Our issue begins with Professor Todd Pettys’ annual review of the United States Supreme Court’s civil cases from the past Term. This Term, much of the notable action was on the civil side—rulings on the Affordable Care Act, the First Amendment, campaign finance, affirmative action, the religious rights of closely held corporations, and more. American Judges Association members who have given the AJA their e-mail addresses received this article as soon as it was published, only a month after the end of the Court’s Term.

Professor Donna Shestowsky summarizes the findings of research she conducted in which she studied how litigants evaluate legal procedures (e.g., mediation, nonbinding arbitration, trial) at the inception of their civil cases. Her results are consistent with the procedural-justice findings Court Review articles have been highlighting for years: Litigants prefer procedures that provide them with the opportunity for direct participation in the resolution of their cases.

Federal law clerk Michael Langan and attorney Jason Halpin, a former clerk, provide an overview of civil practice involving cross-motions in both state and federal court. Judges handling civil cases will find helpful citations to both federal and state caselaw on the procedural rules that sometimes trip up practitioners—and judges—handling cross-motion practice.

Judge (now professor) Raymond McKoski takes up the problem of and opportunities for courts communicating with the “political branches,” including “judicial impact statements, state of the judiciary messages, judicial opinions, service on legislative and executive commissions, and testifying before, and consulting with, governmental committees and officials.” His article focuses on the ABA’s Model Code of Judicial Conduct, and Judge McKoski concludes with specific recommendations for judges.—SL & AT