

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FAMAC
(FAMILY MEDIATORS' ASSOCIATION OF THE CAPE)**

26 MARCH 2008

**CHAIRPERSONS' REPORT
Astrid Martalas & Terence Matzdorff**

This brief report summarises the activities of the Family Mediators' Association of the Cape for the period 29 March 2007 until 26 March 2008. The period 1 March 2007 until 28 February 2008 covers FAMAC's financial year. The treasurer's report is available in a separate document.

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2007

The executive committee for the past year comprised the following members:

Co-chairmen: Astrid Martalas and Terence Matzdorff

Treasurer: Megan Hendricks

Secretary: Craig Schneider

Additional committees and portfolios:

Education and training portfolio: Sue Folb and John O'Leary

Accreditation committee: Co-chairmen (Astrid Martalas, Terence Matzdorff), Education and training (Sue Folb, John O'Leary), Sheila Pollard and Craig Schneider (additional members)

Family Advocate portfolio: Craig Schneider

Administration and referrals: Craig Schneider and Joanne Smith

Law society portfolio: Terence Matzdorff

Ad hoc: Various *ad hoc* committees were formed during the year.

2. MEETINGS

Monthly meetings took place throughout the year on the last Wednesday of each month, excluding July and December. The meetings were held at various venues from 19h00 – 21h00. Each meeting was open to all members whether accredited or not. The meetings comprised business matters, a speaker/presentation as well as case discussions. Having a speaker/presentation was introduced this year and proved to be both popular and informative.

Meetings were better attended than ever before and the venues were at times too small. Thank you very much to all of the various persons who hosted the meetings. The question of where meetings will take place in the future, will need attention from the incoming executive committee.

3. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Annual co-mediation training programme: Due to the increased demand for and interest in mediation, two 40 hour training sessions were held this year. During August/September 2007, 19 participants completed the course. In February 2008, 24 participants completed the course. Total: **43** participants.

Mediation training for Family Advocates: Three 3-day courses were offered to Family Advocates from around the country in November and January. A total of **111** Family Advocates and Counsellors were trained by Sue Folb and John O'Leary. Craig Schneider and Juana Horn assisted with the training.

Under the banner of the Law Society, Craig Schneider raised the awareness of FAMAC amongst legal practitioners around the country by assisting in training

of legal practitioners in the new Children's Act: 50 people in Kimberley, 120 in Johannesburg. 100 in Durban and 45 in Cape Town. Total: **315** people.

Workshops:

- 17 November 2007: Adv. Janet McCurdie and Lee Pettygrew (psychologist) spoke on the new Children's Act.
- 15 March 2008: Omri Geffen, a mediator from Israel led the workshop on Transformative Mediation.

Annual Family Law Conference 2008 (Miller du Toit Cloete and UWC): The profile of FAMAC was raised considerably during this year's conference. An entire session was devoted to Mediation and Facilitation. Both Craig Schneider and Astrid Martalas were speakers at the conference. It was noted that during the conference, several speakers made reference to FAMAC.

The trainers are the backbone of FAMAC. Without them, FAMAC would collapse and I propose a special vote of thanks to all those who have been involved in training and particularly Sue, John and Craig.

4. FAMILY ADVOCATE MEDIATIONS

FAMAC continues to assist the Office of the Family Advocate with Mediation. Whereas in the past this was done on a *pro bono* basis, funds have been made available by the Department of Justice and, since June 2007, accredited FAMAC mediators are now being paid for this service. The Arbitration Forum administers the mediations. These mediations offer newly trained mediators an excellent opportunity for acquiring the necessary experience for accreditation.

A total of **246** mediations have been entered into by accredited FAMAC members since June 2007.

The fact that there is a steady flow of paid work, has been extremely positive for FAMAC and Craig must be congratulated for getting this scheme off the ground and for his and Joanne's daily hands-on involvement with it.

5. MARKETING AND ADMINISTRATION

The FAMAC website is up and running: www.famac.co.za

The FAMAC e-mail address is: info@famac.co.za

The new logo was introduced last year and has found wide acceptance amongst FAMAC members and the wider legal fraternity

FAMAC: a brand name:

In Divorce Orders, the appointment of post-divorce facilitators are referred to the chairman of FAMAC should the parties in a divorce not be able to come to agreement on a facilitator.

As mentioned before, a number of speakers at the Family Law Conference 2008 referred to FAMAC. No other mediation organizations were mentioned or represented at the conference.

Craig Schneider and Astrid Martalas spoke under the banner of FAMAC at the Family Law Conference

Increased demand for mediation training by FAMAC has resulted in two training programmes being run this year

Ever increasing numbers of calls to the FAMAC offices requesting mediation.

FAMAC has been invited to join a workshop under the auspices of the Law Reform Commission to provide input on strategies for the development and management of family/divorce mediation in South Africa.

6. GENERAL

The past year has probably been FAMAC's busiest and most successful. With this success comes the challenge of "where to from here?" Will there be a national mediation body and will we be a part of it? Will FAMAC open an office which is staffed? What are the financial implications? Does FAMAC need a part-time bookkeeper?

Clearly also the need exists for the organisation to be more tightly run and possibly also for constitutional changes. Elmarie has done work on the constitution, for which she must be thanked.

Mediation is more firmly established in the local landscape than ever before and FAMAC must now try and capitalise on this.

It has been our privilege to be this year's co-chairs. We look forward to continuing our involvement from the sidelines and remain committed to the great crowd of people who make up FAMAC.

Astrid Martalas & Terence Matzdorff

Cape Town

26 March 2008