

2009 Celebration: "Games Couples Play"

September 25-27 at Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel, FL

Our 2009 Celebration went very well although we didn't have a large attendance this year. With 22 couples from all over the state we offered a Keynote Speaker session with Dr. Nick Hall on Friday evening and Saturday morning. He spoke to us about how the mind and body deals with stress. He was thought provoking, entertaining and even had us up and out of our chairs throwing tennis balls to each other. He introduced us to how we deal with stress individually and in turn how it will help us recover from stress with our spouses.

Saturday afternoon our couples selected from either a workshop or a Ropes Course - also with Dr. Hall. Saturday evening we ate dinner and danced to the southern rock tunes of *Crossfire*, a local band from Tampa. We closed the weekend Sunday morning with a buffet breakfast and a brief business meeting to install the 2009-2010 Florida Board of Directors. All in all, the resort was beautiful, we had nice weather (a little rain in the afternoon) and the food was yummy!

Here's what some of the attendees had to say about this year's Celebration: "Loved this resort." "Good location geographically." "Great speaker - uses humor and keeps it interesting." "Wished that there had been some couples exercises afterward to allow time for dialogue between spouses." "Prefer a Keynote Couple."

---Sally & Tim Glisson, Conference Coordinator Couple

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The Florida Conference Survey: WE WANT YOUR OPINION!

If you were unable to attend this year's Florida State Celebration, we would like you to complete a survey that will only take a few minutes. Click on the link below for the survey; your responses will be completely anonymous. We very much want to know what interests you, and what might entice you to attend future Florida conferences.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=EFqkZQ7kAtQRCFMKUMQsXg_3d_3d

The survey will remain open through December 15.

We would like for both husband and wife to complete the survey independently---not as a couple. Please contact Cindy or Ross Alander if you have questions; 813-251-2791 or calande@tampabay.rr.com

Florida State Celebration Pictures

We appreciate Will Rodgers preparing a Picasa Web Album so everyone can view some pictures from this year's Celebration. There are 217 pictures and they were contributed by Patty Johnson, Art Connelly, Richard Congdon and Will Rodgers. Go to <http://picasaweb.google.com/WilliamCRodgers/FLACME2009Celebration> to view the pictures. When you first open this website you should see an array of all 217 pictures arranged in about 23 rows of five small pictures per row. You will be able to see these pictures in three sizes: Small (like those shown initially), Medium, and Large (full screen or slightly smaller). Detailed instructions from Will are on page 7 and 8.



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 President Couple of Florida ACME this year and were very involved in helping to plan the Florida ACME Celebration at Saddlebrook in September. 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 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 President Couple of Florida ACME. That term was over at the end of the Celebration at Saddlebrook, September 27th. This was very hard for her, but it speaks to her commitment, courage and strength that she was willing to do this.

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 Please note "Roy Fund" on your check. THANK YOU!
1100 SE 5th Court
Pompano Beach, FL 33060 Mail to address on left or give to a Florida Board Member.



Individually answer these questions, then dialogue about them.

1. What am I willing to do to make our dialogue more regular? How do I feel about that?
2. Are we counting our years together, or making our years together count? How do I feel about that?
3. How do I feel about the way we use our spare time?
4. Is frustration bringing us together or driving us apart? How do I feel about that?
5. Which family rituals are really important to me? Why? How do I feel about that?

From: Couples for Marriage Enrichment Australia (CMEA), <http://www.bettermarriages.org.au/>

President Couple's Corner

Jena and Richard Congdon



We are so grateful and excited to serve as President Couple for the Florida ACME for 2009/2010. Marriage enrichment is very important to maintaining and growing a more vibrant marriage and the organization is dedicated to “Building Better Marriages”. We are excited to be a small part of this organization as there are many couples on the leadership team working together throughout the state in small groups (MEGS) and for our annual “celebration”.

Whenever we talk about ACME, we are asked why we are involved and what the organization is all about. Shortly after we got married, we realized our families of origin had two different models of “how to do” marriage. Each model worked but neither one was totally correct for our marriage. Neither of us came equipped with adequate communication and conflict skills that were going to work in our relationship. We were introduced to ACME about two years after we got married by attending a marriage retreat led by an associate pastor and his wife who modeled the magic of dialogue and how to deal with conflict to grow our relationship. The resulting small group....MEG... stayed together for five years during which our marriage strengthened. We also experienced how important an on-going MEG is to aid growth in a relationship. We later attended Leadership Training and approximately six years ago developed a group of couples who also went through Leadership Training in preparation for leading a series of marriage workshops over several years.

Going through life's changes (parent's illnesses, job loss, economics difficulties, etc.) puts strains on marriage but continued participation in ACME helped us become a “two-person” team. We remain active in ACME to keep our marriage strong and to share with other couples the helpful “tools” to use on a daily basis.

Plans are already underway for the 2010 Florida Celebration. To assist with this preparation, please complete the survey described on page one. Your feedback would be extremely valuable.

As the holidays approach, we wish you a joyful celebration with family and friends. Make one of your goals in 2010 to prioritize time to enrich your marriage and join us as we grow our Florida organization.

If you loved “*Happily Ever After*”, 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>

Marriage Enrichment Workshop in Jacksonville on January 29 & 30, 2010

Exciting news! Better Marriages is going to the Super Bowl and we want you to come along!

Debbie and Charlie Parsons, Better Marriages Certified Specialist Couple, will conduct the workshop using a football team theme. "You and your spouse are teammates. Just as in football, practice helps a team to develop the skills necessary on the field. Success is the product of perseverance. As a team, each player compensates for individual weakness and encourages individual strengths. A good communication system plays an integral role in the making of a winning team."

The workshop is for engaged couples, newlyweds, second marriages, and all married couples. It will be on Friday, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The workshop will be conducted at St. Matthews Lutheran Church, 6801 Merrill Road, Jacksonville, FL 32277.

The cost, which includes snacks/drinks on Friday night and lunch on Saturday, will be \$50.00 if received prior to 1/29/10 and \$70.00 if on-site registration. Please make checks payable to: **Florida Better Marriages**

For information please contact Ashley Parsons at 904-744-5333 or youthworker.ashley@gmail.com

Association for Couples
In Marriage Enrichment
c/o Ben & B.J. Mather
2220 NW 46th Street
Gainesville, FL 32605-5703



National ACME President Couple *Sally and Bob Harris*

In September we attended the Florida Celebration at Saddlebrook Resort and really enjoyed the event and spending time with old friends. We were able to spend time with Maxine Roy (now past president), who has an amazing attitude and now that her love John is gone has volunteered to help Priscilla on various tasks for the Albuquerque Better Marriages Celebration, what a wonderful giving spirit and resilience.

Priscilla Hunt, ACME's wonderful Executive Director, has traveled all over representing us well throughout the US. She has stepped up to the plate in her enthusiasm to see our Web site strategy come alive with better interactivity, now using YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and on and on. She is leading us quickly to the next level of social networking which should dramatically impact our effectiveness.

Our committees have worked hard in doing the work they needed to do with much now being accomplished between board meetings. The Marketing and Communications committee is doing a marvelous job, as are the folks in Programs, all evidencing real team spirit and willingness to attack difficult challenges. The Finance committee has been carefully watching our budget as well as monitoring our endowments to provide the best safe return, and the Financial Oversight committee is a joy to work with having outstanding and dedicated talent in its membership. Human Resources has been busy working on an Executive Director Evaluation tool and working through the selection process for new board members and trying to improve our Policy and Procedures guidelines. Of course we all have the financial challenges in fund raising as we have kicked off our annual giving campaign at a very tight time in the current economy. The challenges of keeping us within budget are always interesting to say the least.

At the recent ACME National Board Meeting and Dream Session, numerous people were brought together to discuss issues and make decisions. These included the Training and Certification committee, Area leaders, and strong committed couples that are interested in being involved helping others build better marriages. A result will be a closer relationship between the State and National organizations.

ACME National Board Meeting & Dream Session *Charlie and Debbie Parsons, Marketing Couple*

We were recently asked to come to a national Better Marriages board meeting in Winston-Salem, NC.....and we went! One might ask why anyone would attend a board meeting when they are not on the board. Good question. Better Marriages is "Renewing Our Roots" and wanted input from non-board members on how to make it happen. The current board is a "working" board" – they actually are accomplishing the goals they are setting. We were amazed how much work has been completed along with what they still hope to achieve. Our opinions and suggestions were solicited and accepted as valid ways to improve connectivity between each state and the national office.

Better Marriages wants to grow! Having a happy, intimate relationship for every couple is their goal. We brainstormed many ways to make this happen. Many ideas came out but one stands out to us. MEGs are a fantastic way to help couples improve their relationship skills in an ongoing manner. Many regular Better Marriages members know this and are content with the status quo in their MEGs. We believe in "pay-it-forward". A new MEG motto is "Start, Sustain, Replicate" – in other words spread the happiness of a good relationship.

Our experience with the board was enlightening, enriching, encouraging and well worth the trip.

Visit YouTube <http://tinyurl.com/yegpr3u> and see couples actually having a dialogue about making their relationship better. So in an effort to help new MEGs get started we are again offering to come to your area and get things going. Just contact us at parsonscd@tampabay.rr.com and we will make sure to help couples begin to enrich their relationships.

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 hard 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 and clicking on Donate Now. 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. We'll be introducing a new name and a new look soon - watch for details!

Officers of Florida ACME 2009-2010

President Couple/Web Couple Jena & Richard Congdon 305-271-6596 rcongdon@bellsouth.net	Treasurer Couple Kristine & Kip Barkley 954-784-8307 KipBarkley@aol.com
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Newsletter Couple Note: We thank Will Rodgers and Richard Congdon 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

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

Instructions to Review Online Pictures of the Florida ACME 2009 Celebration at Saddlebrook

You may now review pictures taken at the 2009 Florida ACME Celebration at the Saddlebrook Resort in Wesley Chapel, Florida September 25-27. There are 217 pictures and they were contributed by Patty Johnson, Art Connelly, Richard Congdon and Will Rodgers. They are displayed in a Picasa Web Album. Picasa is a free Google product.

To view the pictures, use your internet browser to go to

<http://picasaweb.google.com/WilliamCRodgers/FLACME2009Celebration>

When you first open this website you should see an array of all 217 pictures arranged in about 23 rows of five small pictures per row. You will be able to see these pictures in three sizes: **Small** (like those shown initially), **Medium**, and **Large** (full screen or slightly smaller).

Small

In this mode, you can scroll quickly through all the slides. Also, you can see at least some of the captions beneath each slide. By hovering the cursor on a slide, you should see the entire caption. If you click (or double click) on any slide, you go to the next size (Medium) and display just that slide. You can increase or decrease the number of slides shown in one row by clicking to the left or right of the slide bar on the right hand side above the pictures. The range seems to be from 2 pictures on a line to 10 and the default is 5 pictures.

Medium

This mode displays a good sized single picture and it may be sufficient for you. Note the following in this mode:

- There are navigation arrows above the picture that let you view go to the previous slide or the next one.
- On the left side near the top, it tells you what slide number you are on and also has a [View All](#) link. Clicking on this will bring you back to the Small pictures display mode.
- Just above the top of the slide on the right side is a Zoom button (icon looks like a magnifying glass). If you click it, the picture is enlarged within the same sized window. By clicking and dragging you can, in effect, move your viewing window around.
- On the right side of the screen, you should see a heading labeled "Tags". Below this heading are the names of the people associated with each slide. If you click on one of the names in the list you will bring up a new screen of Small pictures of all the slides containing that person. If you click on one of those slides, you will enter the Medium mode with the navigation arrows. From this point you can use the navigation arrows to see all the slides that contain the person selected. If at this point, you click on Slideshow (on the upper left side), your slideshow will display all the slides containing pictures of the selected person.
- You can continue the process of getting the subsets of all pictures containing a given person by selecting names in the Tags areas. However, the process always searches the entire set of pictures for a given name. It does not do subsets of subsets.
- At any point, you can also start a slide show using the Slideshow button at the top left of the screen. If you have selected a subset of all the pictures, it will only show those.

Large

Click the button on the upper left side of the screen labeled Slideshow to see all the pictures (or a subset of pictures if you have chosen one) in Full Screen mode. A slide show should commence. If you move your mouse pointer near the bottom of the screen, you can control:

- The slideshow manually, by clicking navigation arrows, a Pause button or a Play button.
- The speed of the slide show (default: advance every 3 seconds)
- Whether or not the captions are shown
- When to exit from the slideshow (click the X button)

You can also exit from the slideshow by hitting the Esc key.

Returning to the Initial Screen

Sometimes, it is not clear how to get back to the initial screen with all the pictures in Small mode. To do this, double click the "My Photos" tab, then click the single icon of the album in the upper left hand corner.

Printing and Downloading

Picasa Web Albums also allows you to have pictures downloaded or printed. It seems to be most convenient to do this in the **Medium** sized mode using the Download or Prints button on the top left side of the screen. First use the navigate arrow buttons to select the picture you want.

- To download a picture to your computer:
 - Click the Download button.
 - Click Download Photo
 - When the File Download window appears, click Save
 - When the Save As window appears, specify the folder on your computer where you want to save the file, its name (if you want to change it) and click OK.
- To print one or more pictures by a vendor, do this for each picture you want printed:
 1. Click the Prints button
 2. Click Order Prints. Note that a canary-yellow box located above the picture will increment a counter for the number of pictures now in your Cart.

When you have selected all the pictures you want to print, click [view](#) in the counter box.

1. Next you will see a screen that shows the pictures you have selected for printing.
Click on [Remove](#) below any pictures you don't want to print.
2. Click on a vendor on the left side of the screen to choose who you want to print your pictures.
3. Next specify:
 - Whether you want to pick up the prints at a local facility or have them mailed to you
 - The sizes and quantities you want for each picture. Prices will be shown.
 - Information needed to complete your order.