

President's Report

It has been a busy year for FMC. It is hard to believe how fast the time goes as I conclude my first year as President of this wonderful organization. It has been a pleasure working with so many committed and hardworking board members. I wish to just touch upon some areas where we were particularly active knowing that Board Chairs will cover their own areas in more detail.

Leading up to our AGM on November 16, 2013, FMC participated with the DR5 in holding a two day advanced mediation continuing education program. Nina Meierding provided an excellent program. I am happy to report that, at the end of the day, none of the organizations lost any money on this program and in fact, we actually had a small surplus of almost \$600. (For your information, the "DR5" is a very loose affiliation of five organizations – Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC), ADR Institute of Ontario, Ontario Association for Family Mediation, Ontario Collaborative Law Federation and FMC. The purpose behind the group is to hold events like this and maintain communication about important events occurring within each association so as to avoid as many scheduling conflicts as possible around good continuing education and other programs. It meets only on an informal basis.)

Following this event, the Board held a retreat for a planning session for the full day.

At the retreat we discussed many topics, the primary one being the need for governance of our organization under the new not for profit federal legislation. Ernie Tannis and Gerry Schoel led the discussion. Gerry will report on the results of that meeting as, over the course of the year, he was instrumental in establishing our new by-laws and ensuring that we will be in full compliance with the new legislation.

At board meetings following the retreat, the Board decided to continue the discussion regarding the issues which could not be fully addressed for lack of time. At the start of each Board meeting, from January this year to July, we met for an hour ahead of the regular Board meetings and continued discussion on the agenda which was established at the Retreat. The following topics were discussed at each meeting:

- *Board committees* – how can they enhance the services FMC provides, are they properly constituted, do they have appropriate terms of reference?;
- *Specialization Committees* - Are they effective? What can we do to make them more effective?
- *State of FMC* – is it healthy? Does it meet the needs of the community it serves – members and the public?
- *Website review* – we committed to going over each page and seeing if it was still timely and relevant.
- *Fund raising* – how do we get money into FMC to pay for more programs and more public relations events in particular?

Over the months we had great discussions and came away from the meetings with strong resolve to get things moving in the right direction. All of the topics were addressed and each now has an action item which we plan to implement over the coming months.

The Board also decided to participate in the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts annual conference which was held in Toronto at the end of May 2014. Many thanks to Tamara Bodnaruk-Wide, Mary Damianakis and Carrie Cekerevac for all their hard work in setting up and being present at the booth for the entire conference. FMC provided a bronze sponsorship. The sponsorship included an FMC insert in all the delegate bags and mention in the program. The conference was attended by over 2000 people. Tamara reported that event was a great success for FMC. We had a strong presence and the event was well worth the money spent. We did a lot of networking with other exhibitors and made great connections. We had tons of interest, especially from the prairies and by Friday morning we had run out of certification brochures. We plan to continue involvement in these conferences.

FMC was also asked to participate in the Children Now Conference held in Montreal. We had several Board members in attendance including Mary, Gerry and me. The purpose of the conference was to focus on how mediation can be used to benefit children in family breakdown. Mary and I were asked to speak at the opening of the conference. Many mediators from around the country and around the world were in attendance. We had a delegation from Thailand. We also had a mediator from Australia which, as you know, is instrumental in developing a different approach to the resolution of family disputes designed to keep people out of court wherever possible. The organizers of the conference are planning to have a video of the conference published perhaps in a documentary format. We will keep you posted in that regard.

FMC also helped sponsor the Elder Mediation International Network 7th World Summit held in Halifax. This event was well attended and FMC was well represented. You will hear more about this event in the Elder Mediation Report.

Next year is the 30th anniversary of FMC. Betty Ife has agreed to chair a committee to plan our AGM around that event which will take place in British Columbia. Hope to see everyone there.

We also had some problems with our web site as some of you may be aware. This has now been corrected and will not happen again. The web site is under constant review by our Web site committee.

FMC is also involved with a new Ontario group, Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario (FDRIO) wanting to establish an organization for all neutral dispute resolution experts with the goal of getting all professionals who practice in this area, including parenting coordinators and family arbitrators, under one umbrella. The group is holding meetings at this time. FMC is in a supportive mode at this time trying to determine if there is a positive role for it in this new organization. The Board will continue to meet with this group and see what develops. At this point, there is a steering committee in place which plans to meet on September 16th. Accordingly, at this point, the organization is just in its infancy.

Finally, we have decided to search for a part time executive director. The function of the executive director would be to implement the strategic goals and objectives of Family Mediation Canada; with the President, enable the Board to fulfill its governance function; give direction and leadership toward the achievement of FMC's philosophy, mission and strategy. The responsibilities would include Board Administration and Support; Program and Service

Delivery; Inter-agency liaison; Financial, Tax, and Risk Management; Correspondence; Community and Public Relations; Marketing; Certification and Fundraising.

We are always looking for members who want to join the Board or a Board committee, whichever you prefer. If you are interested please submit a resume to Carrie at the FMC email address. We need representatives from all provinces so if you can spare the time, please consider volunteering.