

## **A Better Parting Of The Ways**

**Divorce without litigation is a calmer alternative to court battles for some couples.**

Nora Daniels (617-467-3142) is one attorney who can help. For other members of the Massachusetts Collaborative Law Council, go to [www.massclc.org](http://www.massclc.org).

The saddest thing about divorce is the turnaround from love and goodwill to acrimony and self-interest. But for some can maintain some cooperation and respect, there is the Mass Collaborative Law Council, which avoids litigation. Abusers, asset-hiders, and country-skipppers need not apply. Fostering an open discussion of the crucial matters of property, money, future college expenses and most of all, care of children, these collaborative lawyers, including Nora Daniels, help separating couples work together to divorce amicably. Eschewing the brutalities of litigation, which tend to foster defensiveness, blaming, distortions and even outright lies, these de-couplers work with joint financial planners and sometimes therapists, rather than with warring professionals who must sharpen the teeth of conflict, in that counter-cooperative I win/you lose approach. In this more reasonable scenario, the couples (sometimes, admittedly, needing what Daniels calls “an adult time-out”) control the process and the timing of information, refraining from court orders, say, for documents, pronto, tomorrow. By taking an approach more like that of reasonable friends negotiating joint interests (“I’ll give you alimony for three years but then I want to retire”), couples can avoid secrets and surprises, and the traumatic anti-wedding of the court.