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Law Library Blog (October 2015): Legal Beagle's Blog Archive

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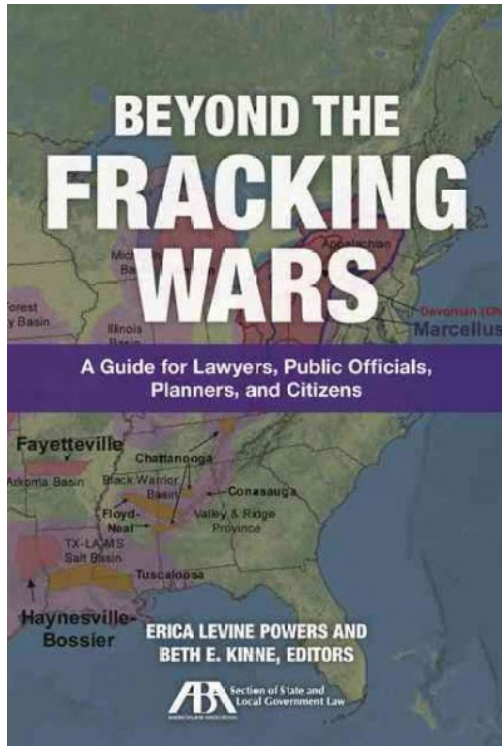
Legal Beagle's Post

Fracking: A Primer

Posted by Library Blog on 10/05/2015 at 11:26 AM

There is a lot of talk about fracking these days. In fact, one well-known professor [commented](#), “[t]here are few issues as polarizing and divisive as fracking...” Considering all the talk and polarity, below are some resources about fracking and how to research fracking and law.

The [BBC News](#) website has a simple explanation of fracking for the beginner. This story is particularly useful to a law student researching fracking for the first time (even though it focuses primarily on the UK) because it explains that fracking is shorthand for “hydraulic fracturing” which may help you craft a search in a database.



Another useful source is a book in the library's collection which is published by the ABA and called [*Beyond the Fracking Wars: A Guide for Lawyers, Public Officials, Planners and Citizens*](#). This book provides articles on a variety of fracking-related topics including leasing mineral rights, types of gas pipelines, riparian rights, and case studies.

One of the challenges to researching fracking laws is finding information that is non-partisan. Many of the available websites on the topic may not be neutral which may make them hard to trust or rely upon. For example, [this website](#) provides a very helpful list of localities which have banned fracking. However, the website is called the *Food and Water Watch* and its mission is to "stand up to corporations that put profits before people, and advocate for a democracy that improves people's lives and protects our environment" so it may not be the best website to site in unbiased research.

The [Environment & Safety Resource Center \(BloombergBNA\)](#) is an excellent source for tracking current legal information on this topic. A quick search of the term "fracking" located news articles and references to the Federal Register, cases, and a state statute.

Finally, another way to find materials on fracking is to locate a bibliography or list of books and other resources on the topic. For example, the [Boston Globe](#) published a short list of fracking books which might be a useful starting place. A more robust bibliography on fracking can be found on the [EnerGeoPolitics website](#) which clearly states the bias of the bibliographer. While the law library does not have all of these publications, the RWU University Library may also be a useful source for fracking research, specifically research beyond the law of fracking.

Legal Beagle's Post

Innovation: The Path to Becoming a Better Lawyer (Part II)

Posted by Library Blog on 10/09/2015 at 08:36 AM

On Friday, October 2, the RWU Law Library hosted the Law Librarians of New England (LLNE) Fall Meeting. The theme was *Successfully Supporting & Igniting Innovation* and the meeting was a great success. We gathered with law librarians all over New England and discussed innovations in law, in libraries, in legal education, in legal practice, and in organizational culture.

The event's plenary speaker was Stanford's [Margaret Hagan](#) who dazzled us with her insights about promoting and supporting innovation. In preparing for the event, one of the librarians downloaded and tried out one of Hagan's apps, [Law Dojo](#).

Law Dojo is a family of legal games to help you learn law:

- *Open Dojo* is a free general law trivia game.
- *Know Your Rights* is a free game which helps users learn their rights when dealing with the police, FBI, and immigration agents.
- *Supreme Court Dojo* is also free and is one of the more difficult games. It tests players on famous SCOTUS cases.

In addition to the free content, there are several games for purchase which may be particularly useful to law students. For example, there are:

- *Criminal Law Dojo*,
- *Civ Pro Dojo*,
- *Income Tax Law Dojo*,
- *MPRE Dojo*.

- If you like learning the law in game form, also check out Lexis' [Think Like a Lawyer](#) or Cali's [Supreme Court Justice Game](#).



Legal Beagle's Post

Legal Haiku?

Posted by Library Blog on 10/16/2015 at 09:24 AM

As we all learned in elementary school, Haiku is a form of traditional Japanese poetry with a 17-syllable verse form (5, 7, and 5). What you might not have learned in grade school is legal haiku.

[Haiku Decisis](#) is a website created by [Joshua Auriemma](#) which features haiku extracted from a random Supreme Court opinion. It is like a random Supreme Court haiku generator. The haiku were identified using a computer algorithm and some of them are [awesome](#).



If you want to try your hand at writing haiku, the ABA's Young Lawyer Division and ABA Law Student Division sponsor an annual haiku contest where you can compete and win money for your legal poetry. This year the theme is recent U.S. Supreme Court Decisions and the U.S. Constitution. Information about the contest can be found at www.ambar.org/haikucontest. The [winning entries](#) from last year are available online for inspiration. The deadline is November 15th.

If you prefer to read non-haiku poetry from judicial opinions, check out the University of Washington School of Law Gallagher Law Library website on [Judicial Humor](#) which has a section on Parody & Verse in Opinions. If you prefer spoken word poetry, please feel free to stop by the reference desk and share your talents with our librarians.

Legal Beagle's Post

Happy Halloween!

Posted by Library Blog on 10/23/2015 at 10:20 AM

Halloween is a time for all things spooky, even court cases and law books. In fact, a magazine called *NWLawyer* compiled a [top ten list of cases to spook you](#). More locally, there was a [court case](#) a few years ago which was Halloween-themed!

A review of our catalog uncovered several scary titles in the law library collection, including [The Sleepy Lagoon Murder Case](#), [Of Murder and Madness](#), and [Internal Bleeding: The Truth Behind America's Terrifying Epidemic of Medical Mistakes](#). Possibly the scariest law book title of them all is [Body Parts: Property Rights and the Ownership of Human Biological Materials](#) which debates whether the body, human organs and DNA should be subject to property law. This book and many other books with hair-raising titles are available via our [WebCatalog](#).

Whether you are taking time this October to read up on property rights or about the [Slender Man case](#), have a safe and enjoyable Halloween. For a relaxing and scary treat, take a few minutes of your study time and play one of these spine-chilling [online games](#) or Monday through Wednesday stop by the library

to join in the contest to guess the number of candy in the “pumpkin” jar!



Legal Beagle's Post

Cameras in Courts

Posted by Library Blog on 10/30/2015 at 11:21 AM

According to the [United States Courts website](#), “[e]lectronic media coverage of criminal proceedings in federal courts has been expressly prohibited under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 53 since the criminal rules were adopted in 1946.”

Starting in July, 2011, fourteen federal trial courts voluntarily took part in an [experiment](#) to evaluate the effect of cameras in courtrooms. The data collection portion of the pilot concluded this summer with the

videos posted online until the Judicial Conference considers recommendations regarding the pilot. More information about the project can be found on the [Federal Courts' website](#).

Although the District of Rhode Island did not take part in the pilot, the District of Massachusetts did. There are several videos from Massachusetts which may be of interest to law students and faculty such as a hearing on a [Motion for Order Approving Settlement Agreement](#) and a 2013 hearing on a [Petition for a Federal Writ of Habeas Corpus](#).

For more information about the [history of cameras in courts](#), see the history provided with the videos themselves on the US Federal Courts' website. For additional information on this topic, see the [Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press website](#).

Video from actual court cases can also be a useful tool for law students and young attorneys learning trial techniques. [LexisNexis Courtroom Cast](#) allows access to real trial proceedings with commentary and analysis to provide students the opportunity to see how to practice their craft.

