RECENT PUBLICATIONS

GENDER EQUALITY: DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN’S EQUAL CITIZENSHIP. Edited by Linda C. McClain and Joanna L. Grossman. New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press. 2009. Pp. xvi, 450. $90.00. Despite progress, gender inequalities persist. Professors Linda McClain and Joanna Grossman have compiled an enlightening collection of articles that address the barriers that remain to full gender equality. Departing from traditional analysis, the collection employs the language of equal citizenship to reflect on society’s progress toward achieving equal status for all individuals. An early contribution, for example, describes how the women’s rights movement has shown that women can earn a “subset of citizenship-based rights, while being deprived of others” (p. 9) that are necessary for full membership in society. The articles also address women’s roles in the spheres of sexual and global citizenship, highlighting the manner in which traditional notions of citizenship condition full membership on “conforming to a specific set of sexual norms” (p. 307). By emphasizing the exclusionary and masculine underpinnings of current conceptions of citizenship, Professors McClain and Grossman’s collection recognizes a need to re-gender citizenship in order to eliminate the gender biases that remain present despite contemporary gender-neutral definitions of citizenship.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THEIR LIMITS. By Wiktor Osiatyński. New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press. 2009. Pp. xx, 241. $32.99. Human rights are often framed in lofty, absolute terms, but in the reality of limited resources, one must draw a line between the truly necessary and the merely desirable. In Human Rights and Their Limits, Professor Wiktor Osiatyński sets forth a “soft universalism” conception of human rights that focuses on satisfying basic human needs and respecting different cultures, but retreats from the imposition of a particular rights regime. Drawing upon his extensive work on human rights issues in Poland and other transitional countries, Professor Osiatyński details the sociopolitical environments that are most likely to foster development of such rights. His compelling account imagines human rights as a framework of aspirational principles tailored to fit individual states and peoples, interweaving history and philosophy as entry points for illustration and debate. Professor Osiatyński concludes that although human rights are worthy goals, they must be weighed against other competing social and cultural values. Overall, Human Rights and Their Limits offers a valuable contribution to the existing human rights literature by identifying competing social values and redefining universal rights in more pragmatic terms.
THE LAW MARKET. By Erin O’Hara and Larry E. Ribstein. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press. 2009. Pp. 278. $35.00. In an increasingly interconnected world, private actors come into contact with numerous legal regimes in the course of their everyday lives. A person can start a shipping company in Virginia, incorporate it in Delaware, and contract to arbitrate customer disputes in the United Kingdom. The fact that choice-of-law clauses in contracts are customarily enforced creates a global marketplace for legal regulation — a “law market.” Focusing on concrete and recognizable examples, Professors Erin O’Hara and Larry Ribstein explore the law market’s two-directional decision process that is created by “the mobility of at least some people, firms, and assets and the incentives of at least some states to compete for people, firms, and their assets by creating desired laws” (p. 65). While the law market places pressure on lawmakers to supply laws that benefit the populace, it also undermines lawmakers’ power to universally enforce any law, even those that protect the health and safety of the populace. To strike a balance, Professors O’Hara and Ribstein propose a federal choice-of-law statute containing “super-mandatory rules” (p. 210) that not only “trump customized contract terms and super-mandatory rules” (p. 219), but “also trump choice-of-law clauses” (p. 219). By specifying in the statute the situations in which contractual choice-of-law clauses will not be honored, The Law Market promises to add some much-needed clarity and common sense to a “largely ignored field of law” (p. 4).

THE UNBOUNDED HOME: PROPERTY VALUES BEYOND PROPERTY LINES. By Lee Anne Fennell. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. 2009. Pp. xi, 298. $45.00. Cap-and-trade markets for lawn gnomes, calls and puts for plastic flamingos, and fragmented rights to noisy lawnmowers are just some of the colorful applications of economic modeling to residential property ownership found in The Unbounded Home. Professor Lee Anne Fennell examines the current legal framework’s inadequacies with respect to today’s interdependent metropolitan neighborhoods and proposes some innovative solutions. True to Chicago School form, the book introduces readers to such familiar analytic tools as the tragedy of the commons and the prisoners’ dilemma, illustratively applying them to the residential property context. While these concepts may be familiar to many readers, the analysis that follows is strikingly original. Professor Fennell argues persuasively for a more fluid conception of residential property ownership, a system in which homeowners, neighbors, and communities can more easily buy and sell their rights to neighborhood aesthetics and to individual homes’ property values. Students and scholars of property, land use, and municipal government law will benefit from this volume’s creative ideas, and anyone with an interest in law and economics will profit from the book’s entertaining and informative examples.