



2008 NEWSLETTER

Issue #1

Special Points of Interest:

45th Annual Conference

*Fitting the Forum to the Family:
Emerging Challenges for Family
Courts*

May 28-31, 2008

Vancouver, BC, Canada
Westin Bayshore Resort

AFCC Eighth International

Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations

September 25-27, 2008

AFCC Eighth International

Congress on Parent Education and Access Programs

September 26-27, 2008

Albuquerque Marriott
Albuquerque, New Mexico

President's Note

Martha Musselman, Texas Chapter President

Dear TX AFCC Member:

On behalf of the Texas Chapter of AFCC Board of Directors, I welcome you to a new year as a member of the Texas Chapter of AFCC. I am honored to serve as Chapter President this year. I want to give you a short recap of what TX AFCC accomplished in 2007 and a glimpse of the exciting events planned for 2008.

In 2007, under the leadership of Aaron Robb, the Texas Chapter made significant accomplishments in the legislative and educational arena. 2007 was a year where the state legislature was once again in session. Many Chapter members were active in that process in their roles as individual practitioners and as representatives of their agencies. Advocates spoke on both

sides of the debate on HB 555, regarding Parenting Plans and Parenting Coordination, and with much input the legislature passed compromise legislation which further solidified parenting coordination services in Texas. Another major legislative issue that in which many of our members were involved was HB 772, which addressed the integration of standards for social study (child custody) evaluations into the TEXAS FAMILY CODE. Starting from Texas' historical statutes and issues raised in the *AFCC Model Standards*, many members worked in a loose collaboration with Texas AFCC, the statewide Domestic Relations Offices, the mental health and social work professional organizations, and the Family Bar to craft a major advance in the level of

professionalism standards for custody evaluation in Texas. The Texas Chapter participated in the post-legislative session discussions and worked to fulfill its mission to provide an interdisciplinary forum for the development constructive methods for resolving family disputes by initiating a statewide Parenting Coordination Taskforce. Drawing on attorneys and mental health professionals from around the state the PC Taskforce took the *AFCC Guidelines for Parenting Coordination* as a starting point and looked at how we could adapt national practices to our local needs. Many meetings later a general consensus was developed and published as a report of the Taskforce. A series of Parenting Coordination [Continued at "President's Note," p.2]

Texas AFCC Chapter Announces Annual Conference Details

The 2008 8th Annual Texas AFCC Statewide Conference: *The Full Spectrum of Domestic Violence: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You*, will feature Keynote Speaker, Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Senior Fellow, Child Trauma Academy, speaking on "Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Children in High Conflict Families". The Conference will be held at, and in conjunction with, South Texas College of Law on Friday, October 3 and Saturday, October 4, 2008. This conference will explore new and emerging

legal, judicial, mental health and dispute resolution interventions, special services, and models of care for children and their parents affected by domestic violence and challenge previously held conventions.

Sponsorship opportunities are available at a variety of levels. To ensure you are recognized in the conference brochure, submit the Sponsorship Form (pg. 3) by May 30, 2008.

"President's Note" - continued from page 1

tion Seminars were hosted by a pair of our Houston-area members. And finally, we had a successful 7th Annual Statewide Conference in October in Austin, which many of you attended.

In 2008 TX AFCC hopes to be equally successful in the educational arena. In February many of our members helped to host and attended AFCC regional trainings on *Advanced Issues in Parenting Coordination: Functional Co-parenting for High Conflict Families*, featuring presenter, Matthew J. Sullivan, Ph.D., and *The Battle Between Abuse and Alienation: Assessment, Diagnosis and Interventions*, featuring presenter, Leslie M. Drozd, Ph.D., in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Planning for our 2008 8th Annual Fall Statewide Conference is well underway. I am excited to announce that this year's Conference will be held at and in conjunction with South Texas College of Law in Houston on October 3-4, 2008. This year's conference is "*The Full Spectrum of Domestic Violence: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You*," featuring keynote speaker, Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., Senior Fellow, ChildTrauma Academy. The ChildTrauma Academy is a unique interdisciplinary organization dedicated to helping understand and serve high-risk children. Founded in 1990 by Dr. Bruce Perry, Chief of Psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital at Baylor College of Medicine, CTA is now located in Houston, Texas, and focuses on non-medical models of care, cross agency collaborations, and interdisciplinary educational activities for professionals working with maltreated and high-risk children. This year's Conference will explore new and emerging legal, judicial, mental health and dispute resolution interventions, special services, and models of care for children and their parents affected by domestic violence. In another first for our Chapter, a nationwide "Call for Presenters" went out in December of 2007. We anticipate Confe-

rence workshops and sessions to be presented by legal, mental health, judicial, ADR and governmental professionals from all over the country. Our organization is unique. It is the only interdisciplinary group of professionals that looks at family law as a process and seeks to educate and improve the outcome of the process so that children and families obtain the best possible resources and assistance in resolving their disputes. The AFCC Mission is to promote a collaborative approach to serving the needs of children among those who work in and with family law systems, encouraging education, research and innovation and identifying best practices. I am proud to be a member of this organization and even prouder to serve as your Chapter President.

This year, I hope to meet every Chapter member in Texas and to spread our message to those who do not yet know of our wonderful organization. I want to challenge each of you to increase the membership of the Texas Chapter of AFCC. In the vast expanse of Texas there are family professionals who might share our goals, but are still unaware of this unique organization. In the coming year I would like to see our message spread to the far west of our state, to the many rural areas and among the professional groups in the urban areas who are not yet aware of us. Please share the information in this newsletter with a colleague you think might be interested in joining TX AFCC, and if we can help you by sending more information or through other support, please let us know!

Very truly yours,

MARTHA J. MUSSELMAN
Attorney & Counselor at Law - Mediator



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AFCC Texas Chapter State Conference
Houston, Texas // South Texas College of Law, Houston, Texas
“The Full Spectrum of Domestic Violence: What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You”
October 3-4, 2008

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

<i>Sponsor Dr. Bruce Perry, featured presenter (\$3000 level)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website • Company Representative introduced during sponsored event • Exhibit Table (Upon Request) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Co-Sponsor • Company brochure included in Conference Materials
<i>Sponsor Happy Hour Reception (\$2500 level)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website • Company Representative introduced during sponsored event • Exhibit Table (Upon Request) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Co-Sponsor • Company brochure included in Conference Materials
<i>Sponsor Friday or Saturday Luncheon (\$2000 level)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website • Conference Co-Sponsor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Representative introduced during sponsored event • Exhibit Table (Upon Request)
<i>Sponsor Friday or Saturday Breakfast (\$1500 level)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website • Conference Co-Sponsor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Representative introduced during sponsored event • Exhibit Table (Upon Request)
Platinum (\$1000 and above)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website • Exhibit Table (Upon Request) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Co-Sponsor
Gold (\$500-\$999)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website • Exhibit Table (Upon Request) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material or Reception Co-Sponsor
Silver (\$250-\$499)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website • Exhibit Table (Upon Request) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshment Break Co-Sponsor
Bronze (\$100-\$249)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in Conference Materials, AFCC Newsletter, and on the AFCC Texas website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibit Table (Upon Request)
Exhibitor Tables (\$100; \$75 for non-profit organizations)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listed in the Conference Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to display your program, products, or services
Friend and Supporter of AFCC (\$50)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance to network with a multi disciplinary group of professionals 	

PLEASE PRINT YOUR INFORMATION AS YOU WISH IT TO BE LISTED

Name:	Position or Title:
Organization:	
Street Address:	
City/State/Zip:	
Telephone:	Fax:
Email address/website:	
Amount of Sponsorship:	Exhibit Table? _____ YES _____ NO

To ensure that you are recognized as a Sponsor in our conference brochure, please submit your contributions by May 30th, 2008. All sponsorships received after this date will be recognized at the conference.

Please return completed form with check payable to: Texas AFCC
c/o Patricia Barrett
11659 Jones Rd., Box 352
Houston, TX 77070

DIVORCE AND THE CLOSELY HELD BUSINESS

By Patricia Barrett CFP CDFP

Divorce settlement is seriously complicated by the existence of a closely-held business. To further complicate matters, the business is usually a source of income for the family as well as an asset subject to division. There are basically three methods to handle the business during divorce:

1. Both parties continue to own the business. However, if there is a great deal of rancor, this is not normally an acceptable solution.
2. Sell the business and divide the profits. However, most businesses cannot be easily sold and take a long period of time to find a buyer.
3. One spouse keeps the business and offsets one half of its value with other assets. This is usually the best option, assuming that there are other assets to complete the transaction.
 - a. The equity in the homestead is often used as an offset for the buyout, although the ongoing cash flow needs of the spouse must be considered, as well.
 - b. IRAs or 401k plan assets are often used to offset the business; however, these should be calculated at their after-tax value.
 - c. Securities and cash equivalents outside of qualified plans are often the most desirable in offsetting the value of the business, since these are liquid.
 - d. If the business comprises most of the couple's net worth, it may be necessary to utilize a "property settlement note" to equalize the outcome. A property settlement note is similar to a note at a bank, having a reasonable rate of interest, a definite term and a principal amount.

Example: Susan and Steve have two significant assets, the \$100,000 equity in their home and the value of Steve's business, \$350,000. Steve can provide a property settlement note to Susan in the amount of \$125,000 at 5% ($\$350,000 - \$100,000 = \$250,000 / 2 = \$125,000$), paying Susan \$1,350 per month for ten years.

Separate versus Community Property

- A business started during marriage with joint funds is community property in Texas. A business that was already in operation or was begun with separate funds is more complex, since the community interest may involve joint funds used to expand the business and any appreciation in value attributed to that contribution

Valuation of the Closely held business

Valuing ("appraising") a business is a very complex task, requiring the assistance of a professional business appraiser skilled in identifying the relevant information and applying the proper valuation methods.

According to Phil Hamilton, CPA/ABV/CBA (President of Hamilton Valuation Group in Austin), all valuation methods fall within three valuation approaches. These are the Market Approach, the Income Approach, and the Asset Approach.

The Market Approach estimates the business value by using one or more methods that compares the subject business to similar ones that have been sold. The Income Approach estimates the value by one or more methods that convert expected profits or cash flows into value. The Asset Approach estimates the value based on the values of the assets and liabilities of the business. These assets include both tangible and intangible assets.

While the appraiser selects from numerous methods, please note that book value (the assets minus the liabilities on the balance sheet) is *not* a valuation method.

Most skilled business appraisers offer more than one level of appraisal service, ranging from roughly \$3,000 to \$12,000 or more.

If there is a contested divorce, spouses often obtain separate appraisals. A significant problem involves appraisers who value businesses for divorce and slant the results to favor their clients. Fighting this out in court can increase the cost of divorce tremendously. If the divorce is "collaborative", the couple uses only one appraiser who works for the couple and is far more likely to produce a fair, independent valuation.

In order to save money when employing an appraiser, organize your documents and provide a full set to your own lawyer and business appraiser, as well as to the spouse's.

Ideally, an accountant representing each spouse should meet with an accountant for the business to structure the transition of business ownership, in order to assure no disruption to day-to-day operations and protect the interest of both spouses.

Choosing an Appraiser

You'll be much safer if you start the search by looking for appraisers who hold either the Certified Business Appraiser (CBA) or Accredited Senior Appraiser (ASA) credentials. Earning either of these credentials requires the applicant to pass a highly technical exam and submit appraisal reports proving that they can perform appraisals competently. Look for a CBA or ASA appraiser at these organizations:

- Institute of Business Appraisers (IBA), <http://go-iba.org>
- American Society of Appraisers (ASA), <http://www.appraisers.org/>

Your attorney plays a key role in coordinating the appraisal and business settlement with other issues in the divorce. Additionally, a financial planner (CFP) trained in divorce financial issues can illustrate the outcome of the proposed settlement with tables and graphs, assisting both spouses to see the long-range implications.

PARENTING COORDINATION [PC] AS AN ADJUNCT TO COLLABORATIVE LAW [CL]

By Dr. Lynelle C. Yingling, LMFT

In Texas we know CL as a statutory ADR service designed to facilitate development of a court order outside the litigation process. CL impacts divorcing parents in the larger context of the divorcing process. The divorcing process begins before the parents meet the CL attorneys and goes on after the CL attorneys have said good-bye. Implementation of the agreed order then becomes the challenge for the parents. Family therapy is the traditional resource that has been used before and after the CL process. One current more specifically defined resource in Texas law to facilitate successful implementation of the CL agreed parenting plan is PC.

PC must be compatible with CL principles and ethics—

Selection of the adjunct service to be used beyond CL must be compatible with CL standards such as the following:

1. **Classification as an ADR process.** The AFCC Guidelines for the Practice of Parenting Coordination categorize PC as an ADR process. Texas law clearly identifies PC and CL as ADR processes. ADR processes are conciliatory alternatives to litigation which cannot be used as a resource in litigation. Texas law draws the boundaries very clearly, making PC and CL compatible processes.
2. **Confidentiality protection.** As an ADR process, PC must have confidentiality protection in order to be compatible with CL. Texas law strongly provides confidentiality protection and compatibility. ADR and mental health professional legal and ethical guidelines provide some exceptions to absolute confidentiality for safety or when following specialized methods for release of confidential information. If needed, communication with the CL team members can be achieved by the parenting coordinator using appropriately executed releases of information.
3. **Self-determination assured.** CL strongly emphasizes the importance of self-determination by clients. Therefore, a supplemental service must support that important principle. Arbitration can be used under Texas law only by voluntary agreement of the clients. Texas and other state laws limit the PC functions to facilitating co-parenting goals which lead to self-determination in parenting without the need for court intervention. The Oklahoma PC law, which provided a model for Texas in many respects, survived a constitutional challenge because of the goals being based on self-determination of parenting.
4. **Clarification through informed consent.** The PC service used as an adjunct to CL must clearly define the above guidelines in a written informed consent.
5. **Avoidance of dual relationships.** One purpose of ethical restrictions against dual relationships is to protect impartiality of the service provider in order to work effectively with the entire family system in co-parenting. Clarification of what constitutes a dual relationship should be in the practice guidelines for PC and should be consistent with the CL practice protocols. The Collaborative Law Institute of Texas [CLI-TX] protocols specifically allow the MHP in the CL process to serve as a parenting coordinator for implementation of the parenting plan.

How I define PC to make sense in my practice—

The CL setting in which I work uses an interdisciplinary team with the single MHP functioning as a team member throughout the process generally. When both CL and PC models were just developing in Texas, I was practicing and training as a family therapist and as a family mediator. When PC and CL MHP roles were introduced, I began feeling splintered. The attached marketing chart was created to define the core elements of what I do to help families in the legal process and distinguish unique characteristics of the roles based on the context. For me, this exercise identified the goal similarities and compatible contexts between family therapy, CL, and PC.

All *confidential conciliatory* services include the basic components of the **Collaborative Family Therapy model**. When extremely high conflict in the family occurs [such as verified family violence], non-confidential litigation-based custody evaluation or social study services may be required.

- Distinctive characteristics of Collaborative Family Therapy:
 - Focuses on the needs of the child and the strengths of the family
 - Gives the child a voice through the therapist
 - Includes the entire family system in the process
- Techniques used are combined from Family Systems Therapy, Co-Parenting Education, and Relationship-Focused Family Mediation

Continued on next page

Title of Service:	Collaborative Family Therapy	Collaborative Law Mental Health Family Specialist	Parenting Coordination
How Accessed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Court order ▪ Voluntary request by parents/attorneys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attorney referral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Court order by agreement or judicial decision
Statutory Authority:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TFC §153.010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TFC §6.603 & TFC §153.0072 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TFC §153.601-611
Parent Conflict Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low to High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low to High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderate to High
Confidentiality:*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If court ordered, report compliance only to court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By agreement, report to Collaborative Law Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report recommendation for continuing service to court
Cost:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-pay with sliding scale ▪ May be covered by insurance for family therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-pay with sliding scale ▪ May be covered by insurance for offline family therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-pay with sliding scale ▪ May be covered by insurance for family therapy
Primary Focus Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep focused on the needs of the child ▪ Empower parents to develop a parenting plan to meet the needs of the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify & resolve parenting conflicts which impede the Collaborative Law contracted process for parenting plan development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successfully implement / modify parenting plans ordered by the court

*Family violence is never confidential. Participants may sign a release of information to allow additional sharing of services content as appropriate in accordance with HIPAA, the Texas Mental Health Code, & AAMFT Code of Ethics guidelines. Communication with attorneys is generally released by client consent. Court-ordered services require compliance reporting.

As a CL MHP, I continue to clarify the roles for myself, my colleagues, and my clients. The divorcing process is a long-term reorganization of the family system which involves implementing changes in the way the family communicates, makes decisions, and connects emotionally. This process of implementing a thorough parenting plan takes years for families. The core services the family systems oriented MHP provides in the CL process result in improved communication and effective development of a parenting plan. These same core services are often needed to facilitate effective implementation of the parenting plan through continued communication skill development. Extension of this service will support the lasting success of the CL experience.

Using the compatibly defined Texas model—

PC can be built into the Texas court-ordered parenting plan as the agreed dispute resolution process that will be used before resorting to litigation in the future. Under the CLI-TX MHP protocols, the CL MHP could also serve as the parenting coordinator for the implementation of the parenting plan. Reconvening the CL process, mediation, and arbitration could also be included as dispute resolution processes to be used before litigation. The order in which the different dispute resolution processes would be used if parents are unsuccessful in face-to-face discussions could be identified in the court-ordered parenting plan.

The core PC goal is to help parents learn the challenging communication skills necessary for effective co-parenting without relying on litigation to resolve disagreements. The Texas statute defines PC rather straightforwardly: “Parenting coordinator means an impartial third party appointed by the court on its own motion or on a motion or agreement of the parties to assist parties in resolving parenting issues.” [Texas Family Code Sec. 153.601(4)] Texas statutory guidelines identify PC as a confidential self-determined ADR process facilitated by a family systems trained mental health professional. The Texas LMFT licensure board includes PC under the scope of practice for family therapists; so a regulatory body is in place to protect the public if the PC is a licensed marriage and family therapist. The Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy has adopted practice guidelines for PC which can guide the practicing LMFT PC and serve as a resource for all mental health licensing boards to use.

Because of the compatible statutes and professional organization guidelines for CL and PC in Texas, I feel comfortable working with families as a CL MHP and continuing to work with the family as a PC after the CL process ends. If CL professionals become more involved in setting and maintaining standards for PC consistent with CL philosophy and standards, PC will become an excellent resource for extending the value of the CL process for families.

Dr. Lynelle C. Yingling, LMFT, LPC for 30 years has specialized in developing, providing, and training providers in support services for divorce-impacted families: family therapy, mediation, and parenting coordination. She was an active group member in establishing the Rockwall Collaborative Family Law Alliance in 2004. After 20 years in academia training doctoral and post-doctoral family therapists, she is now a private practice family therapist who includes collaborative law and parenting coordination in her practice. See www.SystemsMediation.com for further information on parenting coordination, including training.

Who are this year's Board Members?

The 2008 Executive Committee

Texas AFCC Board President for the 2008 year is Martha J. Musselman, Attorney at Law and Mediator in private practice in Harris and Montgomery Counties.

President-Elect is Louise Lee, Attorney at Law in private practice in Houston. Louise will take over as Board President on January 1, 2009.

Board Secretary is Mardi Winder-Adams, M.Ed., a parenting coordinator, parent educator and mediator living in Naples, Texas, but who serves families and Courts in an area encompassing several counties in East Texas.

Board Treasurer is Patricia Barrett, who is a Certified Financial Planner, a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst, a Mediator, and runs Lifetime Planning LLC in Houston.

Immediate Past President is Aaron Robb M.Ed., NCC, LPC, who is a mental health professional in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area who does primarily forensic counseling, custody evaluations and parenting coordination in Tarrant County.

Returning Board Members

2008 AT-LARGE DIRECTORS (with Terms ending 12/31/2009)

Jack Bannin, MS, LPC, LMFT, a mental health professional in Bexar County who owns and runs Bexar Family Solutions in San Antonio, specializing in forensic counseling, parenting coordination, and custody evaluations.

David Eaker, Attorney at Law with Noelke English Maples St. Leger, L.L.P, a family law firm in Austin.

Alissa Sherry, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology, Department of Education Psychology, University of Texas at Austin.

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS (with Terms ending 12/31/2008)

Gilda Bowen, LMSW, who owns and runs Bowen Associates and is a mental health professional doing social studies and other work with families in the Rio Grande valley area.

Mary Fogel, MS, a social worker in the Travis County Domestic Relations Office.

The Honorable Frank Rynd, judge of the 309th Family District Court in Harris County.

Vicki James, MS, LPC, LMFT, a mental health professional in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area.

New Board Members for 2008

Stephanie J. Hall, an At-Large Director, who is an Attorney at Law and Mediator in private practice in Harris and Montgomery Counties; and

Patricia Barrett, CFP, CDFA, Treasurer.

Welcome to both of you!

What's the Texas AFCC Board doing?

The first Board of Directors meeting was held on February 8, 2008, at South Texas College of Law in Houston. Among other agenda items, the Board reviewed two proposed policies and one proposed amendment to the Chapter By-Laws. The Board also reviewed and approved the 2008 Budget.

Our next Board of Directors meeting will be Friday, June 13, 2008, at 1:00 pm, at NOELKE ENGLISH MAPLES ST. LEGER, L.L.P, in Austin.

How do I become a Board member?

In a state as large as Texas it is particularly important that we have representation from all areas - as practices vary widely across our state. We rotate geographically and professionally the office of the Presidency of the Chapter, as well as members of the Board of Directors. Alternating leadership between mediators, educators, and mental health, legal, and financial professionals not only allows for a continued infusion of ideas and perspectives, but keeps one professional group from "taking over" the chapter. Each fall, the Chapter Nominating Committee meets and determines what board positions will be open for the coming year as the result of terms ending. The Nominating Committee sends out a plea for nominations to all existing board members and then considers all the proposed names in order to present a slate of nominations to be presented to the Chapter membership as a whole. If you have an interest in being nominated, notify this year's Chair of the Nominating Committee, The Honorable Frank Rynd, of your interest, and INCLUDE your curriculum vitae and contact information. That information will be passed on to the Nominations Committee.

How do I make a comment or suggestion or ask a question about Texas AFCC?

We are interested in your opinions, issues, and other areas of interest for where we take the Texas Chapter in the coming year. While the Board tries to be representative, both geographically and professionally, of our membership as a whole, we genuinely want your feedback regarding what you think is important for our Chapter. First, visit the TX AFCC website at www.texasafcc.org to see if your question is already answered there. If your question isn't answered there, the complete contact information for all Texas AFCC board members is located at: <http://www.texasafcc.org/board.html>. You can contact any board member for further information. Finally, if you have not done so already, you may join the TX AFCC listserv at TxAfCC-Members@yahoo.com or by contacting the moderator, Aaron Robb, at: arobb@texas counseling.org. You can contact me directly at musselman.lawfirm@yahoo.com or click on the "Contact Texas AFCC" link on our webpage to send us feedback. Please help us continue to keep the Texas Chapter active and vibrant through your participation!

How do I become involved?

Our Chapter needs your time and energy to accomplish the goals we've set. We have at least six committees on which you may serve. These committees include:

[Continued on Page 8]

What's the Texas AFCC Board doing? (Continued from page 7)

- Finance/Audit Committee, chaired by Trevor Townes, M.A., Director, Family Court Services & Dispute Resolution Division, Harris County Domestic Relations Office
- Membership & Education Committee, Co-chaired by Louise Lee (President-Elect) and David Eaker (At Large Director)
- Publications Committee, Chaired by Jack Bannin (At Large Director)
- Nominations Committee, Chaired by the Honorable Frank Rynd (At-Large Director)
- Texas PC Taskforce Committee, Chaired by Aaron Robb (Immediate Past President), and
- Annual Statewide Conference Planning Coordinating Committee, Chaired by Martha J. Musselman (President).

Other ways to become involved:

- Suggest a topic or a speaker for the annual conference put on by Texas AFCC by contacting the President or our website
- Sponsoring any one of our Conference programs or activities. This year, we are asking for your help to make the Houston area annual Conference a huge success.
- Contribute to the Chapter Newsletter by submitting your article, blurb, notice or other information of interest to the membership to Jack Bannin at: txafccweb@yahoo.com.
- Last, but not least, you can join us in our efforts to increase the membership of the Texas Chapter of AFCC. Please share information about our wonderful organization with a colleague you think might be interested in joining, and if we help you by sending more information or through other support, please let us know.

New Policies Adopted by Board of Directors

In February 2008 the Board of Directors adopted two new policies. The first pertains to political activities by the Texas Chapter and its members. It affirms that the organization does not endorse or sponsor legislation, and does not lobby for changes in Texas statutes. Because the Texas Chapter is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the IRS imposes strict limits on these sorts of activities. This does not prevent members from making their *individual* views known to the state legislature and other rule-making bodies.

The second policy addresses public presentations by Texas AFCC members. This two-line policy states:

Individual members of TX AFCC may identify themselves as members of TX AFCC, however they may not represent that they speak for or act on behalf of TX AFCC as a whole. The President of TX AFCC is solely authorized to speak for or act on behalf of TX AFCC as a whole provided they have consulted with the TX AFCC Executive Committee.

You can find links to both of these policies at: www.texasafcc.org/board_info.html.

News from the Parent Organization

AFCC Five-Year Report Available Online

Since 1963, AFCC has grown from a small group of volunteers to a robust professional association. In 2001, AFCC implemented sweeping changes to its governance structure; in 2002 the association restructured the administration; and in 2003-2004 AFCC developed and implemented an ambitious five-year strategic plan. The results of these efforts are contained in the AFCC Five-Year Report, which chronicles the development of AFCC from fiscal years 2002-03 through 2006-07. Read the report at <http://www.afccnet.org/pdfs/AFCC%20Five-Year%20Report%20Web.pdf>

Sneak Preview: Report on Wingspread Conference on Domestic Violence and Family Courts

The Report from the Wingspread Conference on Domestic Violence and Family Courts is now available on the AFCC Web site. Written by Conference Reporters, Professors Nancy Ver Steegh and Clare Dalton, the Report will be the centerpiece of a special issue of Family Court Review in July 2008. The conference was cosponsored by AFCC and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and work developed by conference participants will be featured at the AFCC 45th Annual Conference in Vancouver, BC.

Read the report at:

<http://www.afccnet.org/pdfs/Report%20from%20the%20Wingspread%20Conference%20on%20Domestic%20Violence%20and%20Family%20Courts.pdf>