

Editor: Amy Urbanek
University of Utah
aurbanek@uc.utah.edu
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Western Association
of Prelaw Advisors

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WAPLA Newsletter

President’s Page

Marilyn Hoffman, University of Utah

Dear WAPLA Colleagues:

I hope you had a productive academic year and enjoying summer. I know many of you will be busy with summer orientation programs and/or teaching on your campuses.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our joint regional conference with SWAPLA, Oct 1-3, at the New York-New York Casino Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. This year’s theme, in keeping with our location: ***Don’t Leave It Up***

To Chance – Making Sure Your Students Know The Odds When Applying To Law School.

Please see elsewhere in the newsletter for some preliminary details on the conference and the link for registration and hotel. We have a tremendous room rate for a hotel right on the strip, so make your reservations as soon as possible!

As you know from previous emails, we are partnering with SWAPLA to provide an outstanding joint conference where advisors from our two regions can network and share with each other, as well as with representatives from law schools across the U.S. We will offer a new advisors preconference workshop on Thursday afternoon Oct 1 as well as an opening welcome reception that evening; a full day of sessions on Friday at the hotel; and on Saturday morning sessions, APLA business meetings, lunch, and a tour hosted by William S. Boyd School of Law. In addition to national updates from LSAC and NALP, there will be panels of advisors and law school representatives on a variety of informative topics. **Please plan to attend the WAPLA Business meeting** on Saturday morning – we will be conducting an important election for President Elect

as well as other business; it is also a chance to meet just with WAPLA advisors and get to know them as well as more about WAPLA.

And, of course, since it's Vegas, there's lots to do! If you want to come early or stay after, rates are still quite reasonable on weeknights, but subject to availability. Conference rates for nights of Oct 1-3 are \$82/weeknight, \$151 weekend (Fri-Sat). Our Hospitality Committee will have information on restaurants, tourist attractions, and other activities-TBA.



Updates from Feb 2015 PLANC Meeting

Mary Nadarski, Arizona State U, WAPLA Designated Representative to PLANC, and I attended the semi-annual PLANC meeting in Philadelphia last February where we joined other APLA reps and presidents to discuss issues such as the listserv (see below), plans for the national conference, and received updates from partner organizations such as NALP and ACCESS. Part of the spring meeting also includes a trip to the nearby LSAC headquarters where we receive LSAC updates and become more familiar with their programs and processes.

Some highlights from these meetings:

- **NALP** (National Association for Law Placement) reported that the largest grad class in history occurred in 2013 with ~ 47,000 grades vying for ~38,000 legal jobs. Jobs are increasing, but employment rate fell again due to the large number of grads. Entering class sizes have decreased and the 1L class for 2014 is ~38,000, so the outlook for the future is starting to look more positive.

- **ACCESS Group** reported new free guidebooks are available: *Financing Your Legal Education* and *Federal Student Loan: Repayment 101*. The first helps students understand legal ed expenses and financial aid options; the second provides info about repayment strategies and options, and using ACCESS budgeting calculator. Advisors may order free copies (minimum 25) while supplies last at memberservices@accessgroup.org Guides are available to students as flipbook or pdf at www.accessgroup.org/financial-education-guides
- **LSAC**
 - Applicant decline seems to be slowing.
 - Simulation site for advisors – log in, create account or multiple accounts with another password(s)
 - Evals and LOR's – possible elimination of Evals is under review for 2016-17 application cycle
 - 15% of transcripts now received as E transcripts, only accepted from specified vendors
 - LSAT – new Superprep II now available; is provided with LSAC fee waiver. New videos on LSAT web site give overviews of exam and question types.
 - Diversity Initiatives - African American and Latino applicants are up. DiscoverLaw.org is expanding info on legal career areas. Discover programs are expanding to include visits to colleges, PLUS Program (Prelaw Undergrad Scholars), and student ambassador program for high school outreach.

SAVE THE DATE – 2016 PLANC Quadrennial National Conference

The Prelaw Advisors National Council (PLANC) will hold the 7th prelaw advisors national conference, June 7-11, 2016, at the Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago. Conference Chair is RJ Holmes-Leopold from Cornell College and the Program Chair is Rodia Vance from Emory University. For national conferences, WAPLA usually offers a larger travel grant, providing funds are available, to help as many region prelaw advisors as possible experience this national event which happens only every four years. The national conference is an incredible experience where you will meet advisors, law school admissions reps, and legal educators and leaders from across the country. In addition to an array of session topics, there will also be new and veteran advisor workshops, a poster session, hot topics panels, and visits to local law schools. For more information see www.planc.org



PLANC Listserv

If you are not already on the PLANC listserv, I encourage you to join. This is a great way to communicate with prelaw advisors on a national level, learn a lot which will be valuable to your work with students, and get questions answered from experienced prelaw advisors.

To learn more about PLANC, go to www.planc.org Listserv request can be found under Resources. New policies for the listserv have been adopted to require listserv participants to be either prelaw advisors at undergraduate institutions, law school representatives, or PLANC partners such as ACCESS in order to allow for open communication. Commercial vendors will no longer be included.

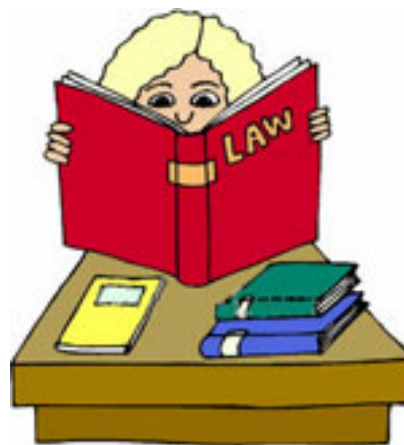
WAPLA Membership, I strongly encourage you to become a part of the only western organization whose sole purpose is to support prelaw advising and provide professional development opportunities for prelaw advisors. And, if you are seeking involvement and leadership development, there are many opportunities such as regional conference planning and presentations or writing articles for the WAPLA Newsletter.

Please note: Membership dues are for the calendar year and are included in the annual conference registration fee. Your 2015 conference registration will automatically cover your 2015 membership, back-dated. For those not attending the conference and wishing only membership, please contact our Secretary KrisTina Carlston kris_tina_carlston@byu.edu directly to pay dues separately.

Please feel free to contact me any time with questions, suggestions, or concerns you might have. If you are a new prelaw advisor, please feel free to contact me or any of our Board members for information and resources you might be seeking. We are happy to help!

Best regards,

Marilyn Hoffman
President, WAPLA
University of Utah
mhoffman@uc.utah.edu
801-581-3842



2015 WAPLA/SWAPLA Joint Conference

October 1-3, Law Vegas, NV

Theme: Don't Leave It Up To Chance – Making Sure Your Students Know the Odds When Applying To Law School

Where: Las Vegas, Nevada at The New York – New York Casino and Hotel

When: October 1-3, 2015

**The conference takes place right before the NACADA national conference also in Las Vegas, Oct 4-7.

[Download the conference invitation](#)

Registration Fees (includes membership):

- Prelaw Advisors – \$150
- Law School Representatives – \$250

Hotel rates (Not including resort fees and tax):

- Thurs – \$82/night
- Fri-Sat – \$151/night.

Registration and hotel reservation available starting June 1st.

Registration and hotel reservation deadline is September 9th.



WAPLA will once again have travel grants for WAPLA prelaw advisors. Details are on page 5, and have been sent out to the WAPLA advisor email list with the conference invitation.

Presentation topics will include:

- LSAC and NALP updates
- Helping students make well Informed choices when considering offers of admission
- Law School Debt-Hearing from recent graduates on what it's like to live with debt
- Making personal statements great
- Writing conduct statements, and other statements explaining grades, LSAT, etc.
- Bridging the gap between Pre-Law Advising and the Bar Exam
- Using data in to improve prelaw advising
- Special prelaw programs
- Communicating with Admission Offices
- Undergraduate internships
- LGBT issues

Tentative Conference Schedule:

Thursday, Oct 1 – Registration, new advisor pre-conference workshop, and evening reception

Friday, Oct 2 –Sessions all day

Saturday, Oct 3 – Morning sessions, business meetings, lunch, and tour of UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law

For questions or more information, please contact:

Marilyn Hoffman
WAPLA President
mhoffman@uc.utah.edu

Jeff Robb
SWAPLA President
jrobb@mail.twu.edu

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

WAPLA Region Advisor: \$150.00

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



WAPLA ADVISOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAVEL GRANTS

WAPLA Advisor Professional Development Grants for conference attendance are 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 (usual limit is two advisors per institution but requests for additional are considered and often supported). 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.*

We are pleased to report that for our 2014 conference all WAPLA prelaw advisors who requested Professional Development Grants received this award which covered most or all of

their travel expenses. WAPLA continues to be committed to supporting prelaw advisors to attend WAPLA and national prelaw advisor conferences.

WAPLA Law School Caravan 2015

Make plans now to bring your students to a Law School Fair this 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!



Monday, 10/19/15—University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Tuesday, 10/20/15—Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

Wednesday, 10/21/15—University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Thursday, 10/22/15—Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

Friday, 10/23/15—University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

Thursday, 11/5/15, Boise State University, Boise, ID

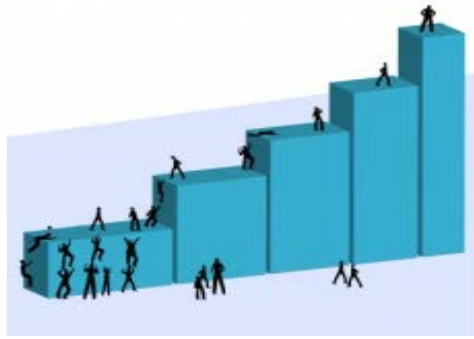
Saturday, 11/7/15, Portland State University, Portland, OR

Monday, 11/9/15, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR

Tuesday, 11/10/15, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV

The Value of US New Rankings

Kyle McEntee, Law School Transparency
(Reprinted with permission)



Editor's note: Each year when the US News & World Report rankings come out, prelaw advisors are often asked about what they really mean. This year I thought it would be good to reprint an article from the Law School Transparency outlining some of the weaknesses of one size fits all rankings. I was also asked to include a short blurb about the LST Podcasts

LST Podcasts

Law School Transparency (LST) has launched its second season of its very successful podcast, *I Am The Law*. In each episode of the show, LST conducts an informational interview with a different law school graduate about his or her job. The goal is to help pre-law and current students understand what the practice of law is really like. You and your students can subscribe on iTunes or your favorite podcatcher app. You can also listen at www.lstradio.com/iatl/

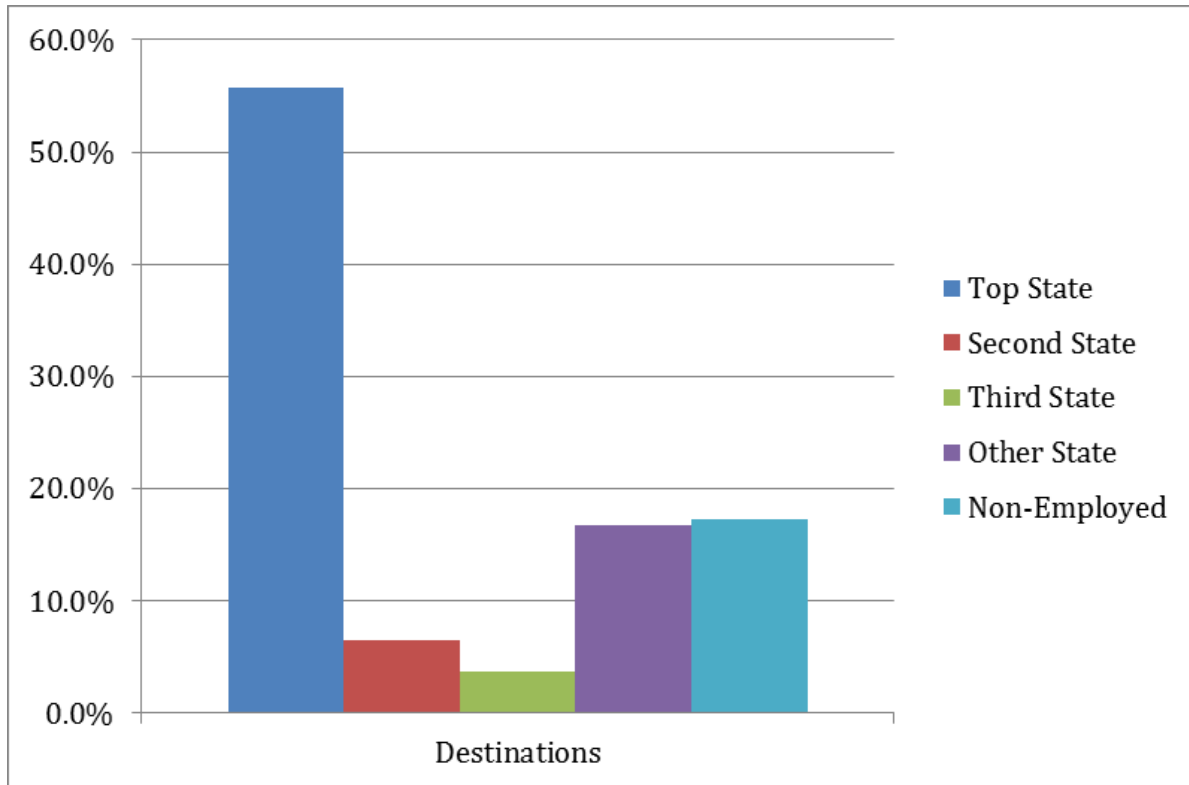
The Value of the U.S. News Rankings

This guide explains five failures of the *U.S. News* rankings and the (lack of a) connection between a school's job placement and its *U.S. News* rank.

Every year, the law school world overreacts to slightly-shuffled *U.S. News* rankings. Proud alumni and worried students voice concerns. Provosts threaten jobs. Prospective students confuse the annual shuffle with genuine reputational change.

Law school administrators react predictably. They articulate methodological flaws and lament negative externalities, but nevertheless commit to the rankings game through their statements and actions. Assuring stakeholders bearing pitchforks has become part of the job description.

If the rankings measured something useful, the entire charade would be much easier to stomach. The unfortunate irony is that these rankings adversely affect the decision-making process for law school administrators and prospective law students alike. The stakes are high. Our profession and society need law schools that don't figure inefficient metrics into annual budgets. Dollars spent chasing *U.S. News* rankings diverts funds away from students' education. It also stands in the way of reducing tuition.



It turns out that 158 schools place at least half of their employed class of 2013 graduates in one state. The top state destination for each school accounts for 67% of employed graduates. A much smaller 8.2% of employed graduates go to a school's second most popular destination, with just 4.5% of employed graduates working in the third most popular destination. Only 20.4% of employed graduates (16.7% of the entire class) end up in a state other than the top three. Comparing schools across the country just doesn't make sense.

Third, *U.S. News* rankings follow an ordinal system that fails to show the degree of difference between schools. Are Columbia and NYU virtually tied? Or does the two-rank difference represent a wide gulf in quality? Is the so-called difference between Columbia and NYU the same as the difference between Cornell and Vanderbilt? Students weighing school prices need to know not just which school is better but how much better it is.

Fourth, performance changes over time but year-to-year comparisons are virtually impossible using the *U.S. News* rankings. *U.S. News* will tell you that Stanford knocked Harvard out of the #2 spot in 2012-13, but the swap in rankings does not provide any clues to your average reader as to why. Stanford may have improved while Harvard declined. Or, Stanford may have improved while Harvard's quality stayed the same. Or perhaps both schools saw a decline in quality but Harvard's decline was more severe. In fact, if every single school saw a marked decline in quality the *U.S. News* rankings would not indicate that this happened. Instead, students can know only relative performance.

Finally, *U.S. News* inexplicably places every ABA accredited law school on the list of "The Best." The best at what? *U.S. News* doesn't say. But it implies that every school on the list is good. The truth is that once costs and employment outcomes are considered in comparison to personal career goals, many schools are bad choices. The *U.S. News* rankings provide no help in drawing the line.



Parting Thoughts

U.S. News wants to be the duct tape of law school applications. No matter what your career goals, geographic preference, or financial situation are, it wants to be the answer. The truth is that the *U.S. News* rankings produce bad outcomes for applicants and law schools alike.

Not only do the *U.S. News* rankings measure the wrong things, but they put schools in the wrong order for job outcomes, make meaningless comparisons between schools which are not in competition, provide no way of telling what a difference in rankings mean, and provide strong encouragement for schools to push tuition levels to brave new heights. They provide for some great gossip and intrigue once a year, but when it comes to helping you make a \$200,000 investment, they are worse than useless.

Rankings are not inherently bad. In fact, they are conceptually quite useful. They order comparable things to help people sort through more information than they know how to or can weigh. However, ranking credibility may be lost when methodologies are unsound, through irrational weighting or meaningless metrics, or when the scope is too broad. As previously described, the *U.S. News* rankings are victim to many of these flaws.

LST has developed the Score Reports in an effort to produce a tool to help prospective students make application and enrollment decisions, keeping in mind that each person has a different risk tolerance and financial situation. Though the Score Reports have a number of opportunities for improvement, little of what makes the *U.S. News* rankings flawed applies to the Score Reports. They unambiguously measure job outcomes, use a regional scope, and use real terms about the outcomes to allow prospective students to make an educated decision about not just which school to attend, but whether any school happens to meet their needs. Click [here](#) to read our guide to using the Score Reports.

The University of Utah's New Law School: A New Building as Innovative as the Programs it Houses

Reyes Agular, Associate Dean of the S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah



The University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law has completed construction of its new law school building. The new facility will allow us to build on our past excellence and improve dramatically our ability to educate lawyers and leaders for the Twenty First Century. The Utah Legislature approved this new 155,000 gross-square-foot building to replace the College of Law's current 98,000 gross-square-foot facility. The new building will immediately improve the learning environment for College of Law students. To cite just two relevant statistics, student space will jump from 7 square feet to 60 square feet outside of class, and from 18 to 30 square feet inside the classroom.

The building's vision incorporates:

- An iconic design to complement Rice Eccles Stadium
- A welcoming campus gateway that invites TRAX, campus community up through the newly reconfigured street corner.
- A dynamic conference center to provide a venue for the College of Law, the university, and the community to discuss and debate the issues of our time
- A floor plan that enables the College of Law to pursue its vision as an innovative teaching center for law by emphasizing service & simulated experience
- The library as the building's spine to generate intelligence at the core of program
- A collaborative research facility to enable and encourage faculty-student interaction
- Nimble technology, including blended classrooms, simulation-centric spaces, and mobile technology

- Universal access to allow seamless physical & cognitive accommodations
- An extremely efficient design to promote sustainability, save energy, and conserve water



Benefits of the Building

From its iconic location on the southwest corner of the University of Utah campus, the new College of Law building will welcome the community with universal accessibility that exceeds national ADA standards and minimizes physical and educational limitations.

Other welcoming features include a café coffee shop to serve the university and the greater community, a 450-seat conference center that will fill critical unmet need for a medium-size venue on campus and will be open for outside conferences, and numerous sustainable design strategies, from south-facing solar screening to a naturally ventilated atrium and the use of low-emissivity, insulated glass in the windows throughout.

After six years of intensive planning, meetings with various internal and external constituencies, and numerous revisions, the College of Law is justifiably excited about the new facility. We truly believe it is as innovative as the programs it will house.

But despite all of the building's many innovations, our commitments remain constant. The new building will facilitate the College of Law's ongoing objectives and advance the College's efforts in the areas of research, training and service:

- To more effectively teach the next generation of leaders in our profession
- To identify solutions to the most critical issues of our times
- To provide dedicated public service to the local, national and global communities and in so doing to improve the human condition

Universal Design and Accommodation

The College of Law is uniquely dedicated to a fully universal architecture design: one that fully and seamlessly accommodates a range of disabilities (from physical disabilities from spinal cord injury to the cognitive challenges of Vets with PTSD). Our objective is to facilitate a full, rich, engaged experience for each person who enters the building. To achieve this goal, the building features gradual inclines, enhanced acoustics, clear sight lines and soft colors, and universal accessibility.

Sustainable Design

The new College of Law has built an affordable but highly sustainable facility that will save energy and water, use safe and recycled materials, and encourage environmentally responsible behavior. These goals are consistent with our longstanding commitment to environmental and natural resources stewardship, but will also result in long-term savings in building operation and maintenance. To meet these goals, we have incorporated the following sustainable elements into the site and building design:

- An efficient irrigation system that includes low-water-use drip irrigation and more efficient sprinkler heads. The irrigation system will also be tied to the campus control system, which allows the irrigation to respond to current temperature and humidity levels.
- Planted areas will be designed to hold rainwater from adjacent hardscape areas.
- A site landscape designed to accommodate both adapted and native vegetation that thrives in our warm, dry summers and can resist the cold, snowy winters.
- Secured bicycle storage located within the building to allow students, faculty and staff to store and secure their bikes in a safe and thermally secured environment. There will also be showers and changing facilities adjacent to the bicycle storage space, to encourage non-automobile-dependent transportation by students, faculty and staff.

The building will also incorporate passive energy strategies that reduce overall energy consumption through the performance of the building itself:

- Enhanced exterior insulation to reduce thermal conductivity through the building envelope
- Fixed exterior sun shades at the south façade to minimize solar heat gain during the summer
- Exterior overhangs that are aesthetically pleasing but also act as sun shades to reduce the building heat gain in the summer
- Low emissivity, insulating glass to reduce thermal transmittance and glare while improving visible light transmittance

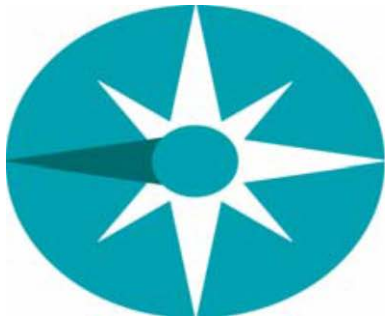
In addition, the building will also achieve energy savings through the integration of more efficient energy-using systems:

- A chilled beam HVAC system to heat and cool the building
- Radiant floor heating and cooling to supplement the chilled beam system
- A heat recovery system to transfer the heat from the exhausted conditioned air into the fresh ventilation air
- Regenerative elevators to convert the excess energy generated by an elevator into electricity that can be used elsewhere in the building
- Enhanced lighting system control that include occupancy sensors and daylight sensors

Finally, the building will make use of sustainable material acquisition, which includes designing and installing materials that are more sustainable through material re-use, the integration of recycled materials and the reduction of toxic ingredients used in the building materials.

One common program used to measure building sustainability is LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). LEED is a voluntary, consensus-based program that provides third-party verification of green buildings. In addition, we designed the building to meet the University's ambitious goal for all new buildings to achieve a 40% net reduction in energy costs. By meeting the above goals in a cost-effective way, as well as the University's energy reduction target, this building should be eligible for LEED Platinum status, which would make it the first law school with its entire footprint LEED Platinum status.





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>

