

HANDS TOGETHER

AMTA-OK Newsletter
Winter 2005/2006

WHY I LOVE BEING A MASSAGE THERAPIST

By Rocky Chen, CMT

Ask any massage therapist why they decided to choose this profession and you'll get many different answers:

"I want to help people who are in pain."

"I've always been told that I have a good touch."

"I wanted to have my own business and set my own schedule."

And, for most of us, the answer is probably some combination of all of these.

“*I've always felt that touch therapy and bodywork is a life skill that everybody should have...*”

The reason I got into massage was strictly because of my search for knowledge. I've always felt that touch therapy and bodywork is a life skill that everybody should have, like knowing how to cook, how to ride a bike, and how to ask "Where's the bathroom?" in at least 3 different foreign languages. However, I learned in massage school that if I started my own business, there were certain tax benefits. So, five years later, I'm still in business, and I'm still learning and realizing how much I still need to learn about our profession.

This is one of the few professions where people are glad to see you at the beginning of a session, and they're glad to see you when their session is completed. You have the opportunity to bring some relief, some joy, to help people forget what a hard day they had at work, to help them break that five-minute-mile barrier that they've been striving for over the last three years of their running career.

What I enjoy the most is working on clients who have never had a massage before. I have the opportunity to introduce them to touch therapy and to show them what a good, professional massage feels like. In that way, I am the ambassador of our profession, and it is my responsibility to make sure that they have a good experience.

And, when the session is finished and they say, "Wow, that was awesome" with that glazed look in their eyes, I know I've done a good job. The best compliment I can get is when the client falls asleep on the chair or table during the session. That means they're comfortable with my tableside manner, my technique, and my massage protocol. And, at the end of each session, I always thank my client for coming to see me and for allowing me the opportunity to work on them. So, as much as my client has benefited from the session, I too have gained a little bit from our time together. The therapist-client relationship is like no other.

And, lastly, although each of us has a slightly different reason for continuing in this profession, one of the best reasons for becoming (and staying) a massage therapist is summed up in one word: "tradeout."

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Rebecca Billy is 2nd Vice President of the Oklahoma Chapter and Editor of *Hands Together*.

By Rebecca Billy, LMT

I've never had much luck with New Year's resolutions. Over the years, I've resolved to indulge myself less, indulge myself more, try to do less, accomplish more, spend more time at work, spend more time at home, spend more time with my friends, and lose weight. I've resolved to organize my house from top to bottom so many times it's become a joke (probably motivated by that storage closet I have to face when taking down Christmas decorations every year). Last year, I decided to lower my expectations and just resolved to finally get the perfect haircut. Alas, my hair resembles my house (in organization, though thankfully not in size).

The thing is, the new year is not a good time for me to make changes in my life. I may regress a little during the holidays, but resolutions made in the throes of post-holiday guilt don't last. The lasting changes I've made always seem to occur gradually during the spring, summer and fall. This year, I have spent more time with my family and my friends and less time at work, and I have lost weight, although I didn't know it would happen that way in January. And even though I didn't discover the elusive perfect haircut, 2005 is the year I rediscovered that going to the gym four hours a week is the perfect excuse for not just a ponytail, but also for wearing sweats. So, what does 2006 hold in store? Maybe I'll have more luck with resolutions this year—I've decided to make a few I know I can keep:

First, I resolve to eat too much chocolate and to watch too much TV. Second, I resolve to buy some stuff. And third, I resolve to wait until spring to make any more resolutions.

Maybe you have better luck with resolutions than I do. Maybe you're the kind of person who is easily motivated by the thought of a new year. Or maybe you, like me, find change a long and confusing process. Whatever your plans for the near year, I wish you well—not just in your career but also in the rest of your life.

Rebecca

WHAT I LEARNED AT CVOP

By Xerlan Geiser, NCTMB

If I ever have another opportunity to go to CVOP (Chapter Volunteer Orientation Program) again I will go. It was mind-blowing experience. I learned so much about AMTA, associations, people, myself and budgets and it was not boring at all. I don't want to go on too much about this so here is my top ten list. In the meantime I plan to start saving my money to go back even if I have to pay for it myself.

1. Every board member needs to be cross-trained to support each other.
2. Every member doesn't have to be on the Board or a Committee to participate.
3. Volunteers need to be appreciated.
4. Board members are volunteers too.
5. Not very many massage therapists are analyzers.

6. Every state, big and small, has issues.
7. The hottest topic is still boundary issues.
8. You can say a lot with a squishy cow toy thrown by a group of massage therapists in agreement.
9. Ethel's Chocolate Lounge gives free samples.
10. Evanston rocks!

Now, if anyone would like any explanation of the anything listed above or is just curious, I want you to call me or e-mail me personally so we can chat.

Xerlan

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS: GET TO KNOW YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

Your Oklahoma Chapter Board Members are each elected to a two-year term. To help you get to know them better, Jeff, Chris, Rebecca, and Xerlan were each asked the following questions:

What kind of music do you like?

Jeff: 70's rock, Steve Wynwood, Bruce Hornsby, U2

Chris: It varies—Phish, Pavarotti, Frank Zappa, Monday's Off.

Rebecca: Fiona Apple, Death Cab for Cutie, Aqualung, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Xerlan: DeirdreFlint.com, Wilco, Mermaid Avenue...this month.

What is your favorite food?

J: Pork chops, mashed potatoes, gravy and green beans.

C: Italian—but I'm VERY picky.

R: Japanese (mmm...sushi).

X: Fresh tomatoes from my garden.

What are three books you recently read?

J: *Energy Medicine, The Scientific Basis* by James Oshcman; *Energy Medicine in Therapeutics and Human Performance* by James Oshcman; *Super System 2* by Doyle Bronson (Texas Hold'em)

C: *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* by J.K. Rowling, *The Cabinet of Curiosities* by Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child, and *Angels & Demons* by Dan Brown.

R: *13 Ways of Looking at the Novel* by Jane Smiley, *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold, and *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister* by Gregory Macguire.

X: *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* by J.K. Rowling, *Miracle* by Irving Wallace, and *Medicinal Wild Plants of the Prairie* by Kelly Kindscher.

What do you do to relax?

J: Play golf and Texas Hold'em.

C: Listen to music, garden, read—oh yeah—get a massage whenever possible.

R: Do yoga, go out with my friends, take a warm bath.

X: Get a massage (not nearly often enough), Play Neopets (way too much).

What do you wish you had more time to do?

J: Absolutely nothing...There are just not enough hours in the day!

C: Get more massages, travel, visit friends, play with my sons.

R: Write, paint, sleep.

X: Beading, sewing, and gardening.

If you had more money what would you spend it on?

J: Travel, kids, parents, a beachfront getaway.

C: A ring for my girlfriend and a 1967 Volkswagen Westfalia Van (32 window if possible).

R: A trip to Europe, and a housekeeper.

X: Upledger classes, a place at the lake.

What is something else you do?

J: High school football referee.

C: I am an active Master Gardener, I manage three websites, I love to play around in the kitchen (cook—My brother is a chef), and I love to spend time with my sons.

R: I'm a semi-professional writer and artist.

X: I am a Master Naturalist and on the Board of Y-Me, Northeastern Oklahoma Affiliate of the National Breast Cancer Organization.

What three techniques do you use most in your practice?

J: Trigger Point Therapy, Myofascial Release, Reiki.

C: Strain/Counterstrain, Lymphatic Drainage, and PNF.

R: Classical massage, trigger point, and passive joint mobilization.

X: Classical massage, Lymphatic Drainage & Passive Trigger Point.

What do you most want to accomplish?

J: Licensing for Oklahoma, early retirement.

C: I want to get the massage community together under one state license, and help encourage more massage therapists to communicate kindly.

R: I'd like to see an improvement in AMTA's reputation among Oklahoma therapists, and fair, beneficial licensing laws.

X: I want to see Oklahoma have a fantastic state massage license and host a kickin' 4-State Conference in 2007.

Do you have a family?

J: A combined family of hers, mine and not ours: Justin (24), Nikki (22), who are mine, and Britney (22) and Brody (12), who are hers.

C: Yes. Immediate family—3 sons, 13, 13 (yes, twins), and 10, and a large extended family.

R: I have a charming, handsome husband and a sweet three-year-old son.

X: Yes! Daughter #1 (26) married to my very decent son-in-law and my incredible granddaughter age 3; Daughter #2 just graduated from Ohio State and is a Certified Health Care Education Specialist and the Educational Director of Road of Life Cancer Prevention for Children in Ohio. I must give honorable mention to my incredible significant boyfriend.

Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine.

—Lord Byron*

*This quote and others are on T-shirts for sale in the new online store at www.amtaok.org. Proceeds from sales support massage legislation efforts in the state. There's a lot of cool stuff, so check it out! You'll want to ask Santa for some of these!

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Jeff at the OAFP in June.

By Jeff Smoot, CNMT

This year the National Convention was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico during the week of September 18th through the 24th. Christopher Deery and Xerlan Geiser joined me in representing the Oklahoma Chapter at this year's meeting. We attended various meetings, seminars and work groups gathering information that will benefit our chapter membership, as well as sharing our opinions and views with other chapter leaders from around the country. We enjoyed the continuing education courses offered and made many new friends. I have to admit that the Oklahoma Chapter was well represented on the dance floor at the traditional Saturday evening dinner/dance.

I would like to congratulate Christopher Deery on his acceptance of the State Meritorious Award at National Convention. Since joining the chapter in June of 2003, Chris has devoted considerable time and effort in service to his fellow members and to the growth of this chapter. Thank you, Chris!

On October 26th, we had another successful trip to the State Capitol where we gave complimentary chair massages to legislators, lawyers, and secretaries during National Massage Therapy Awareness Week. I would like to thank non-AMTA members Ginger Smoot and Lynne Kincaid along with fellow AMTA members Xerlan Geiser and Christopher Deery for volunteering their time to help. Governor Brad Henry also signed a proclamation declaring October 24th through the 28th as National Massage Therapy Week in Oklahoma.

The newsletter looks great once again and Rebecca has informed me that the theme this issue is "Why I Love Being a Massage Therapist," so: I have had several jobs over the years and have always taken pride in trying to be good at what I do. We all want to be recognized and told what a good job we are doing. When you help someone through their pain or dysfunction they are always very appreciative and even though I have heard it thousands of times over the last fourteen years I still get goose bumps every time someone thanks me for doing what I love to do.

Thanks for your time,

Jeff Smoot

TWELVE INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES FOR THE NEW YEAR

(TO CUT OUT AND TAPE TO YOUR MIRROR IF YOU FEEL LIKE BEING CHEESY)

When love and skill work together expect a masterpiece.

—Ruskin

I find the great thing in this world is, not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.

—Goethe

Life is like music; it must be composed by ear, feeling, and instinct, not by rule.

—Samuel Butler

Perseverance is failing nineteen times and succeeding the twentieth.

—J. Andrews

If we would read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

—Longfellow

The main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance but to do what lies clearly at hand.

—Thomas Carlyle

The purpose of human life is to show compassion and the will to help others.
—Albert Schweitzer

Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.
—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

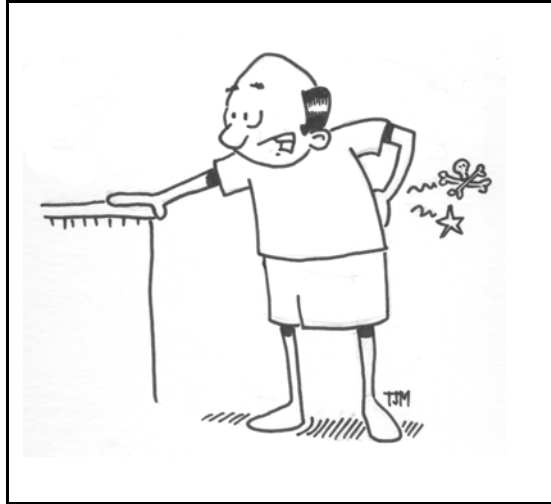
We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.
—Aristotle

Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely.
—Auguste Rodin

Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.
—Mother Teresa

Believe, when you are most unhappy, that there is something for you to do in the world. So long as you can sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain.
—Helen Keller

THOSE COOL CARTOONS



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