

Report to the Counsel for the NB Branch of CBA for Family Law Section

September 2007- January 2008

This section has been very active since September 2007. A new Chair was appointed on September 14 and since then two Vice Chairs have joined Mary-Eileen Flanagan to form the Executive of this section. Jolène Richard of Stewart McKelvey in Moncton and Brenda G. Noble, Q.C. of Barry Spalding in Saint John, they are 1st and 2nd Vice respectively. They have agreed to be incoming Chairs 2009 and 2011. At the Continuing Legal Education presented by this section November 2, 2007 in Moncton, a meeting of the section was held during the lunch time break and those in attendance agreed that the organization of the section could best be achieved by having a representative appointed from each judicial district. An e-mail request for volunteers was circulated and immediately the attached list of representative was achieved.

The Chair attended the National Family Law Section meetings on September 26-27, 2007 in Ottawa. There was a full weekend of meetings and opportunities to socialize. The main contribution from the New Brunswick section was a specific request to be on the agenda at the next section meeting to talk about an overhaul of the "Mission Statement" for the section to ensure that Alternative Dispute Resolution is included as well as a request to be put on the agenda to propose the creation of a National ADR/Collaborative Practice sub-committee.

The November 2, 2007 CLE was delivered concurrently in French and English (with some small differences between the two programs at Université de Moncton). This was well received by the practicing Bar and resulted in one of the largest gatherings of Family Law practitioners from across the province in recent memory. The group assembled agreed that this is a preferred way to continue to deliver CLE and the feedback provided to CBA was positive and encouraging.

This section has been quietly lobbying the Minister of Justice to strike a Task Force to permit a comprehensive examination of the Family Law system in New Brunswick and to propose changes and/or improvements. Our section is meeting again on February 9, 2008 at 7:30am with the main purpose being to strike a committee to be the voice of the CBA and to make submissions to this Task Force. It is hoped that the formation of the Task Force will be finalized in short order.

The National Family Law section will be having its next meeting May 31, 2008 in Prince Edward Island. Our section is also going to strike a committee to work in support of the PEI Family Law section to organize this meeting. Typically, there is the opportunity for continuing legal education as well as public education in connection with these national meetings that take place outside of the Ottawa or Toronto centres. Mary-Eileen Flanagan has made contact with Brian Waddell of the PEI Family Law section to offer support. The interest of our section will be gauged at our next meeting February 9th, 2008.

Since September there have been three separate messages e-mailed to this section all of which have been translated into French by the CBA office. The feedback from this form of communication has been positive and the value of our relationship with Lia Daborn in Fredericton has been invaluable.

All of which is respectfully submitted this 25th day of January, 2008.

Mary-Eileen Flanagan
Vice Chair