

SANDSPIEL

Newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group

Volume XV, Number 1

April 2004

THE SNAIL AS A SYMBOL IN SANDPLAY

Snails make frequent appearances in sand trays in various forms. Sometimes spiral shapes drawn in the sand represent them. More often their empty shells are placed in the trays to signify a water world or a treasure of nature or an element in an aesthetic design. Snails also show up in miniature replicas where they more clearly represent the animals themselves. The snail can be a central figure in the tray or a more incidental element. In any case its presence is likely to hold significance for the client.

A spiral shell, an extended abdominal foot, and a head with appendages or "horns" distinguish snails. Most snails spiral in clockwise fashion and are termed "right handed". "Left handed" snails are rare in most species. These creatures have fascinated me since childhood when I would observe the animals peek out from their little brown caves. Their discarded houses bleached by the sun served as white beads for bracelets and necklaces. At home, snails became miniature vacuum cleaners for

the glass walls of our aquariums. My grandfather entertained me with trumpeting from a large conch shell, which I in turn now play for my own grandchildren.

I considered writing about the symbolism of snails following a trip to Mexico with other members of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group. Even



though I included spiral shells in my own sandplay process, I hadn't given much conscious thought to their meaning. At Chizen Iza, I was surprised to learn from our guide that the snail shell symbolized wind to the Mayans. Ancient Mayan artists created images of the wind god emerging from a snail shell. The Mayan's association of snails to music was less surprising to me, as I have trumpeted with conch shells for years.

My interest in snails grew stronger when I was gathering shells on another trip. I picked up many empty snail shells along the beach and another on a trail leading away from the beach. When I returned home I discovered that one of the shells was not from a seashell but that of a land snail who was still living in its portable dwelling. It had been inactive and "came alive" when we were washing the shells. We named it Sam.

Sam was with us for more than four years. It chomped contentedly on

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The Archetype of Numbers: MSTG's Spring 2004 Presentation

Pratibha Eastwood will present a lecture and workshop on her work on the archetypal meanings of numbers in sandplay for MSTG's spring 2004 conference. Her presentation will consist of a lecture on Friday evening, April 30, on the numbers one through nine and how these numbers provide a structural for the universe and reveal the basic states of consciousness. Saturday, May 1, will be a full day workshop on stages of ego development throughout the life cycle, and how these can be seen in numerically significant arrays that unfold in sandplay. Case material that illustrates ego development and the individuation process in children and adults will be presented, as will the manifestation of

numerical symbols in other forms of therapy, such as art and play therapy.

Several MSTG members had the pleasure of hearing Eastwood present a one hour lecture on numbers at the Sandplay Therapists of America (STA) national conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico in October, 2002. Her masterly command of the material she has developed, as well as her elegant presentation style, put her at the top of the list of guests we wanted to bring to Minnesota for more in-depth discussion of sandplay.

Dr. Eastwood's extensive work with the meaning of numbers has been published in a fascinating and wide-ranging book called *Nine Windows to Wholeness: Exploring Numbers in Sandplay Therapy* (Sanity Press, 2002). In this wonderful

book, Eastwood not only discusses each of the basic numbers in detail, illustrated with cross-cultural imagery and sandplay case material, but she also describes how Dora Kalff, developer of sandplay, used numerology to understand others. Eastwood also provides a set of interactive exercises that allow the reader to analyze sandplay scenes for their number symbolism, and compare his impressions with Eastwood's. Copies of Eastwood's book will be available at the workshop.

Flyers for Eastwood's workshop go out in early March. We encourage early registration as space will be limited. For more information, contact Regina Driscoll at 651-220-6900 or regina.driscoll@childrenshc.org.

Snail

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the lettuce and other greens we provided. It absorbed the calcium from the pieces of concrete its jar. Sam inspired me to learn more about snails, especially terrestrial ones. Five years is a typical life span for such snails. In as much as I have no idea of Sam's age when I found it, I cannot determine whether the snail died of "old age" or some other cause. Some land snails have lived more than ten years. Desert varieties may even achieve fifty years with many of those years being in an inactive state.

As I read up on land snails, I became fascinated by their sex lives. Each animal comes fully equipped with both male and female apparatuses. When two snails get together they fertilize each other's eggs. Snails have elements of both the masculine and the feminine principle not only in biology but also in their physical properties and in their metaphysical qualities. The horns and protruding foot remind one of male features. The containing and decorated qualities of the shells represent the feminine principle. The spiral design suggests life and creative forces that depend upon the integration of masculine and feminine.

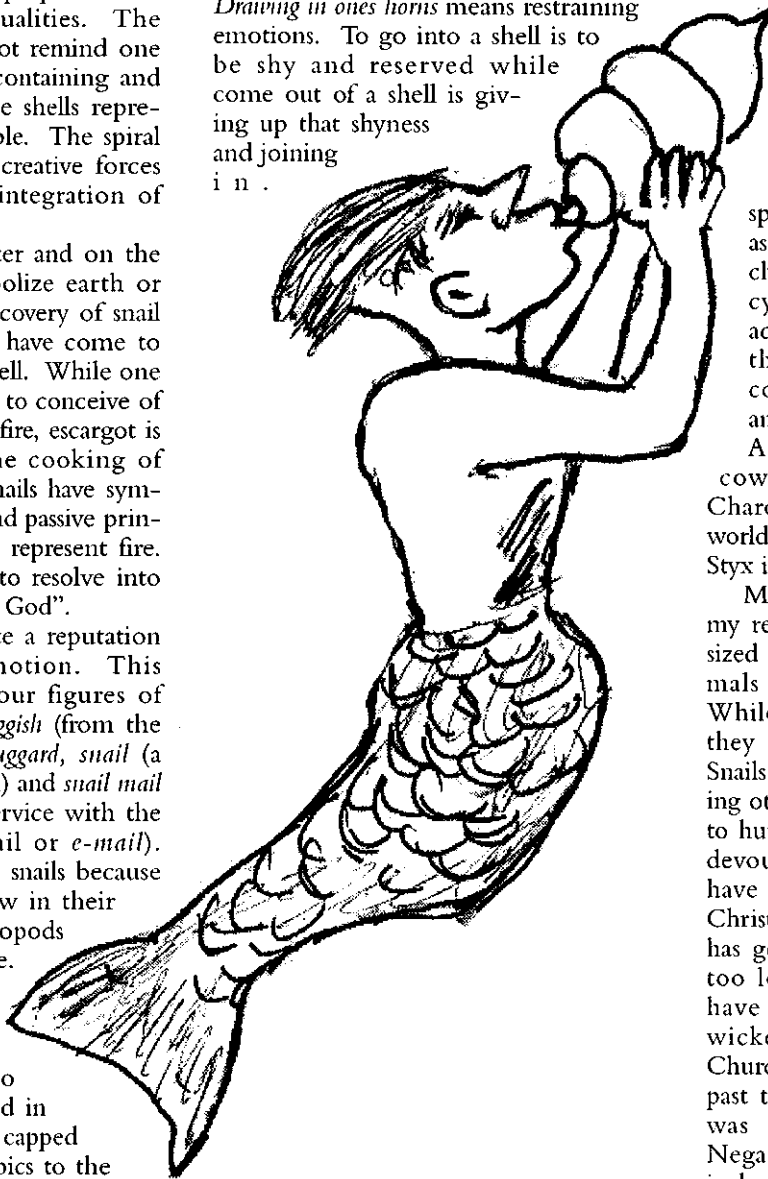
Snails live in the water and on the land and thus can symbolize earth or water. Due to man's discovery of snail shells as trumpets, snails have come to symbolize wind (air) as well. While one may find it more difficult to conceive of snails in association with fire, escargot is a delicacy involving the cooking of snails. In India where snails have symbolized both the active and passive principles, the radiated shells represent fire. In heraldry, snail is said to resolve into "esna-il" or "light of one God".

Snails have built quite a reputation from their slow locomotion. This quality has crept into our figures of speech: *a snail's pace*, *sluggish* (from the shell-less gastropod), *sluggard*, *snail* (a lazy, slow-moving person) and *snail mail* (contrasting the postal service with the speedier electronic mail or *e-mail*). People tend to disparage snails because they are notoriously slow in their travels. However, gastropods are amazingly adaptable. Species occupy a variety of surfaces of the earth, from wet to dry, hot to cold, high to low. Snails can be found in deserts, seas, lakes, snow capped mountains, from the tropics to the

Arctic and places in between.

Most kinds of land snails are found in areas that are moist and shady. When it is dry snails go into aestivation. When moisture returns, they become active again. Snails have been known to remain in aestivation for months and even years and to revive upon the introduction of water. Snails can aestivate for short periods of time or long periods. During aestivation they do not eat and their body functions slow down. Snails are hardy survivors.

The snail emerges from its shell to activate its foot and move about. Snails move by rippling the muscles on their "feet". The "horns" of the land snail hold the eyes. In marine varieties the horns are sensors rather than seers. The snail emerging from its shell suggests birth. This quality also can symbolize dawn coming from a cave of darkness. The drawing into the shell implies a going inward, an introversion. *Drawing in ones horns* means restraining emotions. To go into a shell is to be shy and reserved while come out of a shell is giving up that shyness and joining
i n .



Again I am struck by the snail's gift of integrating opposites.

Tritons are named after the son of Poseidon and Amphitrite. These snails are also known as trumpets of the seas. Shell trumpets through the ages have had more serious purposes than the amusement of children and grandchildren. They have been used to summon the gods, to honor the rites of initiation, marriage, or funerals, to celebrate festivals of plowing and harvest. They have been used as part of the ceremonies in sun worship cults. The conch is one of the eight glorious Buddhist Emblems and represents the voice of Buddha.

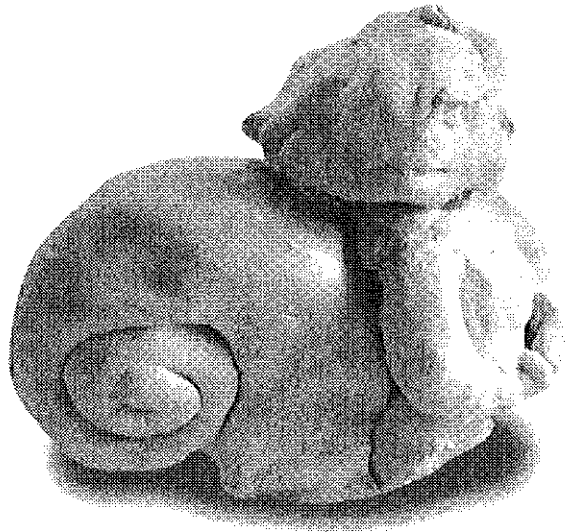
The snail as a symbol of birth and a female symbol goes back to ancient times. Malaysian folklore has it that the first woman sprung from a cowry. Mayan and Aztec pictographs show people emerging from snail shells.

Japanese have attributed to the cowry powers for easy child delivery.

Snails have been seen as having magical powers including protection from evil, foretelling one's mate, bringing good luck, making spells, reading omens, and serving as an ingredient in love potions and charms. The snails' characteristic cycles of aestivation followed by activity suggest resurrection from the dead. Snails including the cowry have been used as money and magic objects in many cultures.

According to Greek mythology, cowry shells were used to free Charon, the boatman of the underworld, to ferry the dead across the river Styx into the other world.

Most of my experiences with and my readings about snails have emphasized positive qualities. But these animals have their dark sides as well. While snails often benefit mankind, they can bring death and pestilence. Snails can take over territories, destroying other creatures of economic benefit to humans. They can be garden pests, devouring crops and flowers. Snails have been viewed negatively in the Christian Church (though Christianity has generally ignored this creature as too lowly for attention). Christians have associated snail with sin and wickedness (de Vries, 1984). The Church banned eating of snails in the past though eating snails during Lent was permitted by dispensation. Negative qualities of snail as symbol include concealment, laziness, slowness,



and slander.

While the snail sometimes symbolizes fire and the sun (radial shells and sun dials), more often snails are considered a lunar symbol. Teccistecal, the moon god, is portrayed as enclosed in a snail shell. In Indonesia, snail shells were seen as protective moon droppings. Some snails typically are nocturnal, which reinforces their association with the moon. Snail shells often represent the feminine, again emphasizing their lunar quality.

This apparently lowly creature has the power of generation and resurrection. It symbolizes for me the feminine aspects of my own psyche, yet it also signifies masculine qualities and energies. Snails in various forms can represent each of the four elements of fire, water, earth, and air. I have decorated rooms in my home and office with shells of snails. I have honored this being in my own sandplay process, in sculptures, on a shield, in photographs, drawings, and paintings. I delighted in sharing my home with Sam, the steadfast little land snail.

C.G. Jung does not make many references to the snail in his works, though he has quite a bit to say about the spiral. Nevertheless, Jung gives honor to the animal as a proof of God's existence (Jung, 18 1360). While I am not sure what he meant by this, it does seem to raise the status of this allegedly lowly creature. Jung also refers to the snail as a symbol of Self in dreams (Jung 9ii 356). Of the spiral, Jung describes the creative process whereby an older pattern returns on a higher level. "The

process is that of the ascending spiral, which grows upward while simultaneously returning again and again to the same point" (Jung, 1964 p. 225). The snail could be seen, therefore, as a sculpture of the creative process. Since ancient times, this shape has represented the universe and the process of growth.

Snails find their way into sand trays during sandplay processes. The shells may indicate the recognition or the emergence of the feminine in the client. For the woman or girl the appearance may suggest an acceptance of an element of her femininity. In a man or a boy, the inclusion of shells may show a connection to the anima or even an integration of the male and female within the psyche. I have found that the use of snail shells has most often suggested hope and has been a positive indicator. Snails and their shells have been considered a sign of good luck by peoples around the world throughout the ages.

The empty shell of the snail may signify a sense of loneliness as the live animal has departed. In ancient times, snail shells, especially the cowries were used in funerary rituals. The context of the appearance of the shells in the sand tray is of major importance for interpretation.

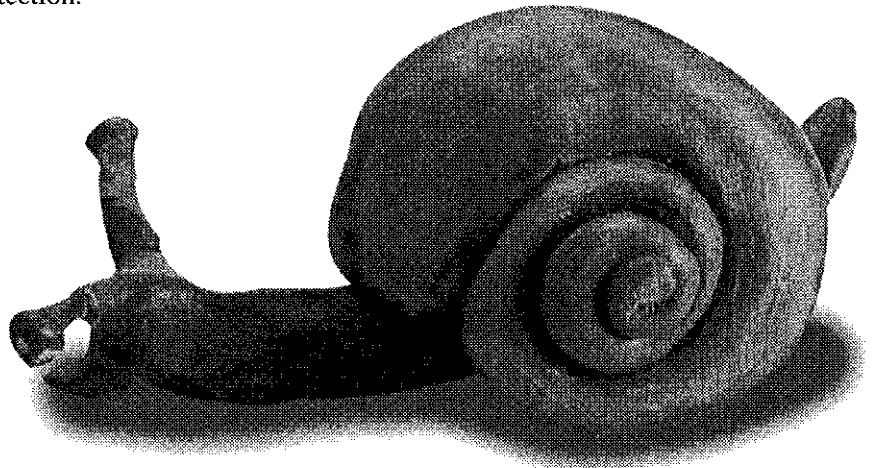
The snail is a survivor and its shell often represents protection. The sand scene may actually stimulate the sand player to come out of their shell when they face the fear causing the desire for protection.

Kay Bradway has commented on the relationship between the snail and the unconscious. "...In Jungian psychology the snail is seen as a union of conscious (the shell) and the unconscious (the under soft part). The snail is also seen as a spiritual symbol because of its spiral..." (Bradway, 1992 p.19). The snail may represent the transcendent function. The nature of the snail as a combination of male and female has been discussed above. Snails bridge land and water, and may represent a combination of all of the ancient elements.

The negative association of snail is not lost on some of my clients who particularly comment on its lowly quality and its slowness. Their comments may signify their impatience with how they are moving in their daily life or in the process with which they are working. They seem to fear that their pace will cause them to be left behind or run over by those around them. The snail may also represent the feeling of inadequacy of the client. Yet as the client moves along in his or her journey, accompanied by the persistent snail, he or she may discover that the pace is just right and leads to an acceptance of self.

The snails, especially marine varieties, often imply a deep watery scene in the sand. Representations of water often indicate the unconscious in the sand tray. Snail shells show a lasting picture or the evolving life form, implying eternity. The snail may be ignored or downgraded by some, but it is a significant symbol that often creeps into the sand tray in one form or another. It is usually a good sign.

—Stephen W. Olmsted, Ph.D.



2003 ISST Congress Convenes in Seattle

The International Society for Sandplay Therapy's biennial congress was held in Seattle August 16-20, 2003, allowing several local sandplay therapists and advanced trainees an easy opportunity to hear a variety of international presenters. Speakers from Italy, Switzerland, Japan, China, Israel, Canada, Ireland, and Germany joined U.S. ISST/STA members to present a wide range of topics on the theme of *Relationship in Sandplay/Sandplay in Relationship*. The opening presentation was a delightful and moving recollection of Dora Kalff by Vera von Braunbehrens, who served as an assistant to Mrs. Kalff in the last several years of her life. Von Braunbehrens discussed Kalff's life and work, with a particular emphasis on how her personal life and relationships had shaped her development of sandplay therapy.

The next three and a half days saw nine keynote presentations and 16 break-out sessions that permitted attendees to hear a wide range of topics in sandplay, including in-depth exploration of the analytic underpinnings of sandplay; use of sandplay in a surgical practice; use of sandplay in group; Eastern symbolism in sandplay, including Buddhism, Hinduism and the I Ching; training and research issues in sandplay; and, of course, much case material.

Everyone there, however, might agree that the peak moment came with Bert Meltzer's presentation of the case of an eight year girl in a hospital in Israel; amazingly, the case was recorded on video and Meltzer had permission to show it in a professional setting. The little girl was an Arab child who had been hit by a car and who had become increasingly mute, to the point of catatonia, in the Arab clinic where she was first cared for. The Arab hospital referred the child to the Israeli hospital where Meltzer practices and teaches sandplay to trainees. Through the video taped sessions, we had a chance to see the child progress from an unresponsive, limp rag-doll of a child, slumped in a wheelchair, to a vital, joyous, beautiful little girl. Her therapist, unable to get any other response from her at the outset, had begun to see her in the sandplay room, where she showed the child a few sandplay items. Overtime, the child became more alert and

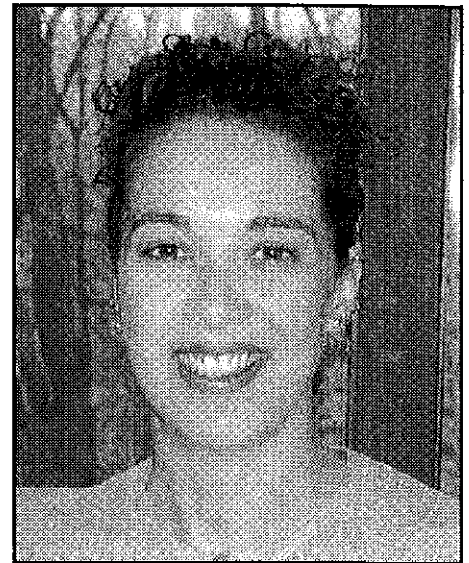
interactive, and began to use those few items that had been shown to her in those first moments, when one would have sworn she did not even notice them, as central items in her sandplay journey. This presentation satisfied and amazed on numerous levels: we had an opportunity to see the miraculous transformation of this very wounded child, the catalyzing effects of the sand and the objects, and the healing relationship that developed between the child and her gifted therapist. Not just hear about it: we actually could see it happen through the videotaped record. And lest we forget, all of this occurred between an Arab child and an Israeli therapist, when Arab doctors referred a desperate case to an Israeli hospital: surely the other, hopeful, side of the terrible violence we see in the headlines about terrorist bombings on buses and raids on refugee camps.

In addition to extraordinary moments such as these, we also experienced some lighter moments, such as an evening of music, dancing and a silent auction of sandplay items (proceeds used to support the ISST scholarship fund) and to trips to Seattle's famous Pike Place Market and to Blake Island, a state park in Puget Sound where we had a salmon dinner and an enactment of the Northwestern Indian story of Raven's theft of fire from the gods, an act that brought the light of consciousness and the warmth of love to the world.

There were some minor quibbles. The conference was held on the lovely University of Washington campus with accommodations in the dormitories, which kept participants together for a more retreat-like experience and kept costs down, but most of us have grown beyond dormitory living (I know I have). And sometimes it was hard to understand an occasional presenter, reading a paper in non-native English. Still, as always, the sandtray pictures spoke for themselves, and we left the 2003 meeting reaffirmed in our faith in the extraordinary universality of sandplay, and its beautiful capacity to build relationships between very different cultures and people.

For those who might be interested in attending a future ISST congress, keep in mind that the next one will be held in Rome in 2005.

—Regina Driscoll



Diana-Christine Teodorescu is the New MSTG President

Congratulations to Diana-Christine Teodorescu who assumed the reins as president of MSTG in January. Teodorescu brings enthusiasm, creativity and wisdom to the leadership of the sandplay organization. She was employed at The Store Front Group in the Impact program for five years before focusing on her private practice. Teodorescu shares her background and vision in her own words:

"Inherent to sandplay is the application of a dynamic, soulful process that offers unique opportunity for replenishment and insight to those we come alongside. For those of us who practice it, the sand continues to draw forth our own creative and introspective spheres of awareness. It has been my great pleasure and honor to work with the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group for the past six years, growing in my own competencies as a therapist and working with others to increase awareness of and skill within the organization.

I have worked within a variety of settings over the past fourteen years, primarily with children, adolescents, and families. My graduate and post-graduate degrees are both from St. Mary's University of Minnesota and hold licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapy. My partner and I have made our home in Minneapolis for the past twelve years and enjoy sharing our lives with our furry canine companions Justice and Agnostic. My current focus's involve expanding my private practice and continuing my education,

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Calendar of MSTG Events

APRIL

In Touch Again Network
Friday, April 9, 2004, 10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Office Building of Nancy Hawkins**

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
The Transcendent Function
Saturday April 24, 2004, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Home of Carol and Larry*

Prathiba Eastwood: Friday Night and Saturday,
April 30 and May 1, 2004
Archetypes and Numbers and Ego Development and Individuation as Related to Numbers (using both child and adult case material).

MAY

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
The Transcendent Function
Saturday, May 15, 2004, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Home of Carol and Larry

MSTG Board Meeting (all members welcome)
Saturday, May 15, 2004
Following Advanced Seminar
Home of Carol and Larry

JUNE

Sandplay Advanced Seminar
(if needed) Saturday June 12, 2004
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Home of Carol and Larry

JULY

In Touch Again Network
Friday, July 9, 2004, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Office Building of Nancy Hawkins

MSTG Summer Party
Saturday, July 17, 2004 (Date Tentative)
Home of Joe and Doris Meyer
Amery Wisconsin
(Watch for further Details)

OCTOBER

In Touch Again Network
Friday October 8, 2004, 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Office Building of Nancy Hawkins

Future Events:

Sherry Shepherd workshop of Spirituality in Sandplay
March 18 - 20th, 2005

Regional STA conference in March 2005
(Being looked into).

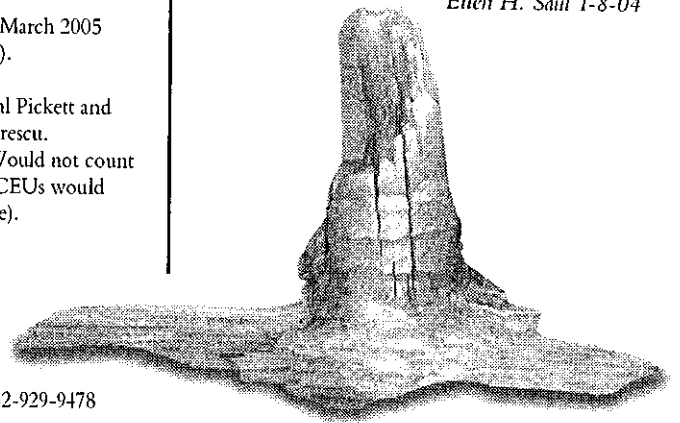
Play Therapy Workshop by Hal Pickett and Diana-Christine Teodorescu.
Details available at a later date. (Would not count toward STA but professional CEUs would probably be available).

Words from a Piece of Driftwood

*I have moved through life
Just as you have:
Shaped by the flow of water,
Abraded by a million grains of sand
Bumped, tossed by wind and wave
Left to bake in the sun, cooled by breezes.
I carry the journey on my body.
The rough places have been smoothed
My grain
Is visible and clear.*

*I hold the power of all of this —
Any space I wait is sacred.
I like the way you're shaping up.*

Ellen H. Saul 1-8-04



* 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 Building of Nancy Hawkins, 4500 Park Glen Road, St. Louis Park, MN 55416, Ph: 952-929-9478

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 guidelines 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)

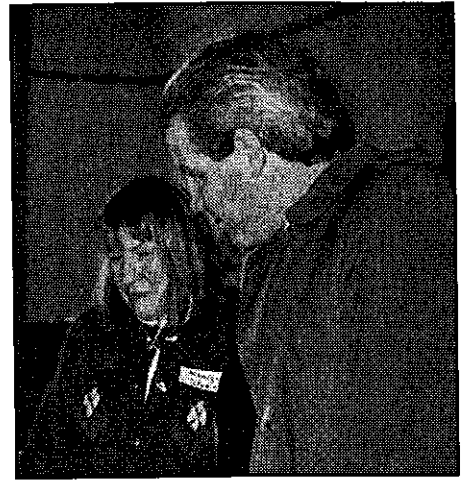
- Psychology
- Psychiatry
- Social Work
- Psychiatric Nursing
- Other _____

Please mail to:

Treasurer
Minnesota Sandplay
Therapy Group
53 Birchwood Road,
Mahtomedi, MN 55115

Duluth Mayor Herb Bergson Gets an Introduction to Sandplay

Duluth's Temple-Opera Counseling and Psychotherapy Network welcomed newly elected Mayor Bergson at a reception in the historic building where the therapists' offices are located. The network includes MSTG members Stephen W. Olmsted, Marlyn J. Sternal, and Katrina Tobey. Mayor Bergson is shown here with Marlyn Sternal. The sand tray picture they are viewing is a representation of Duluth (created by Ms. Sternal), complete with a sign reading "Welcome to Duluth".



Teodorescu

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specifically around neurophysiology and attachment issues.

The legacy of this organization is impressive and it is my sincerest hope that we continue to expand our membership and trainings during the next few years. Both of these areas are critical if we are to attract new members and energy to the organization while continuing to uphold the high stan-

dards of excellence that have been our hallmark since the beginning. We have accomplished so much as organization and we have much to be proud of, and yet, we still have much to do. I look forward to working with our current and future members and professional partners to meet the opportunities that lie ahead."

Sandspiel is the newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group, 53 Birchwood Road, Mahtomedi, MN 55115. *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.

MSTG 2004 Board: Diana-Christine Teodorescu, president, Joe Meyer, Catharine Larsen, Ethel Griggs, Hal Pickett, Stephen Olmsted, Regina Driscoll, Cil Braun, Dennis Flom.

Editorial Staff: Stephen Olmsted, editor, Regina Driscoll, Catharine Larsen, Carol Kindschi

Typeset and Design: Clay Schotzko.



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