

SANDSPIEL

Newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group

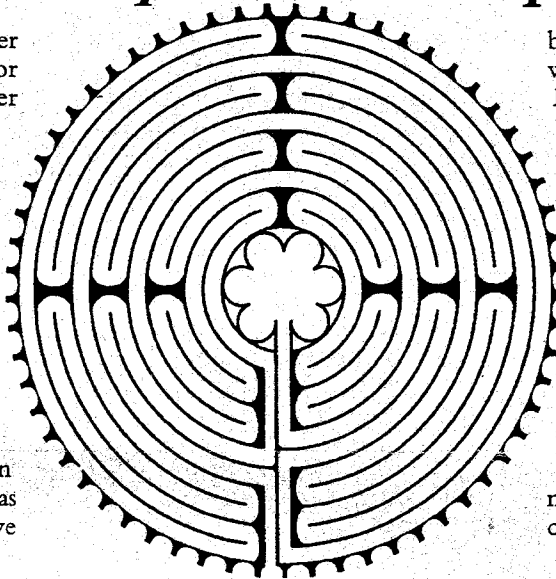
Volume XI, Number 1

January 1999

Welcome 1999! MSTG's Spring Workshop: *The Labyrinth and Sandplay*

Betty Jackson, a teaching member of the International Society for Sandplay Therapy and founder of the Colorado Sandplay Therapy Association, will be in Minnesota in May, 1999, to present on the topic of the labyrinth in sandplay.

The labyrinth, which winds inward to center and then out again, has long been a symbol of the inner journey: sometimes a search for the divine feminine, or a quest to slay one's inner demons, or a metaphoric re-enactment of death and rebirth. The path of the labyrinth has been a way of transformation. In recent years interest in the labyrinth has been rekindled, and labyrinths have



been built or restored all over the world. Locally, as the participants in MSTG's summer sandplay institute will remember, there is a replica of the labyrinth at Chartres cut into the lawn at the College of St. Catherine.

Betty Jackson has had a long standing interest in the labyrinth. She will be here the weekend of May 14 - 15th for a lecture and workshop of the topic of the labyrinth, its contrast with the maze, and its relation to, and illumination by, the sandplay process. Please save the dates and look for more information in the months to come.

The Raven

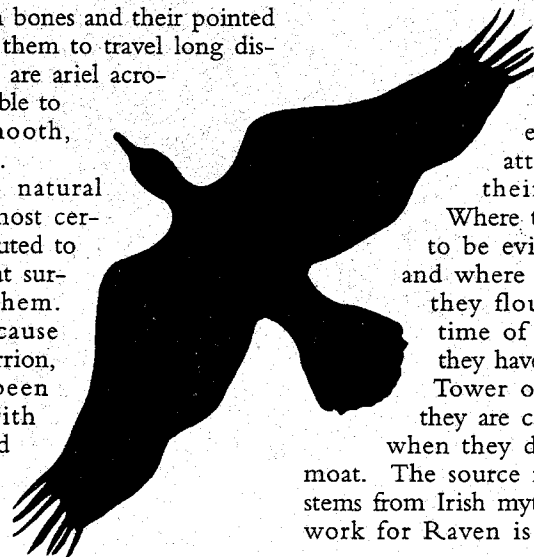
The cry came from high above. My young son and I looked up and saw a large black bird falling from the sky. As it plummeted to the earth, we could see it was an old raven. Falling with Raven was a tattered old rabbit, no doubt to be a meal for Raven. As they touched the earth, Rabbit landed cradled by Raven, who lifted it's wings and gently stroked Rabbit's head. We knew Rabbit and Raven were near death and would die.

My dream came at a time when I was struggling with my aging and was fearful that death, mine and others, was coming closer and could come at any time. According to the *Medicine Cards* (Sands & Carlson, 1988) my dream meant I was about to experience a change in consciousness, perhaps have to face my inner fears. In attempts to better understand Raven, I made images out of cut paper and clay and wrote a short story.

My initial research began by learning the facts about Raven. Ravens, *Corvus corax*, are members of the crow family but are much larger and have shaggy throats and wedge-shaped tails. Their "Roman" bill is suited for shear-

ing meat from bones and their pointed wings enable them to travel long distances. They are ariel acrobats and are able to speed in smooth, gliding strokes.

Raven's natural habits have most certainly contributed to the myths that surround them. Probably because Ravens eat carrion, they have been associated with death and pestilence and calamity throughout



the years and in the world. Conversely, myths and legends determine the attitudes that affect their distribution.

Where they were thought to be evil, they are scarce and where they are revered, they flourish. Since the time of King Charles II, they have been kept in the Tower of London where they are caged and fed and, when they die, buried in the moat. The source for this reverence stems from Irish mythology. An Irish work for Raven is *bran* and it was

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The Raven

continued from page 1

believed that keeping the head of the chieftain Bran buried in London would preserve the safety of London. It is the Celtic bird of death. Ravens were called the "battlefield bird," perhaps because battles meant corpses from which they could feed. "Ravenstone" is an English term for a place of execution.

Raven's ability for long flight and their carrying call may have contributed to the myths that they could see all, know all. They were sent to learn information (Odin's two Ravens, Hugin and Munin, thought and memory) and report to him. A Viking story has them discovering Iceland.

Raven is thought of as both saint and sinner. Their call while feeding on caribou probably led Eskimos to food. In Northwest Indian mythology, Raven is hero-trickster-transformer and figures predominately in their creation myths. In these stories they transform into a crying child whose crying will only be stopped by seeing what is in the box. They trick the keeper of the light into opening the box, whereupon Raven turns back into a bird and steals the sun (or moon) and carries it away to fling it into its place in the sky. Sometimes Raven is burned to its black color in these and similar escapades.

Raven is said to be the guardian of ceremonial magic and is present in any healing circle, carrying the healing ritual to its destination. Its black is of the void, which is not emptiness, but the holder of all creative energy. If one dares to enter this unknown darkness, one will experience a change, bringing darkness into light.

Raven is represented widely in literature, the most famous probably being Edgar Allen Poe's poem, *The Raven*. It has many of the raven symbols of death, connection

with the spirit world, evil and cleverness. Shakespeare used the raven to portend death in both *Macbeth* and *Othello*.

Birds are in the alchemical process of Sublimatio, which pertains to air and is when a solid is heated and turns into a gas and ascends to the top of the vessel where it resolidifies. In Sublimatio, the body is made spiritual or "perfect." As one goes higher, one gains perspective by getting above a concrete problem. Death is the ultimate Sublimatio, the soul is separated from the body into a new form of existence or rebirth.

Marie Louise von Franz said that birds represent the psychic intuitive and thinking parts. She tells a charming story from the region of Upper Wallis, where there is said to be a little window in the parents' bedroom which is only opened when someone is dying,

so that the dying person's soul can leave through it, fluttering out like a bird.

Jung said that birds figure in initiation dreams and seem to be portents of something to come. In Tibet, Raven is considered to be the messenger of the supreme being.

Birds appearing in the sandtray generally represent the transcendent, transformative, and spiritual. They connect the elements of land and sky, and sometimes, water, land and sky. Feathers in sandtrays of my clients are usually stood upright. There was a numinous, spiritual feeling present, as if the client was beginning to realize an inner connection to something greater than themselves. Sometimes they seem to be "flags" proclaiming the Self, or are "gates" indicating a threshold to cross into the spiritual.

Two clients have used the raven I made. In one, the woman said it represented the "old part of me, dead, a dried-up bird, brittle." It along with the other objects in her tray, which included a nest and an egg, seemed to honor her brokenness and to also show signs of spiritual healing—out of the darkness comes light. The second was used by a fourteen year old girl whose mother has "a thing" for ravens. Her mother has a genetic disease and the girl carries the gene. I believe Raven represents both a conscious and unconscious symbolism and is a first mention of this girl's fearful struggle with life and death and of her issues with her dying mother.

Raven is a powerful image, touching on deep, spiritual longings. Being open to Raven can lead the way to positive change. It presents the opportunity for awareness to the Great Mystery. As I was trying to come to terms with my aging and my losses, Raven was "knocking at my door" trying to get

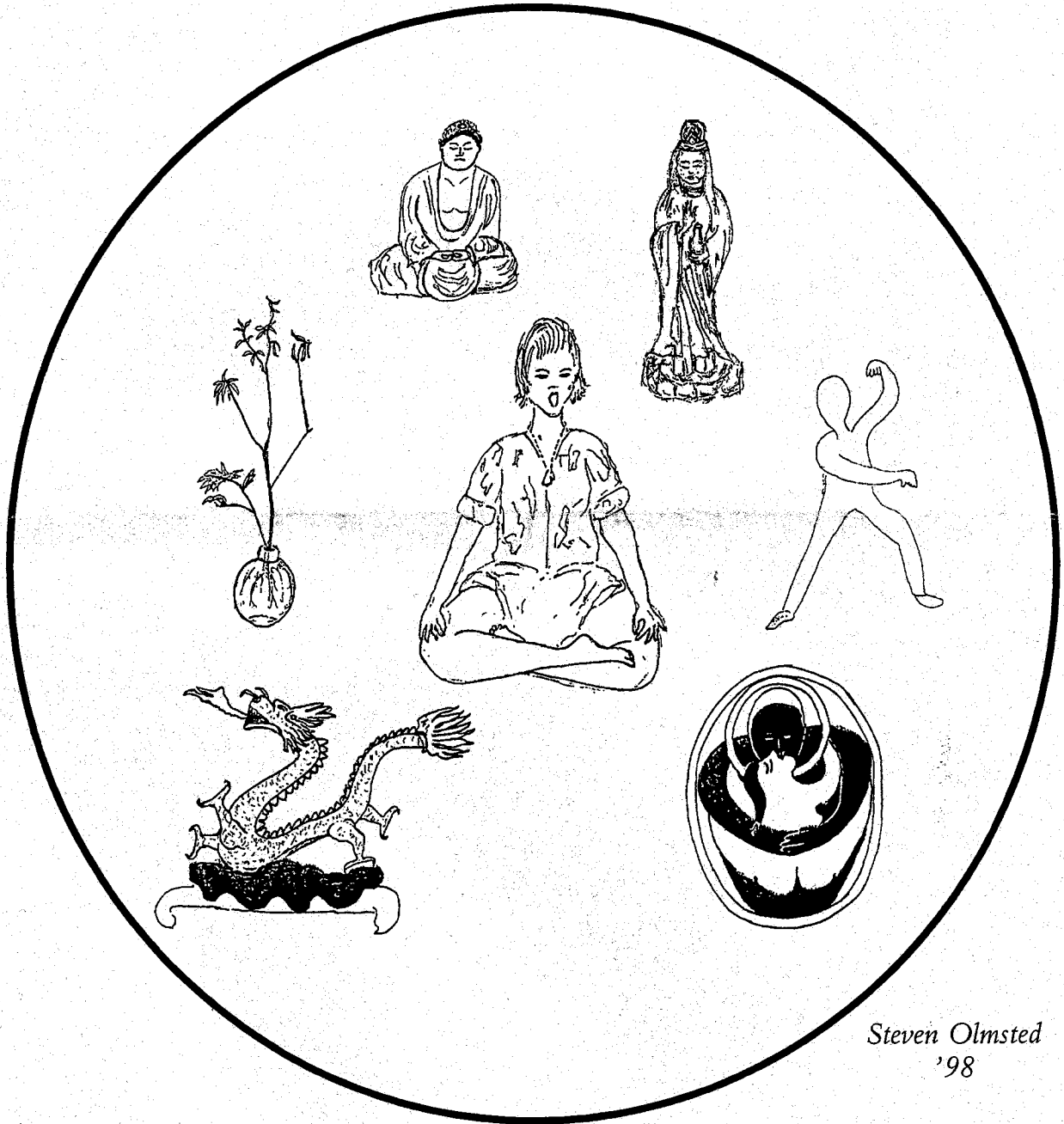
my attention. I needed to be aware and to unflinchingly look at myself and my life before I could be open to the positives that were there along with the losses.

—Catharine J. Larsen



Review of 1998 Highlights

Sandplay & Buddhism Conference Boulder, CO, July



*Steven Olmsted
'98*

(Other reflections can be read in the Journal of Sandplay Therapy, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1998.)

Review of 1998 Continued

Ages and Stages of Sandplay



The first Summer Sandplay Institute took place at the gracious Carondelet Center at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota, Wednesday, June 17 through Sunday, June 21. This training was co-sponsored by the Upper Midwest Region of Sandplay Therapists of America and the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group. It consisted of lectures, small group workshops, and community building that incorporated play - rituals of storytelling, dancing and drumming. Around 30 people attended, including staff, traveling from Ohio, Canada, Texas, Kentucky, New Mexico, California, Wisconsin and Hawaii, as well as Minnesota.

Sandplay is about life journeys, and the life journey of the sea turtle provided a theme and metaphor for the training at the opening and closing rituals of each day's lecture and small group meetings. The Turtle is "the keeper of wisdom" in native spiritual tradition. Turtle carvings adorned tables, and a large green plastic sandbox turtle provided a center for sandplay and ceremonies. Tall bouquets of flowers also brought the outdoors in, compliments of Ethel Griggs.

Entry

Drumming and story-telling by Cil Braun, Kate Rubio and Chris Holder created community and "a space for renewal, to better rejoin the world." Cil Braun told the story of an old man at the San Diego zoo, who calls an ancient turtle that comes to him, "for relationship, not for food." We were asked to think

about our relationship to Turtle, with whom we share the planet, an ancient being that is self-contained, carrying its own refuge, "maker of a safe place."

Participants brought sand from favorite places to blend in the turtle container, representing many selves coming together in one place.

MSTG President Barbara Weller gave the opening lecture "Who Are We?" telling the story of sandplay and describing the history of Minnesota's sandplay group. Sandtrays are "maps of soul. . . transformations made visible."

That evening, we each lit candles, said our names and the names of our parents, and sang songs, connecting with each other as well as our own histories.



Chris Holder drumming. Catharine Larsen dancing.

Nesting and Laying the Egg

After the morning's opening ritual, Joe Meyer presented on "Beginnings in Sandplay, describing the "profound, early experiences" in sandplay therapy, which require the patience of a turtle and a pace that can't be forced. The depth of process can be powerful: enlivening and frightening to both client and therapist. He talked about "setting the stage," gathering a collection of representative figures, and becoming familiar with them. They have "psychic feel" as well as symbolic meaning, and sometimes clients will use the same figures during a day as if sensing their energy. He suggested that sand used be leavened with sand from elsewhere. He stressed the importance of containment, the energy the therapist brings that is part of the "holding." All previous relationships are elements in the therapeutic session. The positive aspect of relationship within the therapy container touches the Self/Soul/Hara, a connection that supports the client on his/her journey. Fear of exposure threatens this, especially for adults; the goal of the work is to bring about "play in the presence of the forgotten therapist." Joe illustrated his points with slides summarizing four case studies.

After the lecture, the group divided into three smaller groups, and attended slides and summaries of sandplay cases, lead by ISST Teaching Members Donna Johnson, Joe Meyer and Barbara Weller. In these small groups it was possible for more more intense observation and discussion to take

place. Each of the three group rooms was also stocked with a small library - books on sandplay and symbols, thanks to several MSTG members.

That evening, most of the group was able to attend and participate in a lively performance of Meeting Rivers. Meeting Rivers is a group of musicians and mythmakers.

Incubation

In the opening ritual for Friday, a symbolic turtle egg was buried in the turtle-shaped sandbox. Donna Johnson presented the second day's lecture, "The Middle stages of Sandplay: Descent to the Self." The fourth and fifth chakras were used as metaphors for the constellation and manifestation of the self. She described similarities between the seven chakras and movement through sandplay therapy. (Copies of an article on this subject are available to institute participants through MSTG.) The theme was of embracing the shadow, being able to "see death in the mirror," and transfer to the divine. The mood of the "nigredo" permeated this day, made heavier by dark thunderstorms and humidity. Attendees found relief by napping, creating in the Art Room, and walking the labyrinth mown into a grassy area outside. In therapy, as in real life, the potentiality of the egg can be uncovered too soon, and the need for patience was stressed.

That night some members escaped to the MSTG toy store at the home of Nancy Hawkins, and stocked up.

Hatching

On Saturday, the group seemed energized and renewed.

Barbara Weller presented the last lecture, The Final Stages of the Process: The Return. The end of the sandplay journey is also the commencement of another journey. To go full circle, one must come home to the self. But the ego is no longer "the boss," it is an organizing center, no longer co-opting the power of

the self "The ego is the flute (or the reed), and the wind is the self." There is recognition of the center, which is unknowable but it has been touched or felt. This new relationship of ego to self is the relativization of the ego. Sometimes aspects of the future are revealed in the final stages of sandplay therapy. She suggested looking for themes of the return to self at the end when the client seems to be at home within the self (like the turtle in its shell) and can withstand change, knowing that even in death, life wins — "we end, we continue, and life goes on."

Release

That evening, a delicious dinner was served (catered by Ann Fecht and Lois Chambers), followed by storytelling, dancing and music. It was a beautiful summer evening, and participants proceeded outside to sing and dance through the labyrinth while the sun set.

On Sunday, a "town hall meeting" was held to discuss "adapting to the collective." The topics of burn-out and managed care were brought up. Kate Rubio had prepared participants for this by telling the mesmerizing story of

the little man with the little green vest, who poisons hope, and how to deal with him. The program had helped participants gain a sense of community — "we're all alone in this together," and suggestions were put forth for dealing with a climate hostile to therapists. Barbara Weller mentioned the importance of soul-making in pro bono work - that giving "returns." She told of her grandmother's definition of rich: "having enough to share." and the poor are those "who do not share." To think in terms of non-material wealth, and when anxious, share.

In writing treatment plans, Nancy Hawkins advised participants to focus on the increase of a positive behavior rather than the decrease of negative behavior, and to use "rule out" diagnoses.

To deal with the challenge of doing therapy in these times, a collegial community such as was created during this institute is necessary. Participants agreed the institute had achieved this connecting goal, along with its academic, educative aims. The rituals and play and labyrinth made for a profound experience.

—Sherry Machen



Marya Hage and Steve Lietchi contemplating the turtle

Calendar of MSTG Events

— JANUARY —

In Touch Again Network
Friday, January 22, 1999
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
Saturday, January 23, 1999
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
*Home of Carol and Larry

MSTG Birthday Party
Saturday, January 23, 1999
Home of Nancy Hawkins and the MSTG
Miniature Store
5:30 p.m. for shopping followed by 6:30 pot
luck dinner, meeting with board election
and annual "toy swap."

— FEBRUARY —

MSTG Board and Education Meeting (all members
welcome)
Wednesday, February 17th, 1999 at 6:30
*Home of Carol and Larry

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
Saturday, February 20, 1999
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
*Home of Carol and Larry

— MARCH —

Images of Transformation in Sandplay
Sandplay Therapists of America 1999 National
Conference
March 11-14, 1999
Austin, Texas

— MARCH (cont.) —

MSTG Board and Education Meeting
(all members welcome)
Wednesday, March 17th, 1999 at 6:30
* Home of Carol and Larry

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
Saturday, March 20, 1999
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
*Home of Carol and Larry

— APRIL —

Introduction to Sandplay
Saturday, April 10, 1999
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
*Home of Carol and Larry

In Touch Again Network
Friday, April 16, 1999
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
Saturday, April 17, 1999
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
*Home of Carol and Larry

Board and Members' Planning Luncheon
(all members welcome)
1:30-4:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 17, 1999
Home of Nancy Hawkins and the MSTG
Miniature Store

— MAY —

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
Friday, May 14, 1999
1:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
*Home of Carol and Larry

"The Labyrinth and Sandplay"
with Betty Jackson
Friday evening and all day Saturday
May 14-15, 1999
Location TBA

"In Touch Again" attachment workshop
Monday- Wednesday, May 20-22, 1999
* Home of Carol and Larry

— JUNE —

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
Saturday, June 12, 1999
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
*Home of Carol and Larry

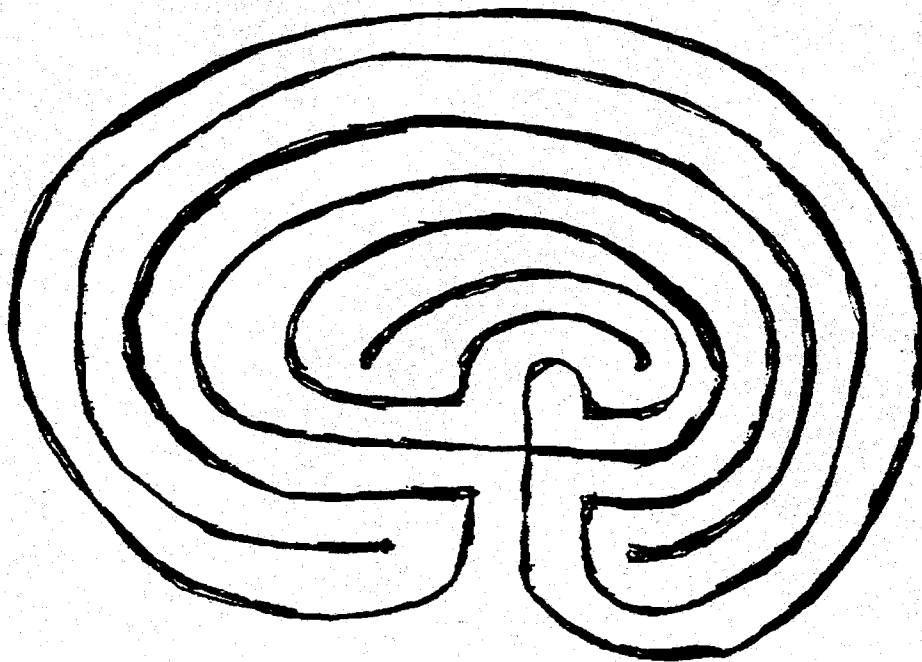
— JULY —

In Touch Again Network
Friday, July 16, 1999
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

— OCTOBER —

In Touch Again Network
Friday, October 15, 1999
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

* Home of Carol Kindschi and Larry Greenberg, 2129 Larpenteur Avenue W.
(NW corner of Cleveland and Larpenteur), Falcon Heights, MN 55113. (651) 642-9417



In Touch Again Network

The *In Touch Again* network is flourishing with enthusiasm and participation. Our mailing list now includes over 100 professionals who have participated in our workshops! Members are also active in advocating for the implementation of this approach with county and state agencies. Barb Weller has participated in the Hennepin County Adoption Task Force and has interested the group in the In Touch approach. Karen Wahlund, Chair of the Task

Force, will join us at our next meeting.

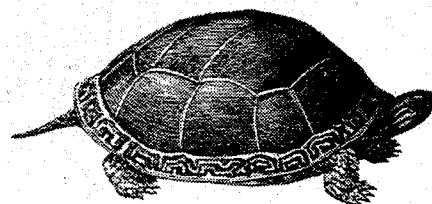
The *In Touch Quarterly Meetings* are a time and space for providers, who have completed the 3 and 1/2 day In Touch Again workshop, to come together and share problems, successes and experiences with the process of attachment work. Our first priority at Network meetings is to provide time for members to share their experiences with this work—including case material, successes, problems and questions. We are continually teaching

and learning from each other. Meeting dates for 1999 are January 22, April 16, July 16, and October 15. All meetings are held at The American Indian Family Center at 579 Wells Street in St. Paul. Please call Nancy Hawkins, 651-929-9478, with questions.

The *In Touch Again Workshop* will be offered May 20-22, 1998 in St. Paul. Please call Carol Kindschi, 651-642-9104, or Nancy Hawkins, 651-929-9478, with questions or referrals.

MSTG Birthday Party! *We're Eleven!*

We are eleven years old as an organization and will be celebrating on Saturday, January 23, 1999 at the home of Nancy Hawkins (1012 Hyacinth Ave. E., St. Paul, Ph: (651) 778-1389) which also is the home of the MSTG Miniature Store. All members and guests are invited to any or all of the events. The store will open at 5:30 p.m. for shopping followed by 6:30 pot luck dinner furnished by the MSTG board. There will be a members meeting with board election followed by storytelling, fun and folly. Of course the evening will include the annual "Trash-and-Treasure-gift-swap-game" so please bring a wrapped item or two that you no longer want to hold onto and are willing to pass along to another unsuspecting player.



Renew (or begin) your MSTG membership today!

The Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group was formed in January, 1988, to support the work of the International Society for Sandplay Therapy at a local level. Its interests include public education, professional training, and research in sandplay. It supports the guide-lines for the professional practice of sandplay therapy as established by the ISST.

Benefits of Membership include:

- * Priority in MSTG seminars and workshops
- * Discounts on MSTG seminars and workshops
- * Priority for individual sandplay hours with visiting ISST members
- * Discounts on books, toys, and miniatures purchased through the MSTG
- * Special members events

Regular Membership is offered to:

1. Persons holding membership in the ISST
2. Persons holding licenses or certification in the discipline which has included training in psychotherapy such as psychiatry, psychology, social work, psychiatric nursing, pastoral counseling, and others as approved by the MSTG Board.

Associate Membership is offered to:

1. Persons in training in a field of psychotherapy as listed above.
2. Persons interested in and supportive of sandplay therapy.
3. Psychotherapists living more than 100 miles from the Twin Cities.



Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group Membership Application

_____ Regular Member (1 year, \$35) _____ Associate Member (1 year, \$25)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Thank you for your participation and support

License or Certificate In:
(Check those that apply)

- Psychology
- Psychiatry
- Social Work
- Psychiatric Nursing
- Other _____

Please mail to:

Treasurer
Minnesota Sandplay
Therapy Group
3616 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Training in Sandplay Therapy

As we prepare our first-ever general advertisement for publication, I am somewhat astounded at what we have undertaken in the last ten and a half years...and how much is currently going on locally in sandplay training. A brief update:

In Touch Again, the attachment therapy training is going strong. There are nearly 100 therapists on the In Touch Again Network mailing list. Consultation and networking meetings are held quarterly, and the three and a half day training is offered annually. The next quarterly meeting of the Network will be on Friday, January 22, 1999. The next three and a half day training will be held May 20-22, 1999. FFI Call Nancy Hawkins, (651) 929-9478.

An Introduction to Sandplay Therapy, a one day workshop for those new to Sandplay will be held on Saturday, April 10, 1999. FFI: Barbara Weller, (612) 729-7084

Beginning Sandplay Practice, an 18 hour series of classes for those who have done personal sandplay process and want to use sandplay in their clinical work, will be offered this spring/early summer. Dates TBA. FFI: Barbara Weller, (612) 729-7084.

The Advanced Sandplay Seminar, with 14 participants, is spending the year in intensive study of the case of a young adult, adopted cross-culturally. We meet from October-June

Betty Jackson, ISST member from Boulder, Colorado, will present on "The Labyrinth" in sandplay, May 14-15, 1999. See information in Regina Driscoll's article.

The Cedar Riverside Internship Program has four Sandplay interns seeing eight children within their school setting for twenty sandplay sessions. We hope to offer this internship again next year.

If you or your colleagues would like a 1 1/2 - 3 hour presentation on Sandplay Therapy to be offered at your workplace or for your professional group, please contact Barbara Weller (612) 728-7084. A number of speakers are willing to meet with you.

—Barbara Weller

Sandspiel is the newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group, 3616 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55407, Tel: 612-724-0854. Sandspiel means "Sandplay" in German. The MSTG was formed in 1988 to provide education and training in the area of Sandplay, developed by Dora Kalff of Switzerland. 1998 board members: Barbara Weller, President; Priscila Braun, Regina Driscoll, Lawrence Greenberg, Ethel Griggs, Dale Grossman, Marya Hage, Carol Kindschi, Jackie Weirsmas. Editorial Staff: Regina Driscoll, Lawrence Greenberg, Carol Kindschi, Doris Meyer and Sherry Machen. Typeset and Design: Clay Schotzko.



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