

# THE MEDIATOR

Mediation Offices of Michael Becker, Esq.  
*Experience Matters*

*Spring 2008 Edition*

## This Month in...

In March 1972, John Lennon and Yoko Ono were served with deportation papers.

## Quote Me on It

"Is there a greater miracle than to see through another's eyes, even for an instant?"

*Henry David Thoreau*

## We're Online!

After much ado, we finally have our website up at [www.michaelbecker.net](http://www.michaelbecker.net). Check it out from time to time for useful information and news. We'll still be publishing this newsletter, as well as maintaining the site. See you online!

## Contact us @

t: 203.454.4270  
f: 203.454.4467  
e: [michael@michaelbecker.net](mailto:michael@michaelbecker.net)  
i: [www.michaelbecker.net](http://www.michaelbecker.net)

All articles written by Michael Becker  
© 2008 Mediation Offices of Michael Becker  
All rights reserved.

## Key Legal Development:

### Connecticut Enforces Prenup

The Connecticut Supreme Court in *Friezo v. Friezo* has raised the bar for challenging prenups.

In this case, it was the wife who wanted the pre-nup set aside. At first, the trial court deemed the pre-nup unenforceable. It cited the husband's insufficient financial disclosure and the wife's lack of meaningful consultation with counsel before signing the pre-nup.

The husband appealed, and ultimately the Connecticut Supreme Court sided with him. In this landmark decision, the Court maintained that even though the husband provided

ambiguous and somewhat incomplete financial disclosure, the wife had independent knowledge of his finances — and this was sufficient. And even though the wife's attorney worked in the same firm as the husband's attorney — and was referred by the husband — the Court did not find this a conflict such as to invalidate the pre-nup.

Finally, the wife asserted that she had insufficient time to review the pre-nup before signing. Rejecting this claim, the Court suggested that the wife could have postponed the wedding until she had time to understand the pre-nup.

## Marital Satisfaction:

### Mental Health Matters

The American Psychological Association reports that certain aspects of marital partners' mental health can predict marital satisfaction.

This study showed that each partner's levels of depression and anxiety predicted not only his or her own marital satisfaction level — but that of his or her partner as well. The more anxious or depressed either spouse was, the lower his or her marital satisfaction. Interestingly,

depression in one spouse greatly affected both partners' satisfaction, while anxiety in one spouse had much less effect on the other. This may be because people living with depressed individuals sometimes report feeling burdened by their partner.

The researchers emphasized that these findings demonstrate how important it is for therapists to evaluate each spouse for depression and anxiety when clients report marital problems.

## Money Stuff: Maxing out Retirement

Mick Jagger will be 65 this year (really). And it's no secret that baby boomers have, as a group, been poor savers. As this huge group enters retirement age, saving for retirement has received lots of media ink.

So it's good to know the annual contribution limits for many common retirement vehicles — such as 401(K)s and IRAs — some of which are increased for tax year 2008.

For example, the 2008 limit for traditional and Roth IRAs has jumped 25%, from \$4,000 to \$5,000. And the annual limit for SEP-IRAs has jumped \$1,000 to \$46,000 (or 25% of compensation, whichever is less). By contrast, most annual contribution limits for 401(K)s and 403(B)s remain at \$15,500. There are also additional 'catch up' contributions those over 50 can make to fast track savings.

While some of these increases seem small, any retirement specialist will tell you that with compounding over the years, every little bit counts, and the earlier saved, the better!

## Tools & Tips

Why do so many people divorce? Maybe it's because they don't discuss their expectations for the marriage before they marry.

In *The Hard Questions*, Susan Piver poses 100 questions — covering money, work, sex and family — people might discuss before getting into a committed relationship.



On money, for example, she suggests partners ask each other "how much do we spend?" and "how much do we want to be able to spend?" And on house and home, she suggests "who's responsible for food shopping?" and "who prepares meals?"

No, this tiny book won't win any literary awards! But it's a useful tool to help prospective mates have discussions they might not otherwise about their expectations for the relationship. And maybe, just maybe, there would be one fewer divorce.

**Michael Becker, Esq.** is an attorney and former accountant practicing mediation full-time in Westport, CT. One of the most experienced mediators in our area, he is a founding Director and two-time President of the CT Council for Divorce Mediation. Michael is an ACR Advanced Practitioner Member, a CT Bar Foundation James W. Cooper Fellow, and a Master's Degree candidate in Fairfield University's Marriage and Family Therapy Program.

RESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 100  
NEWTOWN, CT

Michael Becker, Attorney Mediator  
Westport, Connecticut 06880  
One Kings Highway North  
Michael Becker, LLC