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Issue 106 | April 17

[A New Approach to the Bar Character & Fitness Review](#)

Washington Supreme Court Opinion: Prior Felonies Not Necessarily a Bar to Practicing Law

In November, the Washington Supreme Court rejected findings by the Washington State Bar Association Character and Fitness Board and ruled that Tarra Simmons, a bar applicant with felony convictions related to past substance abuse, must be allowed to sit for the bar exam. Earlier this month, Justice Mary Yu issued an opinion that clarifies the decision. The character and fitness board questioned whether Simmons has been in recovery and exhibiting other positive behavior for long enough, and also asked the court to establish a "bright-line rule" regarding years in recovery without a relapse. Yu wrote that recovery is too complex to make such a rule and that "one's past does not dictate one's future." [ABA Journal](#) has more details about the nature of Simmons' felony convictions and why the court believes they should not prohibit her from practicing law.

Does Email Stress You Out? Here's Why ? and How to Tame the Beast

Once a beloved and time-saving technological marvel, email has become a burden for a lot of professionals, commanding (according to one study) an average of 4.1 hours per day. And, writes Dorie Clark at [Harvard Business Review](#), even if it takes you much less time than that to wade through and respond to your emails, you might still feel bogged down and stressed out. Why? Because unanswered emails often make you feel guilty ? but answering them can often result in more obligations. To get at the root of her own email stress and how to decrease it, Clark did a simple, two-week experiment to track all that traffic. What did she do ? and what three key lessons did she learn?

Recapping the 2018 Stanford Law CodeX Conference

"Lawyers are a tough audience," said ABA President Hilarie Bass, keynote speaker at a recent legal tech conference. "We are accustomed to looking in the rearview mirror." But, as they have for the past six years, many lawyers (along with technologists and entrepreneurs) attended the Stanford Law School CodeX FutureLaw conference earlier this month. Bass highlighted several recent ABA initiatives; other speakers covered such topics as the limitations of algorithms in risk assessment tools, current and potential uses of blockchain, and the ongoing discussion of how bars should respond to platforms such as Avvo. Learn more at [ABA Journal](#).

Point/Counterpoint Column Looks at State Bar of Wisconsin's Keller Dues Policies

The State Bar of Wisconsin is no stranger to debate over Keller dues and whether its refund policies go far enough to assuage members who are critical of some uses of their dues. Indeed, as [Wisconsin Law Journal](#) notes, one of the most vocal critics over the past several decades served a term as bar president. In a point/counterpoint column, two other prominent Wisconsin lawyers address this thorny issue: Jon Erik Kingstad, a real estate lawyer whose lawsuit against the state bar helped establish new refund policies, and Michelle Behnke, a past president of the bar and adviser to its executive committee on Keller dues. Find out what each one had to say.



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