

Massage Matters

AMTA-CT Chapter Newsletter - Summer 2020 Edition

Summer 2020 Presidents Message



I am excited to begin my term as President and work with the amazing chapter leaders in Connecticut.

This has been a year to remember right from the beginning of 2020. Due to the Pandemic many of our events have been cancelled – beginning with our 5th annual CT Conference and ending with our National Convention. We are working on alternate plans if necessary for the July chapter meeting. Details will be forthcoming once everything is finalized.

We have been very busy working with the lobbyist, Department of Health, National AMTA office and members regarding the issues with unemployment and what restarting our practices will look like and when that will occur. This is NOT something that has been easy for any of us and it seems like things change on a daily basis and information is constantly changing. Nikki Arel our Government Relations Chair and Becca Torns-Barker our Past President have been on conference calls, busy verifying information before passing it on, informing the membership and trying to keep ahead of the next steps and issues. The amount of information to sort through on a daily basis is daunting.

I also need to thank you Becca Torns-Barker on behalf of the Connecticut Chapter for your leadership as our President for the last 4 years.

Your four years as President have come and gone at the speed of light, but your impact on the members of this chapter and your board members and chairs will always be there. Of all the things I can say about Becca, I think the thing that stands out the clearest is that she is guided by her passion for massage therapy and selflessly serves this unique group of practitioners known as LMTs. There is no easy way to sum up Becca Torns-Barker, as there is no easy way to follow her as President. Becca is a mentor to those she works with, a true leader who is open minded; making thought and fact based decisions (even if sometimes it was not the way she thought things would go), our word-smith, friend, and our champion in the AMTA world and professionally as part healthcare. We are lucky that you will be staying in a leadership position – I wish you the best in your new position as CT Conference Chair as well as your work on the National level and professionally as a practitioner and educator.

Stay safe and well. Enjoy your spring season.

Mindy Michaud

AMTA-CT Chapter President

Message from Becca Torns-Barker



As you now know, I am finishing my 2nd term as chapter president. I want to thank you, our members, for this honor of being your chapter president and representing you. I am in very good company, and hope that I served you well.

We have accomplished a great deal in the past four years: we increased the education required to become an LMT, defeated an effort to apply sales tax to massage therapy, grew our Sports Massage Team, and provided four amazing state conferences, along with several free education opportunities. In the past year alone, we offered four chapter meetings, a volunteer appreciation event, 5 hours of free CEs, 30 hours of low cost CEs, 3 CSMT events, and 6 SMT events.

I've heard many of our members say they would never be president or on the board because it's so much work. Well, Yes and no. Work comes in waves, and sometimes it's a big one, like fighting sales tax. But there are always board members, chairs, members, and wonderful people at the National office willing to help out. How many of you wrote letters to argue against sales tax? We had a dozen members come and testify before the Public Health Committee. We are lucky to have an engaged and active membership. All of that helps lessen the workload.

I am proud to be a part of this chapter in part because you inspire me. We have so many dedicated and caring individuals who work to make our industry better. In my opinion, the best of these are our chapter Board and Chairs. If you think I've been a great chapter president or that we have accomplished a lot, it is because of them. Our Board and Chairs give 100% to their volunteer positions and the massage industry: and not because they have to, but because they want to.

To my board and chairs: I do not have the words to tell you how much I have enjoyed working with you and how much I have learned from you. We don't always agree, but we have amazing conversations and I think we always do what's best for the members. The chapter is lucky to have each one of you, and I've been lucky enough to work alongside you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for having my back these last four years. I wish you and this chapter an even brighter future.

AMTA-CT Chapter Election Results 2020

Board Members – 2 year Terms 2020-2022

President – Mindy Michaud
Board Member – Amy Waite
Secretary – Lani Dove

Delegate to the Assembly of Delegates – 2 year Term 2020-2022

Rocky Perez

Congratulations everyone and special thanks to Melissa Glassman for serving as our elections coordinator this year.

Board of Directors, Chairs and 2020 Delegates to Assembly of Delegates

President	Mindy Michaud	PresidentAmtact@gmail.com
Secretary	Lani Dove	SecretaryAmtact@gmail.com
Financial Administrator	Yvette Law	TreasurerAmtact@gmail.com
Board Member 1	Jodi Wolf	BoardMember1AMTACT@gmail.com
Board Member 2	Amy Waite	BoardMember2AmtaCT@gmail.com
Conference Committee Chair	Becca Torns-Barker	ConferenceAmtact@gmail.com
Education Chair	Amy Waite	EducationAmtact@gmail.com
Membership Chair	Jeff Shuman	MembershipAmtact@gmail.com
Sports Massage Team (SMT) Chair	Tama Mackay	SmtAmtact@gmail.com
Community Service Massage Team (CSMT) Chair	Melissa Glassman	CsmtAmtact@gmail.com
Government Relations Chair	Nikki Arel	GovRelAmtact@gmail.com
Awards Chair	Cass Crewdson	AwardsAmtact@gmail.com
CT Conference Registrar	Natalie Dark	RegistrarAmtact@gmail.com

Delegates to Assembly of Delegates 2020-2021:

Nikki Arel GovRelAmtact@gmail.com
Rocky Perez HandsAtWorkCmt@gmail.com

Wendy Payton – 2020 Chapter Meritorious



The chapter meritorious award acknowledges diligent volunteerism done in an altruistic manner and is selected by a committee of five members.

Our chapter meritorious award this year goes to Wendy Payton. She has been a staple in the massage industry in CT for decades. She reaches out to new members, does her best to make others feel comfortable, and is always ready to jump in and lend a hand. She was very involved in the creation of our MERT team (which was a predecessor to our current CSMT team), and is still an active member on the CSMT team who was involved in many deployments, from our 9/11 response at Ground Zero, the Boston Marathon, Sandy Hook, and the Mass tornadoes, to other CSMT work with Mercy Center Conference, Foodshare, and the Arthritis Foundation.

Her chapter volunteerism also includes serving on various awards committees, on the Ambassador Committee, and as delegate and alternate delegate. She also served as an instructor at CCMT.

To this day, former students still call her asking, What would you do in this situation... Her impact on our chapter has been consistent, steady, and compassionate. She has been a massage therapist for 38 years.

Congratulations Wendy and thank you for your service to our profession.

Awards 2020



Chapter Humanitarian –Cass Crewdson

The chapter humanitarian award acknowledges the heart of massage in action.

Cass is a familiar face in the Connecticut Chapter for many years. She has been an AMTA member for 32 years and has helped to establish a standard of excellence. She has mentored chapter presidents and board members, and is a two-time chapter meritorious award winner. Cass has served the Chapter for over 15 years as President, newsletter editor, delegate to the House of Delegates and on the New England Regional Conference Committee. At the National level, she was on the Chapter Relations committee for 20 years, she was on a Commission for Candidacy, and is currently chairing a national workgroup to investigate Sharing Chapter Volunteer Resources.

If the chapter needs a hand somewhere, Cass is there to help out.

As part of the AMTA-CT Community Massage Team (CSMT) Emergency Division Cass has volunteered at the 9/11 response at Ground Zero and other emergency responses. Cass is also a member of CSMT, she participates in Massage Therapy Awareness Day at the Capital, various Massage Therapy Awareness Week events, and other events over the years.

Outside of AMTA, Cass offers massage therapy at a local homeless shelter, and other events for the elderly, ill and caregivers. She is also a volunteer in her church community.

Thank you Cass for your years of selfless service.

Chapter Government Relations Activist Award – Nikki Arel and Becca Torns-Barker



The chapter does not routinely recognize Government Relations with an award. This year we are recognizing Nikki Arel and Becca Torns-Barker with The CT-Chapter Government Relations Activist Award for their work over the last 2 years. As many of you know they have shared information with us on many occasions over the last few years and continue to do so. Nikki and Becca are not paid for the countless hours spent on the phone, in meetings,

writing letters, working with our lobbyist and DPH, fielding member concerns, keeping us informed, and leadership in this area. Individually they are each a power-house, Together they are a super-power.

The last two years has been a massive undertaking. The major accomplishments are:

- Education hours were increased for licensure

- Hands-on training hours mandatory for massage therapy licensure in CT

- Defeating the Governor's proposal to tax massage therapy services

- Inclusion in the drafting of the Esthetician's bill

- Amending the wording in the Esthetician's bill that affected LMTs

- Educating legislators and staff at Massage Therapy Awareness Day at the Capitol

Nikki and Becca have gone well above just being our Government Relations Chair and President respectively. These two work so well together and have supported each other. The work load alone is more than one person has time for. Behind the scenes they have brainstormed, used their strengths, contacts, and chapter roles, planned and re-planned, attended hearings, cheered and made sacrifices. Their experiences and knowledge working with the legislature and DPH has benefited all LMTs in this state. For those that do not know it is a massive undertaking to propose legislation and passage is not always a positive outcome. Knowing these two as I do and the amount of work put in individually and collectively, the only outcome expected was success.

Just when they thought this was going to be an easy legislative year, well a pandemic challenged them yet again. Following up on everything has created an intense work load for both of them.

Thank you Nikki and Becca for all you have done and will continue to do for us.

Thank you Sue Barrett



We are sad to announce that Sue Barrett will be stepping down as Connecticut Conference Chair. Sue has done an amazing job the past few years heading this committee. Sue, thank you for your devotion to this conference. It has survived in large part due to the sheer force of your will to make it so.

Sue has been a long-time volunteer in CT Chapter leadership, as 1st VP (back when we had VPs), CSMT Chair, and Conference chair, as well as serving as Delegate or Alternate Delegate for 7 years. Sue has committed herself fully to every position she took on, even the ones she wasn't sure about, learning new tools and technologies, and making time for phone calls to team members along the way.

Sue, thank you for your service. You have shaped the culture of this chapter and the conference, and we hope to carry your values moving forward. We wish you and your family all the best as you begin your next chapter.

Government Relations Report

Nikki Arel, Government Relations Chair



First, we want to thank our lobbyist Paula, for all the input throughout the past two months, and our members who have sent kind words and are being understanding throughout these really weird days.

As of March, COVID-19 took hold in the Northeast, and our state began to activate a response to this health crisis. I have been sending emails and posting on Facebook as often as possible with information about the Unemployment System, PUA, EIDL, PPP, and other assistance for small businesses. I have tried to keep everyone as up-to-date as possible on each of these options. If you have not yet applied for PPP, and still want to, funds are still available (as of May 11) through a variety of banks and some approved lenders (like Quickbooks and Square).

On May 8th, the PUA system (AKA the 'red button') came online after great anticipation and has created another whole web of confusion. Many of our members did apply and are seeing some relief; others are having difficulty. We cannot help you access any state agency more quickly, nor can we file for you, but we recommend calling your State Representative if you can't get through to helplines, or if you have any issues with partial self-employed and partial W2 employment. You can find your legislator by going to www.cga.ct.gov and click 'Find your Legislator'.

Also, remember back to January. We were close to getting the DPH to include us in their Bill to 'clean up' language in bills. The esthetician bill that passed last year excluded massage therapists as a profession that could work at a business that employs hair or nail techs and be allowed to manage as well. As the session ended early due to the Pandemic, this was left 'unfinished'. We shall revisit in the fall when the new session starts up.

Finally, just a little request and reminder. Nikki is 1. human and 2. a volunteer. Every chapter leader is as confused and frightened and as unemployed as everyone else. Please remember to be kind. This situation is not our doing, nor are we responsible for what is happening on a larger stage.

For everyone who wants to see changes in our industry? Please step-up to volunteer and help us. We expect the 2020-2021 legislative session will be a busy one. We hope we can count on everyone coming forward with the same level of conviction and passion as you are now.

Membership Report

Jeff Shuman



Hello to my AMTA-CT family!

I know that there are tons of things to occupy our minds as we are sitting idle with our practices closed, but there are some great things we can be doing to improve our businesses and ourselves while anxiously awaiting reopening.

A common question that we get is one on the benefits of being an AMTA member, so I thought I'd take a minute and provide a brief overview of one of those that we can utilize even now. It might be the best time to do them, as once we reopen we may just be too busy (I hope!) to address these.

Education!

We always need Continuing Education Credits to maintain our membership and our license. If you meet the AMTA requirements, then you will also meet the state requirements but many of us have a hard time doing the hours because of the time we would have to take from massaging.

While money is also a concern, AMTA is offering classes free of charge. You can currently use up to 6 CE hours online towards your state license, but the AMTA doesn't limit that. We are also considering how to restart our businesses after this closure, so perhaps you can try

Attracting Business Clients: Part II- Expansion and Recovery or Smart Marketing with Social Media

There are many others that are free and reduced cost for massage therapists including classes in ethics, business, self-care, teaching, and research.

Want to finally get some understanding of massage and the Opioid crisis? Or anxiety? The IMTRC has several available through the AMTA.

Log into your member area today to explore some (or ALL) of the free and reduced cost CEs!