

An in-depth review of *Transportation Logistics and the Law*

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Parcel Shipping & Distribution Magazine = May/June 2002

Regular readers of *Parcel Shipping & Distribution* are familiar with Bill Augello, a regular "Viewpoint" columnist commenting on the laws and regulations governing transportation and shipping. Professor Augello also has a day job: he teaches transportation law at the University of Arizona. While wearing his academic hat (or should I say mortarboard?), he has produced a book entitled *Transportation Logistics and the Law*.

This is no bedside reading. Nor is it a coffee table book, although it certainly is big enough to qualify as one. This is a 550-page textbook intended for daily use in every busy shipping and receiving department as well as in institutions teaching transportation and/or logistics. Readers can even earn college credits by reading this text through the Institute of Logistical Management's accredited Distance Learning courses on Transportation Law !

Since I am not a teacher nor a student enrolled in such a course, I am not qualified to comment on the book's qualities as a teaching text. However, I am a manager who gets involved in day-to-day issues in shipping including occasional issues with legal overtones. Since every transportation arrangement involves a contract of carriage of some sort, legal problems are always involved in shipping. The best feature of this text is that it dwells on those problem areas in the distribution cycle, such as claims, rate disputes, terms of sale, who is liable for freight charges, cargo insurance, surety bonds, carriers' liens, contract negotiations, dealing with intermediaries, time limits, licensing, shippers' and receivers' exposure to lawsuits, etc.), and offers suggestions on how these problems and litigation can be avoided!

This book is a valuable reference tool for people in my position. It covers a huge range of transportation issues: historical perspective on transportation regulation, deregulation and, more importantly, the current statutes and regulations that govern our operations. It also cites a great deal of the current case law to support the author's views. And he has sections for each mode of transportation: rail, motor carrier, ocean and air, as well intermodal and cross-border operations. Of special interest to our readers, however, is a section on Parcel Express Carriers in general, with sub-sections on Liability Limitations and Guaranteed Service Offerings. Did you know, for instance, that carriers first started to limit their liability to \$.50 per lb. in 1861 ? Pony Express introduced that limit then, and carriers are still using it despite 150 years of inflationary increases in the value of our goods!

Since this is not the kind of book you sit down and read cover to cover, the index and table of contents are crucial. Both appear to be quite thorough, consisting of 25 pages of topics. The index refers to subjects in plain English and in job-oriented words and phrases.

There is also a glossary, an absolutely essential tool for those of us who don't deal with legal issues on a daily basis. It covers a lot, although I would like to have seen a more complete explanation of acronyms. Transportation, like all professions, has its own set of alphabet soup terms. But when you don't use them on a daily basis, it's not always easy to remember what they mean. I looked in vain for a definition of "MLA COGSA". I'm sure it's in there somewhere — but as a person in a hurry, I wanted to see it in the glossary.

Augello's text is the first book concerning transportation legal issues I know of that has been published with both academic and "real world" audiences in mind. For that alone, he deserves our thanks and congratulations. Now, Bill, how are you going to keep it updated? A special Web site for transportation law?