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COMPLAINTS CHOIR TO THE TUNE OF
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

HOW COULD ANYONE THINK THAT WATER IS NOT A PUBLIC GOOD?

JOSEPH W. DELLAPENNA*

At the opening of the 2008 session of the Natural Resources Law Section of the Association of American Law Schools in New York, the approximately 70 law professors in attendance were invited to participate in a complaints choir. The lyrics were prepared by James R. and Mary Ann McCurdy, and Annecos Wiersema, and me. Jim, Mary Ann, and I presented the results to the session. As chair of the section, I was worried that we would find ourselves singing off-key in front of a bewildered or even hostile audience, but with the help of Marcilynn A. Burke and Victor Byers Flatt, both of whom proved capable singers, we soon had all 70 engaged in an enthusiastic sing-along—so enthusiastic, in fact, that there was a complaint from the room next door that they could not hear their speakers. I present the lyrics here in order to record the event for a skeptical posterity and for the benefit of those who were unable to attend the session.

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1. The concept of a complaints choir originated in Finland and has been replicated widely around the world over the past couple of years. Samples can be found at http://www.complaintschoir.org/choirs.html, which links to videos and the texts of various complaints choirs. In my view, the ones from Birmingham and Helsinki are the best.

2. Professor of Law, Gonzaga University. Jim and Mary Ann agreed to take on the task of converting various complaints into singable lyrics and to find a suitable tune, as well as suggesting some of the complaints.

3. Professor of Law, Ohio State University. Annecos collected some suggestions of complaints from her students.

4. Professor of Law, University of Houston.

5. Professor of Law, University of Houston.
1. It's getting dam hot.  
   Ice melting out there.  
   We cannot find a town  
   That has clean air.

2. Time drags on in class.  
   No two clocks the same.  
   Class time laptop games  
   Drive profs insane.

3. Hey, Linda Darnell!  
   What happened to her?  
   And how 'bout Cornell Wilde?  
   We'll all be a blur.

4. Hamster with jetlag  
   Gets Viagra dose.  
   Feels better quickly, but  
   Don't stand too close.  
   ***

   "To heck with acronyms and trees,  
   Purple sage and big RV's  
   LOL ASAP!"

5. Chuck Norris smiles on  
   Thursday primary thing.  
   Chuck thinks President Huckabee  
   Has a nice ring.

6. Solution is Markets,  
   Confused people think.  
   For each and every problem.  
   Oink, oink! Wink, wink!

7. Cattle BLM can't control  
   Mining law is absurd.  
   They take Indians' land and oil  
   Don't keep their word.
8.
Huggy, cute polar bears
Are doomed—but, who cares?
As long as LazyBoy builds
Reclining chairs.
(Watch polar bear reruns on tv.)

***

USA Today says price of oil
Has not impeded economy as a whole
Subway New York, Train, Tram New York!

9.
Free agency makes,
Good small market team
Impossible to build.
Pass the Jim Beam!

10.
Legal author’s big dream:
My students will be
inspired by my treatise
Truly meaningfully!
(But they aren’t.)

11.
When I walk, not drive
Breathe yucky exhaust—cough cough!
Smaller carbon footprint, but
At my lungs’ cost.

12.
The Olentangy River
Contains only two species
No fish, alligators or eels, just
Pepsi bottles and geese.

***

Why don’t laws just say what they mean?
Jargon messed up, worse than teens.’
Don’t be a dork!
Enjoy New York!