

Give Chapters a Hand: Awards of Excellence

Texas Chapter

PART 2: EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN PROGRAMMATIC AREAS

Seven years later after being a chapter in distress, the Texas chapter has moved forward into the millennium. It took some very dedicated individuals to push it forward and some very precious volunteers with AMTA at their heart centers.

Five goals were established for this year: to increase membership, perception - the "new" AMTA, volunteerism, board members mentoring, and increasing revenues while minimizing expenses.

Pertaining to increasing membership Hugh Bofenkamp, 1st VP, and his committee welcome new and transferred members to Texas by sending out magnetic business cards with membership contact information and a fold out to put upcoming AMTA & unit information. The membership campaign involved contacting some massage schools in TX and asked to if they would distribute AMTA membership information and/or allow AMTA members to come into the school to present and talk about AMTA membership. While our 1st VP Hugh Bofenkamp was hit hard by hurricane Ike, Terri Irvin stepped up as membership chair and ending 2008 by sending out holiday cards to our new or transferred members with upcoming events and things to look for in 2009. With working on getting more units started Hugh Bofenkamp, Marta Lucas and Terri Irvin revamped the unit manual. Marta also stepped up and started the Austin unit.

Utilizing the new concept of "Common Ground" the TX chapter is collaborating with Mike Hinkle and the World Massage Festival being held in New Braunfels, TX, by holding two-three hour ethics courses on Friday to kick off the weekend, following the CE's with dinner and the AMTA membership meeting. The ethics course offering supports those who are NCTMB. Another benefit of collaborating efforts with other massage groups will help to minimize costs. An extra blessing, volunteers D'Jango Sanders and Savitri Frizzell, AMTA TX Chapter members, are teaching the classes at no cost to the chapter.

Acknowledging volunteerism is to find ways to better use members who have an interest. To make sure that if someone has an interest that the board is aware of that person's interest and what skills they have to offer. It is important to realize that the skills may need to be learned and mentored, or that the willing volunteer may need to develop the skills desired for a specific position or committee of interest. Each board position has duties and committees that they need help to cover. Part of the effort will be to communicate the need of volunteers and the diverse skills needed to make the TX chapter the best chapter it can be. Volunteers are the forces within the membership, and of our AMTA chapter.

Board mentoring is to establish a link or dialogue with students who are coming out of school and entering the work world of massage therapy. The mentors can assist students in preparation for the "real" world of massage therapy work whether it is becoming self-employed or working for someone.

With a state the size of Texas, we try to recognize and accommodate our members using various communication methods, such as phone tree, E-zine, newsletters, email, Constant Contact (a specific type of email), our web page and by moving our conventions and CE's around the state or centralizing our events. We have fun unusual rewards and recognition, such as when Tanya (presently our 3rd VP) jumped in and became a lifesaver to take over our conventions, so for her recognition at our awards ceremony she was presented with a decorated blown up life preserver. Our awards chair has fun creating awards and recognition for many volunteers who need to be

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recognized. Some are homemade items. This year our Meritorious Award recipient will have their expenses paid to attend the National Convention.

We are proud to have our units growing throughout Texas. The Houston Unit has been very active; they gave chair massage at the Ronald McDonald House to families of children being treated at Texas Children's Hospital in March. 911 Harris County Sheriff's dispatchers contacted the Houston Unit the weekend after Hurricane Ike's landfall. The AMTA volunteers gave over a 100 chair massages at several locations to dispatchers working 12 hour shifts or longer. We have a new unit in Austin, with the blessing of being able to use the Lauterstein-Conway Massage School as the meeting place, we had 28 in attendance. Participants were greeted with AMTA pins and the opportunity to win discount certificates to the World Massage Festival and entry into the Chapter's Ethic courses at the state convention in April. The meeting was adjourned with exchange of business cards, hugs and smiles. (They are massage therapists). There is discussion of units being started in the Dallas and San Antonio areas. The units include education CE's with the meeting, which is a benefit to the members. The Houston and Austin units will also have fun social picnic gatherings during the summer.

The Carol Scott Naile, 2nd VP, and Russell Rust, Law and Legislation chair, have been very busy with two new bills affecting our industry. One bill relates to the operation establishments and the other has to do with the operation and regulation of massage establishments. One bill restricts the hours of business to 7AM to 10PM. Another portion of concern is it demands that business doors must remain unlocked during business hours. Another issue is that an owner operator of a massage establishment may not knowingly employ in a massage establishment a person with a communicable skin disease or a venereal disease. As our watchdogs of our industry, they track these bills and keep the membership informed and updated on the web site and via email.

Chapter newsletters, to view them go to amtatxchapter.org. and then select Newsletter in the column on the left. You will be able to view past newsletters as well as the current one. Our last four newsletters have been exceptional in that we made them meaningful to our members through great content in well-written articles. Our most recent issue even included a game to see how well one reads the newsletter of course offering a prize for being the first to notify our editor with the correct list of words. Our December issue featured articles on the theme of professionalism and volunteering, recognition of our membership, annual membership meeting announcement, convention CE registration, call for volunteers, legislation updates, and chapter election notice(s) and standing rules changes. We met all of our Loyalty Study Follow-up objectives. In early December of 2008 the chapter readership survey was conducted to coincide with the mailing of the December issue. The September issue had recognition of the public service events surrounding NMTAW. Within the newsletter it has legislative updates, unit information, board member reports, feature articles, and recently an option to go green by getting the newsletter via email, and so much more. The newsletter editor is always busy looking for new ideas to bring to the membership and to do it cost effectively.

Chapter web site: amtatxchapter.org. offers a lot of information and an opportunity to sign up to receive AMTA information, advertise on the web page or in the newsletter. It is easy to maneuver through the various informative pages. We often have puzzles/searches with prizes for visiting and reading the web page. By visiting the web page you can read what massage is, the Presidents message, membership which would include unit activities, Government relations, Newsletters new & past issues, MERT, Sports, Convention, Vendors, Education, Awards & Recognition that shows past and present winners, and Newsletter advertising. The web site offers everything from pages about the

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board/officers, Education, Government relations, Awards/Recognition, advertising and a link to join AMTA, check out insurance, benefits, the shopping mall, how to build you own web site, and about free client newsletters. There are links and information about massage law nationally, and present legislative activity, photos from past conventions, our next convention, and a link to become an AMTA member with benefits listed. The home page also gives a link to update your member information. We are offering a classified ads section as well. The web master works diligently to keep the web site updated and user friendly.

PART 3: OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO MEMBERS:

We have board and/or committee chairs attend CVOP annually. The education and sharing that is brought back to the chapter has been substantial making it very worthwhile.

Our delegates have a booth set up at our conventions that have complete copies of any issues or topics to be discussed and voted on at the National convention. At the booth a member has the opportunity to talk to the delegates, get information and give feedback in person or to give their vote on the topic.

The nominating committee always is working to get to know the membership and seek out those that have an interest in volunteering in any of the positions or willing to support any of the board members or committee chairs in serving our chapter. The committee puts their ear to the ground to learn of special talents that any of the members might be willing to share. The Events Chair and Convention team work to make it a smooth flowing opportunity and lots of fun!

Our Benevolence committee sends out cards, emails and sometimes calls our members who need to know their AMTA TX Chapter family is thinking about them and wishing them well or sending out or sympathy in a loss.

In our Newsletters often there are articles that remind you or make you think about why you are an AMTA member, a massage therapist, and why you would want to be a volunteer. Our March 2008 newsletter really highlights those topics, especially the article "Benefits of Serving as a Chapter Volunteer" by Greg Schroen, past president. Our newsletter offers incentives that may offer a free paid registration to convention or a scavenger hunt offering.

As a vegetarian I appreciate when the newsletter lists specialty food options in the location of our conventions when some of our meals are on our own. When our convention was in S. Padre there was a list of local AMTA members, which is great if you are making it a vacation as well and need to know where to go and what to do, or food recommendations.

We have members who step up and get other opportunities set up around our convention as in S. Padre when there was an offering of Yoga on the beach and then a bonfire on the beach in the evening. It was all great fun!

As a member of AMTA TX Chapter, we can submit to our newsletter editor for posting any workshops, seminars, or educational opportunities as well as submitting an article, commentary, or editorial. There is also an option to list classifieds if you have equipment for sale.

Our chapter works hard to find out what our members need and want and then work even harder to make it happen.

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WEBSITE ADDRESS: www.amtatexaschapter.org

NEWSLETTER ADDRESS:

http://www.amtatexaschapter.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=34