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# Chicago Daily Law Bulletin

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## Firm enlists some Peeps for a project

*By Allison Petty  
Special to the Law Bulletin*

While others slogged their way through paperwork and conference calls, one Chicago law firm was playing with its food — specifically its candy.

Valorem Law Group LLC is one of five finalists in the American Bar Association Journal's "Peeps in the Law Part Deux" contest, in which entrants create dioramas of legal scenes out of the Peeps, those brightly colored confections typically shaped like bunnies and chicks.

The firm's entry, "The Trial of Rod Peepovich, Former Governor of Illinois," can be viewed at the [ABA Journal's Web site](#). Voting on the finalists ends at 4 p.m. Monday. As of Monday morning, Valorem was in the lead with 42 percent of the vote, slightly ahead of another entry with 41 percent.

The winner of the contest will receive \$150 worth of Peeps memorabilia, including a glass replica of a Peep, said Molly McDonough, the ABA Journal's online editor. The second-place entrant will receive \$100 worth of memorabilia; both prizes were donated by Peeps maker Just Born.

McDonough said the Journal's online staff conceived the idea for the contest last year as a takeoff of the Washington Post's "Peep Show" and the Chicago Tribune's "Peeps on Parade."

The Journal only received 39 entries this year, so McDonough said it was not a difficult contest to run. More challenging, she said, was constructing her own Peep diorama.

"Have you tried to dress a Peep?" she said.

[Nicole Nehama Auerbach](#), a business trial lawyer with Valorem, said the group constructed its entry during one of its Friday afternoon "collabstorms." The firm's 15 members — nine attorneys, plus paralegals and other staff — split into two teams that each created a diorama in an hour.

A UPS delivery man came in just as the hour ended, Auerbach said. The excited attorneys dragged him into their "Bored Room" to choose between Peepovich's trial and the other diorama, which featured two identical scenes from the television show "Jeopardy" (for "double jeopardy," with Alex Peepbeck).

The offbeat sense of humor is one the group cultivates, Auerbach said, in its quest to revolutionize the way law firms operate. Valorem is made up of "refugees" from big law firms, who joined together in 2008 to kill the billable hour and create a focus on value.

Since the firm's entry made the top five, the Peep diorama has become an odd source of pride as well as hilarity, Auerbach said. Clients and contacts are rooting for the firm, and one of the group's attorneys sends e-mail "Peepdates" about how the entry is doing in the polls.

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If Valorem wins the glass Peep, Auerbach said it will be displayed in a prominent position in the office's entrance.

"Lawyers, we covet awards. We like to have as many awards under our names as possible. I'm telling you that this award will be, I think, the best award that any of us could ever dream of for our entire careers," she said with a laugh.

The best part of the experience is that the project helped the firm's attorneys and staff bond with each other, Auerbach said.

"If you know anything about us, you'll know that this is so indicative of who we are. We don't take ourselves too seriously; we take our work very seriously, but we think these types of moments remind you that it's fun to be a lawyer at times," Auerbach said.

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