



Dear Colleagues,

It's hard to believe that it is already October and we are approaching the end of 2008. It has been an interesting year with many ups and downs. Houstonians endured Hurricane Ike; for some-- the aftermath was severe— damaged homes or automobiles, and many people went days or weeks without electricity. Friends from Galveston, Bolivar, and other coastal towns were devastated by the complete loss of communities. It has been amazing to watch people band together in support of their friends and neighbors. Ike reminded us that living in community is imperative and we truly are our brother's keepers. Thanks to everyone that got involved to assist their neighbors. If anyone in the HAMFT community still has a particular need, please contact us at [info@hamft.org](mailto:info@hamft.org). We will network to find support and help as much as possible.

**Please see the letter from TAMFT President, Marvarene Oliver, following the “Board News” section.** AAMFT/TAMFT members received the letter by email on October 8<sup>th</sup>. I thought it was important to reprint since a few of our members may not have received the letter. **It is more important than ever that we support our Political Action Committee (PAC).** We will be selling raffle tickets at the October Ethics meeting to raise funds for PAC. Please be generous in your donations, as we need to protect our license, our rights to “diagnose” and “treat” and thus remain available to the clients that we serve.

### Board NEWS

The 2008 HAMFT Board has been truly amazing. I say this with sincerity, because we have had a condensed board consisting of extraordinarily busy but loyal members. Many have pitched in where they had no knowledge and pulled much more than their weight. I could not have served with a nicer group of people. It has been a privilege. This has been the busiest year of my life work-wise, and I still wanted to serve because of the members. They have become friends and I have learned from them and truly been challenged over these last 7-8 years. **Here's the deal...** we need some help! **Please consider serving on the 2009 HAMFT Board.** We are in need of new board members, as several people are moving and/or have served in every position and are ready to retire. Please join us for the next board meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 to 1pm at the Houston Council. We will review openings at that time and if you are interested we will find a place for you. If you even think you might, sort of, maybe, be interested—join us! It's an excellent way to network, gain support and knowledge, and just have fun! Take it from me: you don't even have to be organized or especially talented—just willing and consistent.

Don't miss the October board meeting, as we sadly wish our dear friend (and Website Chairperson Extraordinaire) farewell. That's right—**Courtney Gordon will be leaving us in November** to move to the Dallas area. Courtney has been the back-bone of our board this year—always coming through in a pinch and always in good humor. She's been a sort of “Wizard of Oz”. If you found out about anything this year—it was because she got it posted on the website or emailed information to the entire membership at a moments notice. She will be sorely missed. Thank you, thank you, Courtney!

## What???

(See the following letter sent to members from the President of TAMFT—for those of you that do not have internet access)

### Important Information Concerning TMA Lawsuit Against the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists

As some of you are aware, the Texas Medical Association (TMA) has recently filed suit against the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists. At issue is the use of the words “diagnose” (or diagnosis) and “treat” (or treatment) in the Board rules. As you may be aware, the TSBEMFT regularly reviews and proposes new rules. In fact, periodic rule review is a statutory requirement. As I understand it, after the latest proposed rule revisions were posted for public comment, TMA sent feedback to the Board about the use of those words, even though that section of the rules was not being changed. Again, as I understand it, the Board considered and set aside those comments as they were not relevant to the proposed changes. TMA took the opportunity to file suit once the rules were adopted, even though this section of the rules was not new.

An alert marriage and family therapist saw an article about the suit and forwarded it to a former professor. The professor then forwarded it on to the Texas Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (TAMFT) Board. As president of TAMFT, I contacted AAMFT and our lobbyist, and have been in conversation with both Tracy Todd of AAMFT as well as Tris Castaneda, our lobbyist, since that time. I also, along with TAMFT board member Allison Sallee, attended the meeting of the TSBEMFT held on Saturday, October 4, in Austin. Members of that Board were very welcoming and appreciative of the support expressed by TAMFT. They are well aware that the potential impact of this suit is quite serious; however, they are taking a non-anxious position. We were told that the TSBEMFT intends to put information about the lawsuit on its website.

The lawsuit is in early stages right now. The Attorney General’s office has the task of defending the TSBEMFT and will file a response at the appropriate time. I don’t have information yet about when that will be. In the meantime, TAMFT and AAMFT are monitoring the situation, and in fact, representatives from both organizations have been in communication with Charles Horton, the Executive Director of the TSBEMFT. The Department of State Health Services is well aware that TAMFT and AAMFT are very concerned about this suit, because while it is the TSBEMFT that is being *In a nutshell, this is where we are:*

1. The TAMFT Board is meeting to create a plan of action, and will be assisted by AAMFT personnel because this is more than a Texas issue. The Board retreat, originally scheduled for the weekend of Hurricane Ike, has been rescheduled for later this month, and this lawsuit will be on our agenda.
2. It appears that TMA and its counterpoints in other states are being aggressive about pursuing such actions against non-physician providers.
3. You may be called upon for assistance as the suit moves forward; however, the suit is currently in its infancy and we don’t know what to ask of you yet.
4. All parties are being proactive, rather than reactive.

5. While it is certainly your right to ask questions of the Department of State Health Services and the TSBEMFT, I ask that you not inundate the TSBEMFT with questions because the Department of State Health Services is already overworked and we run the risk of overloading an already heavily taxed system. I will ask the Chair of that Board how she prefers that questions to that Board are handled. I hope you will feel free to ask questions of or share information with me, other TAMFT board members, or to our Executive Director. We are using a special email account to deal with questions or concerns about the suit. That address is txamft@gmail.com.

6. I commit to keeping you up to date as I become aware of information of interest to membership.

This is a time when we can all work together for a common goal. It's not the goal I'd prefer to be working on—in fact, we have lots of other things we want to do, including finding ways to be more responsive to member needs, nurturing student and associate members to clinical membership, and strengthening local chapters. However, dealing with issues connected with this suit is important, and we must pay attention. We will not, however, make it the only item on the agenda.

I hope all of you are safe and well, and particularly that those of you who were affected by the hurricane are well into the process of rebuilding and recovering.

My best~

Marvarene Oliver, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT  
President  
TAMFT



## **HAMFT Fall/Winter Happenings**

**We are happy to announce that the remainder of our programs for 2008 will return to The Houston Council on Alcohol and Drugs, 303 Jackson Hill Street, Houston, 77007. The Council recently opened their new Auditorium, which features state of the art equipment to accommodate a variety of programs and presenters. The new parking garage is also complete so access will be convenient (walk to back left corner of parking garage to main auditorium). Please join us in October and November so that we can help “break in” their beautiful new facilities!**

- *Mark your calendars for the following dates for Fall and Winter HAMFT programs and meetings*

### **October**

**Annual Ethics Program - Friday, October 24, 2008**

**1:00 - 4:30 (come early for registration)**

**Location: the Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston**

**303 Jackson Hill Street, Houston, 77007**

**A continuing education program sponsored by HAMFT**

**and open to mental health professionals and students.**

**CEU's are available through HAMFT.**

**Free to HAMFT members and student members.**

**Non-members: \$30. Student Non-members: \$10.**

**(HAMFT will also sponsor a raffle with the  
proceeds of the raffle benefiting Family PAC.)**

**See website front page for more detailed program info**

[www.hamft.org](http://www.hamft.org)

[info@hamft.org](mailto:info@hamft.org)

**November**

***Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.***

***Senior Fellow of The Child Trauma Academy ([www.ChildTrauma.org](http://www.ChildTrauma.org)) and author of The Boy  
Who Was Raised as a Dog.***

***Formerly the Chief of Psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital and Vice-Chairman for Research  
in the Department of Psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine.***

***Dr. Perry, a gifted teacher and renowned child psychiatrist, offers an in depth look at how  
relationships and violence influence trauma and brain development and how creative therapies,  
relationships and community can promote resiliency and healing.***

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***A free continuing education program sponsored by HAMFT and open to mental health  
professionals and students.***

***Tuesday, November 18, 2008***

***6:30-8:30 pm***

***(arrive at 6 pm for refreshments and socializing)***

***The Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston***

***303 Jackson Hill Street***

***Houston, TX 77007***

**December**

Join us for our annual Holiday Party on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to Walter and Rebecca Cubberly for letting us celebrate the holidays at their beautiful new offices, located in the West University area at 1720 Sunset Blvd. The party will begin at approximately 7pm and end around 10pm. HAMFT will provide a main dish and beverages and we rely on members to bring their favorite potluck side dish or dessert. We traditionally have a “white-elephant” gift exchange (a gift serious or silly, with a \$10 limit). Don’t miss seeing professionals fight over items such as pig-shaped licorice, and stuffed santas! We always have a great time. Come alone or bring a date. Keep an eye out for follow up emails in November. Always check the website home page for updated information.....

[www.hamft.org](http://www.hamft.org)  
[info@hamft.org](mailto:info@hamft.org)

Thank you all for your continued support for our professional association. We look forward to seeing you all at upcoming presentations and social events.

Warm Regards,  
Charla Smith, MA, LMFT  
Brandon Wheeler



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½ of page or 10 to 15 lines - \$40  
¼ of page or 5 to 10 lines - \$25  
1/8 of page or up to 5 lines - \$15

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TX 77227

