

# Trager<sup>®</sup> International

Spring 2000

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## January Talks Decisions

Judy Rose Seibert

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to let you know that there is a major reorganization of The *Trager* Institute underway. The Institute Board of Directors and European representative Piermario Clara signed an agreement regarding Recognition of European national *Trager* associations and the transfer of many administrative services to those associations. The following day, the Institute Board met and passed motions to implement the beginning of the reorganization. During the meetings, there was agreement that within the next year there will be a transition to an internationally elected Board, and that national associations for the US, Canada, and Asia/Australia be formed. The *Trager* Institute will retain responsibility for service mark protection and the standards of education. Small discussion groups considered the relocation of the Institute office, ideas for improving the financial situation for the Institute's projected 2000 budget, this letter to the community, an international educational body, and the formation of U.S. and Canadian *Trager* associations.

Background information: in September 1999, representatives of the European national associations (ETRC) met in Geneva to discuss and outline the issues that they had with The *Trager* Institute. The European representatives agreed that their national associations would hold in escrow all renewal fees and training fees until certain issues were addressed by the Institute.

After that time an agreement was reached between the Institute Board and the Executive Director, Don Schwartz, that he leave his position. Board of Directors members Rickey Hendricks, Sara Michael Davidson, and John Blaisdell resigned. The Institute also terminated its relationship with its lawyer Elizabeth Reifler. Betty Fuller has continued as a Board member, joined first by new members Phyllis Greenwood and Decia Rowland, and then by Gwen Crowell, Robert Dein, Kathryn Hansman Spice and Audrey Mairi. Decia Rowland was chosen to act as Interim Executive Director. Robert Dein was elected as Board President. The Institute Board and the ETRC agreed to meet in Mill Valley in January 2000.

We, a group of over 20 practitioners, sponsors, tutors, instructors and board members, write this letter having just participated in the January meetings. Official negotiations took place between the Board of Directors and the representatives of the ETRC from January 24 through January 26, 2000. In addition to the ETRC representatives, Canadian *Trager* Committee (CTC) representative James Reid, came with financial requests, many of which were similar to the European requests. We would like to share with the rest of the community how united we feel that the upcoming changes will be helpful to everyone in the *Trager* community.

During the meetings, the Board stated that it supports decentralizing administrative tasks that the Institute currently performs, and they requested that the ETRC and Canada each nominate one person to the Board as soon as possible. The Board also requested that there be another international Board member nominated, perhaps from Japan or Australia. The ETRC stated its concerns about the appointment process for Instructor trainees, and proposed a simplification of the educational staff organization, including a lay program for people who do not intend to do

### Trager Website Question

Do you want your Name, Number, State, etc. on our Website?

If you want your information listed on the new *Trager* website, call, e-mail, or fax Gary Brownlee at ph. 310.937.2041, fax 310.937.4512, or [garygaru@earthlink.net](mailto:garygaru@earthlink.net). Otherwise your name will not appear.

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Trager professionally.

The Institute Board met on Jan 27, 2000, the day after the negotiation meetings. The Board recognized the European national associations of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. The Board and Piermario Clara, the ETRC representative, signed an agreement, effective immediately, in which the ETRC will retain a portion of all annual fees and the above five national associations will take over many administrative functions for their members. The ETRC will contact smaller member groups in Europe and invite them to choose an already established national association, which will include them administratively. European training fees and annual renewal fees for the year 2000 that have been held in escrow by the above five national associations plus Spain, Sweden, and the Israel Trager groups will be released and sent to the Trager Institute.

In their signed agreement, the Board and the ETRC stated their support for the formation of a Canadian Trager Association (CTA), a U.S. Trager Association (USTA), and Asian/Australian Associations. Also at the Board meeting on Jan. 27th, the Board elected new Canadian member Sandra Yanover, bringing the number of Institute Board members to eight. The bylaws allow for as many as 13 members. The Board empowered the CTC to work with existing Canadian provincial and local Trager associations to create a Canadian Trager Association.

In response to a request by Trager community members present, the Board of Directors stated its support for the formation of national and regional organizations. It was strongly recommended that all regions begin to gather the talent, skill, knowledge and efforts of their local communities, and that this happen as soon as possible.

These regional entities are invited to work together with other similar groups from around the world to form a democratic, international membership organization. There will be a transition to an elected International Board of Directors. This new Board will act as a container and umbrella for the Trager organization as a whole.

Present at the meetings, January 24 - January 26, 2000:

Deborah Simon Black - US, Jack Blackburn - US, Gary Brownlee - US, Piermario Clara - Italy, Robbie Dein - US, Louise de Montigny - CA, Betty Fuller - US, Phyllis Greenwood - US, Natasha Heifetz - US, Fabienne Hirsch - France, Jean Hopkins - US (facilitator), Pam Johnson - US, Sheila Merle Johnson - US, Audrey Mairi - CA, James Pond - US, James Reid - CA, Decia Rowland - US, Judy Rose Seibert - US, Shelly Siskind - CA, Kathryn Hansman Spice - US, Jill Stephens - US, Roger Tolle - US, Eva Marie Willach - Germany.

## Credits

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The *Trager Newsletter* is published several times a year by The Trager Institute for *Trager* Psychophysical Integration and *Mentastics*, a California, non-profit, public benefit, educational corporation which represents and supports *Trager* psychophysical integration and *Mentastics* movement education, the innovative approaches to movement education developed by **Milton Trager, M.D.**

The Trager Institute is approved by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) as a continuing education provider.

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Next Newsletter/Schedule  
Deadline Date  
**July 1, 2000**

# Report on IC Annual Meeting

"The mission of Instructors Committee is to define and transmit the *Trager* Approach, and to maintain its integrity".

The Instructors held their annual week-long meeting from Jan. 29 - Feb. 4, 2000. We addressed many issues and reached numerous consensus decisions. Our meeting began with a report from the Instructors who had attended the January *Trager* Institute/ETRC Negotiations and Restructuring Talks. Though Decia Rowland was scheduled to join us during this portion of our meeting, she was unable to do so due to illness.

We began our committee work with the creation of a new mission statement (above) which then fed the clarity and purpose of our ensuing deliberations. In addition to our many hours of policy and decision making (please see lists below), we included an evening of trades and three afternoon times to teach and work with each other. Betty was our guide and leader for two of these sessions and we basked in her instruction and quality of touch and awareness. These sessions inspired us to create a system to support Betty in her trainings so she can continue to offer her unique inheritance from Milton with greater ease.

At the Board Meeting on Feb. 12 (9 days after the conclusion of the annual IC meeting), we informed the Board of several IC decisions and requested approval of others:

Information to the Board and the International *Trager* Community:

- Amrita Daigle has been approved by the IC to teach Practitioner 1
- Antonia Faeh, a past instructor from Switzerland, has been invited to rejoin the *Trager* Institute and the Instructor Committee and to renew her participation in teaching *Trager*
- The proposed expanded curriculum which was sent to the Board in Feb. 1999 has been thoroughly delineated with course content descriptions and requirements
- The IC has given a mandate to Roger Tolle to create an Educational Staff Conference, to include all instructors, teachers (Anatomy, R/R, Electives), Tutors, IWL's, ML's and SPL's

The IC will operate with the following communications links to other parts of our organization for 2000: Gwen Crowell - Board, Roger Tolle - Tutor Committee, Siegrit Salkowitz - ETRC, Cathy Hammond - CTC (Canadian

*Trager* Association)

The Board endorsed the following items:

- Revised Continuing Education Requirements for Practitioners (the Board also offered a "friendly amendment" to the IC policy, so the entire policy will go back to the IC for full consensus agreement through our e-mail Consensus Process). Please note that the new policy will uphold the *Trager* values of putting our work in question, receptivity to feedback, and a commitment to ongoing development AND give practitioners more flexibility and choice in fulfilling their Continuing Education needs.
- An interim Approval Process for Elective Classes
- Support for *Trager* workshops oriented towards the General Public
- *Trager* Instructor Peer Review Requirements and Procedures
- Inclusion of support staff for Betty's current classes and the creation of a new training, "BEING with Betty"

Upon receipt of more documentation, the Board will be addressing more thoroughly:

- A new International *Trager* Instructor Trainee Application, Selection and Training Processes
- Approval of the expanded Curriculum
- Budget approval for the proposed Educational Staff Conference

Please look in future newsletters for more complete information regarding these three items.

Meanwhile, here is more detailed information on many of the IC meeting results:

## ELECTIVE CLASSES: INTERIM APPROVAL PROCESS

- a. The leader of a proposed elective (no more than 3 days) organizes 1 or more classes
- b. These classes are not listed in any official *Trager* schedule, nor do they have continuing education credit for Practitioners, or curriculum credit for *Trager* students
- c. The leader arranges for 2 different Instructors to come observe and evaluate the class
- d. The class content must clearly relate to *Trager* practitioners' and students' understanding of the work, and their ability to do it
- e. The class must have the written recommendation for Elective status with Continuing Education credit from 2 Instructors who have observed the class. This recommendation includes a recommendation for prerequisites

(cont. on page 8)

# THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW MILLENNIUM!

Jack Blackburn

*Jack specializes in body-centered spiritual growth and healing and has been studying & practicing bodywork for over twenty years. He became a Trager practitioner in 1986, an LMP in 1987, and a Reiki Master in 1989. He earned a Master's degree in Theology and a Certificate in Spiritual Direction in 1994. Also in 1994, Jack became an Intro Workshop Leader and Tutor. Since 1996 he has taught the Advanced Side-Lying Trager electives class. Jack has conducted hundreds of individual tutorials and years of bi-weekly group supervisory sessions.*

*Please feel free to contact Jack at: (206) 527-0908 or jackblac@oz.net.*

The following article is an attempt to underscore what I believe to be the challenges that face us as a community in growing and revitalizing the *Trager* Approach as a professional discipline in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This article is primarily directed at those of us who are making all or part of our income doing bodywork.

## **Legitimizing**

When Milton began working with his hands upon other people he was not a trained professional. Just before WWII Milton became trained and certified as a drugless physician in California – the equivalent at that time of being a physical therapist. In the military, Milton was trained and certified as a pharmacist's mate and also plied his hands to soldiers recovering from battle fatigue. We all know that Milton went to medical school with the intent of opening up more possibilities to use his gifts with patients. Milton gave of his intuition and his gifts freely and brought through a body of work we all apply with our clients and patients. What I want to underscore here is that in spite of his gifts and abilities, in spite of his own handicaps as a learner and writer, Milton went through the tough work of becoming licensed and maintaining a practice in three professions. Every time he treated a client or a patient, he drew upon his professional training as well as his gifts as healer and teacher.

## **Credentialing and Licensing**

Milton left the legacy of his approach to all of us and it is that legacy which continues to inform our hands, our hearts, and our minds as we do our work with our clients. By his own example, Milton also left us a challenge to do the hard work of legitimizing this body of knowledge and experience by credentialing and licensing ourselves in those professions which are recognized by the culture at large as valid approaches to the care and treatment of clients and patients. Milton felt it necessary to become professionally legitimate in the eyes of society and to fill in the gaps in his own knowledge and skills. I believe that it is time for us, his protégés, to professionally validate and legitimize the *Trager* Approach.

## **Overcoming superior attitudes towards massage and other bodywork systems**

As a community we have adopted some positions that I think should be reconsidered. Milton did not encourage his students to license themselves as bodyworkers if it required studying massage or other techniques that conflicted with his sense of the work. Milton was biased towards the medical model, which is hierarchically structured with physicians and psychiatrists on top. He was prejudiced against massage, which, for most of the time he was practicing wasn't even included in the medical model. But things have changed. In the last twenty-five years, many forms of massage and bodywork have surfaced and legitimized themselves through their writings, classes, research, and demonstrations of effectiveness to the care giving professions. Practitioners and instructors of every form of bodywork have had to face the challenges of legitimizing their work and maturing both in skill level and conceptualization.

## **Self improvement**

I believe it is time for each of us to step forward and take on the challenges of legitimacy, maturation and conceptualization of the body of work called the *Trager* Approach. To the level of our interest and ability we each must look at the places where we are weakest – e.g. anatomy and physiology, counseling skills, body awareness, writing abilities, marketing skills, professional networking and politics, financial planning – and highlight those weaknesses as skills to be attained. In the true spirit of Milton's example, we owe it to our selves, our clients, and our community to mature beyond our limitations.

## **Learning from others**

One of the areas in which we as *Trager* practitioners are least informed is our knowledge of other bodywork systems and how they blend and harmonize, or don't, with what Milton taught. The old argument of "fear of dilution" and of the specialness of *Trager* work just can't hold – most of us are closet diluters already. Anyone who has even a part-time practice in this day and age can only give thanks for the fact that there are so many highly developed forms of bodywork being taught. We are also blessed by the availability of shared information with other professions such as medicine, psychology, movement therapy, spiritual practices, and biological research. Care giving as a whole must move beyond the blindness of specialization.

## **Accurately describing what we do**

Another fatuous argument we've maintained in the *Trager* community has been that if we write descriptions of what we do or how and why we do it, people from outside the

*Trager* community will try to steal or imitate our work without learning it. I believe that exactly the opposite is true. As I look at the world of professional bodyworkers and the schools and institutes at which they are taught and licensed, I see tremendous resources and writings available. The Roling and Hellerwork communities, Feldenkrais, Aston Patterning, Upledger Institute, Neuromuscular Re-education, The Milne Institute, to name only a few, are filling up vast areas of knowledge and experience with writings and teachings about touch, neurophysiology, emotional anatomy, and the interrelations of body, mind and spirit. Despite the publication of many books and videos, few if any bodyworkers try to learn these systems on their own away from the classroom. The more we in the world of *Trager* mystify our work by our incompleteness of description and visual representation, the more risk there is that few of us, including instructors, will actually agree upon what we define as the *Trager* Approach. Over the years, I have witnessed painful encounters between different members of our community, each of whom claimed to be doing the "real" work, and some of whom were ready to publicly embarrass, chastise, gossip about, or even cast out a member with whom they disagreed about the work.

#### **Doing the hard work of professional writing**

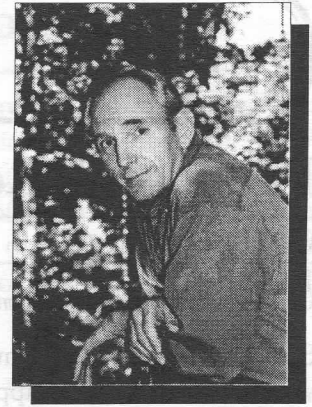
There are notable exceptions to our lack of definition as a professional system of healing. Dean Juhan, Joe Griffin, Phil Witt, Adrienne Stone, Jack Liskin, and many others have tried to describe in professional language what we do and why we do it. Every instructor and tutor makes his/her own contributions to the understanding of the work when they try to make it intelligible to others. When I was in graduate school, a Jesuit Priest offered his own challenge to members of a class of spiritual direction students. "Each of you has probably had more direct spiritual experiences than I ever will, but I will give you fair warning, if you cannot research and articulate your ideas and experiences cogently and with professional clarity you will not pass this course." I believe that we in the *Trager* community are faced with the same kind of challenge. We must raise ourselves up to the professional standards of leading caregivers, learn respectfully and humbly from what they have achieved, and challenge ourselves to do similarly.

#### **Individual endeavors**

- Become licensed to touch by whatever means necessary and look upon it as an opportunity to grow in our knowledge and ability to communicate what we do
- Make peace with the AMTA state massage boards and other health care boards by joining with them professionally and equally
- Start to hold pilot classes of new moves and insights for

one another, showing what we have learned by using the *Trager* Approach

- Have gatherings in which we present to one another the other techniques we use besides *Trager* and how we integrate them with our work
- Form professional supervision groups of practitioners and students where we talk about the difficulties and benefits of using *Trager* in our practice



*Jack Blackburn*

- Hold meetings formally or informally with non-*Trager* professionals where we can articulate and demonstrate what we do and invite them to do the same
- Each of us assess our own weaknesses and areas of growth and get trained and certified and licensed where necessary to allow us to do our best and most creative work
- Personally do our own part to heal the wounds and animosities left over from past dealings with others in the *Trager* community, including those who have resigned

#### **Community endeavors**

As a community we can stop being hard on ourselves for what we do or do not know and recognize that we are all growing together. We can create more and more contexts in which we share what we do in writing within the general field of bodywork. We can establish some easy communication resources like members-only web pages with chat rooms where we can discuss problems and insights and bulletin boards where we display personal bios and keep our addresses and phone numbers up-to-date. Through such a website we can have access to the research data and anecdotal stories that are generated from within our community (Liskin, Brownlee, et al). We can also be more aware of what is happening in other regions and countries. We must move towards open and honest communication between instructors, board members, tutors, and the community at large.

#### **Honoring our legacy**

I believe that all of these steps will help us individually and, as a community, enter a new millennium, free of the misinformation we have picked up along the way that can't really serve us anymore. We can let go of the past including some of Milton's biases and challenge ourselves to honor him and his legacy by doing everything we can to revitalize our organization and communicate what we are learning and where the work is going.

# Trager Around the World

## Parkinson's Research

Claire Bourbeau

*Claire has been a Trager Practitioner for ten years and practices in Montreal.*

Scientists are more and more interested by the influence which the alternative approaches, such as massage, can have on health. We all heard about experiments carried out by our neighbors of the South. Closer to us, at the department of Kiné-Anthropology of the University of Quebec in Montreal, a research is presently under way to verify the impact of *Trager* on the muscular rigidity of people with Parkinson's disease. In a more general way, one seeks to know if it is possible to work with the central nervous system via the peripheral nervous system. I met Denis Lafontaine who takes part in this research as a *Trager* practitioner and I asked him some questions.

*Who thought of this research?*

Jacques Hebert did. He and Christian Duval are the authors of the protocol of research. They benefited from the collaboration of Jean Boucher, Director of the Department of Kiné-Anthropology. Christian assumes the project's coordination while Jacques is the observer and Jean is the statistician. As for myself, I personally spent a lot of time raising the necessary funds to make such research possible. It would be a shame not to mention the great open-mindedness that we encountered at the University of Quebec, based on this kind of research.

*Are several individuals taking part in this research?*

The team of research is made up of four main speakers: an observer, a statistician, an appraiser, in this case, an experienced nurse and, finally, a *Trager* practitioner. We based our research on a sampling of 56 people with Parkinson's disease.

*Where did you recruit the participants of this project?*

We recruited them at the McGill University Aging Center.

*How is the research being held?*

This research is carried out in three stages. In the first part of our experimentation, we met twenty people. We had considered meeting 32 of them but, because the first results were so significant, we were able to go directly to the next stage. In the second stage, sixteen other volunteers will also receive *Trager* sessions, but this time, they will be tested, using electrodes to support our first results in a more objective way. Thirdly, there will be two groups of 8 people,

a reference group and a group where each one will receive six *Trager* sessions. This time, only two tests will be carried-out. One, before the series of *Trager* and the second, at the very end.

*What is your protocol of research consisting of?*

Each participant meets initially the coordinator, who informs him/her of the procedure, then one takes him/her in the room of experimentation where an observer is present at all times and notes all of the relevant information. The nurse carries out a first evaluation of the rigidity of the arm of the participant that is the most affected by it. Then follows a twenty minutes *Trager* session and a second evaluation. The participant then fills in a ten minutes questionnaire before we redo the test. The nurse hands in the results of the evaluation to the observer, which forwards them to our statistician. As mentioned before, at the second stage, the manual tests will be replaced with electrodes. The whole experiment is said to be of a "blind-folded" nature. Let me explain. During the first stage, half of the participants will receive *Trager* on their arm that is most rigid and, the other half, on their least rigid. The practitioner is not informed of the results of the evaluation and, at his end, the appraiser does not know which arm the practitioner touched. As far as the statistician is concerned, he receives the information to be treated under sealed folds.

*But why so much mystery?*

To prevent from being influenced by the observations of the other intervening parties. A real scientific research should not leave anything at random. If we want the results of this experiment to be taken seriously and that they be published in scientific reviews, it is necessary that our conclusions be undeniable. For that, it was necessary to draw up a protocol of research with was faultless and as safe as possible.

*When do you consider this will end?*

The research began at the end of August 1999 and, if all goes well, should be completed by February 2000. The results will be available in April 2000.

*You mentioned earlier that the session lasts twenty minutes. Why?*

The reason is that all these people take medication. As its effect is gradual, we figured a period of time during which the experiment can be undertaken without risking being short-circuited by the effect of the drugs.

*Wouldn't it have been simpler to undertake the experiment with participants who do not take drugs?*

In the beginning, that is what we intended to do but then, we changed our mind because, if our experiment is conclusive, the results will be valid, with or without, drugs. Furthermore, on the ground, the practitioners might have to work with patients who will be under medication also.

*Isn't practicing Trager within a scientific framework a little contradictory?*

(Laughter) In any case, it is a whole adventure! I am surrounded by scientists and it is true that at first I became a little anatomical: the first vertebra, the second, etc. And then, knowing that the result of my work was evaluated, unconsciously, I wanted to have results. The first day of the experimentation with my first client, I tried very hard to get him relaxed. I tried so hard that I was getting as tensed as he/she was. (Laughter) I was no longer following the concept of looking for beauty and space. I became aware that I was missing the essence of *Trager*. So came the idea of opening Dr. Trager's book of *Mentastics* at random to come across a part on "listening". That released me immediately.

*Thereafter, did everything go well?*

Yes, on the second day of the experimentation, we had to make some readjustments. Apparently, the disabled person would not feel the tensions caused by a neurological problem; it seems the brain would get accustomed to this tension and the person would become insensitive. In other words, people suffering from Parkinson would not feel their tensions. I am a little skeptical on the subject but I am not an expert. We then decided that in the twenty minutes that the session lasted, I was to integrate a little rehabilitation. In order to reconnect some circuits, I make them more aware, using the *mentastics* of the arm. When I am seeking the weight or space, I already have a point of reference, but not them. So, I have them experience what is the weight. I take their arm and seek the weight. When it's there, I tell them "There, feel this, now you are giving me your weight". It helps them make the difference between "I am giving the weight of my arm" and "I am holding back the weight of my arm". I must say this simple addition makes the session much more effective.

*Could you describe the course of a session.*

When I arrive, the person is sitting and I have him/her lie down. I start with the nape of the neck (a great deal). Then, I go to the legs and, after that, to the designated arm, a little of the rib cage to go back to the nape of the neck. I help the person to stand up. I make him/her walk a little, he/she sits down and, once again, I work the arm. Then, placing myself behind the chair, I make an opening of his/her rib cage to try to put his/her back straight.

*Do you choose the movements you are going to use, yourself, as you go along or is there a pre-established protocol?*

No, they had to drop the protocol. They came to realize that, with me, they could not follow one. *Trager* is an approach, not a repetition of movements made at precise speed. On the other hand, the circuit remains the same for everybody, in other words, the nape of the neck, leg, foot, arm, cage, and, once again, the nape of the neck, etc. All this, in order to get consistency. Obviously, the intensity is different according to the response I get and this is where the experiment is significant. If, at the time I lift the head, the client does not give me the weight, I realize my hands know. I touch and my hands know - how would it be if he/she let go of his/her head? - I play between what I know and what he/she gives me. Sometimes, he/she releases it, at other times, he/she does not at all, or only partially (50 to 75%). If one does not stop at the right time, the client tires, gets irritated and tries to give you the weight. At this point, it becomes disastrous because he/she is all stressed out. It is really necessary to play with the weight until you can feel a release. Even though, it will not be as deep a release as it could be, the most important thing is to get enough to play with the nape of the neck. I absolutely need to be flexible, light and very soft and, most of all, not wanting to do something. I simply open the book of *Mentastics* and work with the spirit of what I just read.

*Do you do this prior to each Trager session?*

Only the morning before the experimentation as if I was choosing a topic for the day.

*Are there any particular problems you were confronted with?*

Yes, some people suffering from Parkinson tremble. These tremblings rise from a neurological malfunction. So far, only one of them presented this problem and I believe I have found an interesting path. At first, I laid my hands, loosened my shoulders, elbows, and then, I only connected with what was, simply asking "What is nothing?" and waited for the response. But I noticed that not only did I not manage to pass the feeling of nothingness, something even worse happened, the person would transfer his/her trembling to me. If you let it, the person will tremble and you will tremble along and that will be it. Then, I offered a resistance with my hand, then we can induce a feeling. This is something I will explore. It resembles a lot of the work we do with people who experienced a cerebral palsy or those who are affected by spasms.

*If you were entirely free to go about someone with Parkinson, what would you do?*

I would prioritize the group workshop. A lot of balance *mentastics* to groups of 4 or 5 lasting, at the most, one hour.

According to you, what are the benefits Trager brings to these people?

The pleasure of feeling free. One can expect a loosening and a change in balance. That, I am convinced of. But we should not forget that it is a degenerative disease which evolves with aging.

Would you say that the way to deal with Parkinson is very different from the way you usually work?

Not as far as the table work goes, put aside how to deal with the tremblings. On the other hand, if I were to do *mentastics* with them, I would go differently about it.

Any other personal observations related to your experiment?

Yes, I noticed something very interesting. Everyone I met who suffers from Parkinson is adorable. They are funny - really special. I rarely saw that. So much so that, at one point, I really wondered whether Parkinson could bring such kindness to people. To work with them is a pleasure. They are really wonderful.

A story to follow closely.

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We regret to report that Maryann Zimmerman's husband John passed away after a long illness on February 23rd. A memorial service will be held Saturday, March 18, 11 a.m. at Merkley-Mitchell Mortuary at 3655 5th Avenue, San Diego. There will be a reception after the service. Donations in the name of John F. Zimmerman may be made to the San Diego Hospice Center (619) 688.1600.

## IC Article cont. from page 3

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS IN THE TRAGER APPROACH Resolved (to increase the spread of the *Trager* approach):

The Instructors support the development of workshops offering the principles of the *Trager* Approach, including hook-up, *Mentastics* and quality of touch to the general public. We encourage an increase in *Trager* workshops with this focus. Notes are available from previous brainstormings for *Trager* personal development workshops. *Mentastics* and Introductory Workshop Leaders interested in developing such a program should contact Roger Tolle.

### POLICY AND SUPPORT FOR BETTY'S CLASSES

Betty's future trainings will be listed in the schedule as: "Betty Fuller & Staff", reflecting the opportunities we will be creating for other instructors and selected tutor staff to work with her and provide a context for Betty to more simply pass on her touch and wisdom rather than running the entire show.

Furthermore, the IC has approved a new 3-day class, "BEING with Betty Fuller". The intention is for participants to benefit from her experience and quality of touch. Completion of Practitioner I would be a prerequisite for this class. Look for the full description and scheduling of this offering in the next schedule.

Resolution: The IC unanimously invites Antonia Faeh to reenter the Instructors Committee as an Instructor member authorized to teach Beginning Trainings.

NEW CURRICULUM - 24 hours of *MENTASTICS*. The intention is to increase breadth and depth of students' personal experience and to provide practice in the skills involved in sharing. Authorized leaders will be *Mentastics* Leaders and Instructors, the content and format will be determined by the leader to meet the needs of the participants.

Teaching staff / 24 hours of *Mentastics* includes Instructors of Intermediate level trainings for up to 3-day classes. *Mentastics* Leaders may develop up to 3-day *Mentastics* classes for *Trager* Students and Practitioners. The approval process will be as in the new Interim Elective Class Approval process, with the exception of needing only 1 Instructor to attend the full class and recommend it, rather than 2 Instructors.

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# After Hours

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Fern Sternberg, Special to Philly Tech

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*Fern Sternberg is an editorial assistant at The Philadelphia Inquirer. Her e-mail address is [fsternberg@phillynews.com](mailto:fsternberg@phillynews.com).*

## Aching backs and stiff necks are no problem for Stephen Imbrogno

Working out the kinks. Senior consultant Stephen Imbrogno hopes to combine his IT skills with his massage technique, the *Trager Approach*. If you work at a computer all day, you know the feeling: stiff wrists and cramped fingers from endless typing, a low back ache from sitting all day and that crease in your forehead from frowning at the monitor one too many times. Stephen Imbrogno feels your pain. And he has a solution.

Imbrogno, a senior consultant for Actium, and IT solutions firm in his hometown of Conshohocken, began to experience the same kinds of things as a result of long hours spent sitting (often improperly) at a computer. He got the squints from scrunching too close to the little screen; his nascent sciatica revved up from prolonged odd-angle squats on his wallet in his back pocket. Instead of just accepting the pain as a hazard of his job, the 33-year-old Drexel University grad began to try to resolve his physical ailments by taking more frequent breaks, walking at lunch time and taking yoga classes. All these helped, but it was a chance meeting with a massage therapist that really did the trick.

The therapist introduced him to a technique called the *Trager Approach*. Milton Trager, a doctor who had his share of physical knocks in his part-time gig as an acrobat, designed the approach in the 1930s to release both physical and emotional stresses. In itself, the *Trager Approach* was a low-stress technique, which Imbrogno found worked wonderfully on the repetitive stress injuries that result from pointing, clicking, typing and staring at a computer for hours on end.

"As soon as I had *Trager* work done on me, I was buzzing. It's so energizing," he said.

Unlike techniques such as Shiatsu and Swedish massage, which use pressure points or elbow grease to "work" the muscle, *Trager* allows the practitioner to use the least amount of effort to "coax" the body into releasing and relaxing.

When I visited him, Imbrogno demonstrated to me several seemingly effortless techniques that worked tremendously well to relieve my strain and tension.

"Let me show you my parlor trick," Imbrogno said.

He asked me to sit with my legs shoulder-width apart, one arm resting on my thigh, the other dangling between my legs. He then asked me to gently wiggle and twist the dangling arm. I did this for about a minute or so.

"OK," he said. "Now stand up and put your hands on your thighs. Do you feel anything different?"

I definitely felt a tingling sensation in the wiggled arm. I also noticed that my shoulder no longer touched my ear. It was as if by magic my arm had grown. Next, I lay down on Imbrogno's portable massage table. He used the same idea on my legs - only this time he did the wiggling - allowing them to relax themselves, rather than trying to force it. Imbrogno uses similar techniques on the rest of the body to allow blood to flow and muscles to relax.

In March, Imbrogno received his *Trager* certification after doing 500 practice hours and completing a three-week training course composed of anatomy, physiology and technique. Then he was faced with a dilemma. He really liked doing the massage, but didn't want to give up his challenging IT job. So now he has a pipe-dream of combining the two by giving massages in the workplace, like some Silicon Valley companies do through contract services.

"What IT wouldn't want a mid-day or after work massage," he said, "financed, of course, by their employer?" Even if it's just a few minutes in the chair, Imbrogno said he can work on the client's hands, neck, back and shoulders to relieve stress and strain and help prevent permanent damage.

Imbrogno, an easy-going fellow, hasn't formally approached anyone with the idea just yet. He believes that this preventative measure could keep employees happier and healthier, reducing absentee rates due to stress and injury. Actium itself is an unlikely place to start, since most of its employees are out in the field helping customers.

But in the meantime, Imbrogno has been servicing family, IT friends and, uh, a few journalists. One thing is for sure, the region's booming technology business will provide plenty of ailing technology professionals to keep him busy in either of his chosen work places.

# Feeling and Function

Clifford Shulman, PT, CTP

*Clifford Shulman is a Trager Practitioner and Physical Therapist with a practice in New York City. He produced an introductory videotape on Trager which is available through the Institute's administrative headquarters, and is currently developing an elective class for Practitioners in speaking about their Trager work.*

In my article, "On Knowing and Not Knowing" which appeared in the previous *Trager Newsletter*, I offered some thoughts and examples of how I have found the principles of The *Trager Approach* to be an invaluable means for positive change in individuals with a variety of conditions and needs. The foundational practices of hook-up and quality contact provide opportunities for significant and meaningful interactions between practitioner and client, revealing and supporting the interaction between feeling and function. The relation between positive feeling experiences and improvement in functional abilities has been only too apparent in the changes that I have observed in my clients.

In my previous article, I discussed my experience working with Gary, a patient who was recovering from a lumbar laminectomy surgery in a New York area hospital. In his case, he discovered that thinking in a different way about the way he performed a movement and the quality of effort associated with it led to a change in feeling that enabled him to be relieved of pain and to progress in his rehabilitation with less discomfort. The relation between positive sensory input, awareness and improved function was also evident in my work with Henry, another patient with whom I worked with briefly in a rehabilitation facility.

Henry was in tears after less than a minute of my gently rocking and oscillating his right lower extremity, above and below the knee. He looked up at me from the mat and said, "You know, I feel so comfortable. Nobody's touched me like that before. You make me feel better; I'm so worried about what's going to happen to me, but I feel hopeful as I'm being treated." I was so moved by this simple interaction and unsolicited statement from this 79 year old man who was hemiplegic following a stroke. I knew that emotional lability is a symptom that may be associated with having a stroke; but this was not simple emotional lability secondary to the stroke. He communicated clear information about his feeling of comfort and recognition of a kind of touch which generated a feeling of support and hope.

On evaluation, I found Henry was unable to fully extend either of his knees, lacking 20 degrees of complete extension. He was unable to fully shift weight onto his affected

right leg and could not stand or walk independently. Severely complicating his condition and any rehabilitation efforts was an inflamed, arthritic right knee. Even without the resultant weakness from the stroke, the inflammation in the knee had impaired his strength, led to a pattern of muscle guarding and inhibited his ability to transfer from sitting to standing or to stand independently.

My initial therapeutic goals with Henry included restoring his knee extension range of motion bilaterally, enabling him to bear full weight on his right lower extremity to stand and walk at least short distances. When I initially evaluated him, he could not extend his knees beyond their knee flexion contraction either actively or passively. I was unable to determine to what extent his loss of knee extension range of motion was due to the stroke and how much was secondary to the arthritis. After an initial and very painful attempt at standing, which required maximum assistance, I opted for reducing some of the effusion in the knee joint through some passive movement in his pain free range. In the process, and in addition to feeling good, I hoped that he might perhaps develop more knee extension.

Laying him supine, I began gently rocking his right leg. To my surprise, within a few brief minutes, the inflammation appeared somewhat reduced and amazingly, his leg had gained a full ten degrees in extension! I had never seen such a radical and rapid change in tissue and joint motion. Extreme muscle guarding in response to the arthritic pain was probably a key player in his loss of motion. He attempted to stand once again, and although he still required maximum assistance to transfer sit to stand, he was in fact able to stand with support for thirty seconds before he needed to sit again. In the world of rehab where small gains can be monumental indicators of prognosis, this was a big step and a heartening response.

Although I did not work with Henry for an extended period of time, he continued to improve in each successive session, over the course of the next three weeks. My initial work with him supported my contention that the quality of one's initial touch either creates an environment conducive to freedom, fluidity and change or affirms and deepens a restriction. This is a principle that we learn so powerfully in *Trager*. Had I tried to push forcefully into his hamstrings to stretch his legs or forced him to stand for too long on an inflamed knee - as I had seen some other therapists do in their eagerness to attain their therapeutic goals - I would have evoked a guarding response which I believe would have prevented his tissues from releasing and his joints from regaining normal range of motion.

(cont. on page 12)

# Emergence of a U.S. *Trager* Association

Dear U.S. Colleagues,

As a result of the meetings with the European representatives in January, 2000, The *Trager* Institute is undergoing a period of reorganization, revitalization, and growth. The *Trager* Institute Board of Directors is supporting the development of a US *Trager* Association (USTA) as well as regional and local associations. This letter is being sent by e-mail to update as many people as quickly as possible about developments in the US.

Just to let you know, several of the Institute staff members have had a very tough flu virus during the last few weeks. Sandra Berger left the administrative staff in December. This is also annual renewal time - a very busy time with a full and healthy staff!! So if you have not had a phone call returned or some other request taken care of....please understand why there is a backlog.

Components of this letter:

- 1) A beginning vision of what a USTA might be...
- 2) Role of the current USTA Committee
- 3) Composition of current USTA Committee (USTAC)
- 4) Request for additional volunteers to serve on the USTAC; how to volunteer to serve
- 5) List of contact persons for existing and developing regional associations

- 1) A beginning of what a USTA might be... Hmm, what could it be??

The foundation is this - the USTA will be a membership organization; and will elect a representative or representatives to be member(s) of the International Board of Directors of the *Trager* Institute. Beyond that...what would we like it to be? What will work for us in the US? This is a time to dream of what we want, and to share our visions with each other.

In Europe, several of the national associations have elected Boards who volunteer to provide administrative, marketing and practitioner support. As a result of the negotiations in January, five European national associations will retain a portion of their members' renewal fees to cover some of the national associations' expenses. Most of their work is done by volunteers. The European national associations also charge a small fee to help pay for their expenses.

One vision of a USTA is to have approximately two paid staff who will handle the administrative needs of USTA members and who will be paid out of a portion of our annual renewal fees. Another portion of our renewal responsibility for service mark protection and the standards of education. The USTA will probably also need to charge a small national association fee.

## 2) Role of the current USTA Committee

The role of this committee is to get the ball rolling, to bring together people and their ideas, and to develop a way to have a nationally-elected Board for the USTA as soon as possible.

## 3) Composition of existing USTA Committee (USTAC)

Current committee members: Jack Blackburn, Anna Marie Bowers, Gary Brownlee, Gwen Crowell, Kathryn Hansman-Spice, Decia Rowland, Judy Rose Seibert & Byron Spice. Judy Rose has agreed to chair the committee for the next 2 months, and Gary Brownlee has offered to co-chair.

## 4) Request for additional volunteers to serve on the USTAC; how to volunteer to serve

The committee is especially looking for volunteers with computer, legal and financial expertise. Are you willing to make a time commitment of about 5 hours/week, have e-mail, and internet access?? We plan to "meet" via an internet chat room as much as possible so that we don't incur a lot of phone expenses.

## 5) List of contact persons for existing and developing regional associations:

(If you are not yet on this list and would like to be, it's because we haven't yet gotten your permission to list you - let us know!!)

Chesapeake *Trager* Association

Betsey Weick (MD) - [bjweick@aol.com](mailto:bjweick@aol.com)

Four Corners *Trager* Association (AZ, NM, UT, CO)

Kate Rose (AZ) - [katerose@infomagic.com](mailto:katerose@infomagic.com)

Great Lakes Regional *Trager* Association

Anna Marie Bowers (OH) - [anna52oh@aol.com](mailto:anna52oh@aol.com)

(cont. on page 12)

Mid-Atlantic *Trager* Association - has a "committee of three" contact persons: Eula Marie Dyson (NY), Panna Flower (PA) - [pannaji@ix.netcom.com](mailto:pannaji@ix.netcom.com), Kate Juliano (PA) - [kateron@voicenet.com](mailto:kateron@voicenet.com)

New York State *Trager* Association  
Janet Steele (NY) - [NYTrager@aol.com](mailto:NYTrager@aol.com)

North West Regional *Trager* Association  
Jack Blackburn (WA) - [jackblac@oz.net](mailto:jackblac@oz.net)

South East *Trager* Association  
Joe Griffin (GA) - [swimwell@premierweb.net](mailto:swimwell@premierweb.net), Kathryn Hansman Spice (FL) - [khst@aol.com](mailto:khst@aol.com)

With lightness from members of the USTA Committee,  
Decia Rowland, Judy Rose Seibert & Gary Brownlee

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## Feeling and Function, cont. from page 10

As Milton Trager so clearly recognized, the release of movement restrictions and relief of pain is a psycho physical event. In Henry's case, the feeling of emotional and psychological safety and comfort that Henry so clearly expressed, was induced through a gentle and process-oriented (versus goal-oriented) approach that literally opened the door (aka, extended the knees) to begin the path to rehabilitation, enabling him to begin the process of recovering function, learning to stand and walk once again. The *feeling* communicated through the approach was as important as the actual "technique" for his patient. It facilitated the process of making functional gains in his ability to stand and even walk, thus demonstrating a relationship between feeling and function.

Although there are various "techniques" available to therapists in working with patients such as Henry or Gary, I have no doubt that the *Trager* approach is a powerful asset in helping people to discover new freedom in a way that is pleasurable and profound. Through a sensitive, exploratory approach, enjoyable sensory input and progressions which takes its cues from the individual client, people are engaged in their own healing or growth process in a way that empowers them to make lasting change. In my next article, I will share the story of Ron, while exploring the power of sensitive, intentional touch and dynamic imagery.

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February, 2000

## An Alert to the *Trager* Community

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find a report on a new process for obtaining approval for elective classes.

The Instructor's Committee created this process, and the Board approved it at its meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup>. We on the Board are responding to our knowledge that there is a great deal of pent-up energy and talent among *Trager* practitioners at all levels waiting to be expressed - as one of our Board members said, a lot of flowers waiting to bloom.

We wish to call your attention to this provision, and hope that you will use it to enrich your own ability to develop your ideas and share them with the rest of the community.

We also wish to alert you to forthcoming changes in continuing education requirements for practitioners. The Board is working with the Instructors Committee to complete the last details of these changes in response to many requests on the part of the community for a continuing education program that better suits their needs.

Please let us know if you have comments or questions about the new elective process, either by contacting us individually, or by communicating with Decia, our Interim Executive Director. Thank you.

Phyllis Greenwood  
For the Board of Directors

## "Being with Betty" - New Class

At the annual Instructor's Committee meeting, instructors decided to maximize the great gifts of one of our founding teachers and create a class entitled "Being with Betty" in which her extraordinary touch and wealth of experience can be shared more directly and with more people. Betty will also be supported in other classes she teaches by support staff.

# Report on Government Regulatory Activity at the State Level

Submitted by Ginger Carney

As Representative of the *Trager*® Institute on the Joint Government Relations Committee (JGRC) of The Federation of Therapeutic Massage, Bodywork and Somatic Practice Organizations, in each newsletter I hope to report on recent government regulatory activity at the State level which might affect the practice of the *Trager* Approach in those States.

First, I would like to briefly explain the function of the JGRC and of my role in relation to *Trager* Institute members. The JGRC holds Conference Call meetings every 4 to 6 weeks, meets at the semi-annual 2-day meeting of the Federation representatives, and communicate via e-mail in between meetings. The representatives from the various member organizations (currently including the AMTA, the AOBTA, the APTA, the Rolf Institute, the Feldenkrais® Guild and the *Trager* Institute) share with one another any information concerning new State legislative activity (usually regarding Massage Licensure Acts), Regulatory Board activity, and grassroots efforts to organize coalitions of local Practitioners of the various approaches. Further information concerning the mission, values and objectives of the Federation and of the JGRC is available at the Federation's website at <http://www.adeptsys.com/federation>, at which you can also find a 14-page Legislative Packet. Certainly, anyone who practices in a State where there is current regulatory activity or Massage Practice Acts which adversely affect *Trager* Practitioners would benefit from this information.

My role in relation to *Trager* Institute members is to be in communication with Practitioners at the State level where activity is occurring. This involves providing information relevant to their State, including contact information for local Practitioners of other approaches who may be organizing a Coalition, as well as obtaining relevant information from them. I will also seek to be in communication with those in decision-making roles (as the Institute undergoes this major reorganization process), as to the potential consequences for the future of *Trager* work and/or actions which might be warranted by developments at the State level. I would like to stress, however, that I cannot provide what must be done by local Practitioners at the grassroots level in these situations.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Ginger Carney, (773) 465-3808, [ginger@urbancom.net](mailto:ginger@urbancom.net). I have recently learned of a way of calling Long Distance over the Internet to someone on their phone (not requiring them to even have a Computer). The sound quality is not optimal, being some-

thing like a mobile phone, but it's free!

**DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN STATES** where there has been activity in recent months. Please note that my understanding and use of terminology as expressed here may not be entirely accurate.

**New Mexico:** Positive outcome here with *Trager* Practitioners obtaining exemption from the requirements of the Massage Licensure Act based upon the role of The *Trager* Institute in determining criteria for initial certification and ongoing renewal through Tutorials and CE requirements.

**North Carolina:** Unfortunate outcome here with *Trager* Practitioners not obtaining exemption from the requirements of the Massage Licensure Act, despite the fact that Feldenkrais Practitioners and Alexander Teachers were granted this exemption. The latter was obtained based upon their extensive professional training programs and their success in distinguishing their work from Massage due to their focus on movement education. The Massage Board members were favorably impressed by the distinctive focus on movement education conveyed in a demonstration of *Mentastics* at their meeting. In their ruling denying exemption, however, they expressed concern for the potential of *Trager* work to be harmful to the public in view of the minimal Training requirements and coming from their own personal experiences of receiving *Trager* sessions.

**New York:** Remains a very problematic situation with no definite progress since the report in the last Newsletter by Martha Partridge and Nancy Steele. Practitioners who do not meet the requirements for Massage Licensure are reluctant to advertise and there is some concern about the future of Beginning Trainings, but is primarily concerned about controlling Prostitution operating under the guise of massage and bodywork. There may be an opportunity for *Trager* Practitioners to present their case for exemption before the Massage Board at some point in the future. The NY Coalition Lawyer has advised *Trager* Practitioners to form a State *Trager* association and to require a 500 hr. Professional Training Program for the practice of the *Trager* Approach in New York, if that does not become the standard of the National organization.

**Maryland:** Remains a very problematic situation with a recent interpretation of the law - "Regardless of what term is used for your modality, if you knead, stretch, stroke, tap, vibrate or compress soft tissue in any manner, degree or form, you DO fall under the definition of 'massage therapy'

as defined in the law and you ARE required to meet the State requirements of certification in order to continue practicing." It should be noted that when the law was first created, Practitioners of other modalities were told that the massage bill did not apply to them. **An exemption was not explicitly stated in the Legislation**, however, leaving it open for this later reinterpretation to the contrary.

**Texas:** *Trager* Practitioners do not have exemption from the Massage licensure requirements and recent Continuing Education of 8 hrs. Massage Therapy training each year (*Trager* Trainings do not qualify). A Coalition is forming to seek exemption or acceptance of alternative training.

**Pennsylvania:** Senate Bill 1220 proposed in Committee in Dec. 1999, which does not contain explicit exemption of any modalities. A Coalition is forming to seek exemption.

**Michigan:** HB 5219 introduced in Dec. 1999, which does not contain explicit exemption of any modalities. Formation of a Coalition is recommended to seek exemption.

**Illinois:** HB 2211 proposed in late 1999 contains explicit exemption of various modalities by name, including *Trager* Practitioners. A Coalition is forming to monitor the progress of the Bill to be sure that this explicit exemption is maintained.

**Wisconsin:** A Title Registration law was passed last year, but it may come to act like a certification. There is some question as to who will approve the qualifying training programs, giving me the impression that there will be future rulings under which there is the possibility for *Trager* Training to qualify.

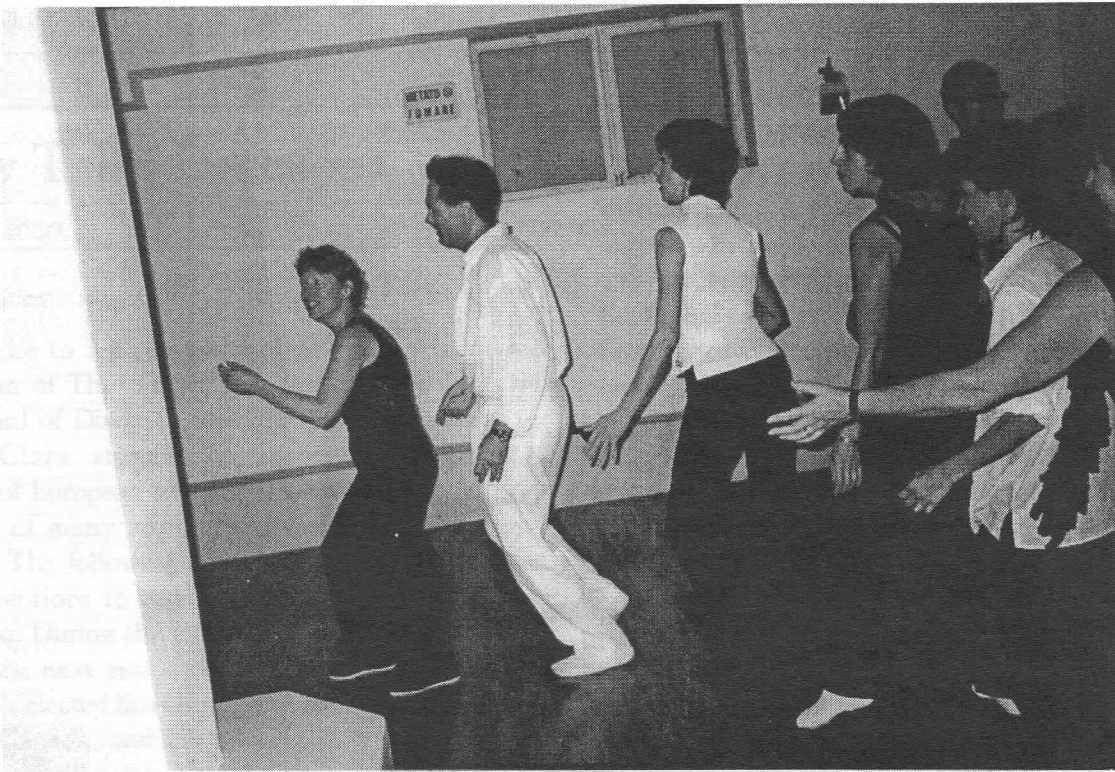
**Arizona:** Efforts for formation of a Coalition are being made, but I'm unclear as to whether there is any current Massage Licensure Act.

**Iowa:** *Trager* Practitioner Rosemary Lucente has expressed a desire to seek exemption for *Trager* Practitioners from the Massage requirements. Rolfers in that state have been given exemption on the basis of their work being educational. Shouldn't we be able to qualify for the same reason? There is no Coalition at this time.

**National trend:** The Federation JGRC initiated an invitation for representatives from various State Massage Boards to come together for a meeting in October 1999 in San Antonio, TX which resulted in the formation of the **National Alliance of the Massage Therapy Boards (NAMTB)**. Reps from 13 States attended. It was hoped that this group would use the Federation JGRC representatives as resources, thereby providing an

opportunity for positive influence on regulatory activity beyond one State at a time. Concern has been expressed, however, that this may have backfired and contacts within this new organization may result in the spread of negative regulatory activity from state to state.

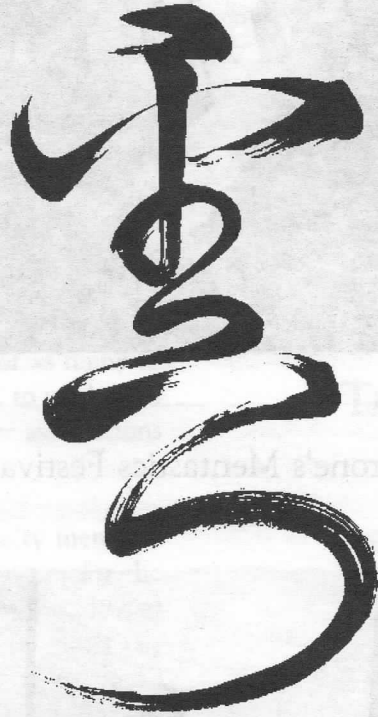
At some point in the future, it is my hope that I will be able to put together a table that would include the status of government regulation in each State to identify which States have Massage Legislation, where we have or do not have exemption from such legislation, and where not, what are the requirements for legal practice in each State.



Michael Madrone's Mentastics Festival, Italy 1999



# Credits



*The Trager Schedule* is a periodic publication of The Trager Institute for Psychophysical Integration and *Mentastics*, a California, non-profit, educational corporation which supports and represents *Trager* psychophysical integration and *Mentastics* movement education, the innovative approaches developed by Milton Trager, M.D.

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