

What's Happening in Washington State, Update February 2005

Collaborative law has been featured on the Today Show and the CBS Evening News: it's continuing to grow!

Washington Collaborative Law (Seattle, Bellevue): hosted its kick off event on Wednesday January 26, 2005. Judge Bobbe Bridge presented to approximately 65 attendees at the impressive meeting room at One Union Square. Judge Bridge was inspiring as she talked about the need for lawyers to have a "new-pair-of-dimes," (pronounced paradigms). You had to be there to get the full flavor of her pair-of-dimes references. Essentially, she promoted the use of client-centered processes that move cases along quickly. She reminded us that in a life of a child, 6 months could be a very long time.

Washington collaborative law reports a membership at around 60 to 70 people, approximately 40 attorneys and 20 to 30 non-attorney professionals. They have revamped their website which is now located at www.washcl.org. The new board of directors are: Rachel Felbeck, President; Don Desonier, Vice-President; Susan Goplen, Treasurer; Marilyn Endriss, Secretary; Joe Shaub, Membership; Ken Dehn, Website coordinator; Michael Moss, Allied Professional group.

For people who signed up and paid for memberships in 2004, will have their membership extended for 2005, with the caveat that members will need 12 hours of collaborative law training, and 30 hours of mediation training by October 2005. Registration forms to sign up for 2005 can be obtained and submitted to Susan Goplen at sgoplen@sociuslaw.com, 206/838-9116, 601 Union Street, Suite 4950, Seattle, WA 98101.

Don Desonier reported at the kick off that the King County and Island County Dispute Resolution Centers are going to be offering mediation trainings to collaborative professionals at a reduced rate of \$500.00.

Washington Collaborative Law is creating sub-groups. The family law section of Washington Collaborative Law met at Don Desonier's office on Wednesday February 15th. Discussed was the need for a chairperson and secretary of this community. The nominations are remaining open for those interested in pursuing a leadership role at Washington Collaborative Law. They tentatively are looking towards a monthly meeting to be held on the third Wednesday of the month at 12:15. Susan Goplen's office was volunteered for the March 16th meeting.

The employment section of WASHCL will hold its kick-off meeting around the time of the April 29 and 30th 13th Annual ADR Conference.

Sound Collaboration (Olympia Group): Sound Collaborative hosted their second all-member meeting on February 1, 2005 at the Marston Center in Lacey, Washington. They will continue to host monthly events on the first Tuesday of the month, at the Marston

Center at 677 Woodland Square Loop SE, Lacey, WA. You can call Kathleen Moore at 360/413-0611 for directions or reach her at kmooreesq@comcast.net.

Sound Collaboration just finished a round of soliciting input from members about its brochure and participation agreement. The group's 2005 goal is to raise community awareness of CL, which will include completing the brochure and website to let the public know about the movement.

Sound Collaboration member Rick Bartholomew has experience in legislation and would be the natural contact with the Seattle/Bellevue group when legislation is discussed. He has expressed some strong opinions about collaborative law legislation at the Sound Collaboration meeting and has much to bring to the table in terms of legislative experience.

Spokane Group: The Spokane group meets last Friday of the month at noon in the Spokane Community Building located at 35 West Main. Their next meeting will be February 25th. They will be focusing this month on proposed changes to the Spokane local family law court rules which are designed to encourage mediation, collaboration and other dispute resolution processes, and reduce conflict within the adversary process. Dale L. Raugust is heading up the Spokane efforts. He can be reached at dalelraugust@msn.com.

WSBA:

The Collaborative Law committee of the WSBA is continuing to meet 1-2 times per month, and is charged with promoting all of the emerging dispute resolution methods, including Collaborative Law (with a big "C"). If you have ideas to contribute, just drop an email to Paul Lehto the chair at paul@lehtopenfield.com

The committee members are gathering resources from around the country and locally on resources available, looking at another symposium, broadening committee discussions on email to include any persons experienced in the area and interested in helping out, and discussing all manner of techniques and strategies for increasing use of emerging ADR methods. This may also possibly include a webcast video program explaining and promoting various methods, as well as events designed to bring more practitioners within the community of people committed to newer ADR.

The committee encourages your active participation and expectation that this is the 'real deal' with the support of the Board of Governors of the WSBA and even Washington Supreme Court Justices like Bobbe Bridge, that can allow Washington State to lead the country's bar associations in productive and dynamic new directions.

Regional Meeting:

Does it feel time to you for a regional collaborative law event(s)? Sound Collaboration has suggested the possibility of a regional quarterly meeting bringing Portland, Seattle, Spokane and Tacoma together. Possibly, could we plan for a regional meeting to be part

of a joint October training? If we don't link the regional meeting to an October 2005 meeting, September might be a good month as well. Are people interested in exploring the idea raised by Sound Collaboration? I'm willing to turn this into a project for myself if people are interested and would like me to coordinate.

Upcoming Local CLEs in Collaborative Law:

Sound Collaboration will be holding a mini-CLE at lunch time during its regular April 5, 2005 meeting. I (Stefani Quane) will be presenting on collaborative language: From Litigator to Collaborator: Changing from the Inside Out. This will be the same material that I will be presenting at the 13th Annual ADR conference later on April 29 and 30 in Seattle.

Marian Korn, of Toronto, Canada, a national trainer is being sponsored for back-to-back trainings in April, 2005. On April 12 to April 13th, she will be conducting an introduction training in the Seattle/Bellevue area (hosted by Washington Collaborative Law) and then on Thursday April 14th, she will conducting a more advanced training in the Olympia area for taking the next step towards building a collaborative practice (hosted by Sound Collaboration). Sound Collaboration intends to host a two-day event and is looking for another trainer or trainers for the second day of CLE which will be on April 15th. Don Desonier is one possible speaker. A Portland Collaborative lawyer might be asked to speak.

13th Annual NW Dispute Resolution Conference: Two collaborative law segments will be presented at the 13th Annual NW Dispute Resolution Conference to be held on Friday and Saturday April 29 and 30th, 2005. Marilyn Endriss (Seattle employment attorney) and Ken Dehn (Seattle business attorney and chair of the solo section of the King County Bar) will be presenting "Practicing Collaborative Law" at 3:00 Friday and I will be following at 4:30 on Friday with "Litigator to Collaborative: Changing from the Inside Out." Since collaborative law rests on the language principles developed by mediators, this would be an excellent conference for attorneys new to collaborative law.

Future CLEs in Washington

Sound Collaboration would like to work with Washington Collaborative Law to schedule a fall (possibly October 2005) training. Some ideas suggested include hosting Stu Webb to come to the West Coast and invite collaborators from Oregon, Washington and Canada.

Out-of-State CLEs

The newer (fancier) international website lost some function over the old one as far as listing information about upcoming trainings. (www.collaborativepractice.com). The old one listed all the trainings going on all across the country. The new one is more selective. I tried a Google search to get upcoming, closer CLE's. I was unsuccessful.

One suggestion I have is that for the national trainers in our area whose websites are out of date, you could email them for their upcoming schedules: CollaborativeDivorce out of Arizona; the Vancouver, Canada group; and Pauline Tesler and Chip Rose, both from California. They are easily found on Google.

Practice Development

A model for developing your collaborative law practice is Holly Hohlbein. She has roughly seven collaborative cases going on at the moment. Holly was at a CLE when I called to talk with her about her rapidly growing case load. I interviewed her assistant Maggie Wyer instead about how they are finding collaborative cases.

According to Maggie, the first thing that serves Holly well is that even when Holly is litigating, she strives to write letters in a demeanor that increases the odds of a settlement and does not flare up the situation. Holly is a good lawyer so her phone is already ringing with new client calls from referrals from past clients and other attorneys. What Maggie has noticed as she fields these incoming calls is that the potential clients will announce that they are interested in an amicable resolution. Maggie finds that “collaborative law” sells itself when she tells prospective clients about it. She makes her pitch once she gets a sense they want a more amicable approach. Her pitch goes like this: “Collaborative law is about the two lawyers and two clients sitting in a room and working it out. It gives you a chance to have more say in the process.” Maggie appears to be summarizing Judge Bridge very well.

Collaborative cases don’t just come to you. People wanting a gentler approach do. You sell collaborative law by offering it to clients already wanting something more amicable.