

# SANDSPIEL

Newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group

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April 2006

## The Scarab

On a recent trip to Egypt, I noticed a curious insect among the more traditional icons and symbols represented in the carvings and paintings on the Egyptian tombs, temples and monuments. Interested, I asked our tour guide about this. He said the scarab was part of Egyptian mythology and was connected with the rising sun, rebirth, and in more modern times, good luck.

At the Temple of Karnak near the ancient city of Thebes there is a stone

sculpture in the shape of a large scarab. Touching the sculpture was to bring good luck and was said if you circle it seven times you would be married within a year. The crowds around the sculpture and the number and variety of scarab items in the gift shop speak to the popularity of the scarab to the present day.

The scarab is classified as a member of the family *Scarabaeidae* that includes over 26,000 species including the African genus *Goliathus*, one of the

largest of the beetles. Members of this beetle family are found on all continents except Antarctica and live in a variety of habitats including desert, farmland, forests, and grasslands.

A distinctive behavior of scarab beetles is the rolling of dung into balls, which they push along with their hind feet.

According to Egyptian mythology the sun was rolled across the sky by a giant scarab corresponding to the sun's daily cycle.

The connection between the dung ball and the sun is the parallel between the rolling of the dung sphere and the movement of the sun through the sky. The scarab has been regarded as self-generated due to the observation of larva and fully developed beetles emerging from the dung. We read in the Secret of the Garden Flower, "and in that ball life is engendered, the fruit of its undivided effort of concentration." The early Egyptians did not realize that the scarab had laid its eggs in the dung, which would then serve as food for the hatchlings.

The ancient Egyptians built a theory of symbolic association of ball, sun, autogenesis and renewal. The lowly scarab became Khepri, the divine form or archetypal figure of the rising sun generated from the earth.

One scholar comments on the scarab's connection with the theme of death and rebirth: "It may not have gone unnoticed that the scarab pupa, whose wings and legs are encased at



Stone scarab at the Temple of Karnak near Thebes, Egypt.

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## Self-Study

In Sanskrit, the word for self-study is Svadhyaya. Sva = Self, and dhyaya = understanding. I would suggest that self-study is the journey of *discovering* ourselves. As in the journey of individuation, we remove layer upon layer or lift veil after veil to finally discover the precious jewel that has always resided within us—our Self, our God within. Knowing ourselves leads to liberation, oneness with all, but it is a journey that requires steadfastness and one that is not easy—but the rewards are great.

To know ourselves takes awareness and constant curiosity. It requires us to be unflinchingly honest about what we notice about ourselves. I use my morning pages for this and don't let myself hide behind false pride or shame. It takes courage and discipline to honestly witness ourselves.

Because we often discover qualities or behaviors in ourselves that we don't like, it is important that we are gentle and deeply compassionate about what we discover and practice non-violence with ourselves as well as with others.

We can be grateful for those behaviors which helped us to cope in the past, but no longer serve us.

Because this is difficult work, it helps to be playful and use humor. I am reminded of my beloved "Winnie the Pooh," where Christopher Robin would say lovingly to Pooh, as Pooh was stuck in the rabbit hole because he had eaten too much honey, "Silly old bear."

The whole world is our autobiography. It helps to remember that 99% of what bothers us about others is about

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this point, is very mummy like.” (Andrews, p.51) The ceiling in the tomb of Ramses VI portrays the nightly ‘death’ and rebirth of the sun as being swallowed by Nuit, goddess of night, and re-emerging from her womb as Khepri, god of the rising sun.

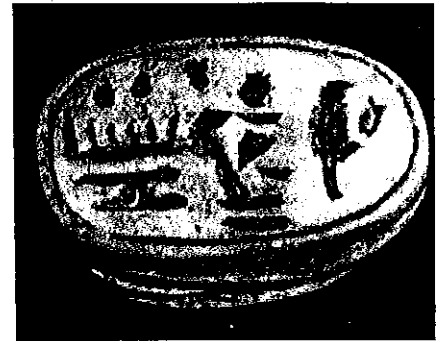
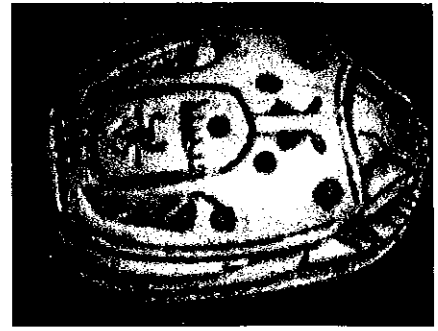
The image of the scarab representing transformation, renewal and resurrection is common in ancient Egyptian religious and funerary art. Often scarab charms were placed on the chest over the heart of the deceased. Perhaps the most famous of these so-called heart scarabs is the yellow-green Libyan glass scarab found at the Valley of the Kings in the tomb of Tutankhamen. It was felt that the heart bore witness to the morality and judged the conscience of the dead person, not unlike an ancient form of the superego. The scarab amulet over the heart served to prevent it from bearing witness against the deceased. The heart was the conscience, often quite critical, that guided the person’s actions as an independent spirit dwelling in the body.

At least two references to the scarab are noted in the works of Carl Jung. The most well known occurs in his article on Synchronicity (cw, vol. 8 P. 843). “A young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned round and saw a flying insect knocking against the windowpane from outside. I opened the window and caught the

creature in the air as it flew in. It was the nearest analogy to a golden scarab that one finds in our latitudes, a Scarabaeid beetle, the common rose-chaffer (*cetonia aurata*).” Jung indicated that he thought treatment of this patient would be difficult, at least initially, because she “was caught up in a rationalism in which the possibility of irrational phenomena was unacceptable.” Jung believed this view needed to change before treatment would be successful. He noted that the needed transformation of consciousness is almost exclusively represented by symbols of rebirth. He writes: “The scarab is a classic example of a rebirth symbol. The ancient Egyptian Book of what is in the netherworld describes how the dead sun god changes himself at the tenth station into Khepri, the scarab, and then at the twelfth station, mounts the barge which carries the rejuvenated sun god into the morning sky” (cw. Vol. 8 p.845). Jung pointed out that this experience had a deep effect on the patient who could now open up to the possibility of the irrational and could recognize the reality of the world of the unconscious.

Jung also mentions the scarab in *Psychology and Alchemy* (cw. Vol. 12 p. 452, 453). In his discussion of the unicorn he refers to the one-horned Scarabaeus. Jung brings up the notion here that the scarab is capable of self-fertilization, hence “born of itself”. Speaking alchemically, Jung describes the scarab as undergoing the same dismemberment as the dragon, a separation into elements.

Jung notes that there are few references to the scarab in alchemical literature, although in the old text, *The*



*A carved steatite scarab amulet  
- circa 550 BC.*

*Consilium Coniugii*, there is the statement that “no water will become the elixir save that which comes from the scarabs of our water.” Translated: The scarab of our water refers to Mercurius, the aqua divina.

The modern fascination with the art and beliefs of ancient Egypt has carried over to the scarab as a living survivor of those ancient times. Its symbolism is both positive and playful, often as a talisman bringing good luck.

### References

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—Dennis Flom



*A scarab beetle, depicted on the walls of Tomb KV6 in the Valley of the Kings*

## Rosalind Winter to Present on Symbol Formation in June

Rosalind Winter, ISST/STA Teaching member and a Jungian analyst, will present on "Symbol Formation" for MSTG's 2006 sandplay workshop on Friday and Saturday, June 2 and 3. There will be a lecture on Friday evening and an all-day workshop on Saturday.

Winter practices in northern New Jersey and New York City, and in the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, she quickly began working with schools and other agencies to develop crisis services for children who were very directly affected by those tragic events. These included children and teens whose parents worked in the World Trade Center or who had other close connections to the victims, families, and disaster responders at Ground Zero.

Winter developed what she calls

Symbol Formation as an adaptation of sandplay therapy for use as an alternative therapeutic response to traumatic experiences. Symbol Formation is a non-verbal, tactile method of responding to unbearable traumatic experiences through the use of the sand tray, sand and miniatures representing a variety of life's experiences and known symbols of comfort. It is culturally sensitive and is accessible to all without the use of words, and it works well with adults as well as children. In Symbol Formation a person accesses, expresses, contains and transforms unbearable emotions and images into a symbol or image that he can tolerate, without the intrusion of another's comments, questions or needs. In this free and safe space, as the person transforms and communicates his/her inner experience into an external image/symbol, he is soothed and

his capacity to manage difficult emotions and experiences increased mastery and resilience. Symbol Formation is an empowering approach to healing in which a person naturally responds at exactly the level that is most healing for him.

Twenty six schools with over fifteen thousand children continue to use Symbol Formation, created on the spot as an immediate and urgent response to the overwhelming traumatic experience of 9/11. It grew as a grass roots movement among the therapists, counselors and social workers working with children and survivors of 9/11. In school environments and drop-in centers created after 9/11, therapists, school counselors, social workers and clients report its efficacy. Consistently, Symbol Formation has been effective where typical approaches have failed or been rejected by clients.

The Friday evening lecture will describe the emotional trauma that individuals living and working in the Ground Zero area experienced as a result of the 9/11 attacks, and address how Symbol Formation leads to symbolic expression that contains difficult emotions and leads to therapeutic resolution. Saturday's workshop will describe the symbol formation technique in depth, discuss its underlying theoretical foundation, and describe the skills needed to be an effective Symbol Formation facilitator. Specific issues in setting up a symbol formation program in settings such as schools will also be discussed.

For more information, contact Regina Driscoll at 651-220-6900 or [regina.driscoll@childrensmn.org](mailto:regina.driscoll@childrensmn.org).



*A child's view of 9-11*

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## Scholarships Available

Eight years ago, MSTG received a generous donation to establish a Scholarship Fund to assist sandplay therapist-trainees. "Recognizing that undertaking sandplay therapy is a commitment to depth work that requires considerable time, energy and financial resources, the intent of this fund is to provide partial support for those individuals who would otherwise be unable to obtain their individual sandplay process." There is a stated preference for experienced therapists who will be working with culturally diverse or economically disadvantaged clients in this geographic area. To date, three scholarships have been awarded. Recently \$1000 from the profits of the miniature sales was added to the fund. Several individual contributions have also been received.

We are once again seeking applicants! MSTG members are urged to spread the word. The completion of a personal sandplay process is an essential part of the preparation for practice as a sandplay therapist. It is an expensive undertaking and these scholarships allow MSTG to partially support those who are unable to afford it. Questions about the application process should be directed to Ethel Griggs at (651) 429-0064 or [c.griggs@comcast.net](mailto:c.griggs@comcast.net)

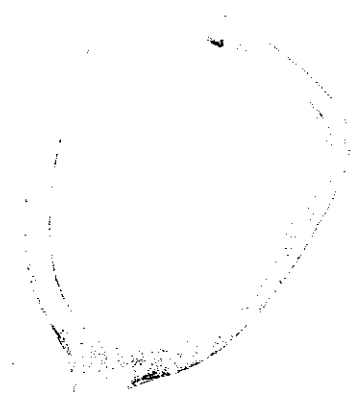
## Self-Study

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us, and 99% of what bothers others about us is about them. (Thanks to Deborah Adele at Yoga North Duluth.) We know as therapists that others are mirrors to us. We have an opportunity to learn about ourselves by our reactions to others in our world.

A revealing exercise is to name a person you intensely dislike, name the trait(s) that bug you, and then find those same traits within yourself. I once named Rush Limbaugh, the opinionated, divisive, hateful radio personality. I couldn't stand him! How could I be like this man? Oops! I remembered how passionate and self-righteous I can be, and how I sometimes seem to like to stir up a hornet's nest. Ouch! Of course, we know these to be our shadow sides—parts of us that are unlive(d) or unknown. And we also know that if we do not know or admit to these parts, they will leak out in a most undesirable way.

So I invite you to notice how you are with others, what happens when you are thwarted or disappointed, with change or loss, with the unknown, what makes you mad, sad, unhappy, happy—these are all wonderful learning opportunities. Notice the things that seem to hook you into reacting. Notice, too, what opens your heart and creates harmony within you.



*What we seek as our highest  
goal depends upon what we  
believe ourselves to be.*

—Ramanuja from "Conquest of the Mind" by Eknath Ewaran.

Remember not to judge or analyze, but just notice. We cannot dislike or love another without first having that dislike or love of ourselves within us.

It helps to know what kind of person we want to be and then we can grow ourselves to be that person. Study people in history or in your life who have the qualities you desire. Read sacred scriptures and other inspiring works. Be in sacred communities—those such as our Advanced Seminar, spiritual groups, yoga groups—with others who are also on an intentional spiritual path. Can we grow our container big enough to hold our greatness? Remember it is already within us.

When I was interning at a halfway house for recovering women, one of my old therapists said to me once, "Catharine, let yourself be a learner." That freed me to allow myself to dare to say something or suggest something to one of the clients—in front of my supervisor—that I had been scared to do, for fear of being wrong or dumb. I let myself make a "mistake" at least one time a day. How liberating.

A practice of meditation can be invaluable on this journey. It allows us to still ourselves and to then create a gap, so that we can witness, not just react.

This path of Self-Study is joyful and liberating. It can also be difficult and even painful. As we shed our old ways, the new ones aren't so firmly in place. Remember: *Like a kaleidoscope, we tumble apart and then come together in a new and beautiful design.* (Catharine Larsen)

By Catharine Larsen, MA, LP. Catharine is a therapist and sandplay therapist in a private practice in her home on the shores of Lake Superior in Duluth, MN. She is also a student and practitioner of yoga. This article is taken from a lecture she gave in the Ten Guidelines class, a class studying the yogic principles and ethics.



## THANK YOU, MARYA HAGE

MSTG recognizes Marya Hage for her contributions to the organization and for her commitment and dedication to helping others. Marya is a past president of MSTG who graciously provided a site to MSTG for seminars and training in Sandplay at the Orion Building in Golden Valley. She has been an active member of MSTG for years and has participated in many of its activities. She has reached out in many ways to be of service to those in need. Minnesota Monthly (January 2006) recognized her as one of Minnesota's leading trendsetters.

In the Minnesota Monthly article, Marya was quoted to say, "In the final analysis, wealth and success matter little, what does matter is that you made a positive difference in at least one person's life." Marya has clearly made a difference in many lives. Marya has traveled far and wide to ease the burdens of those affected by disasters, including the survivors of 9-11, the students and families at Red Lake following the shootings there, and the victims of Hurricane Katrina. She is frequently called upon by the Red Cross to provide mental health assistance in disasters.

Marya founded Meridian Services in 1980 to provide resources to persons with developmental disabilities. From this organization sprung Orion Associated, an administrative consulting firm, and Zenith Services, a vocational program.

Recently her companies sent teams of volunteers to New Orleans to help with the clean-up of the Ninth Ward, a poor district of the City that was devastated by the storm and the resulting breach of the levees. MSTG provided some financial support of these efforts.

The Board of MSTG has voiced its appreciation of Marya Hage for her service and generous spirit.

--Stephen W. Olmsted

# Steve Olmsted Becomes Member of ISST and STA



It is official – congratulations to Steve Olmsted who completed requirements for a clinical membership in ISST and STA in March 2006. His journey included completion of two symbol papers, “Long legged wading birds” and “The Snail”, and a case study following the transformations of a woman in mid-life.

Steve was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, graduated from Stanford University, and earned

his Masters and Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

He married Mary in 1958, beginning a family that now includes three children, their spouses, and seven grand children. Steve’s career as a psychologist began in 1959 including working in schools in Osseo, Hutchinson, St. Louis Park and Becker and Clay counties. In 1973, he joined the staff of the Southeast Mental Health and Retardation Center. He began private practice as a clinical psychologist in Moorhead in 1977 and moved to Duluth in 1980 where he continues his private practice to this day.

Steve was drawn to the Sand by a presentation in Vancouver at the Association for Play Therapy annual conference in 1990. He pursued this interest in an introductory course in Sandplay presented by Barbara Weller in February 1991. At this presentation, Barbara Weller informed the group of the necessity for completing a personal process before using Sandplay with clients. Steve asked her how he could get started. She replied that he could set up an appointment with her. He then asked when her next opening was and she answered that she had time

available that afternoon. Steve’s journey began!

Steve joined MSTG in February of 1991 and began using Sandplay in his practice upon completing his own process in 1992. Steve has attended most of the MSTG training events since that time, including two Seminars in the Yucatan. It was my privilege to travel with Steve on those trips and we often remarked about the synchronicity of our symbol birds welcoming us to Mexico. Steve has obtained training with In Touch Again and has had advanced training and consultation with Agnes Bayley.

(His current practice includes attachment work with children displaced from their birth families through foster care, residential care, and adoption.) Steve is currently a member of the Board of MSTG and is the editor of the Sandspiel. Since Steve has been in my sandplay consultation group for over ten years I have been able to observe his sensitive and caring work, often with some very difficult clients. So I can say with confidence that he is an excellent therapist, as we should all aspire to be.

—Joe Meyer, LICSW, ISST/STA

## 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

# Coming Events

— June 2-3, 2006 —

Symbol formation: An Urgent Response to September 11, presented by Rosalind Winter, ISST/STA, Jungian analyst.

— September 29, 2006 —

Introduction to Sandplay Therapy, Joseph Meyer, ISST/STA and Regina Driscoll, ISST/STA.

— Summer Gathering —

Time and place to be determined

— November, 2006 - May, 2007 —

Advanced Sandplay Seminar: An In-depth Exploration of Sandplay Case Material (theme for upcoming year to be announced).

— Fall, 2006 - Spring, 2007 —

Topics in Sandplay Therapy: Sandplay and its Jungian Foundations.

Faculty: Advanced Sandplay Therapists.

## MSTG Miniature Store Relocating this Fall

After years of being graciously taken care of by Nancy Hawkins & Bill Vikckers and by Joe & Doris Meyer, the store will be moving to 3005 James Avenue South in South Minneapolis this Fall. Hours will be by Appointment ONLY. Stay tuned for details...



*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. 2006 board members: Current Board Members are: Diana-Christine Teodorescu, president, Ethel Griggs, treasurer, Catharine Larsen, Secretary, Dennis Flom, Joe Meyer, Regina Driscoll, Stephen Olmsted. Editorial Staff: Stephen Olmsted, editor, Regina Driscoll, Catharine Larsen. Typeset and design: Clay Schotzko.



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