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ACTON ROTARY WINE & CHEESE: Left Photo— Heritage Acton members Betty McDowall, Kathy Sanford and Kathleen Dills receive a donation cheque of \$7,500 from Robert Bedard on behalf of the Rotary Club of Acton. Right photo— Bill Sanford of the Acton Rotary (left) presents the Community Champion Award to Real Tetraault during the Acton Rotary Wine and Cheese evening held at the Acton Town Hall Centre.

Photos by Ray Lavender

legal matters | FAMILY LAW

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Q

I would like to have time with my two children, aged 4 and 6 years, over the Christmas holidays. I don't want to get into an argument with my ex-spouse about it, so what would be a fair arrangement?

A

If you have a Separation Agreement or a court Order, you should first review it to see if there is a parenting schedule.

Absent any parenting schedule, you should review your family and work schedules over the holidays to determine if you are both off work at the same or different times and try to work around those schedules while being fair to both of you.

Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day are often divided so that one parent has the care of the children on Christmas Eve, after they have work, until approximately 1:00 p.m. on Christmas Day and the other parent has from 1:00 p.m. on Christmas Day until after dinner on Boxing Day. The next year the schedule is reversed.

It might make a difference if one parent always celebrates on Christmas Eve or Boxing Day with their family and friends. You should try to accommodate that schedule so that your children can take advantage of seeing their extended family.

For instance, if you celebrate Christmas Eve each year with family, then in one year you might have the children from early afternoon on Christmas Eve until 1:00 p.m. on Christmas Day but the next year have the children on Christmas Eve from early afternoon until later that evening. In that year you may also have the children on Boxing Day. In that way, both parents have the children in alternate years on Christmas morning which is an important time for children.

You can either make special arrangements for New Years Eve and New Years Day by having the children in alternate years or dividing the time between those 2 days.

The balance of the Christmas school holidays may be split equally but often depends on the work schedules of the parents. If one parent isn't available then the children should be with the parent who isn't working. You can also agree to follow the regular parenting schedule for the balance of the holidays.

The most important thing to remember is that this is an important time for children and you want their memories to be happy ones, so refrain from getting into arguments, particularly in the presence of the children.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EVERYONE!!

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