

LOOKING AT YOUR WORK

Volume 2, No. 6

These Hands



*These hands soothe a baby's cries.
They awaken tired eyes.
These hands ease the pains of labor.
They encourage the shattered to become more stable.
These hands give when all others take
All in the name of forgiveness' sake.
These hands bring nourishment in a time of need.
For the purpose of healing, they plant the seed.
When hope begins to die, these hands shine through;
Their comfort and their love are waiting here for you.*

Graduation, quoted by **Christi Dentro**, Valedictorian, January 2003
Evening Class at the Hotel Inter-Continental, Chicago, May 2, 2004

Welcome to the Glen Club!



Competitors on the pro circuit received welcome treatments from Soma students June 10-13.

More pictures on page 7.

In this issue

<i>These Hands</i>	1
Interview/Catching Up With . . . Michael Jones.....	2
You're Hired	3
Congratulations!.....	4
From the PD.....	6
Michael Jones.....	8
Just Hired!.....	8

Interview/Catching Up With . . . Michael Jones



Photo: Tiffany Saltzman-Jones

Michael Jones told us about an experience his students had at Kindred Hospital that was so amazing we could hardly wait to pass it along to readers of *Looking at Your Work*. We sat down to discuss it and, after a few words about Michael's background (did you know that his early voice teachers included not only professionals from both the Chicago and New York Lyric Opera companies but Michael Jackson's voice coach?) the conversation took off. Forty minutes later we were finished.

* * *

Almost all of us at Soma are aware that core faculty member MJ first arrived in Chicago as a performer in the national road company of *Beauty and the Beast*. He was working as a lifeguard in his home town, Fresno, California, when friends urged him to drive down with them to an open audition of prospective cast members for the show's Los Angeles company. That day turned

out to have been set aside for auditioning female cast members; at the end of the day, 6 p.m., since he was there, the casting people saw him. "You're a tenor," the man said. "Can you sing a high D?"

"You bet your bottom dollar I can," MJ replied.

Michael had an opportunity to unleash his high D during the next round of auditions, in which a dwindling number of hopeful performers participated. This went on for another three rounds, after which came the verdict: You're not right for the L.A. cast, but we'll certainly use you in the road company. Six words remain particularly vivid in his memory. "You will do this show someday."

A year passed.

Meanwhile, Michael, studying voice and acting in central California, had met a young woman named Tiffany Saltzman and asked her to marry him. It was practically on the eve of their wedding that the telephone rang.

* * *

"We started for New York with the AAA Guidebook to I-80," said Michael. "We were married in Las Vegas, and were going to spend our wedding night at a KOA campground. We picked out a terrific site, and we were all ready for a nice romantic evening, when what should come lumbering in but a

huge RV. It came right up to us. The passengers informed us that we were occupying their space. "But we reserved it," we said. "Oh, no," they said. "This space is ours." It turned out these German tourists had reserved the space in the European written style, placing the day before the month. So, we decided to make the best of it and share with them, although they insisted on socializing, and we had to stay up talking for two hours before they let us go to bed."

* * *

The next two years the show was on the road – four months at Washington's Kennedy Center, several months in Boston – and Michael, with Tiffany along, was on the road with it. Having taken an intro course in massage during the time in Boston and enjoyed it, Michael was inspired, when the tour reached Chicago, to check out the local possibilities. (He was also told to check out Chicago's theatre possibilities.) So it was that he and Tiffany, who were already favorably disposed toward Chicago, bought a house here, even though Michael had another year with the show. So it happened that, having received "a random mailer" from the Soma Institute, he enrolled for the first January Day course starting at the beginning of 1999, picking Soma because after a few visits he was convinced that Soma "felt professional." It was a six-month course, all day, every weekday.

After he graduated, Michael said, he had little contact with the school for a couple of years. He was building his practice and also tending bar, a job he had held while he was studying. "I realized, though," he said, "that I missed the fellowship of other therapists. I missed the intellectual component." He laughed. "And I also missed performing. I needed my audience. Now, my students are my audience." He looked immensely pleased. His students' enthusiasm, and approval, he confesses, affords him great satisfaction.

Meanwhile Tiffany, has completed her studies at the University of Chicago Law School. "On June 11 she graduated," Michael said. "She takes the bar exam in July. In August, for a couple of weeks, we're cruising on the Mediterranean.

"You know," he went on, "this may be the only time the Soma Institute and the University of Chicago Law School are compared. But in both cases, the students are just overwhelmed. They come in full of ideas about themselves as graduates, about what they're going to be when they finish – the best massage therapists, the best lawyers. Then, they're broken down. There's all the mechanics. There's the sheer number of hours. There's all the criticism. When they're finished, they've changed: they have a mature appreciation of the ideal they walked in with. Tiffany loves it. She's going to be a wonderful lawyer. It's that love of the profession that kept Tiffany in school, and that keeps people coming to class at Soma."

You're Hired

Anne Fiala heard these words not long ago. She won't even graduate from Soma until August 29th.

First, though, she wasn't sure she'd take the job.

She was feeling the pressure. In the midst of testing – all the big ones: Clinical Integration finals, her CMT II mid-term – she felt as able to think clearly about her future as to – what, swim across Lake Michigan with her wrists tied together? Tears were shed. In many ways, she said, the position was ideal. The Synergy Institute in Naperville is minutes from Anne's home in Lisle. She would be doing plenty of work, and getting plenty of practice. She would be working with a physical therapist and a chiropractor.

What she did was draw up a list of questions. That bought her some time, and it also forced her, and her potential employers, to think care-

fully about how her time would be apportioned. They thought, and she studied for, and made it through, the tests. Then she was ready to reconsider their offer. She decided to say yes.

What pleased her, she said, was the way the people at the Synergy Institute have defined her schedule. She'll have the opportunity to aid the PT in special tests and ROM exercises; then she'll clock out and do massage; then she'll clock back in with the PT. With her, Anne will be applying the techniques she mastered during that challenging testing period.

For additional copies
of this newsletter
for friends and relatives, go
to our website at
www.thesomainstitute.com

Well, well, well

In case any skepticism remains over whether the field of massage therapy has been embraced by the medical community, how about this: the 2004-2005 edition of the American Medical Association's *Health Professions Career & Education Directory* will carry a description of the work of a massage therapist, complete with notes on the profession. So says *Hands On*, AMTA's newsletter, in its March/April 2004 issue.

Congratulations!



May 2, 2004





What Does the Doctor Know?

Recently I had the opportunity to teach two classes of first-year medical students at UIC about massage therapy. As I prepared, the M.D. working out of my office told me something I found hard to believe: that I would know much more about muscles than the students would.

The professor organizing the class had asked me to be one of four presenters on the topic of complementary and alternative forms of health care, the other topics being natural nutrition, homeopathy, and Traditional Chinese Medicine. I was told each student would be required to write a paper about the form of alternative care he or she would feel most comfortable referring a patient to, and why, based on our presentations. I would have one hour with each of two classes.

At first, thinking I should try to be as technical as possible, I turned to Travell, *Myofascial Trigger Points*,

Kendall, *Muscle Testing and Function*, and the Rattray/Ludwig text we use at Soma in CMT II, *Clinical Massage Therapy: Understanding, Assessing and Treating Over 70 Conditions*. I started with trigger points, the myofascial system, and benefits of massage proven with double-blind studies. Eventually, though, recalling the words of Dr. Loring, the doctor in my office, I decided to talk with the students the same way I talk with my patients – in simple terms. I came up with the following fundamental points:

- Basic massage strokes (effleurage, petrissage, tapotement, compression, different types of friction) and their benefits;
- Types of bodywork practiced by massage therapists (wellness, clinical, deep tissue, myofascial release, NMT, sports massage, craniosacral therapy, lymph drainage) and their benefits;
- Trigger point therapy; development of symptoms;
- Locating, and releasing, a trigger point, students working on each other (example: extensor carpi radialis brevis; ischemic compression as the release technique);
- Common medications and their contraindications; how to respond to a massage therapist's call about a specific medication and what work the doctor would or would not allow for the patient

(anticoagulants inhibit the clotting process; deep friction strokes and digital compression may lead to severe bruising; antipressants can alter normal response of the vasculature to temperature changes; do not use hydrocollator);

- Pathologies that would benefit from massage; contraindications to massage.

I hadn't progressed very far with my presentation before I realized that Dr. Loring was correct: it was clear to me that the students had little knowledge of trigger points. I described pain radiating up from the shoulder to the ear and above the eye resulting in headache, and asked what they thought might be the cause. They suggested migraine, mild stroke, and a few conditions unfamiliar to me. I explained referral patterns common to SCM and the upper trapezius. I asked what commonly caused shoulder stiffness and what the students would do about it. Their answers varied, but most took the rest plus anti-inflammatory medication route. I explained about tight fascia, and how releasing the fascia allowed for a less restricted joint and elimination of the inflammation naturally. Finally, I explained how a pitcher's fast ball might be given a few more miles per hour through the use of sports massage principles and techniques.

My goal was to demonstrate how a massage therapist can help the patient without resorting to more invasive options. By experiencing

directly what a trigger point feels like, and how addressing the problem manually can be more effective than simply prescribing drugs, the students gained increased respect for massage therapy. I endeavored to convince them that MTs trained in clinical techniques would have the knowledge and the skills to work on their patients, and I hoped to convince them that they could safely refer their patients to clinical therapists, with their higher-than-average level of knowledge of anatomy and musculoskeletal pathologies.

After the second class ended, the professor who organized my visit thanked me. He informed me that the students from the first class,

ready with their reference sheets in case therapists called with questions about medications, indications, and contraindications, had rated massage therapy the form of alternative care they would be most comfortable referring their patients to.

So, if you call a doctor to discuss a patient, remember this: be sure to let him or her know you are a clinical massage therapist. Chances are this designation will elicit from the doctor extra courtesy and respect.

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Michael Jones, Part Two

The story from Michael Jones concerns a former patient at the acute care facility Kindred Hospital in Northlake.

A woman in her thirties whose bout with the West Nile Virus had led to encephalitis, was a quadriplegic by the time Michael and the students met her, isolated not only by language — she was from Mexico, and knew no English — but by her dependence on a ventilator.

She did have, fortunately, two major support groups. Her relatives visited often, and members of her church community came in to see her at least once a week.

As it happened, one of the Soma students was bilingual. The student was able to communicate with the visitors.

Illinois Licensing Update

Illinois has extended the start date for issuing licenses until January 1, 2005. The Massage Licensing Board will operate under the auspices of the Illinois Department of Professional regulation. More information is available through www.idpr.com or by calling 217.782.8556. The AMTA Illinois Chapter has also developed an excellent booklet about the licensing process. Call 630.980.4780 to get a copy of the booklet.

Over a period of six weeks, the students employed various techniques with the patient. As their goal was to reestablish a functional link between her limbs and her central nervous system, they used rapid brushing and shaking to activate her sympathetic nervous system and improve her muscle tone. To benefit her proprioceptive nervous system, they used dynamic mobilizations. They did plenty of circulatory massage, both at the beginning and during the course of treatment. With the aid of the bilingual student, the therapists instructed the woman's sons in these techniques, so that the sons could make use of them during periods when the students weren't there.

“Just Hired”

Soma grad, Jeff Sapoznik, has been lured away from a successful practice at the prestigious Peninsula Hotel Spa to head up the innovative Medispa at the *San Francisco Preventive Medical Group* in San Francisco. This integrative facility is an anti-aging and preventive medical practice that offers comprehensive programs for the treatment and avoidance of degenerative disease. Jeff will be offering clinical massage, Reiki, Thai massage, Reflexology and energy work. For more information, visit www.sfpmg.com.

Congratulations Jeff!

A turning point occurred when the student therapists made a discovery: they were able — never mind verbal language — to communicate with the woman by touch. By the end of the sixth week the woman could use her fingers to grasp objects. With assistance, she was even able to perform tentative bicycle kicks from her position in bed.

The following week Michael returned to the hospital. The woman was gone. The church people told him that, having improved sufficiently to be weaned from the ventilator, she had been transferred to another rehabilitation center, a non-acute care facility.

Calendar of Events 2004

August 10
Open House 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm
The Soma Institute
Contact: 312.939.2723, ext. 10

August 29
Graduation Ceremonies
The Hotel Intercontinental
Contact: 312.939.2723, ext. 19

September 19
Prenatal and Perinatal Massage Basics
The Soma Institute
Contact: 312.939.2723, ext. 19

September 29
Fall Classes Begin
The Soma Institute
Contact: 312.939.2723, ext. 21

October 6-9
AMTA 2004 National Convention
Nashville, Tennessee
Contact: 847.864.0123, ext. 143