

# THE REPORTER

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Valparaiso University School of Law Library

## Valpo Law Library Enters the *Blogosphere*

by Steven Probst

Faithful readers of *The Reporter* may recall an article in the April 2004 edition written by Mike Bushbaum that introduced “blawgs” (Web logs whose emphasis is on the law or law-related issues) as a possible source for finding current legal information and staying up-to-date in an area of the law. Since these sounded like laudable goals within our own institution, Valpo Law’s librarians launched the library’s own blawg, V.U.Lawcity—The Valpo Law Blawg (<http://www.valpolawlibrary.blogspot.com>), in April of this year with the intention of “keeping Valpo Law’s faculty and students apprised of new sources of legal information, changes to trusted sources, or simply new developments or happenings within the library itself.” Recent posts have highlighted a great international law site, ways to track state legislation or locate local court rules through Indiana’s official website, and other similarly useful legal tidbits. You might get into the habit of routinely checking the blawg during your legal career at Valpo Law and even after graduation—consider it our way of continuing to instruct you in legal research long after you’ve left us (only with no related assignments).

Our library is by no means the only law library using this intriguing new medium to reach out to its own user community and beyond. A list prepared by Bonnie Shucha, Reference and Electronic Services Librarian at the University of Wisconsin Law Library,



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## You Can Read It Here . . . *The Reporter*

*The Reporter*, a newsletter written and produced by the Valpo Law Library staff, begins its 15th year with this midsummer edition. We usually publish several issues during the school year and we distribute copies throughout Wesemann Hall. Recent issues can also be read on the law school’s website at [www.valpo.edu/law/lawlibrary/thereporter](http://www.valpo.edu/law/lawlibrary/thereporter). Topics for articles include new legal sources in print and online, research strategies, reviews of books and films with legal themes, human interest stories, and library news. We welcome suggestions for future articles.

and available at <http://library.law.wisc.edu/wisblawg/bloglistpublic.htm>, lists more than sixty such blawgs around the country offering legal information for your perusal. Remember also from Mike Bushbaum's April 2004 article that other blawgs can be located using either [blawg.org](http://blawg.org) or [netlawblog.com](http://netlawblog.com): both are indexing tools that can help you locate a blawg in your favorite practice area or jurisdiction. Such tools can be very useful, particularly given the rate at which new blawgs are appearing on the Web.

Indeed, blogging has become so popular that law professors have gotten in on the action. For instance, Law Professor Blogs ([www.lawprofessorblogs.com](http://www.lawprofessorblogs.com)) has arisen as a means of supporting both the teaching and scholarship of law faculty members nationwide. But blogs go beyond this utilitarian function: they also offer law professors a way to converse and debate the legal issues of the day. This was the focus of a recent article in the *Chicago Tribune* which examined the blawg maintained by Judge Richard Posner of the 7th Circuit and Gary Becker, Nobel Prize-winning economist and University of Chicago professor ([www.becker-posner-blog.com](http://www.becker-posner-blog.com)). Becker and Posner use their blawg to carry on lively debate with visitors on such topics as mandated retirement age, selling the right to immigrate, the AIDS crisis in Africa, and the Lawrence Summers situation at Harvard. Both Becker and Posner cite as reasons for their entry into the blogging scene the lack of constraints on the blog as compared to print media, and the opportunity the blog gives others to freely enter a debate by posting comments. Becker and Posner's blog is just one of many maintained by law faculty.

Others include [lessig.org/blog](http://lessig.org/blog), maintained by technology law specialist Lawrence Lessig of Stanford Law, and [instapundit.com](http://instapundit.com), a current affairs blog maintained by Glenn Reynolds, a University of Tennessee law professor. Reynolds's blawg links to a number of other blawgs that might also interest readers.

Law students, not to be outdone by their professors, have also taken to blogging: their blawgs abound on the Web. These tend to fall into two categories: those that provide news and legal commentaries and those that chronicle the law school experience. As you can imagine, blawgs of the latter type are more numerous and more entertaining. A prime example is "Three Years of Hell to Become the Devil" by Anthony Rickey, a Columbia University law student ([www.threeyearsofhell.com](http://www.threeyearsofhell.com)). Others have similarly intriguing names: "Sua Sponte," "Law Dork," "Your Mom Goes to Law School," and "If Cardozo Were Alive." Blawgs in the first category, while tame by comparison, are perhaps more practical. An example of this type is IndyLaw Net (<http://iulaw.blogspot.com>), which is written and maintained by students at the Indiana University School of Law in Indianapolis. This site provides information about what's happening within the school as well as commenting on developments in both state and federal law.

With all of this blawging going on, is it only a matter of time before Valpo Law students start blogs of their own? Perhaps you already have. If so, forward your blog's address to one of our librarians—we'd love to check it out!



# Surviving law school

by Gail Hartzell

So, you have been admitted to Valparaiso University School of Law and you want to become the *best and most successful* lawyer ever. As you start your law school experience, you are likely to find the study of law exciting, but also quite challenging. As Steven Long points out in his article, "Eight Tips for New Law Students: Things They Don't Tell You at Orientation," it helps to know "a few tips and inside secrets." Steven Long is a graduate of Duke University and Duke University School of Law. He was a practicing trial lawyer before achieving fame as a writer and designer of games such as "Justice Not Law" and "An Eye for an Eye." Here are summaries of his eight tips with a few of our own comments in italics. You can find Steven Long's complete article on the Web at [www.classbrain.com/artteensm/publish/printer\\_41.shtml](http://www.classbrain.com/artteensm/publish/printer_41.shtml).

## Prepare to Be Mystified

Part of what law school does is "make you think like a lawyer," so you will be learning many new terms and ideas. You may feel confused and overwhelmed at times, wondering if law school was the right choice for you. Stick with it. In a few weeks, when things have begun to sink in, you'll probably feel much more confident.

## Learn the Lay of the Land

Before classes begin, get to know your new neighborhood. Locate commercial and public facilities you are likely to use, such as supermarket and drugstore, some restaurants, the park. Learn where to find what you might need in a hurry once you're busy with classes and assignments, like a quick, nourishing meal.

But don't stop there: get to know the university main campus—the administration building, the student union, the gym, the undergraduate library. *The new Christopher Center has a coffee bar and many appealing study nooks, some with fireplaces and views as well as comfortable sofas.*

## Prepare Your Spouse

If you are married or have a "significant other," let him or her know how law school may affect your relationship. You may have less time to spend with him or her, and you may become more exacting and argumentative. Preparing your loved one helps to lessen the impact of these changes.

## Meet the Librarians

You'll find your librarians a big help in researching for briefs and seminar papers. *At Valpo Law, our six librarians are available for reference assistance over sixty hours per week.*

## A Helping Hand

As a first-year law student, you'll be hearing about study aids and the pros and cons of using them. Generally, these sources are good supplements, not replacements, for the readings assigned by your professors. *It is usually wise to wait to buy any supplements until you have been in class. Sometimes, professors will recommend particular study aids. Some, such as nutshells and hornbooks, are on reserve and can be checked out at the Circulation Desk of the Valpo Law Library. Nutshells are paperbacks that explain one area of law and are easy to read, with few footnotes. There is one for each first-year subject. Hornbooks are more detailed works that describe what the law is on a single legal topic and contain many footnotes. For other study aids such as commercial outlines, you may want to talk with 2-L and 3-L students to find out which ones are worthwhile or useful for a particular professor's course.*

## Rules, Rules, Rules

Pay close attention during your 1-L course in civil procedure if you plan to enter a courtroom at any time during your legal career. This course covers rules for preparing and conducting trials, which are often won or lost based on the pretrial maneuvering governed by the rules of civil procedure.

## Use of Computerized Research

Computerized legal research provided by Westlaw and Lexis is free to law students under educational contracts; but law firms pay hundreds of dollars an hour for the same service. Most firms use it with discretion, and some use it seldom or not at all. *Even if you do have access as a practicing attorney, you never know when your computer may crash or the power may go out.* So, it's a good idea to know how to do legal research the "old-fashioned book way." *You'll have an excellent opportunity to do just that at Valpo Law in the 1-L Legal Research course, where you'll be introduced to both print and online resources.*

Relax

Law school is tough but it's not that hard. In Steven Long's words, "Approach it as you would a job by applying yourself diligently, working at it eight to twelve hours every day, with a little time off on the weekends, and you will do fine. Panic and worry will just impair your ability to do the work well."



The Law Library has many resources to assist you in studying and adapting to law school. This is a partial list of helpful books and their call numbers.

<b>The Law School Trip: The Insider's Guide to Law School</b> by Andrew McClurg	PN6231 .L4 M32 2001
<b>The Law School Rules: 115 Survival Strategies to Make the Challenges of Law School Seem Like Small Stuff</b> by Marion Lewis	KF283 .L49 1999
<b>Learning the Law: Success in Law School and Beyond</b> by Steven Frank	KF283 .F73 1997
<b>Bridging the Gap Between College and Law School: Strategies for Success</b> by Ruta Stropus and Charlotte Taylor	KF283 .S77 2001
<b>How to Succeed in Law School</b> by Gary Munneke	KF283 .M86 2001
<b>The International Student's Survival Guide to Law School in the United States: Everything You Need to Succeed</b> by Rachel Gader-Shafran	KF283 .G33 2003
<b>Law School Confidential: The Complete Law School Survival Guide: by Students, for Students</b> by Robert Miller	KF283 .M55 2000
<b>Planet Law School: What You Need to Know (Before You Go)—but Didn't Know to Ask</b> by Atticus Falcon	KF283 .F35 1998
<b>Slaying the Law School Dragon: How to Survive—and Thrive—in First Year Law School</b> by George Roth	KF283 .R68 1991
<b>The Discipline of Law Schools: The Making of Modern Lawyers</b> by Philip Kissam	KF279 .K57 2003
<b>How to Study Law and Take Law Exams in a Nutshell</b> by Ann Burkhart and Robert Stein	KF283 .B87 1996
<b>Introduction to the Study and Practice of Law in a Nutshell</b> by Kenney Hegland	KF273 .H43 2003
<b>Law School Without Fear: Strategies for Success</b> by Helene Shapo and Marshall Shapo	KF240 .S52 1996
<b>A Woman's Guide to Law School</b> by Linda Hirshman	KF283 .H57 1999

and last but not least . . .

<b>Amicus Humoriae: An Anthology of Legal Humor</b> compiled by Robert Jarvis, Thomas Baker, and Andrew McClurg	PN6231 .L4 A64 2003
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Check these out !

# *Need a Chuckle?*

by Mary Persyn

Are you stressing about the beginning of fall semester (even if it is six weeks in the future)? Have you used up your supply of legal jokes and stories and need something new to entertain your colleagues and family? Has it been a bad day and you need a little something to lighten up your mood? Try one of these legal humor websites for some comic relief.

<http://www.lawhaha.com> is Andrew McClurg's "Legal Humor Headquarters." Professor McClurg got his start with the publication of "The World's Greatest Law Review Article" (see [http://www.lawhaha.com/review\\_2.asp](http://www.lawhaha.com/review_2.asp)) and has created a website replete with stories as well as madcap laws and cases.

<http://www.LawpSided.com> offers "Legal News with an Attitude" presented by Sean Carter, a Harvard Law grad who now is a traveling humorist. In addition to advertising his presentations, Mr. Carter has a page of wacky legal news on his website.

<http://www.legalhumour.com> touts itself as "a legal humour site for lawyers, law students, judges, court reporters, legal secretaries, clients, criminals, NHL referees . . . WITHOUT the lawyer jokes." It includes legal stories as well as cartoons.

<http://www.lawhumor.com> has an impressive list of links to articles poking fun at lawyers and the law, many of them from respected publications such as the *ABA Journal* and the *National Law Journal*. This site also features a selection of legal

parodies such as "Nerds in a Mass," sung to the tune of "Barbara Ann" about taking the bar exam; and "The Time for Cramming," sung to the tune of "The Sounds of Silence."

<http://www.stus.com> contains some pretty funny law and lawyer cartoons. One of my favorites has the snake saying to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "Relax, Eve, His zero tolerance policy is clearly unconstitutional." But then I have a quirky sense of humor.

<http://www.lawcomix.com> is the website for LawComix, a collection of legal cartoons from projects by lawyer-cartoonist Charles Fincher. Fincher's work has appeared in over a hundred law-related publications in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand.

<http://www.madkane.com/legalhumor.html> brings you the legal humor of columnist Madeleine Begun Kane.

<http://www.lectlaw.com/rub.html> is the 'Lectric Law Library's Rubber Room, where you'll find satiric commentary as well as jokes and stories about the law.

<http://www.lawlaughs.com/> is the place to catch up on all the lawyer jokes.

Finally, here is what the paralegals find funny: <http://www.paralegalgateway.com/legalhumor.html>.



## Student Help Wanted in the Law Library

Earn extra money during the academic year helping out in the law library. Students may work up to twenty hours per week (except first-year law students, who may work up to ten hours). Library positions are filled quickly, so if you are interested, please apply as soon as possible.

COMPUTER LAB ASSISTANTS	CIRCULATION DESK AIDES	AUDIOVISUAL ASSISTANTS
<p>Computer Lab Assistants help students use the library's two computer labs. They provide software support for lab applications and maintain the printers, including clearing paper jams and changing toner cartridges. Applicants must be able to work shifts of two consecutive hours during the day or evening, and they must have a good working knowledge of Windows, Microsoft Office applications, and Net browsers. For more information, please contact <b>Michael Bushbaum</b> at 219-465-7822 or <a href="mailto:mike.bushbaum@valpo.edu">mike.bushbaum@valpo.edu</a>.</p>	<p>This very important and highly visible job entails working behind the Circulation Desk in the Law Library. Previous experience working with the public is a definite asset. Since the Circulation Desk is staffed by student aides every hour that the library is open, it is preferred that student aides work at least two consecutive hours per shift. Responsibilities in this position include checking materials in and out, answering the phone, referring patrons with reference questions to the law librarians, directing patrons to various locations in the law school, maintaining the three copy machines in the Law Library, and completing any jobs assigned by the Circulation Desk Supervisor. If you are interested in becoming a Circulation Desk Aide, please contact <b>Debbie Blennerhassett</b> at 219-465-7815 or <a href="mailto:debbie.blennerhassett@valpo.edu">debbie.blennerhassett@valpo.edu</a>.</p>	<p>Under the direction of the Circulation Desk Supervisor, Audiovisual Assistants help provide the day-to-day audiovisual services required by Valpo Law faculty, staff, and students. Previous audiovisual experience is extremely helpful in this position. Assignments include videotaping professors' classes, setting up microphones, showing videotapes and DVDs, and assisting with PowerPoint presentations. Applicants must be able to work a flexible schedule, including some evening and weekend hours. For additional information, please contact <b>Debbie Blennerhassett</b> at 219-465-7815 or <a href="mailto:debbie.blennerhassett@valpo.edu">debbie.blennerhassett@valpo.edu</a>.</p>
<p><b>BOOK SHELVING AIDES</b></p>		
<p>Book Shelving Aides put back in the proper place and in order all materials used by Law Library patrons. Applicants will be given instruction in the Library of Congress classification system used by the library. Although hours are flexible in this position, student aides must work at least two consecutive hours on any day they are scheduled. For further information, please contact <b>Debbie Blennerhassett</b> at 219-465-7815 or <a href="mailto:debbie.blennerhassett@valpo.edu">debbie.blennerhassett@valpo.edu</a>.</p>		