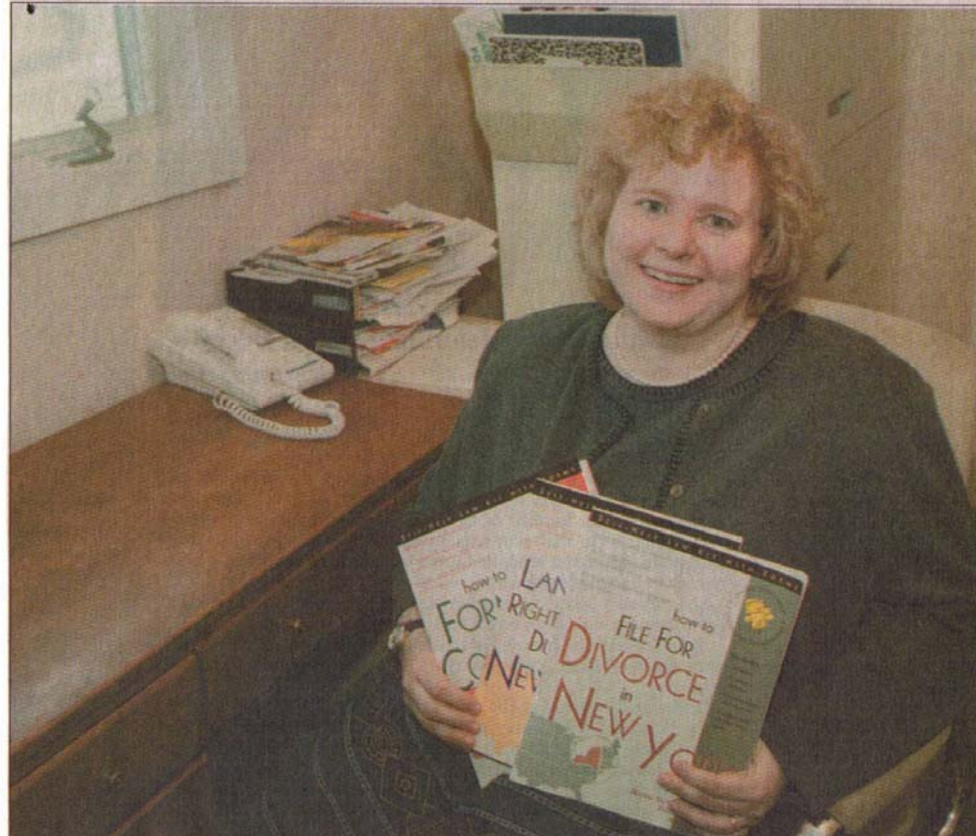


Rocco Laurienzo/Daily News

## Know your "writes"

Brette McWhorter Sember, a local lawyer turned author, has written three do-it-yourself law books, which guide those needing legal assistance through the hoops of common legal problems. Sember, a Basom resident, plans to release another self-help law book in the spring of 2000.

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Rocco Laurienzo/Daily News

## Published works

Brette McWhorter Sember, a freelance writer from Basom who also practiced law, shows three of her books that are designed to help the general public better understand the legal system.

# D-I-Y Law

By Shannon Kozlowski  
Daily News Staff Writer

**B**ASOM — Sitting in an attorney's office may be just like getting your car repaired — you wait, flipping through a dog-eared magazine, just cringing at what it's going to cost this time.

The time, the hours of costly labor seem mysteriously inflated to the fidgety client as he watches minutes tick off the clock, constantly thinking about the retainer dwindling.

To those who have experienced how far attorneys can reach into even the deepest of pockets, a local lawyer turned writer has revealed legal trade secrets that can help eliminate the middle man.

Brette McWhorter Sember, 30, a freelance writer from Basom who practiced law, has written three do-it-yourself books to help take away some of the intimidation and cost out of common legal actions.

Her books, *How to File for Divorce in New York*, *Landlords' Rights & Duties in New York* and *How to Form a Corporation in New York*, convert "legalese" into simple English.

"These books are important to me because I feel the law should be accessible to everyone," McWhorter Sember said.

"The law is there for everyone," she said. "People need to know that."

McWhorter Sember said her books help to take some of the intimidation out of pursuing legal action without an attorney.

"They help to educate the public about how to take legal action. Everybody can do it," McWhorter Sember said.

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Not all cases can be handled without an attorney, but even those who need to consult an attorney can also benefit from reading her books, McWhorter Sember said.

She said she doesn't feel as though educating the public about common legal problems is turning her back on

her former profession, it's helping to cut back on the workload which she said some lawyers see as a pain in the neck.

McWhorter Sember said sometimes lawyers forget that their clients are new to legal language and the whole judicial process, which creates a communication gap between the lawyer and the client.

"You take it for granted that people know what you know," McWhorter Sember said. "This saves everyone time and saves the client money. Knowledge is power."

She said toning down the legal language to make it accessible to the public was easy with her background as an English major in college. She also said that her years of legal work, which required her to talk to clients about specific areas of the law, helped her to easily explain the law in her books.

McWhorter Sember said the books provide basic information for those in the middle of a legal proceeding as well as those who should know their legal rights.

She said for instance, landlords could save themselves a lot of legal bills if they know their rights and responsibilities before they run into a legal problem.

"It can help answer questions that you would have to pay an attorney \$100 an hour to ask," McWhorter Sember said.

More legal advice is also on the way from McWhorter Sember as she releases her fourth book in the spring of 2000.

## Law

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The book will outline the rights of tenants who rent from landlords, McWhorter Sember said.

In addition to her legal writing, McWhorter Sember writes several monthly and bi-monthly columns for travel and family