

Mediator Roster Society Priorities Identified for 2000

On December 7, 1999, the Mediator Roster Society's Board of Directors held a special strategy and planning session. At the session, the Directors reviewed the initiatives that had been undertaken during the past year and worked to establish priorities and map future directions for the Roster.

In their discussions, the Directors reaffirmed that the Society's primary mission is to foster the growth of mediation in British Columbia and to promote its understanding by the province's citizens. They agreed that the Society's main priorities for the coming year will be:

- ◆ Developing strategies for increasing mediation work for Roster members;
- ◆ Increasing consumer/public awareness of mediation and the Roster;
- ◆ Working to promote cooperation within the mediation community in British Columbia.

The Directors also explored the possibility of expanding the Roster and examined options for increasing the Society's existing resources. Discussion of both items is continuing. ❖

November 1999 Member Questionnaire

Thank you to all of you who responded to the Society's November 1999 Member Questionnaire requesting your thoughts and comments on the Mediator Roster .

Your feedback provided invaluable information for the Directors during their December planning session. ❖

New Developments

Throughout the fall and winter of 1999–2000, the Society has been continuing its work to develop and promote the Roster. Here are some of the highlights:

Promotional activities:

In January 2000 the Society launched a campaign to inform government offices and ministries about the Roster. To date, more than 50 offices have been contacted and over 2,000 Roster Society pamphlets have been distributed.

Both the Society and the Dispute Resolution Office, in its capacity as Secretariat for the Society, created a variety of media opportunities for informing the public about the Roster. The Roster was discussed at numerous

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Interaction 2000: "Pulling Together"

The Mediator Roster Society will be present as an exhibitor at the Network's national conflict resolution conference, "Pulling Together". Be sure to come by and visit our booth if you are attending!

The conference will be held in Vancouver at the University of British Columbia on June 10th – 13th. Detailed information on the program is available in the Network's brochure, *Interaction 2000: Pulling Together*. It can also be found on the Network website at: www.nicr.ca/i2000

Volunteers needed...

The Society's exhibit booth will need to be staffed throughout each day of the conference. We anticipate that it will be particularly busy before the sessions begin in the morning and during lunchtime. Please contact the Society office if you are able to help staff the booth during any of these times! ❖

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presentations and interviews, and was written about in several publications, including:

- ◆ Craven, Kirsten. "B.C. Notice to Mediate Process Set to Grow", *The Lawyers Weekly*, December 3, 1999.
- ◆ McEwan, Joan I. "ADR: Moving from Adversarial Litigation to Collaborative Dispute Resolution Models", *The Advocate* September 1999.
- ◆ Homeowner Protection Office. "Options for Resolving Residential Construction Disputes", 1999. (This publication is available free of charge on the HPO website at: www.hpo.bc.ca or at 1-800-407-7757).

Roster Society website:

Use of the Society's website by consumers continues to grow steadily. As of March 14, 2000, there were over 2,900 visitors to the site. A significant percentage of the visitors viewed the section "Selecting a Mediator" where members' individual entries are posted; many visitors performed searches for mediator information on the site's database.

A new section, "Upcoming Events", was added to the website in late February. The section provides up-to-date information on workshops, meetings, presentations and other events of interest to B.C. mediators. Activities hosted by MDABC and BCAMI are posted in this section.

As a recent letter to Roster members indicates, the Society has also responded to increasing consumer requests for information on mediators by expanding members' individual website entries. Roster mediators are now able to post details about their fees and expenses on the Society's site. ❖

Speaker's Bureau

A full set of speaking notes and accompanying handouts are now available to Roster members. Please let us know if you would like to receive a copy.

We encourage you to work with the Society in its promotional efforts by finding opportunities to speak about mediation and the Roster to business, educational or community groups in your area. Your participation will help all of us to move forward more quickly! ❖

New Members

The Board of Directors would like to welcome the following recently admitted Roster members:

**Alfred Henry Field
Jean M. Greatbatch
Eleanor A. Gregory
Peter S. K. Koh
Stan N. E. Lanyon
E. Wynn Lewis
Michael John Lomax
Roderick Nelson McNeil
Paul Guy Scambler
Gerhard E. Schauble
Maureen A. Sullivan
David Anthony Paul
Suzanne K. Wiltshire**

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The Board of Directors

The Roster Society is governed by a board of ten directors who set the rules and policies for establishing, developing and maintaining the Roster. Five of the directors are also members of the Roster Committee; their primary responsibility in this capacity is to review applications for admission. The directors are:

M. Jerry McHale (President)
Tom Kalpatoo (Vice-President)
Ron Tucker (Secretary)
Ron Smith (Treasurer)

Gordon Sloan (Chair, Roster Committee)
Catherine Morris (Vice Chair, Roster Committee)

**Peggy English
Michael Fogel
Marg Huber
Doug F. Robinson, Q.C.**

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More information on the new Roster members and Board of Directors can be found on the Society website at: <http://www.mediator-roster.bc.ca>

A Look Back at the Roster's First Year

The Roster's first year of operation was a busy time for the Society, and a number of projects were undertaken by both the Board of Directors and the Society's Secretariat, the Dispute Resolution Office:

- ◆ **Mediator Roster Administrator:** In November 1998, an administrative position was created to manage the Society's day-to-day operations. The Administrator's responsibilities include maintaining the Roster database and website, and responding to requests for information about Roster mediators.
- ◆ **Roster Society Database:** A searchable database containing detailed information on Roster mediators was created by the Society in the fall of 1998. The database produces a variety of reports for the public's use, tracks requests for mediators, and currently forms the basis for the Society's website directory of mediators.
- ◆ **Mediator Roster Pamphlet:** The Society produced a pamphlet, *Choosing Mediation*, describing the Roster and providing information on mediation. In the spring of 1999, the pamphlet was distributed province-wide to libraries, Community Law offices, Court Houses, Legal Services Society offices, L.S.S. Area Directors, and Native Community Law offices. Active distribution of the pamphlet continued throughout the year and to date almost 10,000 copies have been distributed.
- ◆ **Information Bulletin:** The Dispute Resolution Office, as Secretariat for the Roster Society, published an information bulletin, "The British Columbia Mediator Roster". The Bulletin was posted on the Ministry of Attorney General's website, and approximately 11,000 copies were distributed in a B.C. Law Society mailout.
- ◆ **Education and Promotion:** An extensive promotional campaign was conducted by the Dispute Resolution Office in the spring of 1999. An educational package was developed and presented to individuals and groups around the province.
- ◆ **Media Coverage:** On March 22, 1999, the Ministry of Attorney General announced the availability of Roster mediators in a provincial news release. The Roster was discussed and described in a number of publications throughout the year.
- ◆ **Speaker's Bureau:** A Speaker's Bureau was created by the Society in the spring of 1999. The Bureau consists of Roster mediators who are prepared to speak to interested business and community groups in the province.
- ◆ **Roster Society Website:** The Society website, featuring a searchable section on Roster members, was launched on May 20, 1999. The site was registered with the top 10 search engines on the Internet and a number of major mediation websites posted links to the Roster's site within its first few months of operation. The Department of Justice Canada listed the B.C. Mediator Roster Society in its *Directory of Dispute Resolution Neutrals*. The website was expanded shortly after its inception: sections were added for Roster mediators' profiles and links were created to members' personal websites.
- ◆ **Designation as a Roster Organization:** On June 22, 1999, the Attorney General designated the Mediator Roster Society a "Roster Organization" under the Notice to Mediate (Residential Construction) Regulation and Schedule 2 of the Homeowner Protection Act Regulation. The Society received the same designation under the Notice to Mediate Regulation for motor vehicle actions on March 2, 1999.
- ◆ **The Canadian Bar Association (BC Branch) Lawyers Directory:** In the fall of 1999, the CBA listed the names and contact points of all the mediators admitted to the Roster in their *2000 Lawyers Directory*. The listing appears in the Directory's "Professional Services" section.
- ◆ **Course Assessment Instrument:** In response to frequent requests for information about the acceptability of mediation courses, the Society worked during the fall of 1999 to develop a course assessment instrument which could be used to determine the degree to which courses conform to the Society's requirements. The instrument's development was completed in December 1999. ❖

What's New?

One of the main functions of the B.C. Mediator Roster Society office is to respond to questions about the Mediator Roster. Questions come from many different sources, including Roster members, potential applicants, and individuals, organizations and agencies seeking information about Roster mediators. The following are a few of the most frequently asked questions:

1. How many mediators are on the Roster?

As of March 14, 2000, there were 92 mediators on the Roster. The number is continually growing, with new mediators being admitted to the Roster on a regular basis. An up-to-date account of the number of Roster mediators is maintained on the Society website at: <http://www.mediator-roster.bc.ca/listall.cfm>

2. Is there a limit to the number of mediators who will be admitted to the Roster?

At this time, the Society has not considered limiting the number of mediators. It is believed that the need for mediators will increase as the public's use of mediation grows.

3. How does the B.C. Mediator Roster differ from the Supreme Court Roster?

In point of fact, there is no such entity as the Supreme Court Roster. When the concept of a provincial roster of mediators was initially being developed, some people in the legal and mediation community began to refer to it as "the Supreme Court Roster". With the establishment of the B.C. Mediator Roster Society in May 1998, the name for the roster became "B.C. Mediator Roster". In spite of this, the misnomer "Supreme Court Roster" has remained in usage in some circles. This name is not used by the Society because the Roster is intended for use in a wide range of disputes which includes, but is not limited to, disputes in the Supreme Court.

Other commonly-asked questions can be found on the Society website in the "What's New?" section, located at: <http://web4.pinc.com/cgi-bin/pressroom.cgi?id=13>

B.C. Mediation Umbrella

Last fall, representatives from MDABC (Richard Hart, Richard McGuigan and Sharon Kelly), BCAMI (David Robinson, Rob Thiessen and Patrick Williams) and the Mediator Roster (Jerry McHale and Peggy English) established a working group called the British Columbia Mediation Umbrella. Under the B.C. Mediation Umbrella the activities of the participating mediation organizations can be coordinated to ensure that the users of mediation services are well served by mediators practising in British Columbia.

The goals and objectives of the B.C. Mediation Umbrella are:

- ◆ to work together collaboratively to expand awareness of mediation and to promote the use of mediation in B.C.;
- ◆ to present a united front to the public, the government and other private and public institutions;
- ◆ to coordinate activities and strategies between organizations; and
- ◆ to enhance the credibility of mediators and the mediation process.

To accomplish these goals the following tasks will be undertaken:

- ◆ develop a common code of conduct and common standards of practice;
- ◆ develop common criteria for qualification and a common system for qualifying mediators, including common continuing education requirements (working subcommittee of Joseph Ravick, Terry Neiman and Peggy English);
- ◆ develop common criteria and mechanisms for discipline and censure, and consider a common disciplining body;
- ◆ identify criteria for becoming a "participating mediation organization";
- ◆ create a vehicle for implementing these tasks and coordinating the various mediation organizations (e.g. a college);
- ◆ conduct a public education campaign;
- ◆ act as a resource for inquiries and disseminating mediation information;
- ◆ develop protocols for sharing information and considering issues of common interest. ❖