

International Wellness Conference, TAMT Convention Merge in Galveston

By Lynda Solien-Wolfe, LMT

The Texas Association of Massage Therapists (TAMT) held its 2nd annual convention in conjunction with the inaugural International Wellness Conference (IWC) at the spectacular Moody Garden Hotel Spa & Convention Center on Galveston Island, Texas, January 18-22, 2002.



Pictured (left to right): Vanessa Carpenter: Texas Association of Massage Therapists (TAMT) immediate past president and conference chair, with the "Trenches Panel." The panel addressed "marketing your touch" at the convention: Perry Isenberg, Rickie Mauro, Lori Barton, Roy Desjarlais and Lynda Solien-Wolfe. The IWC program was divided into four sections: the Medical Healthcare Professional program; the Public program; the Spa and Fitness Professional program; and the Massage Therapist program sponsored by the TAMT.

There was also a culinary exposition and expo hall as part of the IWC.

The IWC's Spa and Fitness program started on the afternoon of the 20th and extended to the 22nd. This portion of the program was oriented to learning and sharing of people from the spa and fitness world on how they may assist their clients to "Live Life Better."

The speakers for the Spa and Fitness program were: Janet Abbott; Bethany Kamman; Debbie Kelly; Al Amado; Reenita Malhotra; Sherry Granader; Matthew Wagner; Marian Urban; Irene Heiney; Beth Shaw; James Moore; Denise Dente; Leslee Bender; Michael Effler; and Jonathan Paul De Vierville.

I had a chance to attend one of Stedman Graham's classes. Stedman is the author of *You Can Make It Happen* and *Build Your Own Life Brand*. Stedman illustrated how someone's vision can have a greater impact than his or her baggage. His message is to live out of your imagination and not your history to hold a vision of the possibility of a better life for you and yours and to take responsibility and exercise the faith and power you have within you to create that better life. Stedman used the example of how to build your brand to be the best massage therapist in his class:

None of us are defined by our circumstances, nor are we defined by how other people perceive us. It is up to each one of us to define ourselves, and that is a life's work. Each of us has the ability to lead a dynamic life by pursuing our unique goals and dreams. There are no limits to what you can do. -

Stedman Graham



Stedman Graham with TAMT volunteers Teresa Poplaski, Daphney Gregory, Martha Cheshire, and conference speaker Lynda Solien-Wolfe at the TAMT booth. All program attendees were invited to hear the esteemed keynote speakers for the IWC convention: Deepak Chopra, MD; Christiane Northrup, MD; Don Miguel Ruiz, MD; Larry Dossey, MD; Joan Borysenko, PhD; Rachel Naomi Remen, MD; Julian Whitaker, MD; Stedman Graham; Dharma Singh Khalsa, MD; and Loretta LaRoche.

Over 2,000 professionals and members of the public attended the conference; 290 massage therapists attended the massage program hosted by the TAMT.

The theme of the TAMT convention was "Education Is the Key!" Houston-area massage therapy schools and massage therapists volunteered their time to do chair massage for all of the attendees of the conference. Golden Ratio Woodworks donated 12 chairs for the massage area. Speakers were: Brian Bradley; Roy Desjarlais; David Malin; Renee Votta; Deb Gabineaux; Trisha Cruz; Michael Critz; Kathy Craft; Kathryn Watson; John Fanuzzi; and myself. Every attendee to the massage program earned six hours of continued education credits, which is the new requirement mandated by the Texas Department of Health.

The merging of the TAMT with the IWC was a dream of Vanessa Carpenter, TAMT conference chair. She received a flyer from the IWC through the mail and dreamed that night about the TAMT being there.

Vanessa stated: "We promised our members to have a conference with quality education to fill the new requirement, and my goal as president was to make the TAMT grow out of the grassroots status it has been in for years and become something bigger and better for all Texas therapists. This opportunity to network with doctors and wellness professionals really felt like the way to do it."

The backbone of the TAMT program was the conference committee of Vanessa Carpenter, Sharon Stump, Renee Crockford and Sara Moore. Rickie Mauro, Lane Tow, Nikki Casey organized the volunteers at the registration and classes. Vanessa Carpenter shared with me that " this was a team effort, and 'thank you's' goes out to Sharon Stump, Renee Crockford and Sara Moore for all of their hard work and dedication in making our most successful convention and a sincere thanks to all that took their time in making the event a hit! We all believe in the TAMT and having a voice in the massage therapy profession."

Special thanks also go to massage therapists Martha Cheshire, Teresa Poplaski and Daphne Gregory, who were there to support the TAMT and help out in all aspects of the convention, and the folks at Gulf Coast Conferences/IWC -- Bob Kibler and Anita Metcalf. They organized most of work for the TAMT. Barbara Walling from the Moody Garden Spa was wonderful at arranging all of the complementary therapies available during the day at the conference, including Watsu, Tibetan meditational, yoga, Ti-Chi, and Brehma, just to mention a few.

The TAMT held a lunch during the conference for all massage therapists attending the program. Prizes were raffled off. The election results were announced and the new officers were sworn in. The new officers of the TAMT are:

President: Sharon Stump

1st vice president: Vanessa Carpenter (also the immediate past president)

2nd vice president: Renee Crockford

Secretary: Barbara Mayfield

Treasurer: Lane Tow

Region 1 rep: Janine Ray

Region 4 rep: Linda Aguilar

Region 2 rep: Rickie Mauro

For information on next year's International Wellness Conference, call (281) 319-4646.

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