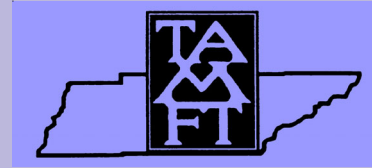


# The TAMFT Marriage and Family NEWS

January 2008



Tennessee Division of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

## From the President . . .

By: Linda Oxford, LCSW, LMFT

### Letter from the President

Bill Balch has resigned the role of President of the Tennessee Division of AAMFT, effective 1/15/08. Bill's decision was prompted by his continuing health challenges and resulting difficulties in fulfilling the responsibilities of the office at the level of excellence with which he has historically served both the association and our division. While the TAMFT board is greatly saddened by this action, we have accepted Bill's resignation.

The TAMFT bylaws, amended July 2002, Article IV, Section 7, provide us this direction in response to these circumstances-

"In the event the Past President is unable to complete the term of office, that position shall remain vacant. In the event, the Secretary-Treasurer is unable to complete the term of office, the Board may appoint a successor to fill the office. In the event that the President is unable to complete the current term of office, the President-Elect shall assume the presidential duties and office, and a special election shall be called to elect a new President-Elect through mail ballot of the voting membership. In the event that the President-Elect is unable to complete the current term of office, a special election shall be called to elect a successor through a mail ballot by the voting membership. In any event, the term

of the Presidency shall not be for less than two (2) years nor more than (3) years."

We have consulted Past Presidents of the Tennessee division to explore what precedents and protocols exist for addressing the relevant concerns, what "lessons learned" they might offer us, and what suggestions they might have.

I have assumed the role of President of the Tennessee division of AAMFT and its attendant functions, responsibilities and duties. The board has decided that the interests of the division in regard to selecting a new President-Elect by means of a special election are best served by the following process: We the Board of TAMFT will charge the division elections committee with immediately beginning the task of identifying and developing a roster

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### Letter from the Conference Chair

Megan James, LMFT

#### Dear Friends:

The Annual Conference of the Tennessee Association for Marriage and Family Therapy is coming soon! I hope you will mark February 22-23, 2008 on your calendar and make plans to join us at the Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville.

The conference is certainly a highlight of the year for our Association. The Conference Committee is working hard on a conference that provides both learning opportunities to enhance clinical knowledge, as well as opportunities to share information and network with peers.

Due to the positive response received year after year, we will once again include

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- ◆ News & Noteworthy
- ◆ Regional Greetings
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- ◆ 2008 Conference Information

## From the Conference Chair

(Continued from page 1)

the Awards Luncheon on Friday and the two rounds of workshops on Friday morning.

In addition, we will be offering a 3 hour ethics class on Friday morning in order to meet the requirements for Tennessee LMFT licensure. Also, we will be offering a supervisor refresher course that meets requirements for AAMFT. This is a 5 hour class that will take place on Friday morning and continue Saturday afternoon.

In addition to the workshops, we are very pleased to have Brent Atkinson, Ph.D. as our keynote speaker. Dr. Atkinson will be speaking on the advances from neurobiology and the science of intimate relationships. You can read more about Dr. Atkinson in another section of this newsletter.

You should have received a registration brochure. If you haven't and would like to, contact Catherine Robbins, 2008 Conference Registrar. We look forward to seeing you in February!

## TAMFT 2008 Plenary Speaker: Dr. Brent Atkinson

Brent Atkinson, Ph.D., received his Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy from Texas Tech University, a Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Wisconsin, and a Master of Arts in Theology from Fuller Theological Seminary. He is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, holds Clinical Membership with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and has also earned the credential of AAMFT Approved Supervisor. Dr. Atkinson is a Senior Graduate Faculty member in the School of Family, Consumer & Nutrition Sciences at Northern Illinois University. Dr. Atkinson utilizes a specific method of helping couples improve their relationship, the Pragmatic/Experiential Approach. The Pragmatic/Experiential Approach applies recent discoveries in neurobiology and relationship science to practical strategies improving relationships. Dr. Atkinson's approach is widely used by therapists through out the country.

He is the author of Emotional Intelligence in Couples Therapy: Advances from Neurobiology and the science of intimate relationships and Developing habits for relationship success: A Workbook for Effective, Neurobiologically-Based Couples Therapy. Dr. Atkinson's thoughts on emotional health and therapeutic process have also appeared in professional journals such as the *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*, *Family Process*, the *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*, the *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, and others. Brent's methods for helping couples have been recently described in the *Washington Post*, the *Oprah Magazine*, *Cosmopolitan* and the *Complete Woman Magazine*. His therapy with couples has been featured in numerous articles in the *Psychotherapy Networker*.

Keep up with  
TAMFT happenings,  
visit  
[www.tnamft.org](http://www.tnamft.org)

## Elections Committee

By: Carole Webb, M.S.

### Lahey, Mauldin, Fussell elected to TAMFT Board/ Committee positions

The fall election yielded three new leaders for the Tennessee Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. Congratulations to our new officers, and thank you to all those who ran for office!

#### Board Members

**Susan Lahey, MMFT** of Franklin, TN, is our newly elected Middle Tennessee Representative. Susan

holds a MMFT from Trevecca Nazarene University and is finishing her Ph.D. at Regents University this spring. She is on the faculty at Trevecca, teaching Marriage and family therapy and research courses.

**Gary Mauldin, Ph.D.** of Knoxville, TN, joins the board as Secretary-Treasurer. Gary is Director of the Holston Conference Pastoral Counseling Center, and is an ordained United Methodist Minister. He is a Texas transplant, where he taught in a Marriage and Family Therapy Masters program.

#### Elections Committee

**Keith Fussell, M.A.R., M.A., LPC, LMFT** of Bartlett, TN, is the new West Tennessee Representative on the Elections Committee. Keith is a therapist at the Christian Counseling Center, and is Family Life Minister for the Sycamore View Church of Christ in Memphis. He is originally from Dickson, TN, and graduated from David Lipscomb and Harding University Graduate School.

## East Tennessee

By: Ron Schumann, M.A.

**Nothing** in all creation exists apart from community. At the most basic physical level, all forms of matter seek relationship, connection, and communion. Subatomic particles are attracted to other particles. Microbes combine into larger organisms. Galaxies emerge from primitive swirling gas clouds into coherent shapes.

What is true for atoms and microbes is true for us. People grow and find nourishment through the giving and returning of attention and recognition. When this rhythm of mutual care and concern breaks (given and received through community), our lives are broken by alienation and separation. When others fail to acknowledge and recognize us, we feel cut off and alone.

Experiences of communion, on the other hand, bridge the spaces that divide us. This give and take, to know and to be known, is the meat and drink required of the human heart. Life is the gift of community. There is no life that is not life in community. Our lives are gifts that come to us from relationships in community. None of us are self-made creatures. We are shaped through the communities that have embraced us, loved us, and nurtured us.

Community is the joy and fulfillment of being human; yet it is also our deepest dilemma. We know that our very existence depends upon mutual acknowledgment and recognition. But such recognition cannot be coerced. It comes as a gift. What we most need, we cannot secure for ourselves. When we try to secure it, it eludes our grasp.

Love and fear are at war within us. We love others by granting them the

recognition and acknowledgment that include them in a common humanity. We, in turn, rely upon others to bestow their recognition upon us. But we also fear that others will not respond to our need for recognition and acknowledgment. We fear that they will not love us as we have loved them.

This loving or not loving of other people is literally a matter of life and death. So, out of fear, we try to coerce what can only be given as a gift. We attempt to secure for ourselves what comes as grace. We control and clutch at others, commanding them to recognize us because of our achievements and accomplishments. Through boasting, we hope to command others' recognition and acknowledgment.

Our attention becomes fixed on getting what we need. We no longer widen the scope of our attention, giving others the loving gaze of relationships-in-community. We instead see them as objects useful to us in confirming our own worth and importance. In the process, everyone is deeply wounded. Others fail to recognize us, depriving us of inclusion in loving communion. We then respond by refusing them the recognition they need. Dividing walls of exclusion and hostility emerge between people.

When atoms split apart, the result is a violent explosion. Nuclear fission is the most powerful source of energy we know. It can incinerate cities and vaporize whole nations. Similarly, when people fail one another by denying the recognition and relationship basic to human existence, the result is an explosion of violence, rage, and inhumanity.

When, on the other hand, people come together in mutuality and community, creation and re-creation (recreation) are realized. The burdens that disconnect people are

unloaded and the bonds of life that tie us together are strengthened.

Over the past few months a portion of us from East Tennessee have come together enjoying networking opportunities, growth experiences and community building. Our common bond, among others, is a genuine care and concern for the people in our communities who reach out to us to reconnect with life and find reassurances of hope. I have been excited to be a part of the rhythm of life known as TAMFT. I invite all of Tennessee to continue nourishing life by participating in community – shaping and being shaped by one another.

## News and Noteworthy

### eCampus.com!!!

A new service for you and your friends means instant financial support for TAMFT.

Need a book? Want to list your text for the class you are teaching? Then find it...list it...and buy it on eCampus.com. Buy it from eCampus.com found on TAMFT's website and 10% of the purchase price will be paid to TAMFT. You can invite friends, relatives, and colleagues to visit and shop the website. Shop now and TAMFT will benefit instantly. Go to the website now and find the book or item you are looking for!

2008 TAMFT Annual Conference sponsored by:

The logo for YouthVILLAGES features a stylized red and white graphic above the word "YouthVILLAGES" in a serif font.

## Middle Tennessee

By: John A. Brownlee, M.A.

TAMFT exists only because many members have volunteered great amounts of time over the past thirty years. Special recognition needs to go to Bill Balch, Eugene Anderson, Louis Nelson, Myrtle Qualls, and others for the Herculean effort they put forth in the early days to get TAMFT organized and licensed by the state. In 1980 Leon Smith wrote, "I remember when I moved to Nashville in 1970 and doubled the TAMFC membership."

It took from 1974 to 1991, to get TAMFT licensure approved. May I encourage you to go to the TAMFT website and read our history? You will come to appreciate the struggle it was to get the state approval. Today, we all profit from the countless hours donated and disappointments

experienced by many members to get us the privilege of being LMFT's.

We salute the many who have contributed their time by participating on the board, committees, conference planning, and execution and other activities over the past thirty years.

Today, I wish to give special recognition to Paul Cates, at Lipscomb University for being the coordinator of the Middle Tennessee Networking meetings for over seven years. We owe Paul our deep appreciation for selecting the speaker and hosting the program every second month. Some members take full advantage of the opportunity to network, learn, and receive an hour of CEU credit. However, there are many more members in our region, who we are missing. May I encourage you to mark your calendar to attend? If you have never attended, try it you will like it.

Membership in TAMFT has not grown as it could in the past few years. We have many challenges facing us if we wish to grow and remain viable in Tennessee. There are several hurdles facing us that we must resolve. They include supervision, licensure, and getting more members directly involved.

We who have inherited the privilege of being licensed as LMFTs need to continue to build on the efforts of our early leaders. Let's not let down the many who have already given generously of their time and energies. Nor should we fail to prepare the way into the future for those who want to be Marriage and Family Therapists and members of TAMFT. To fail the coming generation of marriage and family therapists is to deprive our state of a desperately needed service.

## From the President..

(Continued from page 5)

of candidates for the office of President-Elect. We will further direct this committee to move the date of the general election so that it is held earlier than usual this year so we can include a special election ballot with the general election ballot, thereby saving the cost of an "extra" mail-out to the membership, yet filling the vacant office in a timely manner.

Thank you for your support during this leadership transition. Please express to Bill Balch your appreciation for his leadership and legacy over the history of our organization, and for the numerous contributions he has made to the growth, development, health and success of TAMFT, its members, and the clients we serve. Please pray for his health and well-being, and that God may bless Bill as richly as he has blessed our association at both the divisional and national levels.

I also ask for your prayers and support as I lead TAMFT in pursuit of the division goals I committed to advance when I originally ran for this office: 1) to significantly increase the number and diversity of our student and clinical members, 2) to consistently provide easily accessible and affordable supervision and purposeful mentoring to licensure-eligible MFTs, and 3) to aggressively pursue expansion of MFT practice opportunities and settings for students and professionals.

We have many great opportunities before us. Together, let's make these possibilities realities.

Yours in service,

Linda Oxford, LCSW, LMFT  
President, TAMFT

## 65th AAMFT Conference Report

By: Linda Oxford, LCSW, LMFT

The theme of the 65<sup>th</sup> AAMFT Annual Conference held October 11-14<sup>th</sup> in Long Beach, CA was "Healing Fractured Relationships in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," with a focus on reconciliation and healing at both interpersonal and societal levels.

Over 100 workshops and five specialty tracks (supervision, divorce/custody, eating disorders, infidelity, and lesbian/gay/transgender clients) focused on the populations served by MFTs and the problems they face.

Plans for the 2008 AAMFT annual conference, which will be held in Memphis, Tennessee, are already underway; and it promises to be an outstanding event. The theme for the 2008 conference is "Ethical and Legal Challenges in Contemporary Family Therapy" with a focus on exploration of contemporary ethical dilemmas and legal challenges and give therapists the resources needed to face them with confidence.

Catherine Robbins, Ron Schumann and I attended the day-long Divisional Leadership Training and Development meeting on October 11<sup>th</sup>, where we learned more about

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## Student/Associate Representative

By: Elizabeth Lashower, M.M.F.T.

### Lessons I Have Learned Working in Community Mental Health

I spent a great amount of time trying to think of an article topic that would be applicable for our student and associate members. After considering many possibilities I decided to focus on the difficulties encountered and the lessons I have learned working in community mental health. Many graduate students, myself included, left school expecting to find a job in a clinic setting providing therapy where our clients would pay a reasonable fee for our blossoming skills. Instead we accepted positions in a world in which the clients did not appear to be very invested in the therapeutic process.

The main thing that I needed to realize was, most of the time, self-actualization and growth were not my client's highest priorities. My

clients had much more immediate needs to deal with, such as finding transportation to a doctor's appointment, figuring out how to get bills paid so their lights would be turned on again, finding a job, or worrying about the crime activity around their homes. Maslow's hierarchy of needs states that if a person's physiological and safety needs are not met, a therapist will encounter great difficulty in trying to address that individual's needs for self esteem or self actualization. As a new therapist, I was ready to tackle the issues that I had prioritized for my client and did not initially recognize their priorities. In community mental health, networking and referring to case managers is key. Being aware of other organizations in the community that are set up to meet various needs, and making the proper referral can lead to a client's immediate needs being met. Trying to move forward with therapy without these other services in place will prove to be extremely difficult.

In a similar vein, another lesson I have taken away is that what I

considered growth or success was often not what my clients wanted. I had high hopes and dreams of what I would be able to accomplish as a therapist, but it turns out, they were not the dreams and hopes of my clients. My world perspective had been so molded by my personal experiences, which had a direct effect on what I considered success. Learning to respect my client's values and life goals- without imposing my own - became my focus over time. This change in me made it much easier to help them work toward their goals. The resistance I was experiencing in therapy was simply resistance towards goals that I had set. It is a simple concept but it took multiple years in community mental health for it to sink in.

I am thankful for the time that I have spent working with this population because of the many things that I have learned. In graduate school, I thought I believed wholeheartedly that a client is the expert on their own life, but it wasn't until working in community mental health that I really learned to trust their expertise. ■

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## West Tennessee

By: Terry Browning, Ph. D.

It is an exciting time to be a LMFT! It is good to see continued discussion and national efforts regarding reimbursement for Marital and Family Therapists. It also seems we are seeing more discussion across several disciplines related to the need for services and care of the family. I have recently read a good article on helping families who have a member recovering from traumatic brain injury. Also, school psychology journals have had recent articles related to success of children in school with increased family involvement and support. One article in the National Association of School Psychologists journal

*Communiqué*, Vol. 36, #4, December 2007 discussed the potential roles and issues of MFT in the schools.

We have had ongoing meetings in West Tennessee through the fall with the Memphis Area Networking and Continuing Education Luncheon of the Tennessee Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. Josh Abston, MA spoke in November with a discussion entitled, "Personal Journeys in a Marriage and Family Therapy Practice." Josh related both personal and professional changes that he had experienced over the year.

Our new year began with a meeting on January 7, 2008. The meetings are held in the Hospitality Room of Harding University Graduate School

of Religion from 11:45 to 1:00pm. Shelia Vamplin, M.A. was the speaker for this first session of 2008. The topic was "Bipolar Disorder and the Family." ■

As always, all are welcome to our meetings. Please contact Keith Fussell (372-1874) or Terry Browning (351-4194) for questions or additional information.

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## TAMFT Newsletter

Editor:

Barry Greenlee, M. Div.  
newsletter@tnamft.org

## Greetings from the Secretary-Treasurer

Gary Mauldin, Ph.D, LMFT

### The call is for you!

Is there anything more annoying than a ringing telephone that no one will answer? Recently, my home telephone was ringing off the wall and in sheer frustration I shouted, "Someone answer the phone!" Finally my son answered it and shouted back, "Dad, the call is for you!"

I was thinking the call was for someone else. Why should I bother answering a phone call that was for some other person? I made a mistaken assumption to think that the call was for someone else when in reality it was for me.

I thought about that ringing phone story, after I was recently notified that I had been elected to the office of Secretary/ Treasurer of the TAMFT Board. I felt quite honored to receive that call and my deepest desire is to help to advance the profession of Marriage and Family Therapy here in the State of Tennessee.

I am originally from Texas and served a number of years as chair of the Elections Committee of the

Texas Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. However, I have grown to love Tennessee and I am excited about being involved with the Board.

Currently, I am employed by the Holston Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church where I provide marriage and family therapy services for the Clergy and Clergy families of East Tennessee.

After I received the election results, I was reminded that part of what it means to be a Marriage and Family Therapist is to actively give back to the profession that has given so much to all of us. Like my phone call the other day, we tend to let the phone ring thinking the call is for someone else when all the while it was for us.

Similarly, we all stand at the beginning of a new year. It represents an opportunity to serve our profession through the gift of time and talents. We need your help, and the families and individuals our profession serves need your help. The phone is ringing and the call is for you!

Gary R. Mauldin Ph.D. LMFT  
P.O. Box 30215  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37930  
(865) 805-9781

## 65th AAMFT Conference

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the national organizations priorities in regard to membership recruitment, involvement and retention and explored divisional capacity building and the characteristics of a healthy division.

Among other things, we learned that 42% of divisions have fewer MFT licensees in 2007 than in 2002, 68% of divisions lost clinical members in 2006, and 40% of divisions have fewer members in 2006 than in 2002. As an organization, we are growing older, with the majority of our clinical members in their forties and fifties. Nationally, many of our members are nearing retirement age. Another shift that has occurred is that the majority of our members now are employed by an agency rather than being in private practice.

AAMFT'S charge to divisional Presidents was to 1) determine the number of members planning to retire over the next ten years, and 2) determine how the needs of employed members differ from those of members in private practice. We will soon be soliciting your feedback about both these issues so that the Tennessee division can effectively respond to our members' changing needs.

Of critical concern is the fact that only a third of all graduates from MFT programs go on to obtain licensure as MFTs. Two thirds of these graduates never become licensed as MFTs. Most of these graduates obtain licensure as other mental health professionals (primarily LPCs). Most graduates of MFT programs who go on to seek licensure in other areas identify the relatively high cost of MFT supervision and limited availability of approved MFT supervisors as disincentives to MFT licensure. Clearly, this is a matter that calls for closer evaluation and a reassessment of our supervision process and practices.

At the Tennessee division board meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup>, the board reviewed the health and well-being of the Tennessee division using the Division Balanced Scorecard assessment tool provided by AAMFT. Our division specifically targeted membership growth, clear identification of annual advocacy initiatives, development of a process for evaluation of staff, and leadership recruitment and development as areas for focused attention in 2008. We are exploring ways to actively engage our members in these issues. We welcome your ideas about how we can improve in each of these areas, and invite your participation with us in moving the division to a higher level of excellence.

### Linda High Attorney at Law

*formerly Legal and Ethics Consultant for AAMFT*

### Legal Representation for the Mental Health Professional

**Subpoenas for Records or Testimony  
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## Mark Your Calendars Now for TAMFT Lunches

### **Nashville Networking Lunches**

11:00a.m. – 1:00p.m. (4<sup>nd</sup> Fridays of every other month), The Middle Tennessee network meetings are now being held the fourth Friday of every second month. Record these in your day timer and plan to attend at Lipscomb University. If you are not on the e-mail notification list, send a note to [Cathy.Lincoln@lipscomb.edu](mailto:Cathy.Lincoln@lipscomb.edu) and request to be added.

### **East Tennessee Networking Lunches**

Please contact Ron Schumann, Ball Camp Baptist Church, 2412 Ball Camp-Byington Road, Knoxville, TN 37931 Email at: [ronbcbc@bellsouth.net](mailto:ronbcbc@bellsouth.net) or FAX at 865-693-2110 or phone at 865-693-1641x26 for more details.

### **Memphis Networking Lunches**

**First Monday**, 11:45-1:00 at Harding University Graduate School of Religion, 1000 Cherry Road, Memphis. Keith Fussell Coordinator, [kfussell@sycamoreview.org](mailto:kfussell@sycamoreview.org). These Brown Bag Lunch and Networking opportunities offer excellent programs and CEUs.