

DID YOU KNOW.....

By Victoria Starr –counsel, mediator & arbitrator with the firm of Starr Family Law, Barristers and Solicitors

1. Family Cases at the Toronto Superior Court of Justice are going to be temporarily relocated starting July 4th. There will be no access to the **9th floor** at 393 University Avenue, Toronto while it is being renovated from **Monday, July 4, 2011 to Friday, September 9, 2011**. During this time, the Family Cases, Advice Counsel, Motions Duty Counsel and the Dispute Resolution Officer will be relocated to **361 University Avenue, Toronto**. The family judges will be sitting in Motion Rooms A, B, C, and D located on the 2nd Floor. The Advice Counsel available Monday to Friday will be in Room 511D. The Motions Duty Counsel available on Tuesdays and Thursdays will be in Rooms 610B, 611 and 612. The Dispute Resolution Officer available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays will be in Room 511A. The Family Cases and all existing and expanded services will return to the 9th floor at 393 University Avenue, Toronto on **Monday, September 12, 2011**.
2. In May 2009, the *Family Statute Law Amendment Act* received Royal Assent. The Act includes provisions that allow for a simple way for separating couples to determine the value of pension benefits for family equalization purposes and allow pension plans to pay out a portion of the equalization payment from the pension itself. These provisions were to be proclaimed when a regulation is in place that sets out the valuation methodology and the process for receiving a payout from the plan, where applicable. The regulation (which is under the *Pension Benefits Act*) has now been finalized and by the time this newsletter comes out, will be on E-Laws. The new pension regime will be effective **January 1, 2012**.
3. As part of the progression of the 4 Pillars initiative, both on-site (free of charge,) and off-site (reduced fee) mediation services will be offered at the Toronto Superior Court of Justice starting on July 15, 2011. An announcement will be made shortly by the A.G. with more details including to whom the contract was awarded;
4. Also as part of the 4 Pillars initiative, we are about to get Information and referral coordinators at the Toronto Superior Court of Justice. This program is essentially the assignment of individuals to act as coordinators at the courthouse to serve as a point of contact for families entering the family justice system and to help connect them with agencies in the community that can provide support services during family breakdown, including counselling and alternatives to litigation;
5. A new website / program called My Support Calculator has been set up (affiliated with Divorcemate). It provides a free and accurate child support and spousal support calculator, a searchable list of family law professionals available to help

individuals, and information about child and spousal support and other family law issues. To get on the list of searchable professionals, or to simply find out more, visit: www.mysupportcalculator.ca

6. The Ontario Court Forms Assistant is available to help you work with your clients to fill out such forms as the parenting affidavit. This is a free online program which contains many of the most commonly used family court forms. The system prompts users with a series of questions and automatically fills in the court forms based on their answers. To find out more visit: <https://formsassistant.ontariocourtforms.on.ca>
7. Due to an overwhelming demand from provincial and community organizations Justicenet is expanding its roster of lawyers. JusticeNet provides an opportunity for concerned lawyers to take a leadership role to help bridge the access to justice gap existing in Canada's legal system. This is made possible by charging referred clients \$100-\$150/hr depending on the client's income range below \$59,000/yr and number of dependents. If you want to participate in the program or simply find out more visit: www.justicenet.ca;
8. "The Road to Independence" is the latest publication of the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession. It recounts the experiences and insights of 101 women lawyers who have taken the courageous and difficult step of creating a law firm of their own, either as a solo or with others. Come and listen on August 5, 2011, to various panelists discuss why an increasing number of women are opting to create their own law firms and will share practical advice and lessons learned. For more information, including a list of panelists and co-sponsors, please go to: http://www.americanbar.org/groups/women/events/cle/road_independence.html.
9. The Ministry of Transportation, in consultation with the Ontario Privacy Commissioner and representatives of both the Ontario and Canadian Private Investigation Association, plan to prohibit using Ministry of Transportation information in Family law Matters including for divorce, division of property, child access or custody, and child and spousal support. An example of why this is an important issue for many of us, consider the fact that if the agreement is revised as planned, we will no longer be able to locate individuals (i.e. to get an address for service or locate a deadbeat payor) using the information that we currently have access to through the Ministry of Transportation. The family law bar was not consulted as far as I can tell and perhaps we should be taking a closer look at this and seeking to have input.
10. Justice Sherr's case annotations have been updated. You can access the updated annotations as well as the cases found in the Superior Court Bench book by clicking on the following link: <http://flao.org/lawyers-toolkit/>
11. On Monday October 3, 2011, Justice Goodman will chair a session called Property/Support Issues and the Common Law Spouse. The session will review

the definition of spouse, discuss spousal support claims and the operation of the Suggested Spousal Support Guidelines. The recent developments relating to property claims by the common law spouse will also be discussed. To find out more visit: <http://flao.org/news-and-events/>

12. On October 21, 2011, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (Ontario) will host an informative training program that is of interest to family lawyers, as well as judges and mental health professionals. Dr. Bruce Perry, renowned child psychiatrist from the Child Trauma Academy in Texas will lead us through a program focused on the multi-dimensional effects of trauma, abuse and neglect, from childhood through to parenthood. To find out more visit: <http://flao.org/news-and-events/> or [http:// afcontario.ca/](http://afcontario.ca/)
13. The Family Lawyers Association is putting the finishing touches on the set up of its new Google Chat Group. Once operational, family lawyers who are part of the Google group will be able to communicate with one another, ask questions, and share comments and ideas much like the way people do in other online chat groups and social networking sites like Facebook. Stay tuned!
14. The LSUC Treasurer would like to encourage lawyers to attend the Special Divine Interfaith Service to mark the 2011 Opening of the Courts of Ontario at the Church of the Holy Trinity, 10 Trinity Square (near the Eaton Centre) on September 13, 2011 at 10:00 am. Following the morning ceremony, the Opening of the Courts for 2011 will continue in Court Room 6-1 at the Toronto Court House, 361 University Avenue at 3:30 p.m.