

# FLORIDA ASSOCIATION FOR COUPLES IN MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

March 2010  
Vol. 14 No. 1

**Save the Date**  
**September 17 – 19, 2010**  
**Hutchinson Island Marriott Resort**  
<http://tinyurl.com/ygk15ry>

Florida Better Marriages presents:  
**Red Carpet Romance**  
a Weekend Celebration

Join us for **Red Carpet Romance**, a weekend celebration of your award-winning marriage. The weekend will provide skill building workshops to improve and strengthen your relationships and celebrate your successes. This is a wonderful chance for you and your partner to feel connected and energized!



- Six workshop choices will provide opportunities to enhance your relationship skills and explore your marriage.
- Mini-retreat will be held on Friday for couples new to Better Marriages so that they are free to participate fully in the events on Saturday and Sunday.
- Couples Mentoring Training program will be offered. Led by trained Ohio couple, Kim & Keith Huffman, this program will provide in-depth instruction to equip non-professional couples who want to become mentors to other couples. Certification will be given to all couples who complete the training.
- Fun new group activities will ignite new friendships and strengthen current ones.
- Saturday night's Celebrity Dinner will be a red-carpet affair to remember!
- Enjoy the beautiful location and wonderful amenities of the Hutchinson Island Marriott Beach Resort located on the Atlantic Ocean in Stuart, Florida. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/ygk15ry> to learn more about this beautiful resort.

*Advance registration for the **Red Carpet Romance** Celebration will be available soon – watch your e-mails for more information.*

*But in the meantime, be sure to....**SAVE THE DATE!!***

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## ACME Becomes Better Marriages

Priscilla Hunt, Executive Director

In 1973, David and Vera Mace founded Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment. Within a few years, the Board of Directors began exploring the possibility of changing the organization's name. Already they had noticed that when people heard ACME they thought of the brick company or the roadrunner. *Beep! Beep!*

For most of its 37 year history, ACME has struggled with its name. Over a several year period, your national Board of Directors has engaged in hours of face-to-face meetings, email exchanges and conference calls to explore name options. We discovered that several of our state chapters were leading the way in emphasizing *Better Marriages* and getting away from the use of *ACME* – a grassroots organization at its best!

The Board is excited to present to you the name that we believe to be the best choice to communicate who we are and what we do:



During the next year, we will methodically transition to our new name. Always responsible with our dollars, we'll find creative ways to use our current stock of letterhead, envelopes, and other printed material.

Be assured that, with the name change, our purpose remains the same:

*building better marriages, beginning with our own.*

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If you loved "*Happily Ever After*",  
the International Marriage Enrichment Celebration in Orlando in 2007,  
you'll want to **SAVE THE DATE!**

***Better Marriages Conference***

July 7-10, 2011 in Albuquerque, NM

Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town: Voted Best Hotel in NM, 2008

<http://www.hhandr.com/albuquerque.php>

# President Couple's Corner

Jena and Richard Congdon



The excitement and anticipation are building! The plans are shaping up. The Leadership team is working hard. The "Celebration" this year will be in a new location at the Hutchinson Island Marriott Resort. Make sure to mark your calendars to save the dates of September 17 to 19. There will be two primary "tracks" for this conference:

1. The first will be a Mentoring Track for couples interested in working with other couples. This will be lead by a couple from Ohio, Keith & Kim Huffman, who developed the program for the national Better Marriages organization. We are so excited that this couple has agreed to come lead this training. This is open to any couple, organization, church or group wanting to develop a marriage mentoring program and need training for the leadership couple(s). At the conclusion of this weekend, the participants will be certified to be mentors and have the materials to train other couples. There will be an additional fee per couple for the materials. More details coming soon.
2. The second track will be 6 different workshops on various topics so each couple can select to attend those options that most interest them. These workshops will be lead by well-qualified and experienced couples with extensive knowledge of the topic.

More detailed information and promotional materials are being developed now and will be sent soon. Someone from the leadership team will be contacting every member of our organization to personally answer any questions you might have about the conference. If you start saving \$20.00 per week (\$10 per person) now, the total cost of the resort stay, meals and conference registration will be covered.

One final note-worthy item---the national organization will be using the following new logo:



The Florida Chapter will be incorporating the Better Marriages new look into our materials.

We are so excited about the new look and developments at the national level as well as changes and new materials that will be available in the coming months.

We previously attended another conference at the Hutchinson Island Resort and thoroughly enjoyed the facilities, the relaxing pool area and the beautiful beaches near-by.

Plan NOW to be a part of the "Red Carpet Romance" Celebration coming in September, 2010.

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# Better Marriages

Educating Couples - Building Relationships

Presents:

## A Marriage Enrichment Retreat

Led by: Charlie & Debbie Parsons, Certified Leader/ Specialist Couple



Explore your dreams for a great marriage



Engage in community building with other couples



Learn to communicate more effectively



Use positive growth development to manage conflict



Affirm your relationship



Plan for your future

**Where:** Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church  
1225 Piper Blvd  
Naples, Florida 34110

**When:** Friday, April 16th - 7:00pm - 9:00pm  
Saturday, April 17th - 9:00am - 3:00pm

**Cost:** \$60.00

Make checks payable to: Pete Schwiers

**Registrar Couple:** Pete & Carol Schwiers  
8496 Laurel Lakes Blvd  
Naples, FL 34119  
(239) 272-4740  
[pschwiers@comcast.net](mailto:pschwiers@comcast.net)



Florida ACME  
Leadership Development Fund



In Honor of John and Maxine Roy

John (1938-2009) was a great friend and will be sorely missed.

Marriage Enrichment meant a great deal to John and Maxine Roy and truly enriched their lives. As a result, they became a trained Leader Couple and were passionate in their desire to share what they found with others. They were serving as 2009 President Couple of Florida ACME and were very involved in helping to plan the Florida ACME Celebration at Saddlebrook in September, 2009. Prior to their work as President Couple, John and Maxine participated in ACME activities at the local, state and national level. Locally, they were very active in the Tampa Marriage Enrichment Group (MEG). At the state level, they were Conference Coordinators twice and also led workshops at state conferences, including a mini-retreat. They attended the International Marriage Enrichment Conference (IMEC) 2004 in Fort Worth and were an active part of the Florida ACME group that hosted IMEC 2007 in Orlando, serving as Coordinators of Hospitality.

John was the essence of a vigorous, generous life. His enthusiasm knew no bounds, his optimism was ever present, and his outgoing sense of humor swept us all up in the fun and joy of life. He was everyone's friend. Those close to him were especially blessed.

A memorial service for John was conducted on May 16, 2009 at his church in Tampa. Stories abounded from his family and friends about his caring nature and generosity to friends and strangers alike. Afterwards, his ashes were scattered in Tampa Bay at his request - John loved to be on the water.

After careful consideration and prayer, Maxine decided that she would complete what she and John began by continuing their term of office as 2009 President Couple of Florida ACME. That term was over at the end of the Celebration at Saddlebrook on September 27th. This was very hard for her, but it speaks to her commitment, courage and strength that she was willing to do this.

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In an effort to strengthen Florida ACME, the Leadership Development Fund has been created in order to provide scholarships, continuing education, training sessions, materials and resources to further the awareness and education of the Florida ACME chapter within the state.

Please consider a donation to honor John and Maxine Roy and to continue the success of Florida ACME. Any amount would be appreciated.

Circle: \$20 \$50 \$100 \$\_\_\_\_\_(other)      Make check payable to *Florida ACME*.

Kip and Kristine Barkley  
1100 SE 5<sup>th</sup> Court  
Pompano Beach, FL 33060

Please note "Roy Fund" on your check. THANK YOU!  
Mail to address on left or give to a Florida Board Member.

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The St.Petersburg/Clearwater MEG would welcome at least two new couples to our monthly MEG. We normally meet on the 2nd Friday at 7 p.m., but are open to negotiation on the date.

Phone Ken and Nellie Dean if interested: (727) 392-4158. E-mail: [ken.nell@arclp.net](mailto:ken.nell@arclp.net).

**National ACME President Couple**  
*Sally and Bob Harris*

April should be a beautiful month in Florida and ACME couples in Florida are being offered a wonderful opportunity on Saturday, April 17. The national Board of Directors of Better Marriages is bringing the semiannual meeting to Tampa and you are invited to attend from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with dinner afterward. Please RSVP by April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Phone 800-634-8325 or send an email to [nrussell@bettermarriages.org](mailto:nrussell@bettermarriages.org) The meeting will be held at the Intercontinental, 4860 West Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33609; phone (866) 310-9905.

The Tampa MEG group will be hosting the board for a covered dish dinner and sharing a couples activity together.

ACME has such a wonderful heritage of helping people for so many years, but the name has sometimes been confusing to people. We are still the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment but now we will be doing business as Better Marriages, Educating Couples - Building Relationships. Our membership numbers have begun to increase and our new web site is just about up and running.

Think of how many of your friends and neighbors would enjoy positively working to improve their marriages. Next time you meet someone, share the ideas of Better Marriage with them.

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***Knowing More, Loving More***

As a member of Better Marriages you are receiving your question of the month from our series, Knowing More, Loving More.

Our suggestion is that each spouse takes a moment to think about his/her answer to the question and write it down. Then sit together and dialogue your answers. There are no right or wrong answers, these questions are simply to explore each other's thoughts on the subject.

So please enjoy this month's question from our series: Knowing More, Loving More.

What has been the greatest challenge so far to our marriage?

What was my best response and what was my worst response?

How has it ultimately strengthened our marriage to have gone through this difficult time?

# Renewing Our Roots - A Vision and Strategy for Action

Priscilla Hunt, Executive Director

Better Marriages: The Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment began as a grassroots movement. For 36 years we have thrived thanks to couples, like you, who share a common vision and passion to build better marriages, beginning with their own.

Grassroots movements thrive, not because of someone at a national office in North Carolina, but because people like you in Florida share a common vision and passion. The energy of a grassroots movement doesn't trickle down; it bubbles up. Its vitality, in other words, flows from its *roots*.

We're excited to unveil a *renewed focus on our root system*. Our ability to fulfill our mission to promote better marriages is only as strong as the depth and health of our root system: our local, state and regional organizations. I can't overstate the importance of Florida Better Marriages in this picture. You are one of our strongest state groups!

We are taking strategic steps to strengthen the national-grassroots connection. We believe that these efforts will result in: *1. Renewed Vitality 2. Renewed Resources 3. Renewed Growth*.

I'll be working with the Florida Board to provide support and resources to strengthen your programs and events. You're doing a lot of good things that we hope to share with our other state groups so they can learn from you.

We're renewing our roots. We're doing so because marriage matters and what ACME provides to couples is more crucial than ever. Our first project is an overhaul of our website to make information and resources available at your fingertips. We need your financial support to make it happen.

Please support this exciting new stage of our development by making your tax-deductible donation by calling us at 800-634-8325 or visiting [www.bettermarriages.org](http://www.bettermarriages.org) and clicking on Donate. We'd love to hear from you as soon as possible!

**NOTE:** The national ACME Board has been engaged in looking at marketing issues related to our organization. We've conducted a SWOT analysis to evaluate our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. We've surveyed members and non-members to gain their insights and their input.

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## Officers of Florida ACME 2009-2010

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|---|--|
| President Couple/Web Couple<br>Jena & Richard Congdon<br>305-271-6596 <a href="mailto:rcongdon@bellsouth.net">rcongdon@bellsouth.net</a>          | Treasurer Couple<br>Kristine & Kip Barkley<br>954-784-8307 <a href="mailto:KipBarkley@aol.com">KipBarkley@aol.com</a>                                |
| President-Elect Couple<br>Sally & Harrel Morgan<br>407-830-1766 <a href="mailto:harrelmorgan@gmail.com">harrelmorgan@gmail.com</a>                | Conference Coordinator Couple<br>Cindy & Ross Alander<br>813-251-2791 <a href="mailto:calande@tampabay.rr.com">calande@tampabay.rr.com</a>           |
| Marketing Couple<br>Debbie & Charlie Parsons<br>813-286-2406 <a href="mailto:parsonsCD@tampabay.rr.com">parsonsCD@tampabay.rr.com</a>             | Assistant Conference Coordinator Couple<br>Mindy & Doug Johnson<br>813-505-5505 <a href="mailto:MindyCity2000@yahoo.com">MindyCity2000@yahoo.com</a> |
| Secretary Couple<br>Debbie & Will Rodgers<br>813-875-4450 <a href="mailto:Rodgers@tampabay.rr.com">Rodgers@tampabay.rr.com</a>                    | Newsletter Couple<br>B.J. & Ben Mather<br>352-256-8540 <a href="mailto:benbjmather@hotmail.com">benbjmather@hotmail.com</a>                          |
| <b>Newsletter Couple Note:</b> We thank <b>Jena</b> and <b>Richard Congdon</b> for their extensive assistance to us in preparing this newsletter. |  |

Our newsletter editor couple maintains our ACME mailing list. If you know of anyone who would welcome receiving our mailings, please send their names and addresses to Ben and B.J. Mather at [benbjmather@hotmail.com](mailto:benbjmather@hotmail.com) 2220 NW 46<sup>th</sup> Street, Gainesville, FL 32605-5703.

Florida ACME is a unit of ACME International, which has members in all 50 states and 31 countries. Its mission is "to promote enrichment opportunities and resources that strengthen couple relationships and enhance personal growth, mutual fulfillment, and family wellness."

Florida ACME is a not-for-profit 501 © (3) corporation. We do not use professional solicitors and 100% of any gift goes to Florida ACME. Our registration number with the Florida Department of Consumer Affairs is SC-03733. For more information, visit our website or contact one of our officers or area representatives.

[www.bettermarriagesfl.org](http://www.bettermarriagesfl.org)