



# AFCC eNEWS

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER  
VOL. 6 NO. 3  
MARCH 2011

## AFCC 48th Annual Conference

*Research, Policy and Practice in Family Courts:  
What's Gender Got to do with it?*

June 1–4, 2011

Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek Resort  
Orlando, Florida

[Click here to register for the conference](#)

### Hotel Room Block to be Released April 29

The AFCC room block is **80% sold** and the non-reserved rooms in the AFCC room block will be released for general sale on Friday, April 29, 2011. **Reserve your hotel room now** as rooms are subject to availability and the conference room block has sold out early in the past. The Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek Resort is offering special rates of \$160/night for single or \$180/night for double occupancy. The adjacent Waldorf Astoria Orlando is offering special rates of \$210/night single or \$230/night double occupancy.

[Click here for hotel reservations](#)

### Silent Auction

This year marks AFCC's 13th Silent Auction held in conjunction with the annual conference. The auction will be held Friday, June 3, just before the annual banquet. Funds raised at the auction help support AFCC special projects that benefit not only members, but also the children and families they serve. You can participate by bidding and buying or by donating a tax-deductible (in the US) item to the silent auction.

[Click here to read more about special projects](#)

[Click here for the donation form](#)

### Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mary Ellen Frazier of Naples, Florida, winner of the drawing for a complimentary conference registration. Her registration was chosen from those received by the February 18, 2011, drawing.

### 36 Hours in Orlando, Florida

*By Shaila Dewan, courtesy of the New York Times*

Beyond the theme parks, gator farms and citrus groves of Orlando, there are plentiful options that include museums, picturesque lakes, dive bars and gastro-pubs.

[Read more](#)

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES



### AFCC 48th Annual Conference

*Research, Policy and Practice in Family Courts: What's Gender Got to do with it?*

June 1–4, 2011

Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek Resort  
Orlando, Florida

[Conference program](#)

[Register](#)

[Book a hotel room](#)

[Call for Posters](#)

### Platinum Sponsor:



### AFCC/AAML Conference

*Advanced Issues in Child Custody: Evaluation,*

## Disney Deals

Disney is offering AFCC conference attendees options to save on admission to Disney Theme Parks; however, tickets must be purchased in advance and will not be available at the WDW theme park gates. One of the offers provides the opportunity to enjoy admission to any one of the Disney Theme Parks after 4pm for just \$39. The \$39 After 4pm promotion is available May 15 thru June 4. When you click to purchase tickets you will be asked to enter the dates of your stay; prices will be adjusted according to the dates you choose. A fabulous way to relax with friends and colleagues; you'll have plenty of time to take in a little Disney magic: the Magic Kingdom is open until 11pm, Epcot until 9pm, and the Animal Kingdom until 8pm!

[Click here for more information](#)

## Call for Posters Proposal Deadline is April 1

For the first time, AFCC will accept posters to be exhibited during the conference. Poster presenters will have the opportunity to discuss their work with participants between conference sessions. It will also be a wonderful opportunity to meet with, network with, and get your ideas circulating among professionals from the many disciplines represented in AFCC. Students, practitioners and academics are specifically invited to propose posters concerning innovative initiatives, new programs, legal or policy changes and/or new research. Email poster proposals to [adminassist2@carterpsych.com](mailto:adminassist2@carterpsych.com). Proposals must be received by April 1, 2011.

[Click here to view the call for posters](#)

## APA PC Guidelines

The American Psychological Association has just published *Guidelines for the Practice of Parenting Coordination* completed by the members of the APA Task Force for the Development of Parenting Coordination Guidelines: Helen T. Brantley (Chair), Robin M. Deutsch, Giselle Hass, Joan B. Kelly, Marsha Kline Pruett, and Arnold L. Stolberg (all AFCC members). According to Helen Brantley, the primary differences between these guidelines and the 2005 AFCC Guidelines are the more recent knowledge and development of the field of parenting coordination and that the APA Guidelines are written especially for psychologists, by psychologists.

[Read the guidelines](#)

## ASK THE EXPERTS

### Ten Points of Consideration for Family Law Professionals about the Voice of the Child

*By Lorraine Martin, MSW, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*

Lorraine Martin recently retired after 17 years as Clinical Coordinator for the Office of the Children's Lawyer, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She has presented and written about the voice of the child in both the U.S. and Canada.

[Read Ten Points of Consideration](#)

## AFCC Trainings in Chicago, June 20–23

AFCC, in collaboration with Loyola University Chicago School of Law's Civitas ChildLaw Center, is pleased to offer two new training programs. Each program is eligible for 12 hours of

*Litigation and Settlement*  
September 15–17, 2011  
Westin Philadelphia  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
[More information](#)

### AFCC Regional Training Conference

October 27–29, 2011  
Hyatt Regency Indianapolis  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
[Call for Presenters](#)  
[Submit a proposal](#)

### AFCC 49th Annual Conference

June 6–9, 2012  
Hyatt Regency Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois

### AFCC 50th Annual Conference

May 29–June 1, 2013  
J.W. Marriott Los Angeles at L.A. Live  
Los Angeles, California

## AFCC CHAPTER CONFERENCES

### New York Chapter Upstate Conference

*Tempering the Impact of Divorce on Children: The Paradox of Values, Ethics and Practices in Interdisciplinary Work with Broken Families*  
April 1–2, 2011  
Genesee Grande Hotel  
Syracuse, New York  
[More information](#)

### Massachusetts Chapter Conference

*Parental Alienation: Not Just Another Custody Case*  
April 15, 2011  
Regis College, Wellesley Street  
Weston, Massachusetts  
[More information](#)

### Washington Chapter Conference

*Divorce Minefields and Milestones: Interdisciplinary Resources and Roads to Resolution*  
October 21, 2011

continuing education.

*Keeping Parenting Coordinating Cases on Track: Advanced Concepts and Case Management Strategies*, presented by Matthew J. Sullivan, Ph.D., June 20–21, 2011, in Chicago, Illinois.

*Children and Divorce: The Voice of the Child and Interventions when Children Resist Parental Contact*, presented by Barbara Jo Fidler, Ph.D., AccFM, June 22–23, 2011, in Chicago, Illinois.

[Click here for the training brochures and online registration](#)

## Families Matter Symposium

The University of Baltimore School of Law Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC) and the American Bar Association Section of Family Law brought together an interdisciplinary group of experts in various fields involved with family law to brainstorm about reducing the harmful effects of the legal process in family law cases. Barbara Babb, Associate Professor of Law, Director of CFCC and AFCC member, is one of the many experts who wrote an article in the current *Unified Family Court Connection* reflecting on the Symposium. Other AFCC members involved include Mindy Mitnick, Philip Stahl, Diane Nunn, Charlene Depner, Judge Hugh Starnes, Professor Andrew Shepard, and AFCC Executive Director Peter Salem.

[Read Unified Family Court Connection](#)

## FEATURED BLOGS

**Stephen Page**, a family lawyer from Brisbane, Australia, writes two blogs: the [Australian Divorce Blog](#) and the [Australian Gay and Lesbian Law Blog](#).

**Bill Eddy**, an attorney, therapist and mediator from Scottsdale, Arizona, writes the [High Conflict Institute Blog](#).

If you are an AFCC member who blogs, please send a link to Leslye Hunter at [lhunter@afccnet.org](mailto:lhunter@afccnet.org) for possible future inclusion. Opinions and views expressed in these blogs are those of the blogger, and do not necessarily represent those of AFCC.

## Rand v. Board of Psychology

A California appellate court is considering a challenge to the jurisdiction of the state's Board of Psychology to regulate the work of family-court-appointed psychologists, and to discipline court appointees. In *Rand v. Board of Psychology*, a psychologist appointed as a child custody special master (parenting coordinator) asserts that he is not subject to discipline as a psychologist for his work as a court-appointed dispute resolution professional.

California's Association of Certified Family Law Specialists has submitted an amicus curiae brief (written by AFCC member Leslie Ellen Shear) to educate the appellate court about parenting coordination and the implications of any holdings in *Rand* for other court-appointed professionals such as mediators, minors' counsel and child custody evaluators. The brief does not take a position as to the outcome, but provides background information and addresses the difficulties arising from hybrid roles and multiple, potentially inconsistent regulation.

Holiday Inn, SeaTac  
International Airport Seattle,  
Washington

[More information](#)

## AFCC TRAININGS

**Keeping Parenting Coordinating Cases on Track: Advanced Concepts and Case Management Strategies**

*Matthew J. Sullivan, Ph.D.*

June 20–21, 2011

Chicago, Illinois

[Training brochure](#)

[Online registration](#)

**Children and Divorce: The Voice of the Child and Interventions When Children Resist Parental Contact**

*Barbara Jo Fidler, Ph.D.,*

*AccFM*

June 22–23, 2011

Chicago, Illinois

[Training brochure](#)

[Online registration](#)

## EARN AFCC DOLLARS

Each time a colleague joins AFCC as a first-time member and names you as the referral source on the membership application, you earn ten AFCC dollars to spend on conference registrations, membership renewals and publications. For more information, please contact AFCC at [afcc@afccnet.org](mailto:afcc@afccnet.org) or (608) 664-3750.

## DONATE TO THE AFCC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Scholarship Fund provides scholarships to cover the cost of conference registration and a limited number of travel stipends.

[Donate today!](#)

## JOIN AFCC

## Call for Presenters AFCC Regional Training Conference

***Working with High Conflict and Violent Families:  
A Race with No Winners***  
October 27–29, 2011  
Hyatt Regency Indianapolis  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Proposals for three-hour training workshops are being accepted. This conference will have individual tracks for judges, mediators, legal professionals, custody evaluators and parenting coordinators. The deadline to submit proposals is May 16, 2011.

[Call for Presenters](#)

[Submit a proposal](#)

## AFCC Member News

**Gary Debele**, President of the AFCC Minnesota Chapter from Minneapolis, Minnesota, has been awarded “Lawyer of the Year” by the *Minnesota Lawyer* legal newspaper for his contributions to family law, not the least of which was helping to establish the Minnesota Chapter of AFCC.

**Jonathan Fogel**, AFCC member and family law attorney from Minneapolis, Minnesota, blogs on the *Huffington Post* and recently showcased the [Our Family Wizard](#) website, run by AFCC members **Jai Kissoon**, OFW President and Chief Executive Officer and **Bryan Altman**, OFW Chief Operating Officer, also from Minneapolis, as one of the top five most recent innovations in family law. The Our Family Wizard website is a web-based tool that allows parents in two households to communicate in a non-reactive manner.

**Deborah Moskovitch**, AFCC member from Toronto, Ontario, Canada, also blogs on the *Huffington Post* and has launched an online talk show called *The Smart Divorce* on [Divorce Source Radio](#). She has interviewed many AFCC members including Robert Simon, Justice Harvey Brownstone and Amity Buxton.

## Advanced Issues in Child Custody: Evaluation, Litigation and Settlement

September 15–17, 2011

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AFCC and AAML present an exceptional training opportunity sponsored by two premier family law organizations.

[More information](#)

## Earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Japan

AFCC has 15 members who live in New Zealand, two of them in Christchurch, and had a U.S. member visiting Christchurch as a Fulbright Fellow when the most recent earthquake hit. Peter Boshier, Principal Family Court Judge in Wellington, New Zealand, who also serves on the AFCC Board of Directors, wrote his personal impressions of conditions in his country.

[Read Judge Boshier’s note](#)

Are you a member?

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AFCC offers member benefits that promote excellence in practice.

[View member benefits](#)

## ABOUT AFCC eNEWS

*AFCC eNEWS* is a monthly e-newsletter published by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC). *AFCC eNEWS* provides professionals with time sensitive and up-to-date topics including practice tips, research innovations and international news. Readers are welcome to forward this e-newsletter to interested colleagues.

[AFCC eNEWS archive](#)

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AFCC welcomes your comments, questions or feedback. Please email the editor by [clicking here](#).

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AFCC will never share, distribute or publicize your email address.

earthquake, tsunami and the nuclear crisis, our heartfelt sympathies are with AFCC's members in Japan, their colleagues, families and the country.



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Professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict



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This year marks AFCC's 13th Annual Silent Auction held in conjunction with the 48th Annual Conference. The auction will be held Friday, June 3, just before the annual banquet. In addition to the chance to shop and support AFCC, you will also have to opportunity to mingle with AFCC leadership, conference presenters and colleagues in a relaxed, informal setting. Funds raised at the auction help support AFCC Special Projects that benefit not only association members, but also the children and families they serve. You can participate by bidding and buying, or by donating an item to the silent auction. You do not have to be present to donate a tax-deductible (in the US) item. Items in the \$50-500 range generally produce the greatest return, as do small easy-to-pack items such as jewelry and fashion accessories, electronics and collectibles. We hope you will make plans to join us for this fun event.

AFCC is almost completely self-sufficient financially; nearly all of the association's funding comes from membership dues and program revenues. A fraction of the overall budget comes from project specific grants, but AFCC is not *supported* by government grants or private foundations. Another small, but very important source of funding for the organization is the AFCC Silent Auction. AFCC Special Projects are often referred to in silent auction materials. Have you ever wondered what some of these special projects are?

One of the ongoing projects these funds go toward is what is often referred to as the Domestic Violence and Family Courts Project or also known by its official title, the Battered Women's Justice Project/Praxis Project on Child Custody and Domestic Violence. Members Nancy Ver Steegh, Robin Deutsch, Jan Johnston and AFCC Executive Director Peter Salem represent AFCC on the National Workgroup along with representatives from NCJFCJ and others. The current focus of the project is on the child custody evaluation process, and the role of AFCC is to develop guidelines for conducting child custody evaluations in situations where domestic violence is a factor.

Silent auction funds also help to cover some of the nominal, but yet very necessary expenses associated with the AFCC Task Forces. Recently, the Brief-Focused Assessment Task Force and Court-Involved Therapist Task Force have been busy putting together guidelines. These two new sets of guidelines are available on the AFCC website in the Resource Center under Standards of Practice. Also, look for forthcoming white papers from both task forces. The AFCC Child Custody Consultation Task Force has been working diligently on a discussion paper about this relatively new field, as well, and will meet at the Annual Conference in Orlando, where they hope to finalize the paper.

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There has been a huge outpouring of international interest and support in relation to our Christchurch earthquake. I am enormously grateful for that.

I was working in a Judges' conference here in Wellington, our capital city, on Tuesday 22 February and learnt, very shortly after the earthquake occurred at 12:51 pm, that there had been widespread destruction.

Christchurch is our second biggest city and is amongst other things, a tourist mecca for our South Island. It is characterised by beautiful stone buildings and so, has represented our heritage side. Our Family Court is housed in a beautiful grey stone complex.

The jolt was severe and two buildings in particular, simply collapsed trapping and killing many inside them. One was a language school and so the international community has felt this disaster acutely.

Authorities put up a cordon around the Central Business District which still operates. This has meant that obtaining access to our court building has been impossible. For many people in Christchurch their homes have been damaged and they find themselves still without sewerage, water or electricity. A number of our judges are in this position. How difficult life must be.

But through the tragedy are some wonderful things, one of which is the presence of international search and rescue teams from, for instance, the United States, Canada, England, Japan, China and Australia. And in addition, Australia sent over 300 police officers.

We face a \$15 billion bill to rebuild the city and we will mourn the loss of approximately 200 people, a number of whom were visitors from elsewhere in the world.

I have received many messages of support and an outpouring of emotion. Thank you for that. It means so much and I have shared it with our Family Court Judges.

Peter Boshier



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### ASK THE EXPERTS

#### Ten Points of Consideration for Family Law Professionals about the Voice of the Child

*By Lorraine Martin, MSW, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*

**1. The "voice of the child" has come to be synonymous with the views and preferences of the child**

It should have a larger meaning and should include the child's experience of the parental separation and its aftermath.

**2. When seeking the voice of the child, we need to ask whose needs we are meeting**

Are they the court's or the needs of the litigation process? Shouldn't the needs of the child be considered first?

**3. The protection vs. rights debate**

Some practitioners believe children need to be protected from the parents' conflict and the adversarial nature of litigation and should not be drawn into the fray. Others believe, just as strongly, that children have the right to have their voice heard and cite the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child which has codified this right. In fact, most jurisdictions have included this right in one form or another.

**4. There is no consensus on whether there is quality research to support children's participation in family law proceedings**

Some researchers think there is, others do not.

**5. Memory can be inaccurate, views of children can be influenced by many factors**

Therefore, a single interview at one point in time is likely to not be reliable.

**6. Context is everything**

The complexity of the child's family situation, history, attachments, alignments and the nature of the interviewing dynamics all contribute to a child's voice.

**7. How should the voice of the child be sought?**

Through judicial interview, the lawyer for the child, child testimony, the custody evaluator, the mediator? How, rather than if, seems to be the status of the current debate.

**8. What should be done with the information once it has been gathered?**

Is it to be entered as evidence? Can it be entered as hear-say? If a child testifies, should a parent be able to cross-examine?

**9. Does the level of conflict between the parents and/or a child's refusal to see a parent influence the weight to be given to the child's voice?**

A good assessment should be conducted to determine the extent to which (if) the parents' conflict is influencing the child's voice. If the child is resisting or refusing contact, the reasons for the strained relationship need to be explored.

**10. Interview Skills are critical when interviewing children of all ages, but particularly young children**

Specifically, it is very important that the interviewer avoid any display of attitudes or beliefs about the child or the event(s) in question and is accepting of any type of response the child provides, regardless of whether the response conforms to the beliefs or opinions of the interviewer.

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