

## CONNECTING THE VIRGINIA MEDIATION COMMUNITY

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY JENNIFER PHILLIPS

My goal in this brief column is to share the good work your VMN Board is doing on behalf of the membership. The Board is engaged on many different fronts right now and I am excited by the report I can provide you.

First, I want to thank Ron Avery for his service as the VMN Treasurer from Fall 2012-Fall 2013. Ron also served on the legislative committee before taking on the role of Treasurer. At this time the Board welcomes Bob Carpenter as the new VMN Treasurer. To learn more about Bob, and the other new VMN Board members, see page 3 or visit the VMN website.

In regards to training and education of mediators across the State, Mone' Ardura and her committee are well underway in planning the Spring Conference to be held at the University of Richmond on March 1, 2014. This conference will include a Bookzone discussion (See page 8.) The morning session will feature Stephen Kotev, who will be presenting a thought provoking session on safety issues for mediators. The afternoon session will convene a panel discussion on best practices in mediation. There will also be a 2-hour ethics course dealing with advertising and social media ethical challenges in mediation. Make sure you "Save the Date". (See page 4.)

Speaking of best practices, new Board Member Dave Deal is spearheading an effort to examine mediator standards of practice. This has attracted a great deal of attention that we will be hearing much more about in the coming months.

I hope you have had the opportunity to visit VMN's new website [www.vmediation.org](http://www.vmediation.org). I want to thank Erin Bishop for her hard work in updating the look of the VMN page. I also want to recognize Karen Richards for staying on as our newsletter editor. This will be her second year in this role which will allow her the opportunity to make further improvements to this service. If you have any ideas, please share them with her. I also want to thank the VMN administrative office for supporting each of these efforts.

Legislatively, as you may already know, a task force is being assembled to examine mediator compensation for court-referred cases. (See page 10.) This group will be convening in early 2014 to begin exploring this charge.



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There are several Board members who are currently dedicating a great deal of time researching the many issues that must be addressed so the first task force meeting is productive and focused. I am encouraged to report VMN received a healthy response from the membership for service on the task force. The membership will be kept informed of task force progress. Most of these updates will be posted to the VMN list serve. If you are currently not on the list serve and you are a VMN member, please contact the VMN office to have your name added to the list.

There is one thing all members can do right now to support the good work I have highlighted above. Please renew your VMN membership. A strong professional organization is truly the foundation of any legislative effort that VMN may pursue. **Here's a special membership renewal bonus:** If you renew your membership before January 31, 2014, your name will be entered into a drawing for one (1) free conference registration which can be used for either the Spring or Fall 2014 Conference. (See page 4.)

The VMN Board is often asked the question why membership can't be prorated for those who decide to renew half way through the year or right before a conference. The answer is simple. We are not a large enough organization to be able to accommodate this kind of proration or to keep track of memberships that begin and end on different dates throughout the year. By renewing your membership now (beginning in December 2013), your membership will be valid until December 31, 2014. Visit [www.vamediation.org](http://www.vamediation.org) to EASILY renew and have your name entered into the drawing.

I want to thank the VMN Board members for all they are doing to serve our mediation community. It is an honor to serve the mediation community in Virginia.

Jennifer Phillips  
VMN President

## Time to Renew Your Dues for 2014!

Your 2014 Membership Application will be mailed in December.  
If you prefer—you can renew today online by [clicking here](#).

We have many exciting things planned for 2014—be sure to tell a friend or colleague about the value in becoming a member!

## Welcome to the New VMN Board Members

Bob Carpenter was elected at the VMN Board's November Board meeting to fill the unexpired term of Board Treasurer Chair Ron Avery, who resigned from the Board. David Deal and Betty Russo were elected to 2-year terms at the VMN Annual Membership meeting held during the 2013 Fall Conference.

### Treasurer : Robert 'Bob' Carpenter (Winchester)

Bob is the principal of Vantage Mediation, LLC, which he formed in 2008 after retiring as an executive with the Farm Credit System. Bob is a Virginia Certified Mediator in J & DR, General District and Circuit Court Family Mediation. He serves as the coordinator for the Frederick County/Winchester City General District Court. He regularly accepts court referrals and conducts private mediation for couples as well as corporate clients. Bob has facilitated strategic planning sessions for non-profits, cooperatives and corporate clients.



Bob is a graduate of Virginia Tech and operated the family farm which he and his wife purchased in 1981. The farm has been in his family since 1925 and currently produces hay as its primary product.

You can reach Bob at : (540) 662-1179

### Standards of Practice Committee Chair: David Deal (Northern Virginia)

With an engineering background, David's career weaves together environmental, energy and natural resources law, with a current focus on mediation and restorative justice. He's an experienced advocate, adept at multi-party facilitation and consensus building, accustomed to handling highly technical public policy matters, and an accomplished dispute resolution practitioner, handling mediation and restorative justice cases as well as serving as a trainer or mentor and supervisor with the Northern Virginia Mediation Service.



His job experience includes the organization he founded, Deal Consulting & Dispute Resolution and its spinoff, DealWork; a stint at Fulbright & Jaworski, specializing in energy and natural resources; nearly three decades serving as Director of Office of General Counsel for the American Petroleum Institute; and short stints early on as a lawyer the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. David received his Juris Doctorate from George Washington University and a Bachelor of Civil Engineering from Villanova.

You can reach David at: (703) 750-3188

### Conference Committee: Betty Russo (Tidewater)

Betty is a Member at Betty Russo Law, P.C. which includes a Mediation Division. She is a Virginia Certified Mediator in General District Court and J&DR Court. She served as Committee Clerk for Militia, Police and Public Safety Committee in the Virginia House of Delegates for the 2012 session.



Betty is a former teacher, realtor, and currently volunteers for CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate) with Portsmouth Friends of the Court. She received her Juris Doctorate from Regent University School of Law, her Master's in Education from the College of William & Mary and a Bachelor of Administration in Political Science from Virginia Tech.

You can reach Betty at: (757) 478-0059

## Membership Renewal: You Could Win a Conference Pass for 2014

With 2013 fast coming to a close, thoughts turn to winter, the holidays and renewing your annual membership to VMN.

This year, the VMN Board is “sweetening” the deal. If you renew your membership before January 31, 2014, your name will be entered into a drawing for a free conference pass to either the Spring or Fall 2014 VMN Conference. The drawing will be held in early February so the winner can choose to attend the March 1, 2014 Spring Conference at the University of Richmond or the 2014 Fall Conference weekend.

VMN membership runs on the calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

[Click the “renew” button now for a chance to win a 2014 conference pass.](#)



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## Board Member News



VMN Board Member [Jane Dittmar](#) was elected to the Albermarle County Board of Supervisors, Scottsville District seat, in the November election. She was sworn in on Veteran’s Day, November 11, 2013. Congratulations, Jane, and good luck!

The VMN Board would like to say thank you to [Ron Avery](#) for his hard work as Treasurer and Chair of the Legislative Committee. Ron is stepping down from the Board. You are much appreciated, Ron.

## Board Members Make Progress on Strategic Planning Process

When Paula Marie Young became VMN President in October 2012, she asked the Board to launch a new strategic planning process. It had been many years since the organization had looked at where it has been, where it is now and where it is going. Young, current President Jennifer Phillips, and Board Member Jane Dittmar served on the Strategic Planning Committee for purposes of designing the process. Young began the process by engaging in hour-long interviews with each of the Board members using an Appreciative Inquiry format. She then interviewed about half of those who had served VMN as President, some of whom served when the organization first came into existence. From those interviews, she prepared a 28-page summary for current Board members. A sample of the questions she asked appears at the end of this article.

In anticipation of the January 2013 retreat, Young assembled corporate documents, historical reports on membership and finances, as well as other background material for distribution to Board members. The group met for the day long retreat in Charlottesville, VA. Young identified the following outcomes for the process:

- Develop a vision statement.
- Develop a mission statement.
- Develop of shared understanding of who we want to become.
- Develop goals and strategies that leverage our assets to implement our mission.
- Develop priorities and draft a three year plan.
- Develop a 2013-2014 action plan.
- Develop measurable outcomes that will help us assess whether our strategies and projects are helping us meet our goals. Create the feedback loop we need to assess our performance.
- Create a “big picture” that allows committee chairs the guidance they need to work autonomously with confidence. Allow them to design projects that align with our mission and goals.



By the end of the planning retreat, the Board had developed drafts of VMN’s first vision and mission statements. Up to that time, VMN had had only a “corporate purpose” statement. The next step required the Board to develop goals implementing the statements.

Over the following 12-month period, Board members, working by phone and electronically, have drafted a set of goals. Board members will continue the strategic planning process during President Phillips’ term, expanding the identified goals into strategies and actions to achieve by specified deadlines. As soon as the Board completes the process, it will share its work product with members.

Past-President Young said: “I was blessed with a very active and dedicated group of Board members who devoted over 20 hours to the strategic planning process this past year. We are getting greater clarity about our purpose, resources, opportunities, and challenges.

*Continued on page 6*

We have a very thoughtful and reflective group of VMN leaders, many of whom – including Karen Assaro (who signed the incorporation documents for VMN in 1990) – have dedicated many, many hours to growing and strengthening our organization. Board members want VMN to adapt and move forward to serve our members and the Virginia Mediation community as effectively as possible.”

### Sample of Interview Questions:

1. Recall a time when you participated in an event or activity sponsored by the Virginia Mediation Network (VMN) – a time when you felt most inspired, energized, challenged, alive, involved, and excited. When you and others seemed to be highly engaged. When VMN was most alive to you.
  - Tell me that story.
  - What made the experience exceptional?
  - What was happening?
  - What were you feeling?
  - Who was involved?
  - What were other people doing that contributed to creating this exceptional experience for you?
  - What did you contribute to creating this experience?
2. What would you identify as the core values of VMN?
  - What is the core value (life-giving force; essence; underlying principle) that gives VMN vitality – the one thing without which VMN would just not be the same? Would make it totally different than it currently is?
  - What do you most value about VMN?
  - When have members been really happy and satisfied with VMN?
  - From your perspective, what does VMN most value in its members?
3. What first attracted you to your work as a dispute resolution professional?
  - What excited you about the field?
  - What continues to excite you about the field?
4. Recall the very best leadership team you ever worked on or with.
  - Tell me that story.
  - What made that team exceptional?
  - Who was involved?
  - What were other people doing that contributed to creating that exceptional team?
  - What did you contribute to creating that exceptional team?
5. The future of an organization is affected by the images we hold. Our images are often expressed in our dreams, desires, and hopes for the future. Looking forward toward the future, what is VMN being called to become?
6. What three wishes do you have for the future of VMN?

## Geetha Ravindra Receives Distinguished Mediator Award



Congratulations to Geetha Ravindra who received the Distinguished Mediator Award at the Virginia Mediation Network (VMN)'s 2013 Annual Fall Training Conference held at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg.

Geetha is an attorney and mediator with over twenty years of experience in the field of Alternative Dispute Resolution. She is currently the mediator for the International Monetary Fund. Geetha served as Director of the Department of Dispute Resolution Services at the Supreme Court of Virginia and has been an adjunct professor at the University of Richmond School of Law and at the College of William and Mary Law School teaching courses in mediation. A Past President of VMN, Geetha has mediated family cases for over 15 years and provides assistance to Indian families dealing with difficult marital issues. She recently published a book, *Shaadi Remix – Transforming the Traditional Indian Marriage* (Wheatmark, Tucson, AZ: 2013), on this topic. She also provides communication and conflict resolution training.

VMN's Distinguished Mediator Award recognizes a prominent member of the mediation community in Virginia who demonstrates personal and professional commitment to advancing peaceful conflict resolution. VMN recognizes recipients for one or more of the following qualities:

- leadership in promoting and advancing the field of mediation;
- innovation in the development of mediation programs or creative applications of mediation;
- significant published writings on the subject of mediation;
- exemplary pro bono mediation service;
- cutting-edge advanced mediation training; or problem solving.

Recipients must exemplify personal and professional integrity and respect for others, as well as demonstrated commitment to continuing growth of high quality mediation in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**CHECK OUT OUR NEW,  
RE-DESIGNED WEBSITE:  
[WWW.VAMEDIATION.ORG](http://WWW.VAMEDIATION.ORG)**

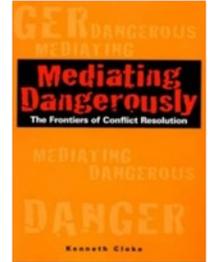
## Check Out the 2014 BOOKZONE Selections

### 2014 Spring Conference BOOKZONE

#### Mediating Dangerously - The Frontiers of Conflict Resolution

by Kenneth Cloke (2001), 237 pages

In this book, the author shows conflict resolution professionals how to advance beyond the traditional steps, procedures, and techniques of mediation to unveil its invisible heart and soul and to reveal the subtle and sensitive engine that drives the process of personal and organizational transformation.



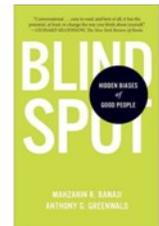
*Mediating Dangerously – The Frontiers of Conflict Resolution* is a major contribution to the literature of the conflict resolution field and it will inspire and educate professionals in the field for years to come.

### 2014 Fall Conference BOOKZONE

#### Blindspot: The Hidden Biases of Good People

by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald (2013), 169 pages

In *Blindspot*, the authors reveal hidden biases based on their experience with the Implicit Association Test, a method that has revolutionized the way scientists learn about the human mind. It gives us a glimpse into what lies within the metaphoric blindspot.



The title's "good people" are those of us who strive to align our behavior with our intentions. The aim of *Blindspot* is to explain the science in plain enough language to help well-intentioned people achieve that alignment. By gaining awareness, we can adapt beliefs and behavior and "outsmart the machine" in our heads so we can be fairer to those around us. Venturing into this book is an invitation to understand our own minds.

[Click Here](#) to Buy these Books from Amazon.

## Save the Date!

### VMN Spring Conference

University of Richmond, Saturday March 1, 2014

Morning : Stephen Kotev, "Safety in Mediation"

Afternoon : Best Practices Panel & Ethics Session



## Fall 2013 VMN Conference A Great Success

This year's conference theme was "Dialogues Across Divides" and was co-sponsored with the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) at Eastern Mennonite University. Conference participants had the opportunity to experience the expertise of EMU faculty and students.



Dr. Howard Zehr and Dr. Carl Stauffer provided a moving plenary session entitled "Putting a Face on the Other". The presentation captured everyone's attention by beginning with a student improvisational group that provoked thinking about the importance of humanizing those we consider to be different than us.

During VMN's Annual Members Meeting, Geetha Ravindra received the Distinguished Mediator Award, which is presented annually. (See page 7.)



VMN also hosted a dinner on Saturday night that provided networking, good food, and laughs as our presenters for the evening explored the issue of the appropriate use of humor in mediation.



VMN wishes to thank the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding in co-sponsoring this event with our organization and gratitude to all the speakers who made this quality training possible to the mediation community in Virginia.



On a final note, the evaluations of the conference revealed great interest by attendees in the continuing study options available through CJP for peace-making professionals. To learn more about CJP's summer institute programs, please go to <http://www.emu.edu/cjp/spi/>

You can also access information on the STAR program (trauma awareness program), Restorative Justice Program, and graduate programs by going to <http://www.emu.edu/cjp/>



## Task Force to Study Feasibility of Mediator Pay Increase Proposal

At its Annual Meeting on September 28, 2013, a majority of the VMN membership approved a resolution to appoint a task force to look at the feasibility of proposing to the state legislature an increase in court mediation pay.

VMN member Bob Carpenter offered the resolution (Bob is now on the VMN Board serving as Treasurer) to increase court mediator pay to a level that is consistent with the professional service that mediators provide to the tax payers of the Commonwealth.

After discussion, the original proposal was revised and approved as follows:

“Now be it resolved, the Members of the Virginia Mediation Network have declared its Board of Directors, or any special task force the Board may appoint, launch a two-step process to investigate, research and report back to membership on the decision to advocate the Virginia General Assembly for an increase in Mediator pay to a level consistent with the professional service that Mediators provide to the Commonwealth.”

The VMN Board is forming a task force from the membership and Board members and plan to meet in early 2014. According to VMN President Jennifer Phillips, “I am encouraged to report we received a healthy response from the membership for service on the task force.”



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## Featured Mediation, Arbitration, and Collaborative Practice Bloggers

Take a look at these links to some featured blog posts on ADR-related topics. This second offering suggests the following bloggers, some with an international reach:

- Lee Jay Berman, Eye on Conflict, <http://eyeonconflict.com/> (mostly commercial mediation and training).
- Alberto Elisavetsky, ODR LatinoAmerica, <http://odrlatinoamerica.ning.com/profiles/blogs/carta-a-un-amigo-dr-pier-paolo-balladelli-representante-ops-oms> (South American Spanish language blog).
- Karen Hollet, Reasonable Person Model, <http://therpmpproject.blogspot.ca/> (Canadian blogger focusing on mindful communication).
- Regina Kim and others, ICCCR Science-Practice Blog, The Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, <http://icccr.tc.columbia.edu/category/blog/> (conflict theory).
- Shaun Lee and others, Singapore International Arbitration Blog, <http://singaporeinternationalarbitration.com/> (Asian arbitration news).
- Jeff Murphy, Kalamazoo Divorce Lawyer Blog, <http://timmediation.com/wordpress/> (divorce mediation).
- Louis Phillips-Senft and others, Being Relational, Blog of Baltimore Mediation Blog, <http://baltimoremediation.blogspot.com/> (transformative mediator and trainer).
- Phyllis Pollack, LA Alternative Dispute Resolution Blog, <http://www.pgpmmediation.com/blog/> (various topics).
- Dick Price, Texas Collaborative Law Blog, <http://texascollaborativelaw.blogspot.com/> (recognized as top divorce blog).
- Sabine Walsh and others, Kluwer Mediation blog, <http://kluwermediationblog.com/> (various mediation topics).
- Jeremy Zell and others, Kluwer Arbitration Blog, <http://kluwerarbitrationblog.com/> (arbitration).
- Michael A. Zeytoonian, Dispute Resolution Counsel, <http://www.disputeresolutioncounsel.com/blog/> (advice for mediation parties and their legal counsel).