

**STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN
SECTION ANNUAL REPORT**

Bar Year: 2012-2013

Section Name: FAMILY LAW SECTION

Mission Statement: To study the laws, court rules, and procedures regarding family law; to study and report upon and recommend legislation and court rules, and to promote throughout the State of Michigan the legal education of members of the Bar and the Public on the problems relating to the family; sponsoring meetings, institutes and conferences regarding family law; preparing and sponsoring and publishing legal writing regarding family law. Family law includes issues associated with marriage, divorce, separation, adoption, paternity and the rights of minor children.

Officers and Council Members:

Officer	Name	Address	Telephone	E-mail
Chair	Traci Rink	Birmingham MI	248 858-1840	rinkt@oakgov.com
Chair-Elect	James J. Harrington, III	Novi MI	248 347-9620	jjh@jjharringtonlaw.com
Secretary: Recording Secretary: Corresp.	Hon. Richard Halloran Carol Breitmeyer	Redford MI Huntington Woods, MI	313 224-7430 248 247-3300	hewhodreams@comcast.net Breitmeyer@bcfamlaw.com
Treasurer	Rebecca Shiemke	Grosse Pte. MI	734 998-6100	rshiemke@lsscm.org

Member	Term	Member	Term
Elizabeth Bransdorfer	2013	Carol Breitmeyer	2014
James J. Harrington III	2013	Sahera Housey	2014
Antoinette Raheem	2013	Kristen Robinson	2015
Erika Salerno	2013	Christopher J. Harrington	2015
Gail M. Towne	2013	Allison Sleight	2015
Hon. Richard B. Halloran	2014	Daniel Bates	2015
Mathew Kobliska	2014	Robert Treat	2015
Steven D. Reinheimer	2014	Randy Velzen	2015
Ross F. Stancati	2014	Open seat expires 2013	
Rebecca Shiemke	2014	Open seat expires 2015	

Council Meeting Schedule:

Please attach any additional information needed regarding council meetings as an addendum.

Meeting Type	Date	Location
Annual Meeting	Sept 20, 2012	Grand Rapids, MI
Council Meeting	October 6, 2012	Ann Arbor, MI
Council Meeting	November 3, 2012	E. Lansing, MI
Council Meeting	December 1, 2012	Grand Rapids, MI

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Council Meeting	January 26, 2013	Novi, MI
Council Meeting	March 2, 2013	Grand Rapids, MI
Council Meeting	April 13, 2013	Ann Arbor, MI
Council Meeting	May 4, 2013	E. Lansing, MI
Council Meeting	June 1, 2013	Novi, MI
Annual Meeting	Sept 19, 2013	Lansing, MI

General Budget Information:

The Family Law Section commenced FY 2012-2013 in September, 2012 with a budget surplus of approximately \$70,000.00. Expenses for the Section are rising, and Section dues have remained unchanged at \$60.00 per member per year. The Section is evaluating the merits of producing its Family Law Journal in electronic format, which will appreciably reduce what is the largest expense in its budget.

Events and/or Seminars:

The Family Law Section actively partners with the Institute of Continuing Legal Education, Ann Arbor, MI and furnishes speakers and written materials for all of the ICLE Family Seminars during the year. In addition, the Family Law Section is a co-sponsor and furnishes nearly all speakers and written materials for the annual, Family Law Institute held in November each year. This 1 ½ day Seminar is the premier Family Law event in Michigan and was attended by 510 Attorneys, Judges, and Friend of the Court staff, of whom 82% were Family Law Section Members. There are approximately 8 to 12 ICLE family law seminars each year, as well as the ICLE Certificate Program.

Legislative Issues: The Legislative Committee of the Family Law Council includes not only its Chair Kent Weichmann, and Council members Traci Rink, Ross Stancati, Randy Velzen, Hon. Richard Halloran, Robert Treat, Erica Salerno, Rebecca Shiemke and Carol Breitmeyer, but non-Council members as well, including William Kandler, Lauran Howard, Sandy Glazier, Jules Hanslovsky, Hon. Lisa Sullivan, Hon. David Hoort, Hon. John Hammond and others. Every single legislative proposal involving Family Law is reviewed by this Committee, recommendations submitted to Council, and positions on the legislation published on the State Bar website. This is a key committee, and its input is critical to protection of families and children in Michigan.

Court Rules Committee: This is also a key committee. Every proposed Court Rule, or Court rule Amendment involving Family Law is considered by this Committee. The Chair Matt Kobliska and Co-Chair Carol Breitmeyer, and members Kristen Robinson, Steven Reinheimer, Rebecca Shiemke, Christopher Harrington, and non-Council members Stephanie Benedict and Tina Yost make recommendations on Court Rules at every monthly Council meeting. The Committee actively supported amendments to Michigan Court Rules 2.107, 2.117, 3.213, and 2.302. The Committee also reviewed and made recommendations on every Court Rule proposal promulgated by the Michigan Supreme Court.

In addition, the Family Law Council has actively participated in a work group involving Hon. Joan Young, and the Hon. Kathleen Feeney, dealing with a major revision of Default Judgments in Family Law cases. This work group has spent over 3 years on this project, and the most recent consensus version of the Court rule is under consideration by the Michigan Supreme Court.

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Amicus Committee: The Amicus Committee is Chaired by former Council member Anne Argiroff and has filed Amicus briefs in a variety of major cases involving Family Law, including *In Re Mays*, *In Re Laird*, *Grange v Lawrence*. The Amicus Committee has also recommended and obtained Council support for amendments to MCR 7.313.

Alternate Dispute Resolution: The Committee Chair, Antoinette Raheem, and co-Chair Randy Velzen, and the many other committee members produced an excellent ADR Informational Brochure, to be distributed throughout the State of Michigan. It also produced an ADR Comparison Chart for Attorneys. Finally, it authored and produced a “Frequently Asked Questions” regarding the ADR process. The ADR Committee reaches throughout the Section, and has many non-Council participants, including Monika Saks, Veronique Liem, Rebecca Decoster, Nina Abrams, Shelley Kester, Jeff Murphy, Zena Zumetta, Deborah Berecz, Lee Hornberger, and Robin Omer.

In addition the ADR Committee has continued its efforts regarding establishing “focus groups” in 9 regions throughout Michigan and set up 4 subcommittees to address the priorities of ADR: (public education, attorney education, education of the judiciary, and prepare an educational video).

Domestic Violence: The Committee Chair of the Domestic Violence is Rebecca Shiemke, and assisted by Council Members Toni Raheem, Hon. Richard Halloran, Daniel Bates, and former Council member Kent Weichmann, and Section members, Katherine Root, Michael Yales, and Kari Heming. The DV Committee was an active co-partner with the ADR Committee with respect to assisting with development and final form of the ADR Committee Brochure and the FAQ’s on ADR procedures. The Committee also is involved in an ongoing dialogue regarding issues arising out of Conciliation hearings and temporary custody and other initial orders in a family law case.

Family Law Journal: The Family Law Journal Committee, through its Chair, Antoinette Raheem, and Co-Chair Anthea Papista, and Council members Traci Rink, Barbara J. Kelly, Sahera Housey, Elizabeth Bransdorfer, and non-Council member attorneys, Lisa Damphousse, and Elizabeth Sadowski, has overall responsibility for the editing and production of the Family Law Journal, in conjunction with the Editor Norm Robbins. The Journal intends to produce a “special edition” of the Journal, which may be the last “paper” edition prior to going online with an electronic format; the Edition will focus upon “Family Law, Past – Present – Future”.

Family Law List Serv: While not a formal Council committee, the Family Law Council and the Section are deeply indebted to the tireless efforts of *ex officio* Elizabeth Sadowski who monitors and manages the Family Law Section List Serv, which is one of the most valuable components of Section membership. The collective wisdom of experienced Family Law Section members expressed through List Serv participation is a key component to the mentoring process which all Section members are committed to.

Journal Advertising: This is a critical Committee insofar as the Advertising in the Family Law Journal is a major source of funding for the Family Law Section. Council Member and Journal Advertising Committee Chair Kristen Robinson continues to do a terrific job year after year with the complex responsibilities associated with solicitation of advertisers for the Journal, Coordinating communication between advertisers and printers, proofing Journal advertisements, invoicing advertisers, and collection of fees and revenues and transmittals to the State Bar.

MidSummer Seminar: The annual MidSummer Seminar is the highlight of the Summer season for Section and Council members who attend this event. Co-chairs Elizabeth Bransdorfer and Traci

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Rink have scheduled the forthcoming seminar is scheduled for July 18-21, 2013 at the Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island, and the speakers in the morning sessions are a select group of family law experts, including Hon. Jane Markey, CPA Bruce Knapp, CPA Jason LeRoy, Hon. Richard Halloran, and Attorneys Liisa Speaker, Anne Argiroff, Robert Treat, and Laura Eisenberg.

MidWinter Seminar: No Family Law Section Member has worked harder than Judith O'Donnell over the years to produce truly exceptional continuing legal education activities, in the warm and sandy surroundings of the Caribbean or Mexico during our long Michigan winters. This past February was no exception, as the participating 21 Family Law Section members, and a total group of 34 persons enjoyed a 7 day stay at one of the premier Sailing locations in the Caribbean: the Bitter End Yacht Club in Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands. The MidWinter Seminars are characterized by multiple high level family law presentations, and the attendees were the subject of competent and thorough presentations by Family Law experts Brent Bowyer, Kristen Robinson, Daniel Victor, Natalie Alaine, and Kathleen Goetsch. ; Plans for the 2014 Mid Winter Seminar are already well under way, with the venue scheduled for Peter Island in the British Virgin Islands.

Conclusion: The Family Law Section is an extraordinarily active component of the State Bar of Michigan. Space and time limitations preclude mention of all Committees and all Committee Members in this report. The Chair and the Officers acknowledge and thank all the Council Members who have assisted in advancing the mission of the Section this past year. Further, Council is particularly pleased to have active and significant participation in the Committees by attorneys or former Council members who are not presently members of the Family Law Council; this input is vital to the success of the Committees and the Council My term as Chair of the Section expires with the annual Meeting in September, 2013 and I will be succeeded as Section Chair by current Chair-elect, James J. Harrington, III of Novi, Michigan.

Sincerely,

TRACI RINK
CHAIR FAMILY LAW SECTION
2012-2013

Cc:

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