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# WAPT "News and Views"

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## Letter from the President

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By Pat Stoehr

As I was driving home the other night from doing some last-minute Christmas shopping, I was listening to Christmas music on the radio. I was amazed at the flood of childhood memories that came rushing over me. I had tears in my eyes as I thought about those happy times. My sisters and I were always so excited as Christmas approached. My daddy always made his homemade fudge that was a special treat. He would read the Christmas story from the Bible on Christmas Eve and then we were allowed to open just one present. We had to wait for Christmas morning to open the other gifts and of course the gifts from Santa. The anticipation of what Santa would bring us kept us on "pins and needles" most of the night. But we knew if we didn't go to sleep, Santa would never come. Christmas was such a magical time when I was a child. As I continued the drive home, I thought about all the Christmas traditions we shared as a family, the beautiful lights, the Christmas carols and just the calmness and serenity of the season. (I really did grow up in an "Ozzie and Harriet" world. For you younger ones, it was a TV show in the 50s where everyone and everything seemed perfect and happiness abounded.)

I also thought about how frazzled I was feeling with the hectic Christmas rush. I realized that I was experiencing a real sense of loss of that magical, serene Christmas of long ago. The rushing around to buy the perfect gift or that one last stocking stuffer or doing the endless baking and candy making seemed to have diminished the true meaning of Christmas. (What had happened to "peace on earth and good will to men" and celebrating the birth of a baby boy who literally changed the world?) I also felt an overwhelming sadness as I thought about my parents who have both died and my sisters who live in different states, so we aren't together as a family of origin anymore at Christmas time. I also wondered how many of those magical moments I have instilled in the lives of my children and grandchildren. I truly hope I have through the Christmas traditions we have built as a family over the years.

As I continued to think about those lost childhood moments, I thought about how being a play therapist can actually take me back to some of those magical times in my childhood, whether it be Christmas or other memorable times of childhood. I have found that when I fully invest myself in the play process, I can feel some sense of those happy by gone days and the excitement and anticipation of wonderful things to come. We have such a great "job", don't we? We have the ability to change the life of a child in a meaningful way and in the process hopefully recapture fond memories of our own childhood and that is so rewarding. I hope each of you can recapture some of those memories along with a sense of calmness and serenity as you look forward to this Christmas season. Take time to relax and enjoy the magic of the season!

On a different note, I am pleased to announce that WAPT will be offering an incentive program to boost our membership and retain those members that are up for renewal. As I have mentioned in previous newsletters, we are hoping to achieve "Gold Branch" status for this year and part of the requirement for that is to have a two percent increase in our membership. That doesn't sound like much, but when you are a small branch like WAPT, if even one or two members don't renew, it can really hurt us. We really value all of our members and want to continue providing information and support for play therapists throughout Wyoming. So if you are up for renewal in January, February or March, or if you know of someone who has been thinking of joining WAPT, please get the word out about the chance to win a one year free membership in our random drawing on March 8, 2014. (See details on page two of this newsletter on how to enter the drawing.)

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As I need to get this emailed to everyone before Christmas day (I am cutting it close as usual), that is it for now. I will be sending out another communication in January regarding additional information on the June conference in Lander, so stay tuned.

I wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and best wishes for the coming year. May 2014 be filled with amazing blessings of hope, peace, love, good health, lots of time to make special memories with family and friends and time to relax and enjoy a quieter, simpler life!

## Win a Free One-Year Membership to WAPT

As an incentive to boost our WAPT membership, we are offering paid one year memberships to the lucky winners of a random drawing. The names of three new affiliate members, one professional member and one member who renews in January, February or early March will be drawn on March 8, 2014. (We may consider holding another drawing later in the year for members renewing after March. We have to have our membership count by March 31, 2014 in order to qualify for the Gold Branch status). If you know of full time graduate students or professionals who have been thinking of joining WAPT, please let them know about this offer. In order to enter the drawing, participants will need to complete the information form in the attachment to this newsletter and then email it back to me at [pstoehr48@gmail.com](mailto:pstoehr48@gmail.com). Winners will be notified as soon as the drawing is held. For the new affiliate member winners and the professional member winner, your information will be forwarded to APT along with a check for the appropriate fees. The renewal winner will be issued a personal check once WAPT has received verification of renewal. (You don't have to wait until March to renew. Just send in your renewal to APT when it comes due and send me a copy of your check or confirmation of renewal.) If you have questions or need more information, please contact me via email or phone me at (307) 851-4150. Please get out there and spread the word!

## Save the Date: Upcoming Event

WAPT and WAIECMH will be co-sponsoring a two day conference in Lander, WY on June 26-27, 2014. The conference is made possible in part through funding from the John P. Ellbogen Foundation. Be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend. (A block of rooms has been reserved at Best Western-The Inn at Lander with a rate of \$89.00 per night, excluding applicable taxes. Call (307) 332-2847 to reserve a room.) The 26th will be a combined session for play therapists and early childhood professionals. On the 27th there will two different tracks available—an advanced play therapy session and a separate session for early childhood professionals. (Information on the early childhood presenter will be forthcoming.) More specific details will be available in January, 2014.

We are very fortunate to have Sue Bratton, PhD, LPC, RPT-S and Kara Carnes-Holt presenting on filial/family play therapy. Dr. Bratton is a professor in counseling at the University of North Texas and the director of the Play Therapy Center at UNT. She has served on the Association for Play Therapy board of directors for four years and is currently serving on the Executive Board as the immediate Past President. Dr. Bratton is a respected lecturer, author, researcher, and clinician with extensive experience in individual and group play therapy, activity therapy, and filial/family play therapy. She is probably best known for her recent publications based on her meta-analysis of play therapy outcome research.

Kara Carnes-Holt, PhD, LPC, RPT-S is an assistant professor in the Professional Studies Department at the University of Wyoming, as well as the Play Therapy Program Coordinator and the Internship Coordinator. She earned her doctorate degree from the University of North Texas and previously served as the Assistant Director of the Center for Play Therapy at UNT. She is the author of numerous articles and research publications and is a well-respected national conference presenter. She was recently selected as a 2013-14 Presidential Fellow by the National Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES). Within one year of joining the UW faculty, Kara established the Rocky Mountain Center of Play Center Studies, one of the few approved U.S. centers for play therapy education through the Association for Play Therapy. It provides ongoing training, clinical practice and supervision for play therapy. Kara has been active in WAPT for the past three years and serves on the executive board.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear two excellent, experienced presenters in the field of play therapy!