



JUSTICE STEWART delivered the judgment of the court.  
Justices Goldenhersh and Chapman concurred in the judgment.

### ORDER

¶ 1 *Held:* The appellant's brief is stricken, and this appeal is dismissed, where the brief lacks any substantial conformity to the supreme court rules governing the contents of briefs and thus hinders appellate review.

¶ 2 Defendant-counterplaintiff Maria Bailey appeals from two orders entered by the circuit court—one that dismissed her counterclaim on the ground that it failed to state a cause of action, and one that denied her motion to reconsider the dismissal of her counterclaim. Bailey is the only appellant in this appeal. In the circuit court, Bailey proceeded *pro se*, and she does likewise in this court. Bailey has filed an appellant's brief. The appellee in this appeal, plaintiff-counterdefendant Thomas Edwards, has not filed a brief. In her appellant's brief, Bailey presented 12 issues, but none is supported by cohesive argument. Indeed, 6 of the 12 are not supported by any argument at all. Bailey did not even suggest a standard of review for any of the 12 issues. Due to these gross deficiencies in Bailey's brief, the brief is stricken and this appeal is dismissed.

¶ 3 BACKGROUND

¶ 4 This case began in May 2013, when Thomas Edwards successfully petitioned the circuit court for a temporary restraining order prohibiting Bailey and other named defendants from proceeding with a funeral and burial for Edwards's deceased wife. In June 2013, Bailey and two of the other defendants filed a counterclaim against Edwards. However, those two other defendants soon withdrew as parties, and their claims were voluntarily dismissed, leaving Bailey as the sole counterplaintiff. In September 2013,

Edwards filed a motion to dismiss Bailey's counterclaim. On December 4, 2013, the circuit court entered a written order that, *inter alia*, granted Edwards's motion and dismissed the counterclaim on the ground that it failed to state a cause of action. Bailey filed a motion to reconsider. On February 27, 2014, the circuit court entered a written order denying the motion to reconsider. Bailey perfected an appeal from the orders dismissing her counterclaim and denying reconsideration.

¶ 5 ANALYSIS

¶ 6 As previously mentioned, Bailey has proceeded *pro se* in this court and has filed an appellant's brief presenting 12 contentions. However, her brief is fatally deficient.

¶ 7 Supreme Court Rule 341(h) governs the contents of an appellant's brief. See Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h) (eff. Feb. 6, 2013). The rule's provisions are requirements, not mere suggestions. *Hall v. Naper Gold Hospitality LLC*, 2012 IL App (2d) 111151, ¶ 7. Every appellant, even a *pro se* appellant, must comply with them. *Biggs v. Spader*, 411 Ill. 42, 44-46 (1951), *cert. denied*, 343 U.S. 956 (1952).

¶ 8 Rule 341(h)(3) states that an appellant "must include a concise statement of the applicable standard of review for each issue, with citation to authority, either in the discussion of the issue in the argument or under a separate heading placed before the discussion in the argument." Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(3) (eff. Feb. 6, 2013).

¶ 9 Here, Bailey presented 12 issues. She did not include a standard of review for any one of them, anywhere in her brief.

¶ 10 Rule 341(h)(7) states that the argument section of an appellant's brief "shall contain the contentions of the appellant and the reasons therefor, with citation of the

authorities and the pages of the record relied on. \*\*\* Points not argued are waived and shall not be raised in the reply brief, in oral argument, or on petition for rehearing." Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(7) (eff. Feb. 6, 2013). Under Rule 341(h)(7), a reviewing court is entitled to have issues clearly defined, with "cohesive arguments" presented and pertinent authority cited. *Obert v. Saville*, 253 Ill. App. 3d 677, 682 (1993). An appellant forfeits any contention that is not supported by argument or by citation to authority. *Id.*

¶ 11 The argument section of Bailey's brief includes only minimal and unhelpful citations to authorities and absolutely no citations to pages in the record. Six of her 12 contentions are not supported by any argument whatsoever, and the other 6 are supported by minimal, disjointed, incohesive arguments.

¶ 12 A reviewing court is not an advocate; its duties do not include searching the record for error or performing the legal research that the appellant should have performed. *Obert*, 253 Ill. App. 3d at 682. A court may justifiably strike an appellant's brief and dismiss an appeal where the brief lacks any substantial conformity to the supreme court rules governing the contents of briefs and thus hinders appellate review. *Hall*, 2012 IL App (2d) 111151, ¶ 15.

¶ 13 The appellant's brief in this appeal gives the impression that Bailey did not even make a good-faith effort to comply with the supreme court rules discussed *supra*. The brief's nonconformity with supreme court rules precludes meaningful review. Accordingly, the brief is hereby stricken, and this appeal is hereby dismissed.

¶ 14 Brief stricken; appeal dismissed.