On behalf of the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, I hope you enjoy this latest addition of the Lighthouse. Bob Sidweber has done a great job of directing this year’s edition for which I want to express my great thanks and appreciation.

This have been an eventful year to date. After substantial and protracted negotiations, the Chapter and the Family Law Section have agreed on a three year extended contract for the operation of the Section’s Board Certification Review Course, for the years 2012-2014. We are very pleased with the extended agreement, as it provides for a detailed and clarified structure and arrangement of the duties and responsibilities between the Section and Chapter, and provides for an enhanced financial package to the Chapter for taking on the financial responsibilities of the Board Certification Review Course. Operation of the financial responsibility of Board Certification has been of significant financial benefit for the Chapter over the past two years and I expect that the extended contract and the terms of the financial relationship set forth in the contract will continue to enhance our financial solvency. The partnership of the Section and the academy has been particularly fruitful and financially remunerative for both groups and has been an excellent opportunity to encourage and foster the mutual goals and directives of both organizations.

The Chapter’s Fall Retreat in conjunction with the Florida Bar Family Law Section at the Casa Marina in Key West on September 30 through October 2, 2010 was a smashing success. I particularly want to thank the invaluable help and assistance of Susan Stafford throughout the one year planning stage for the retreat. Between an intimate retreat dinner on the gorgeous and historic grounds of the Audubon House, walking tours around the picturesque downtown area of Key West, and a jet ski adventure for the more adventurous of our group, we received nothing but positive feed back on the retreat. Section events included a scavenger hunt in old town Key West, along with a jointly attended and engagingly raucous battle of the bartenders throwdown. I hope the joint retreat provided a great opportunity to catch up on old friendships and forge new ones as well.

Other important Chapter news include the welcome of our new Fellow, Jonathan Root. We include a short biographical section in this issue and wish to extend our
congratulations and warm welcome to Jonathan as he initiates his fellowship in the Chapter. I want to encourage all Fellows to reach out to Jonathon and welcome him into the Chapter.

Also, of note, the Florida Chapter was well represented at the National meeting in Chicago on November 4-6, 2010. The Chapter enjoyed a luncheon at 110 Bistro. Outgoing National President, Marlene Moses, was kind enough to attend the luncheon and offer an outgoing message of thanks and appreciation to the Florida Chapter for our continued participation and National Committee work and meetings. On that note, seminars and meetings were also well attended and provided an excellent continuing legal educational opportunity.

Speaking of National, I want to make a personal overture to all our Fellows to contribute to the National hourly billing campaign and to become a lifetime member of the AAML National Foundation. The National Foundation is the charitable arm of the National Academy and generously underwrites and provides charitable donations to a numerable, worthy organizations and individuals around the country associated with Family Law issues. The endowment has increased by several hundred thousand dollars over the last several years as a result of the hourly billing campaign, which is just that simple: every Fellow is encouraged to provide an hour of their billable time to the foundation. I encourage our Fellows to reach out and contribute in this regard, and to become lifetime members of the foundation. The lifetime membership is $1,500 over ten years. Both the lifetime membership and billable hour campaign are excellent ways to contribute to the Academy on a national level and help the disadvantaged and needy of our society.

Lastly, Board Certification Review and the 2011 Institute are just around the horizon. The Florida Bar Family Law Section Board Certification seminar is January 27th-29th, 2011 at the Yacht and Beach Club Resort in Disney. We encourage your attendance. The 2011 Institute, scheduled for April 28th-30th at the Rosen Shingle Creek, is the highly capable hands of Jorge Cestero and his Committee. Jorge has several national level speakers scheduled and new ideas in the works, and I am sure the Institute will be a great success.

Here’s to a great 2011!

Dave Manz
This is OUR Institute and we need everyone’s help to make it a success. To that end, if you have any recommendations for speakers and topics, please send them to Institute Chair Jorge Cestero at jcestero@sasserlaw.com.
Florida Chapter Summer Retreat      Key West, Florida      Sep 30-Oct 3, 2010
Put a Cork in it! by Gordon C. Brydger

Champagne

With the holidays recently behind us, I thought it would be a good time to discuss one of the most versatile wines ever created – Champagne. Champagne can be drunk with chicken, meat, fish, pasta, or just about any food.

By now most people know that only sparkling wines from the Champagne region of France may legally be called Champagne. All others made elsewhere, no matter where, must be labeled as “sparkling wines”. (Spain calls their Sparkling Wine “Cava”).

If the wine is Champagne, only 3 grape varieties are allowed to be used in its production: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, or Pinot Meunier. Sparkling wine made outside of Champagne can consist of any grape variety that the winemaker chooses. For ease however, unless indicated specifically, I will use Champagne to mean both “Champagne” and “Sparkling Wine”.

Vintage Champagne (you can tell its vintage if there is a year on the label), must come entirely from grapes harvested from the same vintage year.

Non-vintage Champagne (approximately 75% of all Champagne produced) can be blended from as many different years and varieties of grapes as the winemaker sees fit. The goal is for the producer to develop a consistency in taste and in style from year to year. Generally speaking, non-vintage Champagne is less expensive than vintage. Even so, there are excellent non-vintage Champagnes that taste “better” than vintage Champagnes.

There are 4 levels of sweetness of Champagnes that can be identified by certain words on the label:

- Brut – has no noticeable sweetness. This type is the most prevalent.
- Extra Dry – this wine is slightly sweet and not as dry as Brut.
- Sec – is a relatively sweet wine, sweeter than Extra Dry.
- Demi-Sec – is a sweet sparkling wine often used to accompany dessert or as dessert all by itself.

Champagne that is made with 100% Chardonnay, (white grapes) is called Blanc de Blancs.

Champagne labeled Blanc de Noirs is made entirely of black grapes – either Pinot Noir or Pinot Meunier (usually a blend of the 2 grape varieties).

A Champagne labeled Rosé is produced either by adding red still wine to the bottle, or by macerating the juice with red grape skins.

So the next time you feel like having a bottle of Champagne (it’s not just for celebrations you know), don’t let all the terms confuse or stress you out. Just do what I do, close your eyes and grab one! – Cheers!
Remember When?

Retreats of the past...
The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Florida Chapter is proud to welcome our new Fellow, Jonathan S. Root. Jonathan is a Florida Bar Board Certified Marital and Family Law attorney whose office is located at 2000 Glades Road, Suite 412, Boca Raton, Florida. Mr. Root became Board Certified in Marital and Family Law by The Florida Bar in 2002. Jonathan Root is a graduate of Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts (B.A., 1989) and St. Thomas University School of Law, Miami, Florida (J.D. 1992). He was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1992 and is licensed to practice in the State of Florida before the Florida Circuit Courts as well as the U.S. District Courts for the Southern District of Florida.

He is a member of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association, Palm Beach Bar Association, The American Bar Associations and the Family Law Section for The Florida Bar. He has been featured in Florida Trend Legal Elite magazine as one of the top family lawyers in Florida.

Jonathan is married to his wife, Elisa and they have two children. He enjoys playing tennis and golf and spending time with his family.