

# SANDSPIEL

Newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group

Volume XI, Number 2

September 1999

## The Transformation of a Teacher

### *Speak truth to power.*

(One of the Quaker precepts on making peace.)

Barbara Weller spoke to an audience of more than 300 at the 1999 National Conference of the Sandplay Therapists of America (STA), held March 11 to 14 in Austin, Texas. She discussed the shadow side of the legacy of Dora Kalff, the developer of sandplay therapy and the founder of the International Society for Sandplay Therapy (ISST), addressing frankly the dark side of the teaching and training of new sandplay therapists by old.

This topic became the vehicle for an examination in archetypal terms of the drama that unfolds when the senex, the elder in the form of the teacher, must come to terms with his children, who might challenge and even replace him.

For many who have come later to sandplay, it has seemed that the rules for certification have become increasingly restrictive, difficult to meet, and have created a very expensive course of training which relatively few can afford. There have been mutterings from the gallery whenever a good-sized group of sandplay therapists and aspirants get together, about the cost, the elitism, the difficulty

in getting supervision and doing a process when only a small number of therapists, scattered around the country, can provide the officially-sanctioned services necessary for entry into the club.

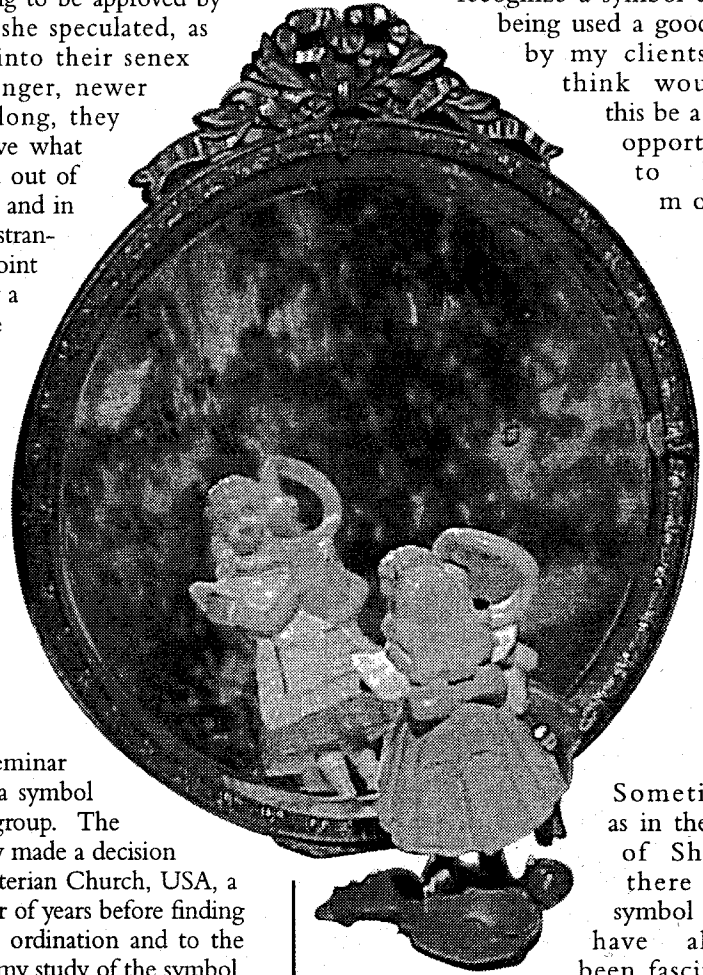
Weller addressed these issues aloud. She began by likening those who were first taught and inspired by Dora Kalff to puellae, young women attached to the mother and living to be approved by her. However, she speculated, as they matured into their senex form, and younger, newer people came along, they strove to preserve what they had created out of Kalff's teachings, and in doing so risked strangling it. This point was illustrated by a powerful image of the Greek Titan Kronos who devoured his children so that they would not displace him. "We were caught," Weller

continued on page 6

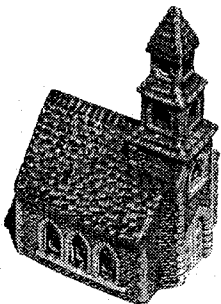
## Mirrors

[This is the text of the paper presented by Dr. Grossman as part of the session of the Minnesota Sandplay Advanced Seminar at the STA National Conference]

After Barb reviews the case, we all choose a symbol. Sometimes there is something in the slides which captures my attention and I have to know more about it. Sometimes I recognize a symbol that is being used a good deal by my clients and think wouldn't this be a good opportunity to learn more.



## Church as Symbol



studied remains fluid rather than static, which is why sandplay can be so full of life changing energy.

This is some of what I found as I studied the symbol church for the Advanced

During the MSTG Advanced Seminar (1996-1997) I chose church as a symbol to research and present for our group. The choice was timely for me as I had recently made a decision to give back my ordination to the Presbyterian Church, USA, a decision that I had discerned for a number of years before finding my own truth about my relationship to ordination and to the church. I brought this personal energy to my study of the symbol, church, and found the process thusly enriched. None of us does research in a factual vacuum; our own history and experience color and shade the information we seek and the way we interpret it as we teach others about the symbol. Thus the symbol

Sometimes, as in the case of Shirley, there is a symbol that I have always been fascinated by and I decide --

here's my opportunity.

With Shirley, that symbol for me was the mirror. Mirrors always interested me. One of my favorite stories as a child was Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*. For those of you who

continued on page 2

continued on page 2

## Church as Symbol

continued from page 1

Seminar and more recently for the STA Meeting in Austin, Texas, with Barbara Weller and Dale Grossman.

Even before Paleolithic times people, searching for the meaning of life, believed the Goddess Mother Creator to hold power over birth, death, and rebirth. They lived with the seasons of the year noting how crops followed the birth/death/rebirth cycle, witnessed the birthing of children from females, and followed the birth/death/rebirth cycle of the moon. The story is no doubt familiar to you as to the history of the evolution of the Goddess, the repression/abuse of the Goddess/feminine, and the resulting power of Patriarchal systems which have significantly affected the lives of women and men, and have shaped the oppression, especially of women, to this day.

A church or cathedral is a structure that serves to set apart a particular space from the space around it - in other words, that marks off a sacred space. A sacred space may serve as a place of communication between the human realm and the divine. It may be a locus for divine power that can transform human life. A sacred space may serve as a metaphor for inner experience.

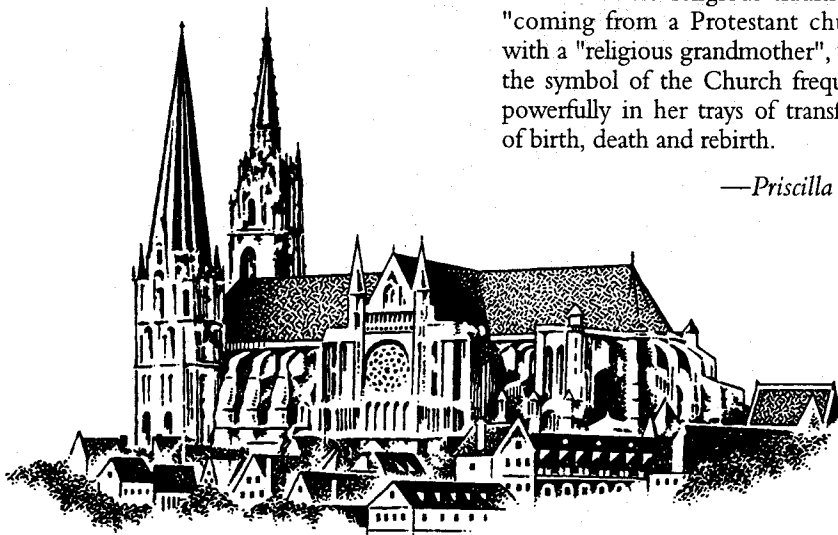
The Church is a container for rituals surrounding birth, death, resurrection/rebirth. It is considered feminine, and is called "The Bride of Christ". There was a medieval belief that Mary was a model for the church. By receiving Christ into her womb, she became like a temple housing the Christ. The construction of churches was often in the shape of a cross, laid out in the shape of the human body with arms outstretched. Many temples have an outer court, inner court and Holy of Holies, representing the abdomen (the organs of regeneration), the thorax (organs of life and vitality) and the head (organs of spiri-

tual perception). Ornate churches depict the glory of heaven. Evidence shows that many cathedrals were built on former sites of temples dedicated to the Goddess. Roman Catholic churches have an altar on which the mass, a ritual of birth, death and rebirth/resurrection, is celebrated. The feminine symbolism remains with the Virgin Mary, although she has changed from the earthy, fertile, sensuous Goddess Mother Creator to a pale, dry, sexless figure (although in recent years she has begun to reclaim feminine power). With the Reformation, the feminine was repressed further by Protestants who labeled much symbolism as "magic" and reduced the place of Mary to only that of Jesus's mother. In most Protestant churches the pulpit is central, the focus on the word, education and rational thought.

At Easter the story of Jesus's death and resurrection is retold and celebrated as life triumphant over death. Christ emerges from the tomb in celebration of rebirth/new life. In ancient times, the object of the tomb builder was to make a tomb as much like the body of the Great Mother as he was able. Being buried in the tomb/womb is analogous to a seed planted in the earth...the expectation is for new life to emerge from the old. Throughout the ages there have been many, many stories reenacting this theme of birth, death, and rebirth. The Church, especially the Roman Catholic/Orthodox, still hold the feminine symbols; in the Protestant churches the feminine symbols are more repressed (perhaps hiding in the shadows?).

In the Sandplay process we often refer to the process of birth, death and rebirth of the self. This was "Shirley's" process. This is the age old cycle of life that humans struggle to understand. This is the cycle of the feminine, of the Goddess Mother Creator. This is the cycle of the liturgical year of the church. It seems quite appropriate and amazing that Shirley, raised with no religious tradition except "coming from a Protestant church" and with a "religious grandmother", would use the symbol of the Church frequently and powerfully in her trays of transformation, of birth, death and rebirth.

—Priscilla W. Braun



## Mirrors

continued from page 1

may not be familiar, it is a story of a young girl, Alice, who has an adventure on the other side of the looking glass.

I begin my research by reviewing *Through the Looking Glass* and other folktales and fairytales which contain mirrors. I look in symbol dictionaries, sandplay books, and the *Journal of Sandplay Therapy* to find other people's interpretations. All the while I am holding Shirley's trays in my head and reviewing them each month in the seminar as other members teach me about their symbols. I think of the folktales as they apply to Shirley's trays and when I look at her trays I think of the stories I have read. I begin to learn more about Shirley, and more about mirrors -- and on one predetermined day I attempt to add to the group's knowledge of mirrors and their knowledge of Shirley.

Today I am going to try to give you a taste of what this experience is like. I am going to talk a little about mirrors as a symbol, how they may be used in sandplay, how they help me understand Shirley's trays and how Shirley's trays help me understand mirrors.

As I already mentioned, in *Through the Looking Glass* the mirror is used as an entry point into another world. The other world initially looks the same as the original, but as you proceed deeper, everything is slightly different. Chetwyn in his symbol dictionary notes that "everything in the glass is reversed-- the mirror becomes an image for the opposing forces in the psyche -- one on either side of the glass." The mirror reflects another world-- a hidden world -- the shadow. Two mirrors enable one to see the shadow even more clearly -- if there is a mirror placed in front and one behind a figure. Several mirrors allow one to see from all sides-- infinity-- a vast increase in consciousness. Hence mirrors become a doorway into the unconscious, revealing the shadow.

Another way a mirror is used frequently in fairy tales is to reveal the truth. In "Snow White," the evil queen witch asks the mirror-- "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" The mirror tells the truth, which in this case can prove very dangerous. Merlin's magic mirror also told the truth. He used it to inform the king of treason, secret plots and invasions.

In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the mirror was used to warn of ill-fortune.

# The Labyrinth

Betty Jackson, LCSW and founder of the Colorado Sandplay Therapy Association, presented a workshop on The Labyrinth: Sacred Geometry and Sandplay, at the home of Carol Kindschi and Larry Greenberg May 14 and 15th. Betty was a student of Dora Kalf. In 1990, she was involved in a workshop with Nessie Bailey where she was inspired to explore the meaning of the labyrinth, especially as a symbol in the context of sandplay therapy.

Betty has also been interested in sacred geometry, its forms and their relationships, and the labyrinth fits well into this interest. Betty prefers to use experiential process rather than didactic methods in her workshops, to promote self-discovery. There were 21 different experiences for those of us attending, and each enriched the other. As with sandplay, walking the labyrinth has a beginning, a middle and an ending, but there is no one "right way" to experience it.

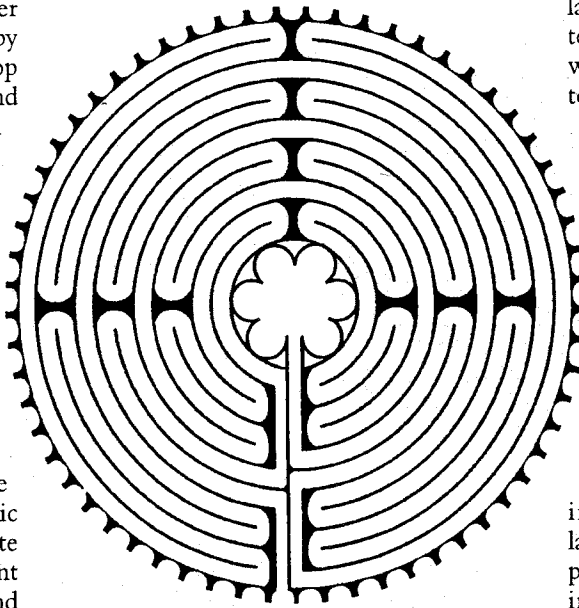
Betty approached her topic with enthusiasm, slides and stories, and provided opportunities to draw labyrinths, create clay models of labyrinths, and walk the 276 stones of the flagstone path laid down in the Kindschi/Greenberg garden last year. We were instructed to have an "intention" before walking the labyrinth: an issue, problem or question. According to St. Augustine, "solvitur ambulando," that is, "it is solved by walking." As in sandplay, we invite a pattern to reveal itself.

It was individual and group work. We worked and walked at a collective pace. We could watch others walk and learn from them too. Betty introduced us into the labyrinth at measured intervals so that we would be well spaced. From outside, it was like watching a clock, the participants moving slowly and evenly across time and space.

We were told to observe or mark the entrance and the exit: The crossing and recrossing of the threshold, like any transition, needs to be recognized, since we live in a culture that encourages moving from one thing to next without mindfulness of passages and the importance of endings and beginnings.

Betty exposed us to the differences between the labyrinth and the maze, having us observe and experience each, and make comparisons. The maze offers many possible routes and one or more solutions. The labyrinth is designed with only one route and one solution.

Participants described the felt differ-



ences in almost polar opposites: frustration vs. relief; blocking vs. flowing; failure vs. success; anxiety vs. calmness; cruel vs. benevolent. There was the sense that one can trust the labyrinth, it won't play any tricks. Someone said about the maze that "you can get lost in this." Not in the labyrinth, which is about finding the way.

The maze brought out our competitive, achieving sides. It challenged our ability to think, and gave us headaches. With the labyrinth, there was no need to hurry. It invited us to feel, and lead to relaxation. We compared the two, as metaphors of self and life. The maze like the ego, like outer life with all its deadends, the labyrinth like the Self, and the inner life. Carol Kindschi said when she "allowed the maze to be a labyrinth, its solution presented itself." Ellen Saul said she imagined the deadends in the maze to be "little centers" to labyrinths, and felt less frustrated when she "hit the wall." To shift from the maze to the labyrinth, trust, perseverance, present mind, and surrender to the process(ion) are needed.

Betty showed us how the maze is multicursal, or many-pathed, vs. the unicursal labyrinth. The labyrinth has a balanced, symmetrical form, with a center or goal (not always in the middle). Geometrically, there is a concentricity of paths in the labyrinth no matter what the size, with penetrating layers. It has a totality or wholeness to it, like the mandala, that includes all parts of the self. The maze is more random, and its solution or ending may be nowhere near its center.

The rhythm and design of the

labyrinth suggest an approach to the center that is misleading: as in real life, just when you think you're where you want to be, you're not. Progress towards the goal is not obvious, but it is certain, with fluctuations and surprises. Larry Greenberg wondered if the labyrinth "always has a kindly middle," remembering the Minotaur. Betty explained that what was found at the center - maiden, rose, or monster - seemed to depend on the consciousness of the era, whether it was matriarchal or patriarchal: love and beauty vs. fear and power.

The maze challenges process: the concern about how to get to the goal interferes with the journey. The labyrinth supports process and invites the participant to be present on the way. An interesting discussion focused on the astronomical origins or implications of labyrinth. Were the paths mirroring planets, following the sun?

On the second day of the workshop, Betty gave us a hands-on lesson in drawing the perfect circle. "Put a dot in center of paper, keep your eye on it. Begin moving your hand or pen around it, above the paper. Then, put pen to paper." She used this exercise to show us how everything arises from the center, "the first iota... the first other from the void." All forms are included in labyrinth: the dot, circle, square, meander, spiral. She suggested that we look for geometric progression in our sandplay cases. Some parallels:

1. Opening or mouth, threshold, doorway, exit
2. Path imagery, meander (snake)
3. Barriers, fences, walls (contain path or obstruct it)
4. Center or goal destination (navel?)

continued on page 7



Garden path to seven-circuit labyrinth

# 1998-99 MINNESOTA SANDPLAY THERAPY INTERNSHIP CEDAR RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Following are reflections from the four interns who participated in a Sandplay Internship program sponsored by MSTG during the 1998-99 school year at the Cedar Riverside Community School which is a charter school in the inner city of Minneapolis and serves a diverse community of students. Anyone interested in pursuing an internship in Sandplay may call Barbara Weller at (612) 276-0166.

I was unsure of whether or not I could and should apply for the MSTG Internship at Cedar Riverside School. I worried about how much time it would take and whether or not I could manage it. Well, some very wise people said to me, "If you don't do this, you'll wish you had." H-m-m-m. I decided to take their advice—they weren't usually quite that adamant or opinionated. I thought I should listen. Well, I'm really glad that I did! Being at Cedar Riverside renewed my faith in child therapy and the relationship that can make a difference in a child's world. And, it gave me a wonderful opportunity to learn, not only about the children I worked with, but about the children the other interns worked with, and to experience high quality case consultation with an ISST member (Barb Weller). Thank you MSTG for making this possible!

—Nancy Hawkins

I knew when we first set up shop that the internship would be a good experience. The four of us interns worked efficiently and amiably, opening up Pandora boxes of sandplay miniatures and miraculously organizing them onto shelves within a few hours. We did equally well putting it all away. In supervision, it was safe to be a beginner at sandplay. I felt enriched by each member's contribution, and was impressed by the wisdom and compassion shown by all participants, including Barb Weller and Ethel Griggs, and our Cedar-Riverside connection, JoEllen Flak. In addition, it was a rare privilege to work with the children at Cedar-Riverside and see what healing sandplay can provide. Many of them were immigrants or children of immigrants and had experienced trauma and deprivation. We learned that all of the children we saw benefited from our time with them. For me, the benefits were mutual and the time invested extremely valuable, professionally and personally.

—Sherry Machen

Being an intern with MSTG this past school year has been enjoyable and professionally enriching. Each of my three colleagues have shared their wisdom, particularly around therapeutically working with children. Barbara Weller and Ethel Griggs have freely given untold hours designing the program and diligently working to provide excellent supervision. We interns have been presented with a great deal of valuable information, not only through direct client contact, but also through regular and ongoing review of the processes for all the Cedar Riverside clients. This type of hands-on learning experience is rare and valuable. I am thankful to Barbara, Ethel, Nancy, Sherry, Hal and all the kids for a fine learning experience.

—Jane Murphy

How do you describe the opportunity to share with a child what may have been a life altering experience for them? Four of us had the privilege to journey with eight children through their first sandplay experience at Cedar Riverside School this past academic year. For me it was a wonderful professional experience to begin my sandplay practice in a structured setting with great supervision from our mentors, Barb Weller and Ethel Griggs, as well as three other colleagues. In addition, it was the gift of offering Sandplay Therapy in its more traditional delivery without the trappings of billing, prior authorizations and pressures from outside others to quickly eliminate some bothersome symptom a child may be exhibiting. These children, who would probably not show up in more traditional mental health settings, offered great insight into their own lives and different cultural perspectives, and patiently accompanied me on my first completed sandplay case. This experience strengthened my fervor for continued study and supervision in sandplay therapy, and renewed my confidence that this technique transcends age, culture and language barriers.

—Hal Pickett

## MEET THE NEWEST BOARD MEMBERS

Nancy Hawkins and Sherry Machen became new board members at the annual Member's Meeting/Birthday Party on Saturday, January 23, 1999. Following is information about them.



Nancy Hawkins

Nancy Hawkins, Ojibwe, is a Licensed Psychologist who currently works extensively with American Indian children and adults. She is a consultant to the Minnesota American Indian Aids Task Force, Earthstar Project, Inc., and a regular trainer for the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center. Nancy is an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Leech Lake Reservation. Her father was from Ball Club, Minnesota.

Nancy has worked for over 24 years in the American Indian community providing education, chemical dependency, and mental health services. She initially worked as a teacher at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa School. She was Program Director at Mashka-wisen, where she developed a culturally sensitive family program. She coordinated a study regarding Minnesota Indian women and recovery from chemical dependency. She is currently in private practice at the American Indian Family Center and is a consultant to the Minnesota American Indian Aids Task Force, Earth Star Programs, and to the White Earth and Red Lake Substance Abuse Programs.

continued on next page

# MSTG Events: Balancing the Extremes (at least of Weather)

**W**e were eleven years old as an organization and celebrated on Saturday, January 23, 1999 at the home of Nancy Hawkins. Members have been known to endure sub-zero temperatures to make it to this annual event that traditionally includes the game of chance and trickery in the form of a "Trash and Treasure Swap". Pictured is the stack of wrapped packages which, although appear alluring, aren't often as they appear. Game rules require that "Winners" must remove their winnings from the premises at the end of the evening (and can't bring them back until next year's game.) Two new board members, Nancy Hawkins and Sherry Machen, were elected. See interviews about them starting on previous page.



*The pile of presents await the "Trash and Treasure Swap" at the MSTG Birthday on January 23, 1999.*



*Some of the members who enjoyed an indoor picnic on July 29, 1999.*

**M**STG's annual summer picnic became an indoor event when temperatures reached sweltering heights on July 29, 1999. We still managed to enjoy catching up with each other after a summer of no seminars, fewer meetings and less contact with one another.

**Future Events:** Plans are underway for the 1999-2000 year to include a Beginning Sandplay Practice for those therapists who have done personal sandplay process and would like to begin using Sandplay clinically. The first meeting will be Friday, September 24, 1999. The Advanced Sandplay Seminar will begin again on Saturday, September 25, 1999. This year's seminar will explore the process of a latency-age boy. A day-long Introduction to Sandplay will be offered sometime in the near future for those interested in an overview of Sandplay, or for those who are deciding whether to proceed with their own personal Sandplay process. Call Barbara Weller at (612) 276-0166 for further information.

## New Board Members continued from previous page

Nancy has participated with, and trained as, a facilitator of the In Touch Again approach, a multisensory therapeutic approach for working with children and adults with attachment problems. Nancy finds this model to be uniquely suited to the American Indian community and adds personal touches from her own experiences. She coordinates a statewide network of providers who work with this approach. She is also a member of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group.

Nancy's therapy interests include mood and anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and psychological assessment. She has extensive experience working with adults and children with chronic mood and anxiety disturbances. She also specializes in working with children and adults who have experienced trauma. She currently cofacilitates an ongoing parent support group at the American Family Center



*Sherry Machen*

**S**herry Machen found MSTG following the many psychic breadcrumbs left on her path by Nancy Hawkins and Barb Weller. She has been a psychologist in private practice since 1990, and in 1995, relocated to an office two doors down from Barb. After several sandplay workshops and lectures, she began her process. The breadcrumbs grew to crou-

tons and now whole loaves.

Sherry is a late-bloomer, receiving her Ph.D. from the U. of M. Dept. of Family Social Science in 1992. She returned to school in 1978 to finish her BA. She was a research assistant with Project Competence, a longitudinal study of children's resilience at the Department of Psychology, and used the study for her dissertation on children and divorce. While in graduate school, she began volunteering at the Indian Health Board, and joined the mental health staff when licensed in 1987. That unit was closed in 1990, and Sherry then opened her private practice with Fred Ninonuevo in Minneapolis and in Wayzata where she resides.

Sherry has lived in Minnesota since 1976. She was born in Toledo, Ohio in 1942 to a military family and moved frequently. She married into the military and raised two sons: Tim is one of Minnesota's finest cyclists, and Brian is a new pilot with Delta Airlines in Atlanta. Sherry's favorite activities are reading, raising Monarch butterflies in the summertime, staring at lakes, and walking the Arboretum with her husband, Murray.

## Calendar of MSTG Events

### — SEPTEMBER —

Beginning Sandplay Practice  
Friday, September 24, 1999, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
\*\*Office of Barbara Weller,

MSTG Board and Members Meeting  
(all members welcome) Potlach Potluck  
Friday, September 24, 1999, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.  
\*\*Office of Barbara Weller

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, September 25, 1999, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

### — OCTOBER —

In Touch Again Network  
Friday, October 15, 1999, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
American Indian Family Center

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, October 16, 1999, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

Beginning Sandplay Practice  
Friday, October 22, 1999, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
\*\*Office of Barbara Weller

MSTG Board and Education Meeting  
(all members welcome)  
Wednesday, October 27th, 1999 at 6:30  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

### — NOVEMBER —

Beginning Sandplay Practice  
Friday, November 19, 1999, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
\*\*Office of Barbara Weller

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, November 20, 1999  
12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

### — DECEMBER —

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, December 11, 1999, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

Beginning Sandplay Practice  
Friday, December 17, 1999, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
\*\*Office of Barbara Weller

### — JANUARY —

Beginning Sandplay Practice  
Friday, January 21, 2000, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
\*\*Office of Barbara Weller

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, January 22, 2000, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

### — FEBRUARY —

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, February 19, 2000, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

### — MARCH —

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, March 25, 2000, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

### — APRIL —

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, April 22, 2000, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

### — MAY —

Sandplay Advanced Seminar  
Saturday, May 20, 2000, 12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
\*Home of Carol and Larry

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

\*\*Office of Barbara Weller,  
4215 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis  
Ph: 612-276-0166

## Teacher

continued from page 1

said, "between senex and puer/puella; between trying something new and preserving Dora's legacy. We came close to devouring our youth."

The issue of the expense of training was addressed. In addition to the senex and puer/puella, Weller said, the third archetype that emerged out of these inter-generational conflicts was the trickster. Weller's slide illustration offered an eighteenth century painting wherein an old woman offers a young man advice while behind his back a young woman picks his pocket. "Are these Ponzi schemes, where newcomers are enriching those who made it through earlier?" she asked.

Weller went on to describe how she, the then lone STA member in Minnesota, created a community of sandplay therapists here. Along the way she had to deal with ethical issues such as how clients doing their process can become colleagues, as well as her own maturation as an effective teacher. She said, "There are three stages in becoming a therapist. In the first we feel we must provide answers; in the second stage we know that isn't right but we're confused about what we should actually do. In the third stage, the stage of transformation, we realize the trick is not to give answers but to ask the right questions." Similarly, in teaching sandplay, one creates a free and protected space for the student, within which the teacher talks less, asks more questions, and reserves judgment. "As I get older," Weller said, "I know I don't know the right way. I only know some ways that work for me."

Weller then described the evolution of the advanced sandplay seminar sponsored by MSTG, how the first three years were devoted to explorations of archetypes, but how the last three years have taken a different and much deeper form. In these seminars, the group has focused on a single case; each participant claims an aspect of the case, perhaps a symbol or a theoretical issue, and explores it in depth in the context of the case, presenting their work to the seminar. The seminar participants have been unanimous in endorsing this method as richer, deeper, more meaningful, and more satisfying than examining concepts in isolation.

Later in the conference, one of the breakout sessions was devoted to the MSTG Advanced Sandplay Seminar. Two seminar participants, Dale Grossman and Cil Braun, joined Barbara in giving a sampling (in an hour) of work that took



Barbara Weller

a year, when they showed a brief overview of the case, and presented shortened forms of two symbol explorations (the mirror and the church). (See related articles on pg. 1) Other members of the seminar joined Barb, Dale, and Cil in answering questions from the audience about how training works here, how we keep it going, how it maintains its integrity.

Among the other highlights from the Austin conference:

- Betty Jackson opened the conference by telling an American Indian story about how the bluebonnets came to Texas, springing out of the ashes created when a little girl was willing to sacrifice her most valued possession to save herself and her people.
- Rie Rogers Mitchell expanded on work we first saw at the national conference at Asilomar in California, where she distilled eight themes which appear in the sandplay process that can indicate that healing or transformation is taking place.
- Lucia Chambers explored the "dark feminine," looking at the transformation of the good feminine of the Great Mother into the split-off, demonic feminine that developed when patriarchal religions and social structures emerged.

The presentations, both large group and small, were strong this year, making the trip well worth it, and, as always, we had an opportunity to reconnect with friends and colleagues from around the country. The sandplay community is a small one, after all.

However, seeing Barb catalyze the individuation process of the sandplay community by confronting its shadow, making it conscious, and doing it in a manner which could be absorbed and integrated, was alone worth the price of admission.

The transformation of a teacher indeed.

—Regina Driscoll

# Labyrinth

continued from page 3

She showed us how to draw the three-circuit labyrinth, and to make little clay models that we decorated. The seven circuit labyrinth is the most universal across time and culture.

Some awesome connections were made between the labyrinth and disciplines such as math, geometry, and music.

In sacred geometry the proportions of growth patterns are considered holy and it is believed that these benefit us psychologically and emotionally, even used in the treatment of maladies, similar to the art of feng shui.

The labyrinth also demonstrates relationships between sound and form. Vibrations cause sand to form geometric patterns. A concentric circle is created by the "seed" sound, "om".

There was some speculation about a relationship to Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), because of crossing the meridian, back and forth motions in the walking. A new theory suggests that some disorders result from being "stuck in one hemisphere." Balance is achieved, coming and going from one side to another.

Astrologically, the labyrinth has 4 clockwise, 3 counterclockwise paths which mirror Mercury's (Hermes) movement through the sky, and the mating

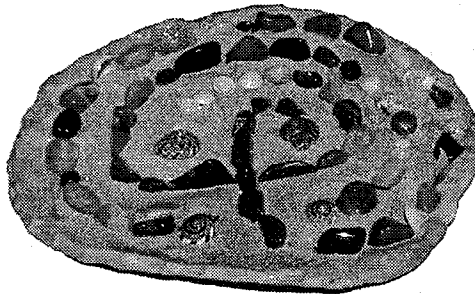
dance of cranes, sacred to Hermes.

Someone observed that if the paths are numbered, the opposites add up to 8, which turned on its side equals the symbol for infinity.

Another interesting relationship was of the circuits to the chakras:

- 5 Throat, expression . . . . .talk, speech
- 6 Third eye, inner vision .insight
- 7 Crown spirit . . . . .connection w/spirit
- 4 Heart, center path . . . . .heart
- 1 Base, survival . . . . .ground, in body
- 2 Sexual . . . . .creativity/procreate
- 3 Solar Plexus power . . . . .power

It was brought up that MRI images are broken down and stored in seven different parts of the brain. The labyrinth assumed greater and greater significance and depth, the more we talked and saw connections to our inner and outer worlds.



Three circuit labyrinth Sandplay miniature made by participant Joe Meyer.

Betty related her experience at the Chartres cathedral, where the labyrinth required uncovering and recovering, breaking the local church rule. A group participant confronted the enforcer of rules by announcing that the labyrinth is sacred and must be open to all. The Chartres labyrinth has 11 circuits, 276 stones. Unlike the labyrinths we had created, it has quadrants, a more complicated looping back and forth. Its foundation may be the 13-pointed star. This pattern is based on the form of the cross, and shows Roman and Christian influence, more masculine than earlier versions.

In conclusion, Betty presented slides of the sandplay work of a woman in her fifties who longed for deeper intimacy in her second marriage and had to come to terms with her adult daughter's revelation of childhood incest. Betty demonstrated how the labyrinth is a metaphor for the sandplay process and for transformation, individuation, and the integration of opposites (two spirals within the three circuit labyrinth). Inherent in the form is the blending of opposites, a path to integration. "There is unconscious unraveling long before conscious unraveling."

This workshop was very satisfying on a number of levels: intellectually, artistically, psychically, and physically, involving both sides of the brain, and our bodies too.

—Sherry Machen

## 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) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Thank you for your participation and support

## Mirrors

continued from page 2

In "Beauty and the Beast," Beauty sees the beast dying in the mirror and travels to him through the mirror-- a transportation device.

Hence mirrors are not only a doorway to the unconscious revealing the shadow; they can portend the future, transport to a different time or place and reveal reality.

Another popular view of the mirror is as a holder of the soul. According to Hans Biedermann, mirrors derive their symbolic importance from the ancient belief that persons or objects were magically linked to their reflections. Thus, a mirror could hold on to a person's soul or life force. "Celtic women were buried with their personal mirrors which were

their soul carriers. There is a tradition of covering mirrors in a room in which a person has died, otherwise the person's soul would be kept in the room and never cross over to the afterlife."

Still another interesting interpretation of the mirror, and one I find most useful in the case of Shirley, is the mirror as a maternal symbol representing

the empathic mirroring between mother and child. In therapy, the therapist does the mirroring.

Through the mirroring, the client's ego develops, and she is able to see things differently than before and find inner strength. Mary

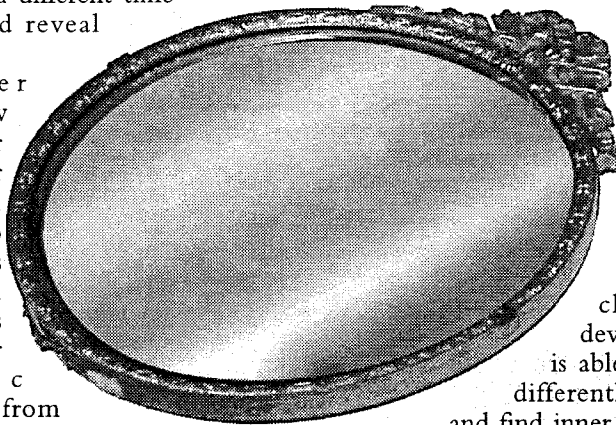
Jo Spencer is quoted as noting, "One wonders if the human sense of ego has its beginning in the capacity to recognize one's reflected image." So in addition to the empathic mirroring, the mirror can represent the ego itself

observing all that is going on, or as Edinger describes, the Eye of God or the Self. In summary, simplified, the mirror may represent:

1. a doorway to the unconscious, reflecting the shadow
2. a revealer of truth
3. a transportation device -- connecting different times or distances
4. a holder of the soul
5. an empathic mother
6. an observing ego
7. the Self

Keeping these thoughts in mind, we review Shirley's trays. We look at the eight trays which contain the mirror so we can see how Shirley uses the mirror in her process--and we see how our knowledge fits with Shirley's.

—Dale Grossman



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

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 Kalf of Switzerland. 1999 board members: Barbara Weller, President; Regina Driscoll, Lawrence Greenberg, Ethel Griggs, Dale Grossman, Marya Hage, Nancy Hawkins, Sherry Machen, Priscilla Braun. Editorial Staff: Regina Driscoll, Lawrence Greenberg, Carol Kindschi, Doris Meyer and Sherry Machen. Typeset and Design: Clay Schotzko.

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
St. Paul, MN  
Permit #7844