

# ALBERTA FAMILY MEDIATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Edition 1: August 1, 2004

## *Special points of interest:*

- AFMS is pleased to feature the new look for the newsletter
- Newsletters will be distributed six times yearly
- We welcome your input about the newsletters and encourage you to submit articles and features
- This newsletter features information on peace building in families, mediation process and conflict resolution in family disputes

Peace building need not occur only on an international front. Peace building can start in our own backyard. When we explore violence internationally, much of the violence is generated by differences (in culture, in religion, in political beliefs, etc) and a lack of tolerance and respect for diversity. These same differences exist in our communities, our schools and even our families. How do we encourage our children to be peace builders?

- Encourage children to be respectful of differences and to recognize their own uniqueness.
- Encourage curiosity in children. When we are curious (not judgemental) about other's beliefs, practises, rituals, etc. we are more likely to be understanding or accepting.

- Introduce children to different languages, activities, traditions, etc.
- Teach and model positive and peaceful problem solving skills in the family.
- Model to children to help them develop an awareness of how their actions and words affect other people.
- Have a family discussion about conflict and peace and explore family negotiate peace problem solving skills that will be used at home (and in the community).

## **Inside this issue:**

<i>Peace building</i>	1
<i>News around the province</i>	2
<i>Interview with Sue</i>	3
<i>Lunch and Learn sessions</i>	4
<i>Book reviews</i>	5
<i>Marketing your practice</i>	6

## **Introducing the AFMS Board of Directors for 2004 and 2005**

**Dr. Kent Taylor (President)**

**Ms. Jane Warren (Vice President)**

**Ms. Bonnie Murray (Secretary)**

**Ms. Barbara Acton**

**Ms. Geeta Bharadia**

**Ms. Barbara Bishop  
Mr. Yogesh Gupta**

**Ms. Marilyn Herrmann**

**Dr. Trevor Neil**

**Ms. Lori Yasenik (past  
president)**

**Mr. Michael Porter**

**Ms. Kim Rieger**

**Ms. Shelley Taggart**

**Mr. Terry Zibin**



## News from around our province

Mediation Services, Alberta Justice is pleased to have Erika Gordon working with them for three months. She is on an Alberta/ Quebec exchange program and is working as a Family Court Counsellor in Edmonton. Erika is entering her 3rd year at McGill University (Montreal) and eventually wants to practice in family Law and Mediation.

We are featuring news around the province starting with Medicine Hat. Upcoming editions will feature Edmonton, Calgary, Grand Prairie, Fort McMurray, Lethbridge just as a starting point. Call Charmaine to be part of the community features.

### Community Features: Medicine Hat by Marilyn Hermann



Marilyn is a lawyer in Medicine Hat practicing in family law, mediation and collaborative law. She is a strong believer of the importance in families resolving matters collaboratively so that their children "can be relatively unscarred by their family transitions." In Medicine Hat there are many family law cases that are resolved by mediation, collaborative negotiation and since 2000 the trial lists and Chambers Court applications have significantly reduced. In addition to mediation, collaborative law has become widely used. The Court workers are actively involved in promoting mediation and Queen's Bench and Family Court also offer Judicial Mediation which is a helpful option to shelter children from parental conflicts.

*"All these options to traditional litigation make our community a better place to live"*

### What are your favorite web links?

**AFMS is creating a links section on the website– a valuable resource for members and the public. To help us meet your needs, please email Sue your three**

**favorite or most commonly used web links so we can share them with others.**

**Email to:**

**[info@afms.ca](mailto:info@afms.ca)**



## An interview with Sue Bedier

Sue, originally from BC and previously residing in Grande Prairie, has worked with AFMS since April 2004. Since that time she has fielded 580 messages (averaging about 7 calls per day). She previously worked for AFMS in 2000 and 2001.

At AFMS Sue fields all incoming calls/messages/emails,

manages the database of members, handle membership status, book keeping for the society, and provides support to the President and volunteer board of the society.

Sue has noticed that many callers are looking for help (many sounding quite distressed) and don't know much about mediation. Being able to calm them, provide information and refer them in the right direction is something that Sue finds rewarding in her job.



Sue Bedier—  
AFMS Administrative Support  
“I am confident in our membership, society and family mediation as a valid alternative for families” in crisis

## It is always possible to approach a goal by a detour (Theodor Reik)

Perspective and perception— so important in the analysis and management of conflict. I recently heard a quote by Alan Alda that alluded to perspectives being the windows or lens to our world and that sometimes they need to be cleaned off. We all know the degree to which perspectives and perceptions impact our human interactions, and relations; and the

power of parties being truly able to understand one another's perspectives on a deep level (even if disagreement still exists). How is it (what approaches do we implement) that we invite parties to explore or understand the perspectives of one another?

*Put yourself into a different room, that's what the mind is for*  
(Margaret Atwood)



## Coming soon— future issues

Some of the topics coming in future issues:

- Mediation Models— what are the newly emerging processes?
- Tools to help families creatively manage conflict
- Relationship and conflict mapping
- Theory and practice— bridging the two

## Lunch and Learn Sessions– Edmonton

Mark your calendars for the 2004-2005 Lunch and Learn sessions!

The location is always the Edmonton City Hall in the Heritage Room. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. and the presentations run from noon until 1:00 p.m. There is a question period and mixer beginning at 1:00 to 1:30. This is a great venue to learn, share



Lunch and Learn Sessions

information and network with colleagues (all over a lunch break).

Upcoming topics include: new maternity/paternity legislation, multi-cultural panel (insight into conflict and cultures), family business mediation, new civil claims mediation program (Queens Bench), tax implications, new divorce legislation, and more!

Dates for Sessions:

Friday October 22/04  
 Wednesday November 24/04  
 Wednesday January 19/05  
 Wednesday February 16/05  
 Wednesday May 18/04  
 Wednesday June 15/04

There is no cost and you just need to bring your own lunch.

These sessions have been held now for several years.

## What's up and coming?

Watch the web page for the upcoming summary of the May 2004 AFMS conference which featured Kenneth Cloke as the speaker.

Our next newsletter will be released October 1, 2004 with editions to follow six times yearly. Newsletters

*Every problem has a gift  
 for you in its hands.  
 (Richard Bach)*

will be posted on the AFMS website and will be emailed in PDF format to members.

Growing Seeds of Peace Conference– Athabasca October 22-24/04.  
[www.peace.ca/AlbertaAgenda2004.htm](http://www.peace.ca/AlbertaAgenda2004.htm)

## About the newsletter Editor– Charmaine Hammond

Charmaine Hammond is volunteering with AFMS to develop, write and edit the newsletters. Charmaine now lives in Sherwood Park, after residing in Fort McMurray for the past 14 years. She has a Masters Degree in Conflict Analysis & Management and has been practicing as a mediator/

consultant and trainer since 1996. You can find out more about Charmaine at her website [www.hammondgroup.biz](http://www.hammondgroup.biz).

Please contact Charmaine at 780-464-3828 or by email to [charmaine.hammond@hammondgroup.biz](mailto:charmaine.hammond@hammondgroup.biz) to advertise in the newsletter, submit articles or let us know about

events around the province.



## Book Reviews- Submitted by Mary Jane Klein

### Two Homes by Claire Masurel and Kady MacDonald Denton

Two Homes is suggested for children ages 3-6. It present an idyllic existence for a little boy named Alex whose parents don't live together. He has two of everything; homes, coat hooks, favorite chairs, friends, kitchens, toothbrushes. Each parent calls him at the other parent's home. He loves his parents and they



Sometimes in reality children feel they have to balance their worlds.

love him no matter where he is. Ah! If this were only the reality for children of divorce. No step-siblings, no half sibs, no step parents, no conflict, no guilt. Just two perfect loving homes. Young children would enjoy the repetition and appealing pictures of each of the paired items but unless their reality is as positive

as the one described in the story, they may wonder what is wrong with their family.

The Edmonton Public Library has more than 100 resources for families coping with separation and divorce.

### Fly Away Home— by Eve Bunting

The little boy in this story lives a vastly different reality instead of two homes, he has none. He lives with his father in an airport. His mother has died and his father cannot afford to rent an apartment. They spend their lives in a discouraging reality— avoiding detection, trying to stay clean and find food. There is something of a community of other families in the same situation and these people

help each other out. They agree that whoever is first to find an apartment will take in the rest of the people. One day a little bird gets caught inside the airport and the little boy worries and prays that the bird will get out. When it does, the little boy takes this as a sign that he

too will one day be able to leave the airport. As unlikely as it sounds, this is actually a hopeful, joyful book. The little boy's father and the homeless community loves him and are meeting his needs the best they can.

*Life is the first gift, love is the second , and understanding is the third (Marge Piercy)*

Mary Jane rates this a three hankie book.

## Membership Categories with AFMS

Registered Family Mediator (RFM) specializing in separation/divorce mediation

Registered Family Mediator (RFM) specializing in General Family Mediation



AFMS Membership Categories

Registered Family Mediator (RFM) specializing in Family Business Mediation.

Practicing Mediator (designation for those who are continuing to gain mediation experience or for whom mediation is a small part of their practice.

General Member

Student Member

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Alberta *family* Mediation Society

*Advancing the practice of  
family mediation.*

*We're on the web—  
look us up!*

### About AFMS

Established in 1984, the non-profit society provides services to family mediators.

The organization has a part time administrative assistant and is managed by a volunteer board of directors, with representatives across the province.

The society is dedicated to both professional and public education regarding family mediation.

## **It is a relief when things get to their worst. You know what the worst is and can begin to plan for better things (Elinore Pruitt Stewart)**

Planning to market your ADR practice is an important element of success. A starting point (Natalie Armstrong, 2001) is to determine whether your practice will be specialized or general in nature. This will help you determine who to market your services to. Armstrong (2001) suggests creating a strong foundation for your marketing plan, one that is embedded with your commitment and enthusiasm. A communication plan is comprehensive in nature and details all the methods you will utilize to reach your audience, a different approach for different target groups. In addition to your marketing plan, there is tremendous value in establishing and demonstrating your credibility. Armstrong stresses the importance of promoting the service, not just

your business. Many people do not have a solid understanding of conflict management and methods of resolution such as mediation and facilitation. She indicates that marketing efforts will be much more rewarding when the audience understands the service you are “selling” and how they may be able to utilize the service. This is an opportunity to educate the public and potential clients about not only the process and theoretical foundations and pillars, but also to help the individuals consider how the service may positively impact them.

Challenge for the week: develop a list of five innovative approaches to promote your services or the field in which we work/volunteer. Then choose five potential “clients” and follow through on your plan and evaluate it's efforts.