

SMALL

# BUT MIGHTY

## An Historical Sketch of the Connecticut Chapter

**M**

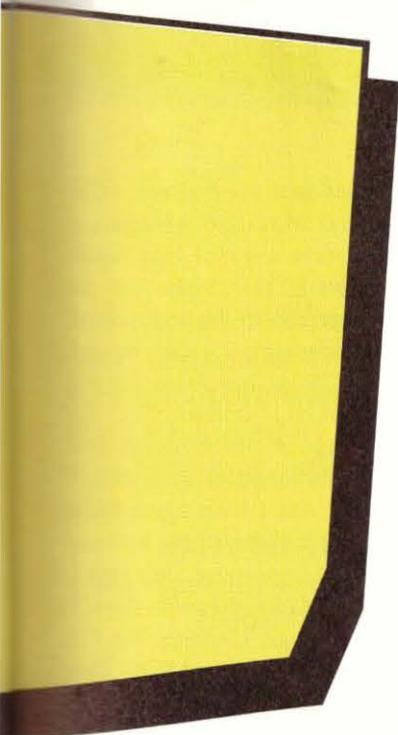
y mom, who is 5'1" would look up to me, her 5'7" daughter when I used to tease her about her height and say, "JoAnn, good things come in small packages. I may be small, but I'm mighty!" The state of

Connecticut is small, but our AMTA chapter is mighty and we've done a lot of good things!

The Connecticut Chapter held its first meeting February 8, 1981. The officers elected at that meeting were : President Steve Kitts, 1st VP Ansel Wolfe, 2nd VP Thekla Litsios, 3rd

VP Judy Gottlieb-Sann and Secretary/Treasurer Beverly Schoenberger. Eastern District Representative Marilyn Frender from the New York Chapter performed the induction ceremony. By September 15, 1981 there were nine active members and nine student members.

During 1982 some significant groundwork was laid out. A format for four meetings a year was proposed and duties of the officers were split to allow for more effective task completion. The processing of new members and the paperwork and finances involved still needed improvement. The chapter doubled in size by the end of 1982



with 35 members. The chapter put together a brochure to educate the public entitled "The Medium is the Massage," and the first plans for a regional New England Conference were discussed.

In March 1982 the CT Center for Massage Therapy was authorized by the CT Commissioner of Education as a private occupational school. Its curriculum was approved soon after by the AMTA. The fourth CT chapter meeting was held on February 20, 1983. New officers were elected. The New England Conference was planned for November in Boston with Maine, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

In July 1984 I attended my first chapter meeting to see what the AMTA was all about. I became interested enough that I attended my first National Convention in September 1985 in New York. Joe Ferguson from New York was my partner in a Shiatsu workshop. That was my first exchange with someone out-of-state! My memories of the general meeting with

the attendees sitting together was, "This is going to be a long night," and it was. When I left the meeting around 1 a.m., it was still going strong. This meeting and the national convention inspired me and several of my friends to become actively involved in our CT Chapter.

At a chapter meeting later that Fall I asked our president, Will Parks, if our chapter had a banner we could display at conventions. Will said we didn't and asked me to be in charge of the Banner Committee! I was very impressed with the warm welcome we received at the convention registration table and resolved in 1986 to become a one-woman

registration/welcome table chairman at our chapter meetings and 3rd VP in Public Relations.

Lucille Gecewicz, my roommate at the 1985 convention, had passed the National Sports Massage exam and soon became CT sports massage director organizing many state events, establishing excellent guidelines and training therapists to work at these events, which gave the public an opportunity to see what sports massage was all about.

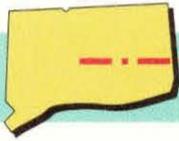
Solid groundwork had been set forth by some effective officers: Linda Derrick-Devevoise, Will Parks, Jeanne Guertin, Laura Munson, Marion Vitali, Nancy Smeeth, Susan Klaus and many other supportive members. At the end of 1986 the CT Chapter saw some strong leadership on its board with Shirley Cooper filling the remaining term of President Will Parks. Bill Greenberg was elected as 1st VP in 1987 and I took over as treasurer with various other duties.

During 1988 Shirley Cooper, Bill Greenberg and Steve Kitts initiated the passage of legislation recognizing massage therapy as a legitimate health profession. We also adopted the newly forming Vermont Chapter to help give them some direction, support and guidance. Steve Kitts was our first state meritorious award winner.

Our membership grew from 262 in September 1988 to 307 in September 1989. Jeanne Guertin received the 1989 state meritorious award. Our membership continued to climb thanks to Shirley Cooper's efforts as liaison between the CT Chapter and CT Center for Massage Therapy. Shirley spoke several times per year to students at the school describing the AMTA, its benefits, functions and how to become a member. Our chapter meetings were heavily attended five times per year. We were on a roll in becoming a "mighty" chapter.

In 1990 Barbara Harvey and Cary Chapin organized volunteers to join forces with AIDS Project New Haven and the Connection for Health Network in bringing massage therapy and bodywork to people living with AIDS and who test HIV positive. The group is called Together Through Touch. We also had 40 AMTA members at the Hartford Civic Center for the "Toys for Adults" Trade Show providing on-site massage. Hundreds of brochures were distributed in our continuing effort to educate the public about the benefits of massage therapy. 2nd VP Cass Crewdson sent CT Chapter brochures to 200 libraries in the state to help promote public relations. We started to take a look at massage ordinances, town by town, to seek a better legislative environment. During this entire year the chapter officers were busy preparing for the New England Conference which would be held in CT in March 1991. Shirley Cooper was our 1990 recipient of the state meritorious award. Our chapter grew from 307 to 378, a 23% increase.

Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers, the Eighth New England Conference, held in Farmington, CT in March 1991 was a great success. During this year the state of Connecticut started initiating more sales taxes. A bomb was



dropped when massage therapists were included in having to charge these taxes to their clients. Shirley Cooper, Bill Greenberg and Steve Kitts met with the Commissioner of Revenue Services in October and were informed that massage services are taxable across the board. We had no recourse at that time and as Shirley stated in a letter to our members, "We have lost the first battle, but not the war!" We were ready for the next battle to begin with the legislation. Bill Greenberg was the 1991 recipient of the state meritorious award.

By February 1992 we had hired lobbyist Judy Yost to guide us in our legislative campaign. At our first public hearing in March with the State Public Health Committee, our Bill #71 was passed, but it still had to make it through the Finance Committee, Government Affairs, House and Senate Floor. We held our first Massage Awareness Day at the State Capitol. We were recognized as a health care profession and had won a major battle. Our lobbyist was petitioning our Bill #71 through the State Senate in April to the House for a vote. At five minutes before the stroke of midnight on the last day of the legislative session in May, Bill #71 passed. Governor Lowell Weicker signed the bill in June. A letter was written in

September 1992 to the State Department of Health informing them that the AMTA-CT Chapter supports the acceptance of the National Certification Exam as the examination for state licensing requirements. We were the first state to use this exam for licensing. On October 8, 1992, I received the state meritorious award at the national convention in Philadelphia.

Today, looking back at our many accomplishments in the past 12 years of CT Chapter history, we all should be very proud. We've grown from 18 to over 500 members. The names of many people may be omitted here, but they have made a positive difference in our chapter. We have produced chapter brochures and shirts, sports massage team shirts, a telephone answering service for massage therapist referrals; seven yellow-page directory book listings; five chapter meetings each year with excellent continuing education (thanks to Deborah Barton); exhibitor booths; one-day or two-day education workshops; six newsletters and six board meetings per year, volunteer participation at sports massage events, charity fund-raisers and university health fairs; five delegates attending national conventions with expenses paid and several CT Chapter members

serving on national committees. Our second annual Massage Awareness Day at the state capitol last April coincided with the vote on an appropriations bill to maintain state funding for licensing. Aided by our lobbyist, Judy Yost, our focus for the next legislative session is on implementation of the massage law along with minor language revisions.

Steve Kitts and I both agree "that our CT Chapter became strong because we were unified in purpose. We kept a close working relationship with the CT Center for Massage Therapy, the CT chapter and the National AMTA. This unity reflects the growth and development of our association." Our togetherness and strength over the years have made the CT Chapter a "mighty" one. ■



*JoAnn Parady is the AMTA Connecticut Chapter Secretary/Treasurer. She has been a member since October 1984. She has served as a volunteer at national meetings since 1990. She maintains a private practice in Moodus, Connecticut.*

### 600 Hour Program

- Pre-Licensing Curriculum
- Approved by Dept. of Education
- Experienced Staff and Faculty
- Full Time Weekday Classes
- Part Time Weekend Classes
- Next session starting in September

### REGISTER NOW

Swedish ■ Shiatsu ■ Anatomy  
Sports Massage ■ Reflexology  
Hydrotherapy ■ Deep Tissue

Blue Cliff School  
of Therapeutic Massage  
(504) 471-0294



### Additional Studies in Zang Fu

*Rick Gold, L.Ac., Ph.D.*  
November 13 - 15, 1993

### Homeopathy

*Carol Elliot, L.Ac., M.A.*  
December 3 - 5, 1993

### Advanced Myofacial Training

*Robert K. King*  
March 5 & 6, 1994

**Come study in New Orleans**