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Western Association of Prelaw Advisors

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WAPLA Newsletter

President's Page Marilyn Hoffman, University of Utah

Greetings WAPLA Colleagues:

Those of you who attended the PLANC quadrennial national conference *Understanding Changes and Choices-Addressing Conventional Wisdom* last June heard many informative sessions on challenges and changes in prelaw advising, legal education, admissions, and legal employment. Hot topics included transparency in data reported by law schools, ABA and LSAC, as well as the value of a legal education as an investment for the future. Several of the presentations can be found on the PLANC web site www.planc.org

To continue this conversation, my conference Co-chair Kris Tina Carlston and I are excited about our theme for the **upcoming WAPLA Prelaw Advisors Conference, *Preparing Prelaw Students for the Future: Perception vs. Reality*, April 12-13, 2013, in Salt Lake City.** The regional conference is an incredible opportunity to meet and network with advisors and law school folks from across the U.S. and attend sessions that you will find invaluable in your work. Details, registration, and hotel reservation information are in this newsletter, and at www.wapla.org

In today's world of admissions and employment data scrutiny, declining applicant numbers, and tight job markets, it is even more important to keep abreast of

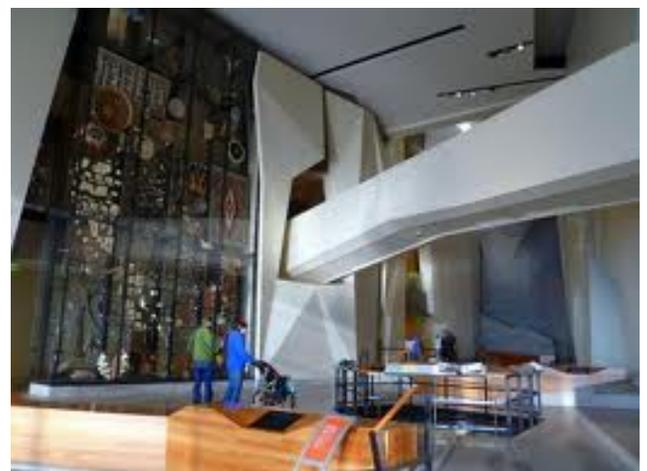


changes in legal education, career trends, and admissions practices. We need to be well informed so we can inform our students. We need to help our students look at both the good news and the bad news, analyze and interpret information objectively, and move forward with the best and most realistic career decisions for themselves.

Our program will focus on these issues from a variety of angles. Our keynote speaker will be Paul Campos, Professor of Law, University of Colorado Law School, and creator of the controversial *Inside the Law School Scam* blog. We will also have a speaker from the *Law School Transparency Project*, an organization which seeks to influence reform in legal education and provide students with analytical tools for making informed decisions.

There will be informative sessions on financial aid, LSAC updates, the various roles of a prelaw advisor, admissions and career/employment topics, as well as a panel of attorneys talking about their career experiences. There will be time over lunch and dinner to socialize and discuss these thought-provoking topics with fellow advisors and law school representatives.

Because many of you asked for some free time to be able to see some sights at the conference location, Friday evening is dinner-on-your-own with the opportunity to join small dinner groups of advisors and law school folks at local restaurants. Saturday our plan is to meet at the University of Utah S. J. Quinney College of Law and conclude with a special lunch and opportunity to visit our new award winning Natural History Museum of Utah located on the east end of campus. See www.nhmu.utah.edu



Following our Friday conference sessions, WAPLA will hold its annual **Business Meeting/Wine & Cheese, Friday evening, 4:00-5:00 pm.** The Board will update advisor members on regional and Prelaw Advisor National Council (PLANC) news, discuss ideas for the 2014 WAPLA conference, and invite discussion on other items of interest. All WAPLA advisors who will be at the conference should plan to attend this meeting. This is YOUR organization and we need your participation!

I strongly encourage you to **become a member of WAPLA**, if you are not already, and become part of the only organization whose sole purpose is to support prelaw advising and provide professional development opportunities for prelaw advisors.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in WAPLA, please let me know. We would like as many individuals as possible to become involved in the organization, such as regional conference planning and presentations, writing articles for the WAPLA Newsletter, and other work of the organization.

**Please note: 2013 WAPLA advisor membership dues (\$25) will be included in the \$75 conference registration fee. Therefore, when you register for the conference you will automatically be a paid member for 2013. For those not attending the conference and wishing only membership, please contact our Secretary KrisTina Carlston kris_tina_carlston@byu.edu directly to make arrangements to pay dues separately.*

Please feel free to contact me any time with questions, suggestions, or concerns you might have.

I hope to see you at our conference in April!

Marilyn Hoffman
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WAPLA 2013 Conference Information

Preparing Prelaw Students for the Future: Perception vs. Reality

April 12-13, 2013, in Salt Lake City

REGISTRATION

Register online at <http://wapla.org>

WAPLA Region Advisor: \$75.00

Please note: 2013 WAPLA advisor membership dues (\$25) will be included in the \$75 conference registration fee.

Conference registration deadline is March 15!



****The first 30 advisors to register will receive a complimentary copy the new Carolina Academic Press book **Before the Paper Chase: The Scholarship of Law School Preparation and Admissions**, by Tim Garrison, WAPLA Past President and current Treasurer, and Frank Guliuzza, former WAPLA President and PLANC Chair.****

HOTEL

Our conference hotel will be the [downtown Hilton](#) within walking distance to restaurants and shopping. The hotel rate will be \$129 per night. Reserve your room from the link on the WAPLA website, <http://wapla.org>. *Hotel reservation deadline is March 20.*



WAPLA ADVISOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Grants for conference attendance **are still available!** We would like to see as many WAPLA advisors as possible take advantage of this valuable professional development opportunity. At least 35 **advisor grants of up to \$1000** are available on a first-come, first-served basis to WAPLA prelaw advisors who are current members from the WAPLA region (limit of two per institution). To request a Grant, please email our Treasurer, Tim Garrison, at timgarrison@pdx.edu as soon as possible. Awards will be in the form of a reimbursement after the conference, with receipts for all claimed conference expenses required. *These grants are made possible by the generous support of law schools through their participation in our WAPLA Law Fairs.*

WAPLA Law School Fair Caravan 2013

Make plans now to bring your students to a Law School Fair next Fall, when the WAPLA Caravan comes to a town near you!

Students from any school are welcome at these fairs. Since it can be a bit intimidating to go to an unfamiliar campus alone, and parking can be expensive, consider setting up a carpool, or renting a van to bring a group of students. It's more fun with a group! 😊

Here are the dates for 2013.



Friday, 10/25/13—University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV

Monday, 10/28/13—University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

Tuesday, 10/29/13—University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Wednesday, 10/30/13—Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

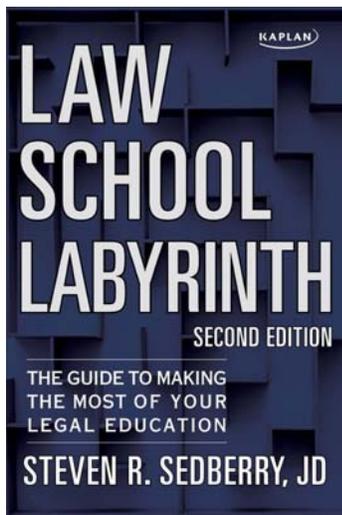
Thursday, 10/31/13—University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Friday, 11/1/13—Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

Saturday, 11/9/13, Portland State University, Portland, OR

Monday, 11/11/13, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR

Friday, 11/15/13, Boise State University, Boise, ID



BOOK REVIEW—*LAW SCHOOL LABYRINTH: A Guide to Making The Most of Your Legal Education* by Steven R. Sedberry (New York: Kaplan Publishing,

\$19.95, 292 pages)

Reviewed by Martin D. Sommers, Northern Arizona University

One could easily read a book such as this, namely a book published by a firm with a vested interest in the pre-law business, with a jaundiced eye.

One could. And that is exactly what I did.

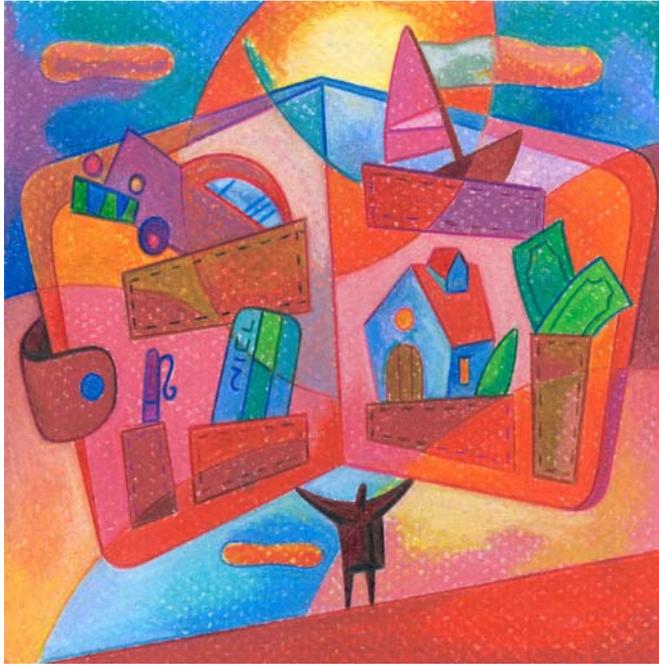
The concern is, of course, whether the author, someone who went to law school in midlife after a business career, would favor products and/or services produced by his publisher. A conflict of interest? You be the judge. In his book's 292 pages, Steven Sedberry mentions Kaplan PMBR (Bar review course) a dozen times. For example: "For more than 30 years, PMBR was the leader in Multistate Bar Exam preparation. In 2006, it joined with test prep Kaplan to become Kaplan PMBR." Another example: "Kaplan PMBR is a great resource to turn to as you prepare for both law school exams or the bar." And another: "I found the Kaplan PMBR review materials, such as their flashcards, to be extremely useful."

I have already previously observed in this publication's columns that law school guidebooks "generally fall into one of two categories: either the directory format . . . or the so-called 'insider' book with personal insights and secrets." (*WAPLA* Fall 2010, "Three Books Reviewed") This text falls firmly in the latter category. Although Sedberry does not write with the humor-laden insight, manic verve and self-deprecation of Martha Kimes in *Ivy Briefs: True Tales of a Neurotic Law Student*, his book may actually provide more generally useful information for students bound to law school. His comments can be more easily generalized to a wider range of law schools than are Kimes.'

Sedberry starts with some personal anecdotes in his Introduction and first chapter, "Lessons from the Labyrinth, or How I learned to Stop Worrying and Start Booking Classes." Horror stories about the rude awakening awaiting the faint-hearted, well-meaning, virtuous naif when he or she first treads upon the hallowed hallways of law school abound. Here is another warning: We live in a time where controversies swirl around the truthfulness of



books like James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* and Greg Mortenson's *Three Cups of Tea*. Thus, one cannot help but wonder about the validity of observations Sedberry makes when he starts with the footnote "All references to professors, people, law schools and events herein are fictitious and are based upon an amalgamation of my law school experiences, *both real and imagined*, and those of various law students with whom I am acquainted" (emphasis added).



The second chapter, "The Money Minotaur: Keeping Law School Costs at Bay," continues Sedberry's mythological theme. This is also quite topical. Given the continually sluggish economy and the fact that higher education costs keep out-pacing inflation, value received for price charged is becoming increasingly central to educational public policy considerations. See the May 16, 2011 broadcast of National Public Radio's Diane Rehm Show, "Is College Right for Everyone?" Sedberry addresses financing issues head on: "So, I have recruited the help of Eileen Crane, one of Kaplan Test Prep and Admission's leading experts in law school financial aid, in order to provide the most effective advice and up-to-date info on financial a law degree.

[sic] Frankly, I don't know where his work ends and hers begins.

And now for some self-disclosure of my own. Eileen Crane is a friend of mine. I have known her for two decades. Currently the pre-law adviser at Utah Valley University, she has indeed built a reputation as one of the most knowledgeable folks in the nation about the ins and outs of money issues and law school. I have been to enough of her professional presentations at conferences and seminars – to students and advisers alike – to know she knows her stuff. Using her as source does not bother me. The shoddy proof-reading, illustrated by the quotation in the previous quotation, however, does.

Sedberry is not much concerned about pre-law education or the law school application process. The heart of his text can be discerned from the title of several chapters: "How to Hit the Ground Running Your First Day as a 1L," "Your Law School Study Approach," "How to Prepare for Final Exams," "Summer Clerkships," "Your Second and Third Years" and "The Bar Exam and Beyond."

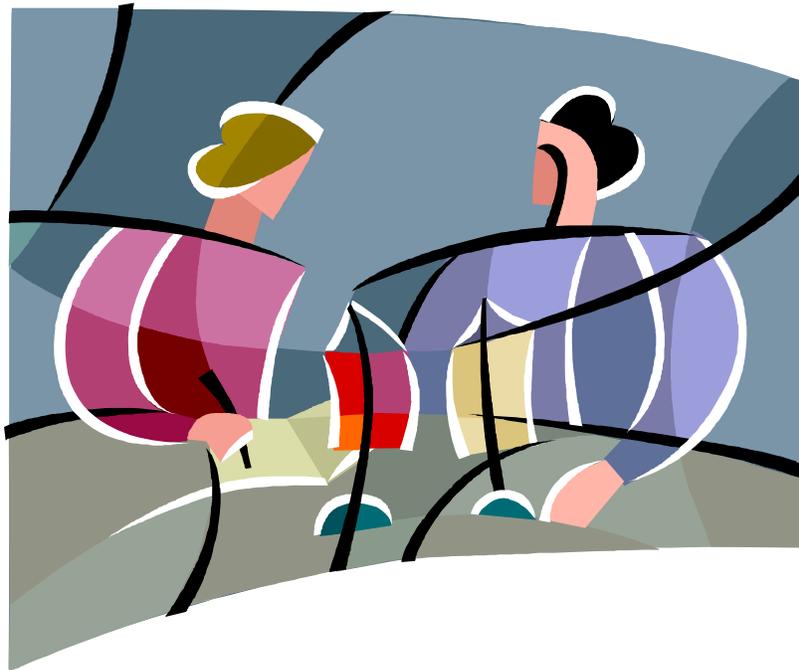


Additionally, Sedberry's text contains more than 60 pages of appendices, including sample outlines for contracts and criminal law classes, as well as first-year issues checklists for those classes and a sample legal memorandum. He argues that the trade-marked

Pyramid Outline Method is the way to study in law school. It certainly is one way, but I know enough about learning styles to know it is not the only way and it certainly is not the best way for all students. One size does not indeed fit all.

In his text, Sedberry tends to equivocate. For example: "It is axiomatic among law students that 'you don't take the course, you take the professor.'" A mere two pages later he argues "Don't be afraid to take courses simply for the purpose of finding out more about the area." His thumbnail descriptions of careers in big law firms, medium or small law firms and as in-house counsel illustrate his equivocation with his "On the One Hand" and "On the Other Hand" observations.

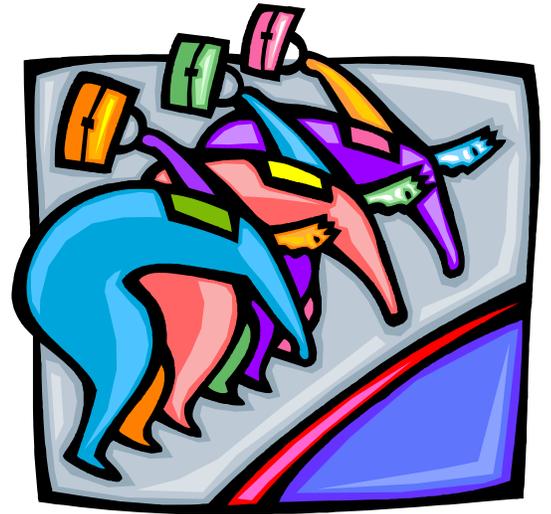
So, in sum, the question remains: do I recommend this book? Not in any sort of blanket, all-encompassing, enthusiastic recommendation. I certainly would not just blithely distribute copies of it to the membership in the university pre-law club. Nor would I make it a book I routinely recommend to the casual parent, student or alumnus entering my office for exploratory information about the prospects of attending law school. I will, however, give a copy of it to my current star pre-law advisee. I have faith she will read the book in a studious and discriminating fashion. I will subsequently engage in her a thoughtful, pointed and wide-ranging discussion about the salient arguments presented in the book. This text, like all tools, must be used wisely. If I can help her in any significant way with the text, then maybe the book will be worth the money I spent on it. I certainly hope so.



Law Schools with Other Than Fall Start Dates

From: *ABA-LSAC Official Guide to ABA Approved Law School™, 2013 edition*

1. **Baylor University School of Law**, Waco, TX
2. **California Western School of Law**, San Diego, CA
3. **Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University**, New York, NY
4. **Charlotte School of Law**, Charlotte, NC
5. **Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology**, Chicago, IL
6. **University of Dayton School of Law**, Dayton, OH
7. **Drake University Law School**, Des Moines, IA
8. **Duke University School of Law**, Durham, NC
9. **Florida Coastal School of Law**, Jacksonville, FL
10. **The John Marshall Law School**, Chicago, IL
11. **The University of Kansas School of Law**, Lawrence, KS
12. **University of La Verne College of Law**, Ontario, CA
13. **The University of Michigan Law School**, Ann Arbor, MI
14. **Mississippi College School of Law**, Jackson,, MS
15. **Northwestern University School of Law**, Chicago, IL
16. **Pace University School of Law**, White Plains, NY
17. **Phoenix School of Law**, Phoenix, AZ
18. **Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico School of Law**, Ponce, PR
19. **University of Richmond School of Law**, Richmond, VA
20. **Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey—School of Law—Camden**, Camden, NJ
21. **Seattle University School of Law**, Seattle, WA
22. **South Texas College of Law**, Houston, TX
23. **The Thomas M. Cooley Law School**, Lansing, MI
24. **Thomas Jefferson School of Law**, San Diego, CA
25. **Washburn University School of Law**, Topeka, KS
26. **Western State University—College of Law**, Fullerton, CA





Western Association *of* Prelaw Advisors

The purpose of WAPLA is:

1. To enhance the skills of pre-law advisors
2. To advocate the interests of undergraduate students and institutions in the counseling and admissions processes leading to law related careers
3. To promote communication between pre-law advisors, individual law school admissions officers, and Law School Admissions Council, the Educational Testing Service, and other law-related organizations. These purposes will be accomplished through periodic meetings, through training of new pre-law advisors, and through such other means as the organization may devise.

Please consider joining us. Dues are only \$25.00 per year!*

**This year your 2013 WAPLA Dues are included in the WAPLA Conference Registration fee!*

To join, visit us online at <http://www.wapla.org>

