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Law Library Blog (March 2017): Legal Beagle's Blog Archive

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Legal Beagle's Post

March 3, 2017

Environmental Law

Posted by Library Blog on 03/02/2017 at 02:51 PM

This month the library is highlighting books on the history of environmental law with a new book display!

[Environmental law](#) encompasses policies, regulations, and principles enacted and enforced to address the effects of human activity on the natural environment. While many early environmental laws find their roots in the law of nuisance and the public trust doctrine, the concept of environmental law as its own specific body of law did not develop until the 20th century.

March is also host to a slew of environmental holidays like [International Day of Forests](#) (March 21) and [World Water Day](#) (March 22)!

To learn more about the history of environmental law and the library's collection, see our [LawGuide](#). You can also find the books from the display featured on our [Pinterest](#) page.

For help with your research related to environmental law, stop by the reference desk or email one of the librarians at lawlibraryhelp@rwu.edu.



March 10, 2017

FOIA Requests

Posted by Library Blog on 03/09/2017 at 04:58 PM

[The Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#) provides the public the right to request access to records from a federal agency. While colloquially requesting information from the government is often referred to as a FOIA request, FOIA is the federal statutory and regulatory scheme and individual states have their own schema. (Rhode Island calls it APRA which stands for the [Access to Public Records Act](#)).

[FOIA.gov](#) provides a significant amount of information about FOIA and the process one could undertake to gain access to government records. Another great resource on FOIA is [the legislative history](#) which is compiled and online courtesy of the National Security Archive. A book in our collection, [The Federal Information Manual: How the Government Collects, Manages, and Discloses Information Under FOIA and Other Statutes](#) by P. Stephen Gidiere, III, is also a useful tool for learning about FOIA.

Researchers can find a treasure trove of information online about freedom of access to information. Many organizations, including journalists and government watchdogs, have websites and blogs which concentrate on FOIA and FOIA requests, such as:

- [National Archives FOIA Electronic Reading Room](#)
- [Muckrock](#)
- [National Freedom of Information Coalition](#)
- [FOIA Mapper](#)
- [iFOIA.org](#)

If you need help finding government information or resources for crafting a FOIA request, please stop by the Reference Desk and speak with one of the librarians. .

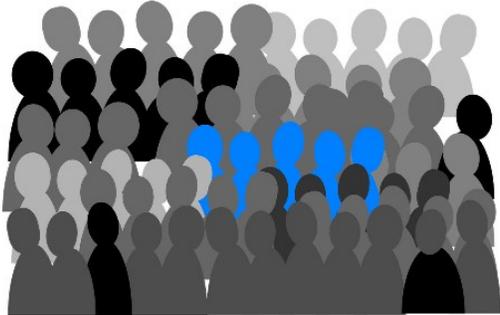


March 17, 2017

Friend v. Friend by Ethan Lieb

Posted by Library Blog on 03/16/2017 at 02:32 PM

Have you ever wondered why friendships aren't protected by the law? In the book *Friend v. Friend: The Transformation of Friendship—and What the Law Has to Do with It*, [Ethan Lieb](#) compares and contrasts the legal regulation of marriage with the lack of regulation over friendship and shows how our transforming society needs the benefits that friendship laws could offer.



Even though it is a vital part of our society, Lieb contends that friendship as an institution is [declining](#). In this era of increased social media contact, some social scientists are finding our networks of truly intimate friends to be smaller than ever. As a result, Lieb argues that laws about friendship may actually be the best way for friendship to thrive.

The book can be found in the library's lending collection at [KF465.L45 2011](#).

If you are interested in learning more about friendship in the age of Facebook, check out this [TED Talk](#).

March 24, 2017

Legal Technology

Posted by Library Blog on 03/23/2017 at 03:29 PM

[The comment to Rule 1.1](#) of the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct states, "To maintain the requisite knowledge and skill, a lawyer should keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, **including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology**, engage in continuing study and education and comply with all continuing legal education requirements to which the lawyer is subject." (emphasis added by Legal Beagle)

In the last few years, [27 states](#) have adopted a change to their legal ethics rules which requires some degree of technological competence for lawyers.

Massachusetts is one of those states. The comment to [Massachusetts Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.1](#) states, “To maintain the requisite knowledge and skill, a lawyer should keep abreast of changes in the law and its practice, including the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology, and engage in continuing study and education.” This language is strikingly similar to the ABA Model Rule Comment language!

According to [one attorney](#), “the concept of ‘technology competence’ is often associated with protecting client information from being inadvertently disclosed, accessed or acquired by third parties. The duty of technological competence, however, is far broader than simply protecting client information or cyber security.”

The meaning and interpretation of technological competence is too large a topic for one Legal Beagle post. There are resources available in the Law Library to help boost your technology competence and to help you learn more about law firm technology, cybersecurity, and technological competence:

- Our Prepare for Practice Certification Program includes [classes on mobile and office technology](#).
- The library’s Law Practice Management collection includes resources on technology. Some are specifically highlighted in our [Timesaver](#) on this topic.
- [Resources on legal ethics](#) can be found in another Timesaver.

To find more resources on researching technical competence or legal ethics, please stop by the library and ask for a reference librarian!



March 31, 2017

Join the Librarians for Hula Hoop Lessons!*

Posted by Library Blog on 03/30/2017 at 02:26 PM

Did you know?

You can burn from 150-250 calories per 30 minutes of [hula hoop moves](#). Please join the librarians in the Law Student Lounge on Saturday, April 1, starting at 11:30am...

* Never Mind -- April Fool!

But seriously, April Fools' Day is tomorrow, April 1 and is widely recognized as a day to play pranks on your unsuspecting family and friends. The April Fools' tradition began in earnest in 1700 with zany British people playing practical jokes. but it [may date back to 1582](#).

To date, there have been 38 federal cases that reference April Fools' Day. In a case involving the Wall Street Journal's publisher, the company was sued by the famous British store Harrod's over an April Fools prank. Apparently, no one at the Wall Street Journal fact checked the store's prank press release about company shares before running a story that Harrod's would make a public offering of stock! After properly publishing a retraction, the WSJ followed up with a "joke" that Harrod's found defamatory. To [quote the court](#): "Promptly the face of comedy began to furrow and its smile to curl into what often becomes tragedy's first sour frowns and snarls: incipient litigation." See *Dow Jones & Co., Inc. v. Harrods, Ltd.*, 237 F. Supp. 2d 394, 401 (S.D.N.Y. 2002). To read more about law related to April Fools' Day, we recommend [The Little Book of Holiday Law](#), by Ursula Furi-Perry.

On a more serious note, we're sure you have seen wild stories and "fake news" on social media and beyond. A great resource to fact check wild stories that appear on social media is Snopes.com, an urban legends site that has been around since 1994. Check out their coverage about the story on [Facebook fees](#) that makes the rounds every few months. For an excellent guide on identifying fake news, see Harvard's [Fake News, Misinformation, and Propaganda](#).

** BTW, if like you like hula hoops as much as the librarians, read on for some amazing facts about them:



- Hula hoops have been around for [more than 4000 years!](#)
- The hula hoop was [patented on March 5, 1963](#) by a company called Wham-O, which is also responsible for the Frisbee.
- Billy Joel referenced Hula Hoops in his song "[We Didn't Start the Fire](#)".