

SANDSPIEL

Newsletter of the Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group

Volume XVI, Number 1

January 2005

Spiritual Direction in Sandplay

I am a spiritual director using sandplay in my work. Clients come with the intention of focusing on their spiritual life, their search for meaning and for God. What happens in the sand goes deeper and far beyond what they, or I, imagine could be possible, as they touch into the unconscious, and begin seeing with their spiritual eye. The more I work with clients in the sand the more I begin to frame the process of spiritual growth, the searching for God, as a search for the Self and a quest for wholeness.

The search for God is often couched in such questions as... "Why didn't God help me?" or "Where was God?" especially with clients who have been abused in childhood or who have lived through other very difficult life experiences. Spiritual Direction can help frame the search. "God" includes the search for trust, safety, containment, being held in "God's hand", being cared for by the "Sacred, transforma-

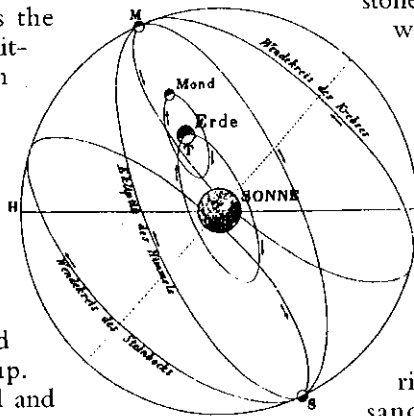
tion and healing." It includes finding and loving one's authentic self, one's "Godself."

Sandplay in Spiritual Direction is a search for the Self, a search for and finding of one's place in the order of things, a search for relationship with God. Until there is a sense of a centered self there is the capacity for only a limited relationship. When the strong survival needs for control can be loosened, fear transformed, and trust allowed, then the deep relationship of Self and God can become possible. Something lets go and something opens up. The intimacy of God and Self can happen

Jung referred to the Self as the center of the personality, saying, "It was

comparable to the sun in the solar system - the source of all the system's energy. In this image the ego is to the Self as the earth is to the sun." Notice the similarity in the words of Hildegard of Bingen, a 12th century mystic. She writes, "The earth is to the sun as the soul is to God. The earth, at any point, can be located by its relationship to the sun. The earth has a scaffold of stones and trees. In the same way is a person formed; flesh is the earth, the bones are the trees and stones."

I would like to invite you to explore the concept of the Self as an image of God, and to use this lens to observe how you and your clients have experienced this search in the sand. The process of the search, and hopefully of the finding, is part of the individuation process,



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The Archetype of Numbers in Sandplay

Pratibha Eastwood, a Teaching Member of the International Society of Sandplay Therapy (ISST) and the Sandplay Therapists of America (STA), presented a workshop on The Archetypal Meaning of Numbers in Sandplay on the evening of Friday, April 30, and all day Saturday, May 1, 2004, as part of MSTG's on-going series of workshops by national and international sandplay experts.

Dr. Eastwood is a licensed psychologist whose practice is based in Hawaii. She has



been working on the subject of numbers and their many levels of meaning for many years, and recently published an in-depth study of her work in *Nine Windows to Wholeness: Exploring Numbers in Sandplay Therapy* (Sanity Press, 2002). During her workshop here, Dr. Eastwood discussed the meanings of the numbers one through nine and how they manifest in the ego development and the individuation process.

Most sandplay therapists are accustomed to counting the numbers of similar items or elements of a design in a sandplay

picture. However, Eastwood cautioned, counting the objects is the most superficial aspect of number interpretation. Numbers are manifested also in geometric forms, the arrangement of items, the shaping of the sand, and in associated qualities of masculinity-femininity, color, element (e.g., earth, fire) symbol, and psychological or mythological context or association. She presented numerous case examples that illustrated the complex manifestations of number symbolism.

At the end of an exhausting and exhilarating workshop, we knew we had barely scratched the surface of this topic. With luck, we will have Eastwood back to Minnesota for another event with her elegant, insightful, and beautiful work.

Spiritual Direction

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i.e. the search for wholeness. Most such searches are not explicitly named as a search for God, although some are, perhaps especially when the container for the work is that offered by a spiritual director.

The questions, "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" "What am I supposed to be doing?" and "Who or what is God?" have been asked by searchers of meaning throughout the ages. How do the questions come together in the sand?

One can find meaning through experiences of the Self, and even more so in a numinous experience of the Self as an image of God. It is good to remember that Jung points out that "the Self is the God image, not actually God." In a similar vein some theologians, such as Paul Tillich, refer to a "God within." Mechtild of Magdeburg, an 11th century mystic, says, "The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw - and knew I saw - all things in God and God in all things."

The importance of religion in Jung's system of psychology, according to Mary Ann Mattoon, is reflected in his vision of the attainment of a religious attitude as essential to the individuation process. Individuation and a religious attitude are almost synonymous, she says, in that both require the ego to become subordinate to the Self.

Although Jung rejected religious doctrines including Christianity, for him the Christian story carried the central images of the individuation process.

Sandplay can be experienced as a meditative process, and a process of individuation, but without the programmed expectations that can reside in religious doctrines. Today, Jung's description of religious imagery without doctrine fits the concept of spirituality, i.e. the lived experience of the sacred rather than obedience to a static doctrinal belief system.

Ann Belford Ulanov in her book *Picturing God* writes:

"Picturing God must precede any speaking about God. Images, the language of the psyche, are the

coin of life. They touch our emotions as well as our thoughts; they reach down into our bodies as well as toward ideas. They arrive unbidden, startling, after our many years of effort to craft them. We make our images of God out of bits and pieces of things in our human experience.

We must always look at our God

pictures to see what projections they contain that really belong within ourselves, for things we cannot carry we put onto God and neighbor. Any picture of God will possess an element of projection."

The sandtray is a space in which to image Self and God, projections and all. The "pictures of God" and of Self in sand trays, grow in the sand space and allow the relationship between the two to become one. In this space our images of God, of Self, get born, get found, get broken, get played around with, get repaired, get thrown out, and get stitched together again.

When I speak of darkness, I am referring to a lack of knowing. It is a lack of knowing that includes everything you did not know or else have forgotten, whatever is altogether dark for you because you do not see it with your spiritual eye. And for this reason it is not called a cloud of the air but rather a cloud of unknowing that is between you and your God.

—Anonymous English monk, 14th century

telling and making of the story."

The third replied, "It's in the whole sandtray. My trays had very few objects...but each of them were God images for me."

And the final one said, "For me it's in the whole process!"

Sandplay contains mystery, including

the mystery called God, the mystery called Self, and the mystery of relationship. If one can accept, as I do, the mystery of what Mechtild of Magdeburg says, that "...I saw God in all things and all things in God", then we could say that God is in the Self of every client, every sandtray, every therapist and every spiritual director. God particularizes or

is projected in the sand space, appearing in a form or image that can resonate with the client on a deep level, the level of the Self, and often, but not always resonates with the spiritual director/therapist as well.

Is the Self an image of God that clients search for in the sand? In the book of Genesis in the Bible we are told "God created man in his own image, in the

image of God he created him, male and female he created them." We are taught that we are all made in the image of God. Searching and finding God in the sand can bring this teaching into our bodily experience of Self.

Jung finally let the matter rest, as he was unable to distinguish between God and Self. When he was 80 years old he wrote:

"It is unfortunately true: the human has and holds a mystery in his hands and at the same time is contained in this mystery. What can he proclaim? Himself or God? Or neither? The truth is that he doesn't know who he is talking of, God or himself."

Jung also wrote, "I do not know what I am really like. I am a man. But what is it to be that? Like every other being, I am a splinter of the infinite deity."

H.L. Menken, 1880 - 1956 wrote; "Penetrating so many secrets, we cease to believe in the unknowable, but there it sits, nevertheless, calmly licking its chops."

The unknowable is perhaps the mystery of all things in God, and God in all things, including the Self. It is there, waiting, when touch into the unconscious and begin seeing and experiencing through our spiritual eye.

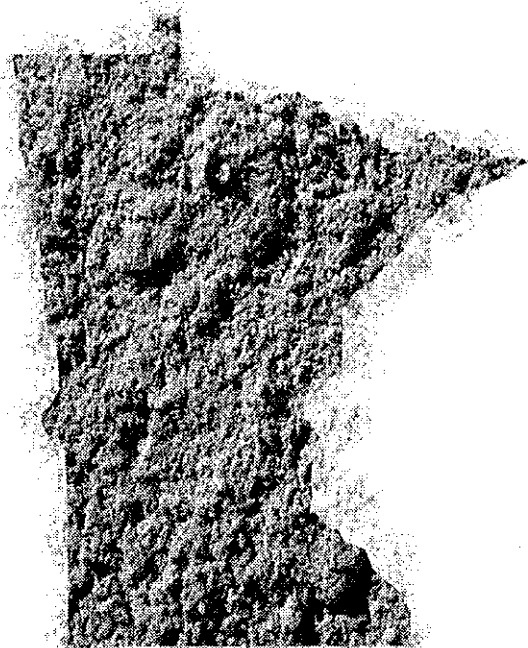
—Priscilla W. Braum, M. Div.

Everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, I think, remember, want, and do; all the future things that are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness; all this is the content of the unconscious.

—Carl Jung, 20th century

An Update on Sandplay Training in Minnesota

There have been a number of changes on the local and national scene in Sandplay training in the last year, and I volunteered to write this article for Sandspiel to discuss some of them. Since the national information is available at sandplay.org, I decided to focus on MSTG history and developments in training.



About twenty years ago I made my first move toward meeting one of my primary professional goals in Sandplay Therapy: to form a local cuddle group. I wanted a band of friends and colleagues to join me in the practice of this new (to me) form of therapy, and to help resist the onslaught of behavioral therapy which seemed to be taking over the country as the only respected – and reimbursable – form of psychotherapy. I invited a group of play therapists to explore Sandplay with me. Periodically, out of state colleagues from the Sandplay Therapists of America

would come for brief workshops and to provide some additional resources for personal Sandplay process. As the method caught on, I served as Sandplay therapist to many of the group, and later as consultant and teacher. We all learned that the real teachers were the clients whose pictures we studied together, and in seminars, we served also as teachers to one another. Nonetheless, I still had the task of trying to hold things together.

As students of Sandplay in other areas seemed to race at breakneck speed toward certification as members of STA and the International Society for Sandplay Therapy, our local group seemed content to take things slowly, and to go to deeper and deeper levels in our work. Two of the group did complete the requirements for membership in STA and promptly moved to the woods of Wisconsin (Joe Meyer) and the island of Taiwan (Grace Hong.)

Finally I threw a mild tantrum, moved to Duluth, and issued an ultimatum: if training in Sandplay Therapy was going to survive in Minnesota, somebody else (preferably several somebodies) needed to get teaching credentials. I was willing to travel to the Cities six or seven times a year to bridge the gap, but had no intention of returning any more often than was absolutely necessary. It worked. Regina Driscoll and Cil Braun have both been accepted as clinical members of STA, and several other Minnesotans are nearing completion of the final steps toward STA membership.

As we celebrate our two new Minnesota members, it seems time to reflect on the current state of training programs here. Regina and Cil are qualified to offer sandplay process and group consultation for those working toward STA membership, and any others interested in simply adding Sandplay therapy to their own practices. They are working toward completion of the requirements for teaching membership, and will then be able to offer individual consultation, teach classes and lead seminars independently. Together with Joe Meyer and me, we will then have four MSTG members available to provide professional education in Sandplay which will “count” toward the accrual of hours required by the Sandplay Therapists of America for membership.

An even greater reason to celebrate is the enrichment and expansion of opportunity available locally for anyone interested in Sandplay. While we will continue to invite Sandplay therapists from throughout the world to provide seminars for us at least once a year, our ongoing program will soon be able to meet the need for more diverse levels of education, and more diverse interests as well. We will be able to adhere more closely to the principle of avoiding dual relationships by making sure that anyone who has done a Sandplay process with one therapist will have a choice of others to use for consultation.

At present, both Regina and Cil will be offering Sandplay process and consultation groups. Both are assisting

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MSTG and MJA, A Joint Effort

The Minnesota Sandplay Therapy Group and the Minnesota Jung Association have entered into a collaborative agreement to promote events and workshops of both organizations that may be of interest to their respective members. At this point, mailing lists have been exchanged and efforts have been started to coordinate publicity between the two organizations.

This effort has already borne fruit to the benefit of both groups. The attendance at last year's beginning sandplay therapy workshop conducted by local

ISST members Regina Driscoll and Joe Meyers was bolstered by a good half dozen Jung Association members. Last springs MSTG lecture/workshop by national presenter ISST member and Jungian Analyst Pratibha Eastwood was also attended by several Jung Association members including MJA board member Jim Klien. Not just a one way street, several of our MSTG people attended Sections of Jungian Analyst Stanton Marlan's dream workshop and Black Sun Lecture which were Jung Association events.

Previously, awareness of the speak-

ers, workshops, and lectures of both organizations were often limited to their own membership base. This collaboration can only promote interest in and increase attendance at events to the benefit of both organizations.

A final update: With the movement of the Minnesota Jung Association to a Fall and Winter/Spring Catalog format for its events rather than the individual flyers previously used for each event, the use of member e-mails will become increasingly important as a means of notification.

—Dennis Flom

Calendar of MSTG Events

JANUARY

In Touch again Network

Friday, January 28, 2005, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
4500 Park Glen Road
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

MSTG Birthday Party

Friday, January 14, 2005
Home of Nancy Hawkins and Bill Vickers
5:30 p.m.

Sandplay Advanced Seminar*

Saturday, January 15, 2005
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

MSTG Board Meeting

Saturday, January 15, 2005
1:00 p.m. (all members welcome)

FEBRUARY

Sandplay Advanced Seminar*

Saturday, February 19, 2005
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

MARCH

Sandplay case presentations*

Cil Braun and Regina Driscoll - March 17, 2005

2 Day Workshop: Sandplay and Spirit.*

Sherry Shepherd, ISST/STA Teaching Member
March 18, 2005, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
March 19, 2005, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Sandplay Advanced Seminar*

March 19, 2005, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

APRIL

Sandplay Advanced Seminar*

April 2, 2005, 10 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

In Touch Again Network

April 15, 2005, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
4500 Park Glen Road
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Sandplay Advanced Seminar*

April 30, 2005, 10 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

MAY

Sandplay Advanced Seminar*

May 21, 2005, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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

A SUMMERTIME REFLECTION...

It is August, the time of year when I return to the beach on the shore of Lake Michigan, the same beach that I have walked on for seven decades. It remains much the same. And so do I, on a deep interior level.

I arrive after dark, so my walk to the beach has to wait. Early Sunday morning my dog, Poca and I walk down the road and through the woods to the beach path. Poca's outward excitement reflects my inward state. She runs ahead, eager to find a stick for me to throw. I walk across the beach to the edge of the Lake. With my barefeet sinking in the sand, my toes in the water, the sun just coming up over the hills, the air a familiar soft and sweet mixture of pine, dead fish and old trees, I breath deeply exclaiming "Aaaahhh, I'm HOME!"

Each year brings its own story to be told in the sand. In childhood the beach was the place to gather with "summer friends." We saw each other once a year for two weeks, but the friendships were deep. As a college student I came to the beach to reconnect my growing up years to my newly formed somewhat awkward life as a young adult. Later I introduced my husband, my children and my grandchildren to the beach and its sacred magic.

During my mid-life years I walked the beach for hours crying out for connection, for help, searching for God and my self in the sand. I would ask the age-old questions. "Who am I? Why am I here? What am I supposed to be doing? and Who ARE you?" Then, thankfully, came the time of deepened

intimacy with the sky, the water, the sun, the moon, the stars, the sand, the seagulls, the crows and the beachstones. I would sing with them and feel the numinous intimate connection with all creation, with God.

This summer was no different. My feet greeting the sand, walking along the water, the sun and air as companions, as well as my dog, brought tears to my eyes. Yes. This is why I have evolved into a sandplay therapist/spiritual director! My feet have been playing in the sand all of my life! The beach has been my sandtray! I walk in it, I leave my footprints, my impressions. I look for stones and feathers and other things the beach gifts me, perhaps a piece of driftwood that looks like a dancing lady. I sit and sift the sand through my fingers. I make sandcastles. I caw with the crows. I see family and summer friends who come back to this place as I do. I greet my true self.

Is this what I have been invited to do all these years? To search and to find God and my Self in the sand? Yes. Is this what my directees are doing when they use the sandtray? Yes! This year, more than ever before, I know that there is really no need to search. Mechtild of Magdeburg says, "The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw - and knew I saw - all things in God and God in all things." All things in God and God in all things. That means you, Poca dog, and you, raucous crow. And you, wet water, and you stone, feather, wood. And you, dear reader. And yes, me too. And of course, the sand.



Soul and Spirit in Sandplay 2004-2005

“Soul and Spirit in Sandplay: Commitment and Surrender in the Search for Meaning” is the theme of this year's advanced sandplay seminar, which began with a full day seminar in November, and which will continue with monthly three-hour seminars from January to May, 2005. As in previous years, the seminar focuses on a single sandplay case which is examined by the seminar participants from the perspective of the course theme.

The theme of the course has been chosen to relate to the theme of Sherry Shepherd's workshop in March next year. Shepherd will present on “Spirit and Sandplay,” and will join the March advanced seminar as a discussant on the year's case when she concludes her workshop.

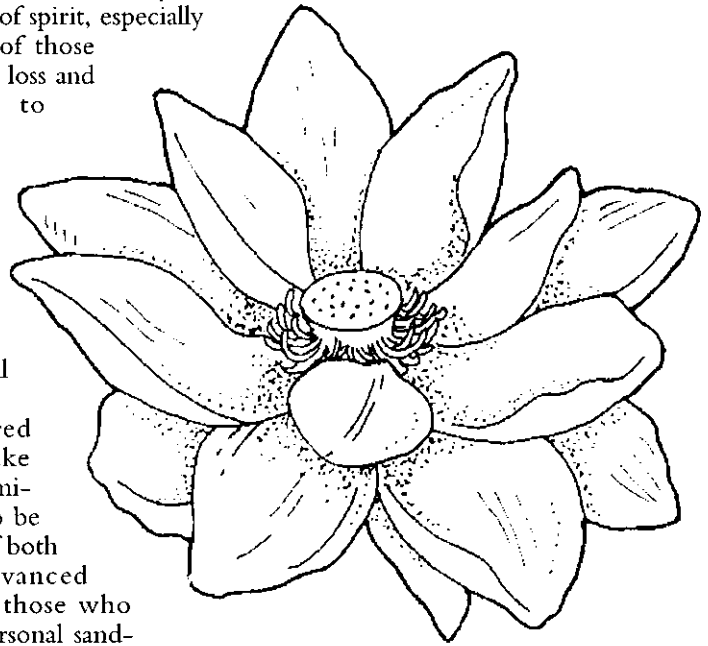
For the first time, the advanced seminar theme will be carried over to the 2005-2006 year. “The theme of spirit and its connection to sandplay is enormous,” MSTG education chair Regina Driscoll said. “We didn't think we could do it justice in one year, so

we will pick it up again the second year. Our title for year two is ‘Soul and spirit in Sandplay: Commitment and Surrender in Loss and Death.’”

Case material for the second year will focus on themes of spirit, especially as seen in the lives of those struggling with grief, loss and death. “We hope to invite as our annual guest presenter a sandplay therapist who is highly experienced in using sandplay with those dealing with loss in its many forms,” Driscoll said.

It is not required that participants take both years of the seminar, but it is likely to be a richer experience if both are taken. The advanced seminar is open to those who have completed a personal sand-

play process and have taken Beginning Sandplay Practice, or by permission of the instructor, Barbara Weller.



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

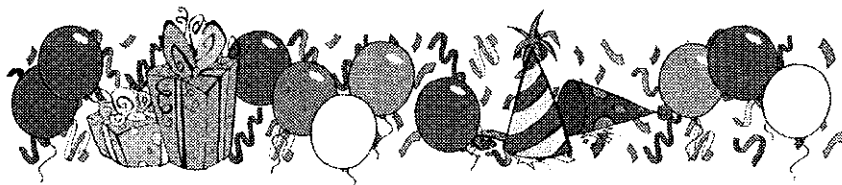
Minnesota

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with this year's advanced seminar, and plans are underway for a class in Beginning Sandplay Practice for those who have completed sufficient individual process. I hope to offer that with Regina Driscoll co-teaching in 2005. We also want to offer intermediate level case study seminars in 2005-2006, and to have training available at several locations throughout the state.

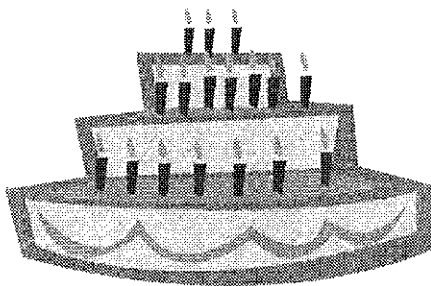
One of the goals of the founders of MSTG was to make training as accessible and affordable as possible. New requirements by STA for increased hours in Sandplay process, training and consultation mean a multiplication of expense and difficulty when either students or consultant/teachers must travel long distances, making training far less accessible. With an increase in our number of teachers, we can ameliorate that to some extent. MSTG will continue to keep fees as low as possible, offer scholarships when we can, stem the tide of behaviorism, and dream and cuddle together in the delightful intricacies of play in the sand.

—Barbara Weller



MSTG CELEBRATES ITS SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY

The annual MSTG birthday party will be held at the home of Nancy Hawkins and Bill Vickers on Friday January 14. (1012 Hyacinth Ave. E. St. Paul, ph. 651 778-1821 or cell 651 402-7671.) Joe Meyer has announced that miniatures will be available for purchase. The traveling store will be open at 5:30 p.m. followed by a potluck supper at 6:30, provided by the MSTG Board. Evening events include a brief membership meeting and the traditional Trash or Treasures gift swap game. Bring a wrapped item that you are willing to pass on to someone else. While you may bring more than one item, please do not go over-board with too many items. All members and guests are invited to participate in any or all of the events.



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.

2004 board members: Diana-Christine Teodorescu, president, Ethel Griggs treasurer, Catharine Larsen, treasurer, Hal Picket, past president, Cil Braun, Dennis Flom, Joe Meyer, Regina Driscoll, Stephen Olmsted. Editorial Staff: Stephen Olmsted, Regina Driscoll, Catharine Larsen and Carol Kindschi. Typeset and Design: Clay Schotzko



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