The purposes of the AMTA shall be; To advance the science and art of massage and related techniques; To raise and maintain the standards of the massage profession; To foster a spirit of cooperation and the exchange of ideas and techniques among its members and others who are part of the massage profession; To promote legislation that supports and upholds, and oppose legislation that harms and damages, the massage profession; To protect and preserve the rights of its members; To enhance the public’s understanding and appreciation of massage; To further the broad objective of improving conditions of life, or individual well being, in our society through utilization of the professional knowledge and skills of massage therapy; To advocate the rights and interests of persons seeking massage therapy as health care; To conduct any other activity in connection with the purposes stated in this Article and to undertake such other desirable activities as the Board of Directors may determine.
I hope this finds you all doing well. Happy 2015 to all, I am excited, overwhelmed and humbled all at the same time to be your President as we enter this busy year.

There is so much I want to accomplish in the year ahead. I'd like to share some of the things our chapter volunteers have been doing to better lead this organization into the new year.

September 15-20 I traveled to Denver, CO for the 2014 National Convention. My first day there I attended a Presidents’ Council meeting. Thirty-two new Presidents including myself were pinned with our Presidents’ Pin at the meeting. What a great experience to get to meet and network with Chapter Presidents from all over the country.

I also attended the National Board of Directors meeting. AMTA announced a national partnership with the American Red Cross to collaborate on massage therapy services for Red Cross Volunteers. The agreement outlines ways for AMTA state chapter community service teams to connect and collaborate with the Red Cross locally in both emergency and non-emergency community events. It will allow massage therapy community service teams, organized by our chapters, to efficiently provide massage therapy to their volunteers. We will need to have a team in place before we contact the Red Cross to get on board with them. Through the agreement, AMTA chapters and Red Cross offices will have standardized information to activate and deploy massage therapists as situations dictate it. AMTA will be replacing MERT with a Community Service Massage Team (CSMT) – Emergency Response Team.

Our Chapter Delegates, Linda Strickland, Melissa Brocato and Allyson Johns, Treasurer, Melissa Pearson and Secretary, Dawn Hedgpeth, joined me for the remainder of the week. This year’s convention was the largest ever. The City of Denver was amazing with the crisp fall air and stunning gold foliage. The host chapter and the national AMTA staff did an outstanding job.

Among the many convention highlights, attendees had a once-in-a-lifetime experience with Dr. Oz! From his inspiring keynote speech describing his personal experience with massage therapy, to an exciting meet and greet in the Exhibit Hall, Dr. Oz set the tone for an unforgettable AMTA 2014 National Convention.

In Dr. Oz’s keynote he stated that doctors are not against recommending massage, they are just ignorant about the benefits of massage—his words! He challenged all of us to commit to educating the doctors in our lives, and the entire medical community, about the benefits of therapeutic massage. If WE don’t do it, nobody else will. We need to be activists in our own communities!

All the Louisiana attendees were proud to attend the Teachers’ luncheon where Susan Salvo was the first recipient of the Dianne Polseno Lifetime Achievement Award. Susan opened the Louisiana Institute of Massage Therapy (Lake Charles, LA) in 1987, and continues to teach at the school, as well as present massage therapy and ethics continuing education classes throughout the U.S. She has been a practicing massage therapist for 30 years. Susan Salvo is well-known for her best-selling massage therapy textbooks, her online courses and instructional videos.

In October 2012, AMTA announced the creation of this new award to honor excellence for a person’s body of massage therapy work, focused specifically on the area of teaching and education. Because she was such an inspiration to educators, students and practitioners for such a long time, the award was established in the name of the late Dianne Polseno. It is to be awarded occasionally.

Congratulations Susan!!! We are so proud of you.

All of our chapter volunteers attended leadership classes offered at the convention. We came back with some great new ideas that we can use in our chapter.

There’s no better opportunity to come together and connect with like-minded professionals. Connecting with fellow massage therapists, enriching my knowledge, and pushing myself to think critically about our profession and my role within it, leaves me with a renewed passion for the work I do every day.

I’d like to share some organizational news with you. We had a successful and inspiring strategic planning retreat at my home in November. These are some of the topics we discussed:

- Creating a Chapter Policies and Procedure manual
- Revising our Standing Rules which have not been revised since 2001.
- 2015 State Convention, July 31 through August 2, 2015 at the Ramada Lafayette Conference Center -
Message from the President

Continued

mark your calendars and Save the Date.
• Strategies for things we can do to promote our chapter and increase our membership
• Implementing online voting
• 2016 State Convention which is our 30th Anniversary

Committees have been formed to work on these projects.

On January 4, we had a board of directors meeting and a budget planning meeting.

I just returned from a Chapter President's meeting in Chicago January 10-12 (the chapter presidents accused the board and staff of trying to cryogenically freeze us for the future…it was 12 degrees when I arrived at the airport in Chicago). The National Board of Directors and staff shared some new policies and procedures with us that ultimately will make our work as chapter leaders easier. But the most important thing, once again, was experiencing the energy, commitment, knowledge and diversity of the Chapter Presidents that represent our association.

I have to share a quote from one of the chapter presidents:

“We as Board of Directors are the face of AMTA on the local and state level. Our members' needs are assessed and considered on the national level by the National Board of Directors. Our purpose is to share the benefits available, encourage the use of those benefits, and elevate the profession as a continuation of the national agenda. We remember our members by knowing and supporting the national mission, and knowing where to find the answers to questions our members may have.”

Over the years, the board had worked hard to lay a solid foundation and now it is time to start building…increasing our membership if the best way to make our chapter strong. I am humbled and awed to be part of such an organization!

In touch!
Marie Humphries
Louisiana Chapter President

Governmental Relations Chair

Melissa Pearson, LMT

Federation - I represented AMTALA as our Government Relations Chair at the annual meeting of the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards this past fall. The meeting was a wealth of collective information on what the massage therapy industry is dealing with across the nation. Turns out, Louisiana law is pretty well organized comparatively! I was able to mix and mingle with some big AMTA names, as well as my favorite textbook author, Cherie Sohnen-Moe. Whitney Lowe was also there presenting new statistics on the future of online learning. Attending this meeting helps our chapter keep our hand on the pulse of massage legislation.

On a Personal Note:

Colorado Convention - I attended my first ever national massage convention on behalf of the AMTALA board this past fall. It was life changing! Our line of work is a solitary profession, and it is so refreshing to mix and mingle among our own kind! I attended Leadership classes while at convention, specifically designed for local volunteers, and I learned a ton regarding AMTA's push toward an electronic, online presence; so we can look forward to online surveys, online voting, and a bigger social media presence. I look forward to this year's convention in Pittsburgh. See all y'all there!
Letter from the Editor
Linda Strickland, LMT

Sometimes people perceive we are capable of a task because they see what we have done in our businesses or every day lives. But that does not always translate into what we are able to do for others or for a group. That would be the case with me as your editor. I perform many tasks for my business, but since I am a sole owner, it is a challenge adding on with certain volunteer responsibilities. Cutting to the chase: if it were easy everyone would be willing to do it. Actually, it is that way with all volunteer positions in any given group. Since this past year has been involving growth on the personal/family front a little more than usual, the balance is a little off. Please bear with me to get the news to you. I have always enjoyed this kind of production but some aspects of life have been catching up with this old woman ;-).

Please note that there are those who take the time and money to share ads regarding their businesses and events coming up. Also, note the changes to AMTA overall, that Marie has written about. Big changes were already on the horizon when Diane was guiding our chapter but the momentum has increased. Hang in there, as our world continues to change at an ever-increasing rate.

Linda L. Strickland
Touchon! Editor

House of Delegates 2015 Report
Linda Strickland, LMT

Denver is a perfect representation of the expansive West and the Heart of the American Experience. This HOD session seemed to run smoothly and without too much chaos. Time was graciously taken to remember Dan Barrow, who had been the Moderator of the House of Delegates for many years. He had a quiet way of managing the process.

This year there were four position statements. The statements and outcomes were as follows:

Position Statement #1: Massage For Health and Wellness
It is the position of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) that massage therapy can improve health and wellness through its effects on the physical, mental and social well-being of an individual.

The motion passed.

Position Statement #2: Proposal on Portability
It is the position of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) that regulations, in statute and/or rules, should provide options for portability of credentials which meet the required licensing, certification, or registration of massage therapists across the United States.

The motion did not pass.

Position Statement #3: Proposal on Therapeutic Massage for Burn Scars
It is the position of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) that massage therapy can assist in the rehabilitation of burn scars.

The motion did not pass.

Non-position statements were also voted on. The first being recommendations from the South Carolina Delegation, on the new guidelines for reimbursement to HOD members and that National reimburse the states for member’s attendance at the National Convention. This passed and the recommendations have been sent to the National Board for consideration. It does not mean it will go into effect, only that it has been sent to the AMTA board for consideration.

The Delegates of Washington State brought forward, for a vote, that the House of Delegates recommend the AMTA Board study moving the function of generating and approving Position Statements, on the clinical efficacy of massage, from the House of Delegates to another group, and that the AMTA Board encourage the House to discuss issues that relate to the actual practice of massage therapy throughout the United States. This did not pass.

California Delegates recommended that the House of Delegates recommend to the National Board of Directors that each Chapter may determine the amount of its Chapter fee and how to request/acquire said Chapter fee via mandatory assessment, opt-out contribution, opt-in contribution or as unnecessary. This did pass.

Following the elections for the National committee for the House of Delegates, the meeting adjourned early. While in some ways the afternoon was eventful, it ran very smoothly and for that, I was grateful. When you are elected to the House of Delegates, it is for two years. You may be elected for three consecutive terms; however, I am going to take a break. I would like to think I brought about a new view to this position. I love it. I love the research and the process of the HOD. I did not take the position or the work lightly as though I was on vacation. It was an honor to serve, so now there is an opening for the position to be decided at our next State Convention.

Linda L. Strickland
House of Delegates


**LABMT News**

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**Meeting Reminders**

The next scheduled meeting is June 5th, 2015 for those of you who would like to attend.

There is more info at the board’s website:

**http://www.labmt.org**

The meeting will begin promptly at 10 AM at the Louisiana State Archives, 3851 Essen Lane in Baton Rouge.

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**Massage License Renewal Reminder**

Remember that your license due date is March 31, 2015, however, you may send in license renewals now.

Visit to **http://www.labmt.org** for updated information and directions.

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