



AFCC NEWS

ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

Volume 24, Number 4

Fall 2005



Return to New Orleans in 2009

AFCC Annual Conference Relocated to Florida

The AFCC 43rd Annual Conference, originally scheduled for New Orleans, will be relocated to the Westin Innisbrook Resort in Tampa Bay, Florida. The conference will take place over the original dates, May 31-June 3, 2006.

President Hugh Starnes said that the decision to relocate was a difficult one, but something that was in the best interest of AFCC members. "We wanted to take enough time and give ourselves every opportunity to hold the conference in New Orleans," he said. "But due to the ongoing uncertainty about the status of New Orleans, we felt that we needed to make a move."

Conference Committee Co-chair (and New Orleans resident) Leslye Hunter returned to her home in suburban Metairie and provided AFCC staff with first hand updates. "Based on the reports and lack of a local planning committee, it would not have been possible to give our members the kind of conference they have come to expect," said AFCC Executive Director Peter Salem. "We were fortunate that the Sheraton New Orleans helped us relocate and is welcoming us back for our 2009 Annual Conference. We are also grateful to our members for their incredible support and patience. I have received dozens of telephone calls and emails with promises to participate in the conference regardless of the location. There is an impressive level of loyalty and commitment among AFCC members."

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ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

AFCC is an interdisciplinary and international association of professionals dedicated to the resolution of family conflict.

Mission

To improve the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict.

Vision

A justice system in which all professionals work collaboratively through education, support and access to services to achieve the best possible outcome for children and families.

Values

- Collaboration and respect among professions and disciplines
- Learning through inquiry, discussion and debate
- Innovation in addressing the needs of families and children in conflict
- Empowering families to resolve conflict and make decisions about their future

All views expressed in the AFCC News are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of AFCC.

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AFCC News Advertising

Advertising copy must be camera ready and payment made in U.S. funds.

	AFCC members	Non-member
Full page (7 1/2" x 10")	\$425	\$600
Half page (7 1/2" x 4 7/8")	\$300	\$450
Quarter page (3 5/8" x 4 7/8")	\$150	\$250

President's Message

I would like to take this opportunity to share some very progressive, but behind the scenes, steps that AFCC is taking. For the last 14 months, AFCC has been working on an organizational effectiveness project funded by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The project was designed to examine our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities as an organization.

The grant enabled us to retain three highly qualified consultants to assess AFCC's capacity for influence, member services and internal management. These consultants engaged our Board of Directors and project committee in a process of self-examination and benchmarked AFCC against similar non-profit associations.

These are some of the highlights offered by the consultants based on their research and interviews with AFCC peer organizations:

- AFCC is viewed by its peers as a "best practice" organization from a management perspective. We have achieved substantial success in the quality of our conferences and publications. Our initiatives on family law education reform, parenting coordination guidelines, court services and child custody evaluation model standards are viewed as cutting-edge.
- Our peers admire our work and our organizational effectiveness and are impressed with the amount of production from AFCC's comparably small staff.
- Our conferences and publications are considered "state of the art."
- One of our strengths is our growing membership. AFCC membership has grown by nearly 50% over the past three years, while similar organizations have struggled to avoid a decline in membership.
- Our chapter membership is a special strength; the membership of our eight chapters comprises 38% of our total AFCC membership. Our membership growth seems to be correlated with our chapter growth. The consultants recommend that we consider increasing the number of chapters, including exploration of some form of chapter membership for international members.

Of course, it is gratifying to receive such positive reviews; however, the purpose of the

project was to help make AFCC a stronger and more effective organization. Toward that end, one important observation offered by the consultants is that the product of much of our work, the final utility of our cutting-edge ideas, is the implementation at the local level.

I am hopeful that we will be able to do more in the future to encourage and assist with implementation at the local level. For me, this is what AFCC was about long before I became active in the parent organization. Whether through AFCC Chapters, other organizations or ad hoc committees and task forces, professionals at the local level must be catalysts for change in the family law system.

Strategies for convening leading professionals that have been successful include: periodic "Lunch and Learn" brown bag meetings in Missouri; an interdisciplinary "Round Table" in Maryland focused on improving the family law court system; and several jurisdictions in Florida are structured to promote change and improve communication and relationships among professionals.

I know some jurisdictions have mentorship and consultation programs to help broaden experience and bring along new professionals. Maybe you have an idea or another method of organizing interdisciplinary professionals for change. I feel strongly that we're all in this together and we would like to hear your ideas about how AFCC ideals can be passed on to the professionals in your community.

Our Board of Directors will consider the consultant's report and its conclusions and recommendations at some length. I believe this process solidifies our organization as one that is progressive, pro-active, and that is seriously striving to get stronger and more effective. If you have thoughts or comments on any of these subjects, please share them with me by emailing me at HStarnes@ca.cjis20.org, with a copy to AFCC Executive Director, Peter Salem, at psalem@afccnet.org.



Hon. Hugh Starnes
AFCC President
Fort Myers, Florida

Message from the Executive Director

Yogiisms, Resiliency and AFCC



Peter Salem
AFCC Executive Director
Madison, Wisconsin

Yogiisms (n): quotes of Yogi Berra, who, besides being a baseball player, was also famous for fracturing the English language in provocative, interesting ways.

"It's like déjà vu all over again."

In late August, as Hurricane Katrina neared her mark, I drafted my bi-annual report to the AFCC Board of Directors, noting the steady growth and financial health of our association. I tempered my enthusiasm with the recommendation that we put something aside for a rainy day (a metaphor I would later delete from the draft report). After all, we recalled all too well the financial losses incurred only four years ago after canceling the AFCC conference scheduled for September 13-15, 2001 in New York City.

Of course, AFCC's 9/11 problems paled in comparison to those who experienced genuine loss and suffering. And as we plan our 2006 Annual Conference, originally scheduled for New Orleans next spring, we know that most AFCC members will experience few real losses from Hurricane Katrina. Sure, we now pay more to fill our cars and heat or cool our homes, but we still *have* our homes. As Katrina swept through the gulf and her aftermath destroyed everything in her path, I watched the news with the same queasy feeling that I had four years ago on the morning of September 11, 2001 in the Chicago airport as members of the AFCC staff tried to board a plane for LaGuardia. I thought of AFCC friends and colleagues just as

I thought of our colleagues in New York. And once again, the AFCC office was deluged with calls and emails asking if there was anything that could be done.

"It ain't over till it's over."

The authorities turned off all of the televisions at O'Hare International Airport just after the second tower was hit, so we had virtually no outside information. But I had a plan. First, I booked a backup flight into LaGuardia that afternoon. When the airport closed, I announced to our staff that we'd stay overnight in Chicago and fly to New York the next morning for the conference that was to begin in two days. They looked at me as though I was from another planet. Well, nobody ever accused me of being quick to catch on. But I've always heeded the words of Woody Allen who said that 80 percent of success is showing up. If the conference was going to be cancelled, it wasn't going to be because the AFCC staff didn't show up.

In the days immediately following Katrina, we learned that the Sheraton New Orleans was housing evacuees and that some bars in the French Quarter opened their doors as gathering places. AFCC leadership made it clear we would be patient and not abandon New Orleans prematurely, even as the most dreadful news crossed the wires. If we could show up, we would. And many of our members contacted us and said they would show up too. We waited, with great patience, until it became clear that having a conference in New Orleans next spring was not going to be possible. Like our conference in New York, this one, too, will take place. It's just going to have to wait a few years.

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Apparently this Yogiism was uttered when the Yankee catcher gave directions to his New Jersey home, noting that following the fork in either direction would lead to his house. The only difference would be the road traveled. Well, in March 2002 we finally held our conference in New York. That conference spawned our New York Chapter and a strong AFCC presence in New York. New Orleans has been good to AFCC. It has given us two of the largest and most successful conferences in our history. Just like the road to Yogi's home and our New York conference, all roads lead AFCC to New Orleans. This time, that road is filled with potholes and detours, and we are going to be delayed for a few years.

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New Orleans has been good to AFCC. It has given us two of the largest and most successful conferences in our history.

MEMBER PROFILE

AFCC Committee Chair, Linda Fieldstone, M.Ed.

Linda Fieldstone, AFCC Board Member from Miami, FL, is Supervisor of Family Court Services of the 11th Judicial Circuit. She is currently serving as AFCC Florida Chapter President. Linda prefers to operate under the radar, and at first she declined the opportunity to be featured in the AFCC News. She finally agreed and explains why at the end of this profile.

When did you first hear about AFCC?

After our fourth child entered pre-school, I became a *Guardian ad Litem* as a reentry to what I hoped would become a crossroad in my professional career. The Miami-Dade *Guardian ad Litem* program is very well developed and my experience with the 19 children I represented was inspirational. There was so much more that I wanted to do and the next step was to become a family mediator. In 1991, at the mediation course, the instructors spoke about an organization that promoted interdisciplinary understanding and collaboration. After seeing what the system was like without professionals working together, I knew that AFCC was something I wanted to support, so I joined.

How did you become involved? For about 10 years I sent in my dues and looked forward to the *Family Court Review*. Then one day I received a letter from a judge (Hugh Starnes) inviting me to a meeting to discuss interdisciplinary collaboration on a statewide basis. I wondered how this judge from Fort Myers got my name in the first place? (I can now thank Judges Judith Kreeger and Sandy Karlan for that.) Entering the room, I had no idea my life was about to change. In a breakout group I volunteered to take the notes, reported later on the outcome of our discussion, and fell into a position to help start the AFCC Florida Chapter.

What was the “hook” that kept you active? That’s an easy answer – the people! In both the chapter and the parent organization I had the feeling of walking into a candy store. If you love chocolate, you may be able to relate! There was always so much to taste, to connect with on a professional level, to exchange, to model. I was in awe just to be included. Plus, once I was involved I never really had the time to think twice about it.

What role does FLAFCC/AFCC play in your life at this point?

Through the relationships I have made along the way, I began to see the Florida Chapter and AFCC like family. My kids and grandkids can tell you that I am pretty nosy, so it’s no surprise that I usually end up in the “secretary role” (taking notes means I get to know everything that’s going on). My husband will tell you that I have saved everything over our 35 years together; so, the more than 6,000 FLAFCC/AFCC messages accumulated on my computer is not surprising. Becoming a temporary historian for the Florida Chapter was natural.

So, why did you do this profile? I first declined... I felt embarrassed. It was actually my kids that framed this as an opportunity. Participating in FLAFCC and AFCC has been so enriching in my life and helpful to my family. I often say it gives me something else to worry about. I also thought there may be someone out there that might read this and think of becoming more involved too. I have found each professional so willing to share, discuss and debate, and each committee providing a source of collaboration and insight. Each opportunity has been both professionally and personally rewarding. There is always something to prompt a thought or light a creative spark, to take back to my teammates at Family Court Services. And there is usually a sense of pride that what I have learned may help those families that I work with every day. Doing this profile gives me a chance to say thanks.



Linda Fieldstone
AFCC Board Member
Miami, Florida

There is always something to prompt a thought or light a creative spark, to take back to my teammates at Family Court Services.

Family Law Education Reform Project Draft for Comment

The Family Law Education Reform Project: Draft for Comment has been completed. The Report is posted on the AFCC Web site at http://www.afccnet.org/about/fam_law_tf.asp and is being sent to deans of nearly 200 law schools. The Report proposes a major curricular reform in family law teaching, and emphasizes three components to make the 21st century curriculum more effectively prepare students to deal with family law as it is actually practiced:

- (1) Teach law students that the contemporary family court is often an interdisciplinary enterprise, where psychologists, social workers, non-lawyer mediators, and others may wield extraordinary power.
- (2) Stress the multiplicity of dispute resolution processes and treat litigation as one alternative, which is useful only in a small minority of cases.
- (3) Emphasize competence and skills, and teach budding lawyers to be reflective and self-aware in the practice of law.

The Family Law Education Reform Project (the "FLER Project") is co-sponsored by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts and the Center for Children, Families and the Law at Hofstra Law School. The Report was based on a series of dialogues between family law academics and practitioners from many disciplines, a FLER Project survey, and research conducted by law students at Hofstra University and Northeastern University. The Co-reporters for the Project are Prof. Mary E. O'Connell (Northeastern University) and J. Herbie DiFonzo (Hofstra University). The FLER Report will be published in the *Family Court Review* in 2006, in a special issue that will include commentary from judges, law professors, and family law practitioners.

Family Court Review Online "Table of Contents" Alerts

Logging onto *Family Court Review* (FCR) online just got better! Members can now register for free "Table of Contents" email alerts. When registered, the alerts are sent to your email address. The alerts will notify members when FCR is posted online and topics that are included in the issue.



Family Court Review Online

AFCC Conference Relocated

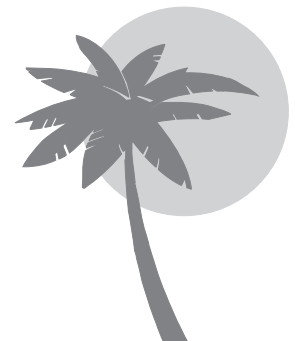
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Westin Innisbrook Resort

In addition to a fabulous conference, the Westin Innisbrook Resort is a wonderful place to kick back and relax and bring the family. Conference attendees can look forward to a pool party and recreational activities utilizing 72 holes of championship golf, tennis and fitness center, bicycle paths, six miles of nature trails, the Loch Ness Monster Pool and Spa (which includes two waterslides, a sandy beach and cascading water falls) and fresh water fishing. Golf and tennis clinics are available for all ages and

the resort features four restaurants on site. *Participants are encouraged to leave their business suits at home and pack plenty of casual clothing, sandals and sunscreen!*

The Westin Innisbrook Resort in Tampa Bay is offering AFCC conference attendees room rates of \$128, *the lowest AFCC Annual Conference hotel rates since 1996!* Suites with kitchenettes are available beginning at \$148 per night. The resort is a 30-minute shuttle ride from the Tampa International Airport.



Atlanta Selected for 2006 Child Custody Evaluation and Parent Education Conferences

Mark your calendars for AFCC's Seventh International Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations, October 19-21, 2006 and AFCC's Seventh International Congress on Parent Education and Access Programs, October 22-23, 2006.

The programs will take place at the Sheraton Midtown Atlanta at Colony Square. The Sheraton is located in Atlanta's vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Midtown neighborhood attached to the Colony Square Mall and just a few blocks from theaters, botanical gardens and incredible dining choices. It is five minutes from exciting Buckhead and downtown, and 12 miles from the airport.

Look for updates in future issues of *AFCC News* and on www.afccnet.org.

Regional Training Conference Reaches New Heights

More than 200 participants joined AFCC in the Rocky Mountains to attend the first Regional Training Conference, *Reaching the Pinnacle of Practice*, September 22-24, 2005, in Breckenridge, Colorado.

The new expanded workshop training format offered participants a choice of tracks for parenting coordinators, mediators, custody evaluators and legal professionals. The parenting coordination track was developed based on the recommendations of the AFCC Parenting Coordination Task Force's new *Guidelines for Parenting Coordination*.

AFCC would like to thank collaborating organizations: Colorado Bar Association Family Law Section, Colorado State Interdisciplinary Committee and Metropolitan Denver Interdisciplinary Committee. Special thanks to local Co-chairs Bob Smith and Christine Coates and to conference volunteers who worked on site, including Jody Brammer-Hoelter, Mac Griffith, Chris Jones, Laurie Mactavish and Michele Tipple. AFCC anticipates the continuation of the new regional training conference format in the fall of 2007.

Audio CDs and CD ROMs in MP3 format from AFCC's Regional Training Conference may be purchased by calling Digital Conference Providers, Inc. at (630) 985-1182, or by emailing customersupport@dcproviders.com. A free audio version of the *Parenting Coordination and Domestic Abuse* workshop is available in the Member Center on the AFCC Conference Audio page of the AFCC Web site at www.afccnet.org. Most conference materials are included in the purchase of CD ROMs, making this a great way to participate in the conference even if you were not in Breckenridge.

New Staff Member



David Vigliotta
AFCC Marketing and
Development Manager

AFCC is pleased to announce the addition of new Marketing and Development Manager, David Vigliotta. After getting married in August, Dave relocated from Boston, Massachusetts to Madison, Wisconsin.

Dave was previously the Communications Manager for the Iacocca Foundation, which funds innovative diabetes research. His credentials and experiences include a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from Plymouth State University (Plymouth, NH), three years as the Marketing Coordinator at Olivio Premium Products in Boston, MA, and internships at NBC Sports and the Knitting Factory record label in New York City.

Originally from Millington, New Jersey, Dave is looking forward to experiencing life in the Midwest. In his free time, he enjoys playing guitar, skiing, golfing and spending time with his dog, Brownie. Dave's wife, Angela, recently obtained her MSW at Simmons College in Boston and works as an outpatient mental health social worker at the VA Hospital in Madison.

Texas Chapter Child's Voice Research Project

by **Lynelle C. Yingling, Ph.D., LMFT**
Rockwall, Texas

At the organizational meeting of the Texas Chapter of AFCC on January 31, 2000, participants listed topics of interest for the Chapter to pursue. Topic number one was domestic violence and topic number two was the child's voice in deciding parenting plans. Dr. Judith Wallerstein's strong plea for the legal system to listen and respond to the needs of the child had sensitized many Texas members. Texas law [Texas Family Code §153.008] provides for a child aged 12 and over to sign an affidavit identifying the child's preference for which parent will establish primary residence. Many Texas AFCC members believe this statute is a destructive way to hear children's voices and would like to see it changed. This concern sparked the interest in the chapter project. But in order to recommend change, an assessment of all options was necessary.

The Texas Chapter has regional groups for different areas of the state. The Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Group chose to focus efforts on understanding options for hearing the voice of the child. One of the five goals in this effort was to research professional and consumer opinions regarding the legal methods currently used to hear the child's voice through development, distribution, and analysis of an opinion poll. The Board of Directors then adopted the plan as a state-wide project. An opinion poll was

designed and distributed in 2002 at four legal conferences and one family therapy conference, as well as at the Texas AFCC Conference. The poll was also completed by parents participating in a family therapy intervention research project in Dallas courts, which interviewed children. This project is described in AFCC's "Exemplary Family Court Programs and Practices: Profiles of Innovative and Accountable Court-Connected Programs" p. 105-6. Funding resources were explored for the opinion poll project; however, funding to complete the project was not available. In 2004, AFCC member Dr. Anne Ellis agreed to run the analysis for a much reduced fee. The report of that data analysis is posted on www.texasafcc.org under Member Center Special Projects.

In September of 2002, our annual conference theme was "A Symposium on Consideration of the Child's Voice." This conference explored various methods of the child's voice being heard, as well as reporting the results of the survey. The following methods were included in the opinion poll:

1. Child testifies in person in a trial;
2. Child provides an out-of-courtroom deposition with the opposing attorney;
3. Child interviews with the judge privately;
4. Child signs a legal affidavit with an attorney who submits to the court;

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Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators Revision

In August 2005, a revised Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators was released. A joint committee comprised of the Association for Conflict Resolution, the American Arbitration Association and the Section of Dispute Resolution of the American Bar Association issued the Standards, which were first prepared in 1994.

The updated Model Standards are designed to serve as fundamental ethical guidelines for persons mediating in all practice contexts. They continue to serve three primary goals: to guide the conduct of mediators; to inform the mediating parties; and to promote public confidence in mediation as a process for resolving disputes.

The revised Model Standards can be found in its entirety at www.mediate.com/articles/model_standards_of_conflict.cfm.

New Orleans Training Programs Relocated to Florida

AFCC has relocated two training programs from New Orleans to the University of South Florida in Tampa. *Advanced Issues for Parenting Coordinators and Practitioners Working with High Conflict Families*, presented by Joan B. Kelly, Ph.D. will take place February 7-8, 2006. *Working with Children of Separation and Divorce*, presented by Mindy F. Mitnick, Ed.M., M.A. will take place February 9-10, 2006.

The brochure will be mailed late November. For further information on the training programs, please view the AFCC Web site at www.afccnet.org and click Training or call (608) 664-3750.

Parenting Coordination Legislation Passes in North Carolina

by **Barbara Bartlett**, Tulsa, OK

On July 27, 2005, North Carolina joined seven other states with new Parenting Coordination laws. Similar to the Oklahoma and Idaho statutes, North Carolina limits the Parent Coordinator's (PC) authority to compliance and implementation. The PC may not modify existing orders, and the court exercises exclusive control of custody, visitation and support. Additionally, the PC may be appointed without consent.

The statute follows AFCC's new Guidelines for Parenting Coordination by assuring that the PC is highly qualified. The PC must have background and training in working with high conflict families of divorce. The PC's training is to continue with involvement in peer review and support. The statute also prevents dual roles of the PC and disallows any other professional service to be rendered by the PC to the same parties.

The most distinctive provision to the North Carolina statute is a mandatory meeting for the involved parties with the judge, attorneys, and the PC. The parties are clearly informed about the PC's role, authority, and responsibilities. Information available to the PC, rules of communication and fee payment are also determined.

The North Carolina PC statute can be found at www.ncga.state.nc.us by following the "Bills Signed by the Governor" link and clicking House Bill link "H1221."

AFCC Task Force Looks at Guidelines for Educators Working with Separating and Divorcing Families

AFCC President Hugh Starnes has appointed a Task Force to assist educators with the challenges of working with children experiencing separation and divorce. AFCC anticipates publishing *An Educator's Guide to Working with Separating and Divorcing Families* during the spring or summer of 2007.

The Task Force, chaired by Barbara Steinberg, Ph.D, will examine a broad range of topics, from protocols for teacher-parent conferences and sending home information, to working with custody evaluators to provide collateral information. The Task Force will also explore state statutes governing the interactions of teachers, principals, counselors and school administrators with family members experiencing separation and divorce.

Task Force members include: Nancy Olesen (Reporter), Dick Altman, Jake Jacobson, Naomi Kauffman, Emile Kruzick, Shelley Propper, Marsha Pruett, Gary Rick, and Kay Vennie.

Look for updates in future issues of *AFCC News*.

Message from the Executive Director

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But the path we have chosen, while leading through Florida, will ultimately get us to our desired destination.

"You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there."

We *will* get there eventually. New Orleans, New York, or any other goals that we set. We understand that the impact on AFCC of events such as 9/11 and Katrina, are minor blips on the radar when compared to those who lost homes, livelihoods and loved ones. Yet our work goes on and AFCC members understand the importance of that work. And as AFCC and its members contribute to the

relief efforts, we also focus on what we can do to improve the lives of children and families in conflict, because that *is* what we do, we know where we are going and we will get there.

I don't think anyone would call me an optimist, but I am persistent. Or stubborn. Pig-headed, maybe? But I know that we'll be back, because AFCC is resilient, our leadership and members are loyal, we have more to do and we must come together to accomplish our goals. And as we follow the rebuilding of New Orleans, I anxiously await the day that it becomes the subject of the final Yogiism of this column:

"Nobody goes there anymore because it's too crowded."

No matter how crowded, AFCC will be there, and we look forward to having you join us.

Texas Chapter Research Project

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5. Child expresses views to the Amicus Attorney/Attorney *Ad Litem* who testifies in court on the child's behalf;
6. Child interviews with a mental health custody evaluator who testifies in court on what is in the best interest of the child;
7. Child interviews privately with a family counselor who then consults with the parents and may also interview the child with the parents, if helpful;
8. Child participates in mediation, either privately with the mediator or with parents of both.

A total of 530 participants rated the eight methods from 1-10, with 10 being healthy and 1 being emotionally damaging. The overall method rated as healthiest for children was #7: interview by a family counselor (7.4 rating). The method rated as most emotionally damaging was #1: testify in a trial hearing (2.2 rating). The use of attorney representation (#5) and mental health evaluation (#6) were both rated above 7.0. Depositions were rated at 3.1. Surprisingly, the child's affidavit (#4) was rated at 4.9 overall, though parents rated it at 4.2 compared with legal professionals rating of 5.4. A summary of ratings is presented in Table 1.

Influenced by the Texas AFCC conferences to bring public awareness to the importance of listening to the

child's voice, changes are occurring to improve the legal system's ability to serve conflicted reorganizing families. During the spring 2005 legislative session, two very significant changes occurred:

1. Legislation was passed that puts the focus on parenting plans and authorizes the use of mental health parenting coordinators to facilitate implementation of parenting plans.
2. A resolution was passed requesting the Legislative Council to revise the Family Code by updating the terminology to be consistent with family dynamics research regarding healthy co-parenting.

Both legislative actions are opening the door wider to listen to the voice of the child. Requiring and defining parenting plans at the temporary hearing level will frame the legal experience as a vehicle to hear and respond to the needs of the child. The parenting coordinator in Texas is defined as a mental health professional who facilitates co-parenting, with "parenting" being the operative word. Opportunities to use the mental health professional to help the child speak are enhanced by this new resource. This change is consistent with results of the opinion poll. Revising the entire Family Code to change the law language in ways that support co-parenting can bring about a true second order change in the system. And perhaps it all began with hearing the voice of a child say, "I want my Mommy and Daddy to stop fighting."

Table 1. Mean Ratings [1-10 with 10 highest] of Legal Methods of Hearing the Child's Voice.

Method of Hearing Child's Voice:	Legal Professionals [n = 253]	Mental Health Professionals [n = 204]	High-Conflict Divorcing Parents [n = 26]	Other [n = 47]	Overall [n = 530]
1. Testify	2.3	2.2	2.8	1.9	2.2
2. Deposition	3.0	3.0	4.4	2.7	3.1
3. Judicial Interview	6.9	6.8	5.8	7.5	6.7
4. Affidavit	5.4	4.5	4.3	5.1	4.9
5. Attorney Representation	7.6	7.0	5.6	7.2	7.2
6. Custody Evaluation	7.0	7.5	5.9	6.8	7.1
7. Family Counselor Interview	6.7	8.1	8.0	8.0	7.4
8. Mediation	4.4	6.2	5.8	5.8	5.3

AFCC Chapter News

California Chapter Update

The AFCC California Chapter is excited to announce the launch of their new Web site, www.afcc-ca.org. The new Web site features a more user friendly layout than the original site and colleagues can find the latest chapter news.

California is also excited about its next chapter conference, *21st Century Children, 21st Century Needs, New Options for a New Age*, which will take place at the Omni Hotel in Los Angeles on February 10-12, 2006. For more information on the conference please go to the Web site or contact AFCCSCA06@aol.com.

Previous conference organizers of the CA Chapter are developing a planning guide for future conferences. California currently alternates its conferences between the northern and southern part of the state, making it a challenge to maintain the continuity of the conferences. The manual, which will offer help for future organizers, is estimated to be available in the spring or summer of 2006.

In addition to offering the new manual, the CA Chapter is also working on organizing its historical records. Projects include obtaining information about tenures of board members, the procedural aspects of the board and making other organizational improvements.

Arizona Chapter Update

In September the Arizona Chapter of AFCC co-sponsored a full-day seminar with the Family Law Section of the State Bar of Arizona in Flagstaff. The AZ Chapter also presented its first mid-year conference, consisting of a full-day parenting coordination training on October 14, 2005, in Phoenix.

The Chapter's annual conference is set for February 3-5, 2006, in Sedona and will feature outstanding presenters and speakers, including Dr. Leslie Drozd, Dr. William Austin and Dr. Paul Amato.

New York Chapter Update

The AFCC New York Chapter is holding its Forth Annual Conference, *Easing the Pain, Containing the Conflict in Divorce: New Research and Approaches*, on December 2, 2005, in New York City. The NY Chapter is pleased to have nationally renowned divorce researcher, mediator, and author, Robert Emery, Ph.D., as keynote speaker. Dr. Emery will present findings from his latest research on child adjustment to divorce, long term outcomes of mediation and the grieving process in relationship break-up. His presentation will be discussed by an interdisciplinary panel of distinguished experts focusing on how research findings can be integrated into practice.

In the afternoon, the conference will offer workshops on parenting coordination, mediation and domestic violence, interdisciplinary teams in collaborative practice, and parental mental disorders in child custody. For additional information, go to the AFCC NY Chapter Web site at www.afccny.org.

ACR Awards AFCC Members

Nina Meierding, J.D., AFCC member from Ventura, California, was awarded the John Haynes Distinguished Mediator Award at the annual conference of the Association for Conflict Resolution, October 1, 2005, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Nina is a frequent and popular presenter at AFCC conferences and is a former president of the Academy of Family Mediators.

John Helie of Berkeley, California, co-founder of the popular Web site www.mediate.com, was awarded the Mary Parker Follet Award for his creativity and innovation in introducing technology to the field of conflict resolution. John has been a presenter and exhibitor at numerous AFCC conferences.

AFCC Members Write On

AFCC Board member Robert M. Smith, J.D. is the editor of *The Role of Child and Family Investigator and the Child's Legal Representative in Colorado*, a new book from the Colorado Bar Association.

Of 27 contributing authors to the 25-chapter book, over half are AFCC members. AFCC members who contributed to the book are:

- Kevin Albert, Psy.D.
- William G. Austin, Ph.D.
- Robert Backerman, L.C.S.W.
- Glynnna Baker, M.A., J.D.
- Edward Budd, Ph.D.
- Christine Coates, J.D.
- Susan L. Elkins, Esq.
- Bill J. Fyfe, Ed.D.
- Elizabeth Holman, M.A.
- E. Robert LaCrosse, Ph.D.
- Andrew Loizeaux, Psy.D.
- Wendell Osorno, Ph.D.
- Robert M. Smith, J.D.
- Theresa Spahn, Esq.
- Shirley Thomas, Ph.D.
- Sue Waters, M.A., L.P.C.

Have you written a book? We want to let others know about new books in the field by AFCC members. Please send information to David Vigliotta, Editor, *AFCC News*, at dvigliotta@afccnet.org.

Reminder: New Office Location

Our new address as of June 30, 2005:

AFCC
6525 Grand Teton Plaza
Madison, WI 53719-1085

Our phone and fax numbers have remained the same:

Phone: (608) 664-3750
Fax: (608) 644-3751

AFCC Distinguished Service Award Named

The AFCC Board of Directors voted to name the association's Distinguished Service Award for Justice John E. VanDuzer (ret.), AFCC's first Canadian President and longtime active member.

Hon. John VanDuzer served as AFCC President in 1983 and retired from the bench in 1991; however, he and his wife Joan continue to regularly attend AFCC Annual Conferences. The VanDuzers have been generous contributors to the AFCC Resource Development Fund and they sponsored the first AFCC Innovation Mini-Grant last year. The John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award will be presented at AFCC's 43rd Annual Conference, May 31-June 3, 2006, at the Westin Innisbrook Resort in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Win Free Membership! Keep Your Email Address Up-to-Date

If AFCC has your email address you are eligible for a free AFCC membership. During the first week of January 2006, a drawing will be held among all members with emails in our membership database. The winner will receive their next year's membership free!

Please logon to the Member Directory on the AFCC Web site to double check if your email is listed and accurate. To update or provide a new email address, please send an email to Dawn Holmes at dholmes@afccnet.org by January 1, 2006.

If your email does not need to be updated you do not need to do anything. All members that have previously provided their email addresses will be included in the drawing.

AFCC will not distribute or publicize your email address beyond listing it on the AFCC Membership Directory, available only to AFCC members. The winner will be announced in the next issue of *AFCC News* and notified directly, by email, of course!

AFCC Award Nominations

AFCC is seeking nominees for the following awards, to be presented at our 43rd Annual Conference in Tampa Bay, Florida, May 31 – June 3, 2006.

John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award: Recognizes outstanding contributions and/or achievements by members of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

Stanley Cohen Research Award: Recognizes outstanding research and/or research achievements in the field of family and divorce.

Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award: Recognizes innovation in court-connected or court-related programs.

If you would like to nominate someone for one of the above awards, email your nomination to David Vigliotta at dvigliotta@afccnet.org. Please specify the award for which you are submitting a nomination. Include your name, address and telephone number along with the same information for the nominee. Please include a brief statement of no more than 600 words as to why you believe the nominee is a good candidate for the award. The nomination deadline is March 15, 2006. For further information on award criteria and nominating instructions, please visit www.afccnet.org.

Electronic submissions in Word or WordPerfect are preferred; however, you may also send a hard copy of your nomination to:

AFCC
Awards Committee
6525 Grand Teton Plaza
Madison, WI 53719-1085
Fax: (608) 664-3751

AFCC Board of Directors Nominations

The AFCC Nominating Committee is seeking the names of individuals to serve on the AFCC Board of Directors. Recommended individuals must be AFCC members and have an interest and knowledge of AFCC and its work.

Nominations must be received by January 15, 2006, in order to be considered by the committee prior to election at the 43rd AFCC Annual Conference, May 31 – June 3, 2006, in Tampa Bay.

If you or another member you know is interested in serving on the AFCC Board of Directors, please forward name, contact information and a resume to:

Leslye Hunter
Chair, Nominating Committee
c/o AFCC
6525 Grand Teton Plaza
Madison, WI 53719-1085
Fax: (608) 664-3751
Email: afcc@afccnet.org

New AFCC Publications Available!



Mediation: Essays from the Family Court Review

A selection of ten articles covering topics from the field of mediation.
Price: \$17 for AFCC members, \$20 for non-members.

Other new Essays from the Family Court Review Include:

- **Overnights and Young Children:** This collection of essays previously published in the *Family Court Review* examines the long-standing debate on overnights and young children in separating and divorcing families. Price: \$17 for AFCC members, \$20 for non-members.
- **Domestic Violence:** This volume features topics that include domestic violence and child protection, partner violence and risk assessment in child custody evaluations, gay and lesbian victims of violence, and teen dating violence. Price: \$17 for AFCC members, \$20 for non-members,

AFCC Members Receive a 15% Discount on Publications and Quantity Discounts on Pamphlets

AFCC's pamphlets are a great way to help parents struggling with separation and divorce. Written in easy to understand language, these pamphlets are helpful and effective sources of information and are the perfect supplement to your professional services. With a wide variety of topics covered, there is a pamphlet for just about every situation.

CLOSEOUT SALE ON ALL VIDEOS – 50% OFF!!!

AFCC will no longer be issuing its VHS collection, which includes the popular **John Haynes** mediation series. A great educational tool, each video in the Haynes collection comes with a training guide and transcript.

Other videos include:

- **The Purple Family:** Illustrates the story of a family as it struggles with separation and divorce.
- **It's Still Your Choice:** Provides an introduction to separation and divorce and demonstrates how mediation can help family members resolve disputes.

To order publications or videos, please complete the order form on page 14 or visit us online at www.afccnet.org and click on Shopping Center.



Improving Parent-Child Relationships

with Carol Lynn Morse, PhD

A complete parenting education curriculum for individual, court & agency use. This curriculum includes 10 hours of video in 20 half-hour episodes, plus a comprehensive viewer's guide.

Parents learn:

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ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

PAMPHLETS Pamphlet orders over 1,000: \$0.20 each

Quantity		Price	Total
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_____	When Parents Relocate-Moving Away and Long-Distance Parenting	\$0.25	_____
_____	Information for Never-Married Parents – English Version	\$0.25	_____
_____	Information for Never-Married Parents – Spanish Version	\$0.25	_____
_____	A Guide For Joint Custody and Shared Parenting	\$0.25	_____
_____	Making Your Parenting Plan Work	\$0.25	_____
_____	Parents Are Forever	\$0.25	_____
_____	Is Mediation For Us?	\$0.25	_____
_____	Preparing For Your Custody Evaluation	\$0.25	_____
_____	FAQs Parents Ask About Separation, Divorce and Child Custody	\$0.25	_____
_____	FAQs Separating and Divorcing Parents Ask About Legal Matters	\$0.25	_____
_____	A Guide for Stepparents	\$0.25	_____
	Total		_____

PUBLICATIONS AFCC Members receive a 15% discount

Quantity		Price	Member Price	Total
_____	Domestic Violence and Empowerment in Custody & Visitation Cases	\$12.00	\$10.20	_____
_____	Domestic Violence Visitation Risk Assessment	\$10.00	\$ 8.50	_____
_____	Exemplary Family Court Programs and Practices	\$25.00	\$21.25	_____
_____	Parenting Coordination: Implementation Issues	\$16.00	\$13.60	_____
_____	Planning for Shared Parenting: A Guide for Parents Living Apart	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.55	_____
_____	Domestic Violence – Essays from the <i>Family Court Review</i>	\$20.00	\$17.00	_____
_____	Overnights and Young Children – Essays from the <i>Family Court Review</i>	\$20.00	\$17.00	_____
_____	Mediation – Essays from the <i>Family Court Review</i>	\$20.00	\$17.00	_____
	Total		_____	_____

VIDEOTAPES CLOSEOUT SALE! – 50% DISCOUNT

Quantity	Price	Member Price	Non-member Closeout	Member Closeout	Total
_____	The Purple Family	\$135.00	\$114.75	\$67.50	\$57.37
_____	It's Still Your Choice	\$135.00	\$114.75	\$67.50	\$57.37
_____	You're Still Mum & Dad (sold out)	\$135.00	\$114.75	\$67.50	\$57.37
	John Haynes Mediation Series:				
_____	Michael and Debbie: When She's Not Around	\$160.00	\$136.00	\$80.00	\$68.00
_____	Neville and Cheryl: The Odd Child Out	\$160.00	\$136.00	\$80.00	\$68.00
_____	Norman and Terri: Who Makes the Decisions Here?	\$160.00	\$136.00	\$80.00	\$68.00
_____	Pat and Tom: Moving 100 Miles Apart	\$160.00	\$136.00	\$80.00	\$68.00
_____	Boyd and Sheryl: A Family Recovering From Alcohol	\$160.00	\$136.00	\$80.00	\$68.00
_____	Full Haynes Series	\$700.00	\$595.00	\$350.00	\$297.50
	Total				_____

Further information on all the resources above can be found online at www.afccnet.org or by calling (608) 664-3750.

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Telephone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Please Mail, Email, or Fax your order to: AFCC, 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719; Email afcc3@afccnet.org; Fax (608) 664-3751

AFCC 43RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Tampa Bay

May 31-June 3, 2006
Westin Innisbrook Resort

Relocated from New Orleans

**Juggling Conflicts,
Crises and Clients
in Family Court**



Room rates starting at \$128!
The lowest AFCC Annual Conference hotel rate since 1996!

Join AFCC and explore how to successfully juggle our significant professional challenges while productively managing their impact on our lives.

The Westin Innisbrook Resort is a spectacular getaway for the entire family!

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- *Four championship golf courses and 11 tennis courts; golf and tennis clinics are available for all ages.*
- *Nestled in 900 wooded acres, the resort offers jogging and biking trails and 70 acres of lakes.*
- *Six pools, including waterslides and a poolside grill, a fitness center, and children's recreation center.*

Participants are encouraged to leave their business suits at home and pack plenty of casual clothing, sandals and sunscreen!

For further information please view the AFCC Web site at www.afccnet.org or call (608) 664-3750.



Upcoming AFCC Conferences and Trainings

Parenting Coordination: Working with High Conflict Families

Presenter: *Christine A. Coates, M.Ed., J.D.*

December 5-6, 2005
University of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland
www.afccnet.org

Working with Children of Separation and Divorce: Fostering Healthy Family Transitions

Presenter: *Risa J. Garon, LCSW-C, BCD, CFLE*

December 7-8, 2005
University of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland
www.afccnet.org

Arizona AFCC Annual Chapter Conference

February 3-5, 2006
Sedona, Arizona
www.azafcc.org

***Advanced Issues for Parenting Coordinators and Practitioners Working with High Conflict Families: Alienated Children, Domestic Violence and Case Management**

Presenter: *Joan B. Kelly, Ph.D.*

February 7-8, 2006
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida
www.afccnet.org

***Working with Children of Separation and Divorce: What They Know, What They Want, What You Can Do**

Presenter: *Mindy F. Mitnick, Ed.M., M.A.*

February 9-10, 2006
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida
www.afccnet.org

California AFCC Annual Chapter Conference

February 10-12, 2006
Los Angeles, California
www.afcc-cal.org

***AFCC 43rd Annual Conference**

May 31-June 3, 2006
Westin Innisbrook Resort
Tampa Bay, Florida
www.afccnet.org

AFCC Seventh International Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

October 19-21, 2006
Sheraton Midtown Atlanta
Atlanta, Georgia

AFCC Seventh International Congress on Parent Education and Access Programs

October 22-23, 2006
Sheraton Midtown Atlanta
Atlanta, Georgia

AFCC 44th Annual Conference

May 30-June 2, 2007
Capital Hilton
Washington, D.C.

AFCC 45th Annual Conference

May 28-31, 2008
Westin Bayshore Resort
Vancouver, BC, Canada

*Relocated from New Orleans

