

# Intractable Conflict

By: Heidi Burgess

Travelodge Hotel  
106 Circle Drive West Saskatoon, SK

May 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012



Everyone who works in this area is aware that just the term "intractable" is a difficult one--many people, particularly mediators, don't like the term, saying "nothing is intractable." Heidi quips that "she knows that there are such things as intractable conflicts, because we've been arguing about the word for over 20 years!" She is quick to point out, however, that "intractable" does not mean "impossible," it means "very difficult". Intractable conflicts do not last forever. They can be transformed and resolved, but the strategies for doing so are different than the strategies typically used by mediators, arbitrators, or other conflict professionals to resolve other, more tractable conflicts. If disputants and third parties do not understand the differences, any attempts at resolution are likely to make the situation worse, not better.

The Burgesses have continued to work together as a team, along with many other collaborators to produce a large online knowledge base on better ways of dealing with intractable conflict called Beyond Intractability:

(<http://www.beyondintractability.org>). This knowledge includes 400 theoretical and practical articles, which explain the nature of intractable conflicts and what makes them so difficult, along with articles about what can be done to address the intractability and work to transform the conflicts into more productive situations ... 2

Heidi Burgess, together with her husband, Guy Burgess, both earned Ph.D.s in sociology in 1979 from the University of Colorado. They both focused their work at the time on intractable environmental conflicts, both took post-doctoral positions at MIT after their graduation, and then went on to different jobs in conflict management practice before they came back together in 1988 to form the Conflict Resolution Consortium (now called the Conflict Information Consortium) at the University of Colorado. They remain co-directors of the CIC.



# Intractable Conflict ~ continued

Most recently the Burgesses have focused their attention on problems of bad governance - another “difficult concept.” They define “governance,” not just as government, but as the processes of making decisions that affect the public sector. So governance involves government, business, and civil society and the interactions between them. They have recently deployed a new online knowledge base called The Governance Commons ([governancecommons.org](http://governancecommons.org)) which focuses on the conflict issues that are preventing good decision making - and good governance from happening at the local, national, and international levels around the world.

## S C H E D U L E

### THURSDAY, MAY 03, 2012

<b>8:00 am</b>	<b>REGISTRATION &amp; Continental Breakfast</b>
<b>8:30 am– Noon</b>	<b>Intractable Conflict</b>
<b>Noon – 1:00 pm</b>	<b>LUNCH ~ Speaker TBA</b>
<b>1:00 – 4:30 pm</b>	<b>Intractable Conflict</b>
<b>5:00 pm</b>	<b>Please join us for a Networking Social in “Oscar’s Lounge” Sponsored by ADR SK; Collaborative Lawyers of SK Inc.; and Conflict Resolution SK Inc.</b>

### FRIDAY, MAY 04, 2012

<b>8:00 am</b>	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING &amp; Continental Breakfast</b>
<b>8:30 am– Noon</b>	<b>Intractable Conflict</b>
<b>Noon</b>	<b>FAREWELL</b>

# Intractable Conflict

## REGISTRATION

Are you a **CURRENT** member of Conflict Resolution Saskatchewan, ADR SK or Collaborative Lawyers of SK?    YES     NO     If so, **MEMBER RATE APPLIES**

NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_  
 COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 TEL: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL INCLUSIVE FEE Includes:** Continental Breakfast – both days, Coffee Breaks, Lunch – Thursday only

**Member Rate:** \$250.00                      **Students:** \$175.00                      **Tables of 8:** \$1,800.00

**Non-Member Rate:** \$275.00 {Includes membership fee until March 31, 2013}

**Amount enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Third party billing to your employer is available by contacting Shirley, at the number below.

- A block of rooms has been reserved at the Travelodge Hotel, 106 Circle Drive W., Saskatoon until April 02, 2012 @ \$129.95/night plus taxes - Call 1-888-278-4209 or (306) 242-8881 to reserve a room.
- Please let us know if you have special needs that would make the conference more accessible for you.

### **Mail Registration Form & Payment To:**

**Conflict Resolution Saskatchewan Inc.  
 P. O. Box 3765, Regina, SK S4P 3N8**

### **Contact Info:**

**Phone:** (306) 565-3939 **Fax:** (306) 586-6711  
**Toll Free:** 1 - 866 - 565-3938  
**E-mail:** admin@conflictresolutionsk.ca  
**Web-site:** www.conflictresolutionsk.ca

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Please note that non-attendance at the conference does not constitute a withdrawal. Conference registrations cancelled before April 15, 2012 will be subject to a \$50 administration fee. No refunds will be made for registrations cancelled after that date. Substitutions will be accepted.