

The LAMFT Monitor

A Quarterly Publication of the Louisiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Fall 2008



A Message from the President-Elect

The MFT Family

By Jana P. Sutton, Ph.D., LMFT
President-Elect, LAMFT

In early April, I attended the AAMFT Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, along with LAMFT Student Associate Representative Robyn Jardine-Randel and LAMFT Board Member Walker Marsh. The trip was enlightening both personally and professionally. Professionally we were exposed to many extremely important mat-

ters relevant to effectively leading our state division. We were schooled in advocacy issues and grassroots efforts to further the professional interests of Marriage and Family Therapists. We met with legislative aids to both of our Senators, as well as the aid to Congressman Melancon. Beyond the necessary trainings in budgeting, financing and legal issues, we were excited about future possibilities of programs, conferences, and matters closely connecting with you, our members.

From my perspective, it was personally fulfilling to experience isomorphism between the closeness we developed as representatives from LAMFT with other state division leaders as well as with leaders of AAMFT, while simultaneously connecting more closely with each other, as well as dreaming of ways in which to stay connected, and to deepen those connections, with you, our members.

All too often it is easy to forget that we are so closely connected with the rest of our states, individually and collectively, as well as to each other. Similarly, it is oftentimes natural to highlight the differences between Louisiana and the rest of the states, individually and collectively, as well as between ourselves as Louisianians.

While it is important, if not imperative, to think along the lines of the uniqueness of LMFTs in Louisiana and the clients that we serve, it is equally important to come together on a national level as LMFTs for the sake of the profession and for the clients we serve. Likewise, while absolutely necessary to focus on the differing needs from one part of our state to the next, it is crucial that we be reminded of our commonalities. As I learned more about Walker and Robyn, fellow members of the LAMFT Board, I was reminded of the family, ironic as it may seem, and how energized families get when they come together and work together toward one common goal.

We all know the importance of spending quality time with our family members, of reminding our loved ones that they are indeed loved, of encourag-

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE:

Private Practice	2
LAMFT 2009 Conference	6
LAMFT Student Update	8

The LAMFT Monitor

From the President-Elect

(Continued from page 1)

ing our relatives with uplifting words when they fall or with words of encouragement as they strive and dream, of honoring their strengths, and of celebrating individual accomplishments as indeed an accomplishment for which the entire family can be proud. My thinking altered slightly, during this trip, as it dawned on me that the Louisiana Division of the AAMFT is indeed a family ... and, we all belong to that family ... a family which we are extremely proud of and extremely proud to be a part of. Families are made up of many different individuals who have many different strengths and roles which all serve purposes, but who together fortify the entire unit.

As members of LAMFT, let's utilize our therapeutic skills and competencies that we all use daily to strengthen client families, and apply them to ourselves as an organization. As we become closer to each other, spend more time together, work together, communicate with each other, and collaborate with each other for the profession of marriage and family therapy that closeness will reverberate upwards and downwards, into the older and younger generations, and into the larger and smaller systems of which we are all a part.

I urge you as a member of this family to assist the LAMFT Board in learning how we can better serve you and represent you. As sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandfathers, and grandmothers, we much to teach and learn from each other. Our family is one of the strongest I know but as we are reminded of the interconnectedness of our members, let's dream, play, and work together in order to strengthen ourselves individually and collectively as MFTs and professionals, and as a profession.

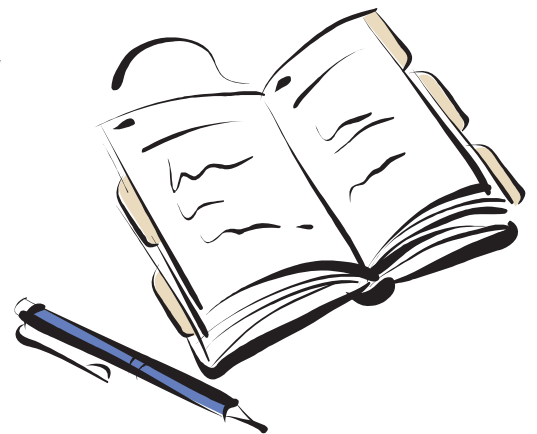
I look forward to seeing you all at future LAMFT events and programs.

Build it and They Will Come: Starting A Private Practice

By Carol A. Kacer, LMFT
Special to The Monitor

Successful private practice in marriage and family therapy is a building process not a field of dreams. No matter how talented you are as a therapist you must generate clients and understand financial management in order to have a long term practice, whether full or part time. There are books and services that can help you learn the financial aspects of a practice. Generating clients is a foundation built by YOU, one brick at a time.

Exposure and networking are the name of the game whether you live in a small town or an urban area. The electronic age has brought us such advantages as being on the TherapistLocator.net provided by AAMFT. Being on insurance provider panels eventually generates referrals. The yellow pages (paper or electronic) and



(Continued on page 3)

Private Practice (Cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

newspaper advertising can help to get your name out. But there is no substitute for one on one interaction. Many potential clients might ask their new neighbor for a referral to a dentist, but they may be uncomfortable asking about a marriage and family therapist. Every time you shake someone's hand and say, "I am a licensed marriage and family therapist" you have made a contact that may generate a client. You may say it to an attorney, a physician, a minister or someone next to you at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast. Experiencing you in person is a key building block for potential referral sources and clients. It is a slow but steady process that will grow exponentially when you have networked effectively. Unless you begin your practice with a source that will send you two new clients per week, you will have to build a network. This requires getting out and about. It requires volunteering to speak, to run a support group or give a workshop. If you are not a confident public speaker consider going to Toastmasters and getting some experience. Twenty six years ago I started my practice by speaking on parenting at every PTA meeting in my parish and volunteering to monitor a monthly support group meeting for Parents Without Partners. Even now I will get new clients who met me then or were referred by someone who did.

Put time into analyzing your market to see where to best focus your efforts. How do clients in my area get referred for therapy? Established mental health practitioners in your area may be willing to share their experiences. Some psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and counselors prefer to refer out for marriage and family therapy so they could also be referral sources. Do gynecologists and pediatricians in your area refer? Call their office managers and ask. Busy physicians may not make time for you. Their nurses and office managers might. Ask your own physician, minister or anyone who serves you professionally who they refer to and why. If there are large businesses in your area they may have Employee Assistance Programs that refer to marriage and family therapists. School counselors may not be allowed to refer to specific therapists but you can get exposed to them and other school personnel. Think creatively.

Sounds like a lot of work doesn't it? It is important to remember that if you love marriage and family therapy, learn to talk about it. Your passion will show. There is no such thing as a failed contact. At some point in that person's life an issue may arise that they never anticipated and they will need you. Be realistic. Networks take time. A good estimate is two years of conscientious foundation building. If you want a full time private practice there will be a difficult phase when you don't have enough clients to be full time but are stretched thin trying to work and continue to build the practice. LAMFT provides a mentoring program. Consider partnering with a mentor who has extensive private practice experience to help you navigate the difficult transitions. They could have other network building experiences to share with you. When you come to the annual conference in Baton Rouge seek out the LAMFT members who have private practices and pick their brains.

You have studied long and hard to become a marriage and family therapist, now study practice building. If you put all of the bricks in place, they will come.



The LAMFT Monitor

The LAMFT Monitor is published by the Louisiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. All material is copyright © 2007 by the LAMFT. All rights reserved.

To Submit An Article: Articles or letters will be considered for publication in THE LAMFT Monitor. Send drafts to:

Jana P. Sutton
drjanasutton@aol.com

Conversations

By Joan Fischer, LMFT, and Nathan Fischer
Special to The Monitor

. . . there are three main avenues on which one arrives at meaning in life. The first is by creating a work or by doing a deed. The second is by experiencing something or encountering someone Most important, however, is the third avenue to meaning in life: even the helpless victim of a hopeless situation may rise above himself, may grow beyond himself, and by doing so change himself. He may turn a personal tragedy into a triumph.

Viktor Frankl, **Man's Search for Meaning**

The occasion of the 2008 LAMFT conference provided a unique opportunity for a mother and her son to jointly present on ADHD. However, for us, the lunch conversation which followed the presentation was more meaningful. Each of us has faced significant personal challenges in our life journey. As we processed our individual journey, as well as the path the development of our relationship has taken, we wondered how to explore our lessons with clients.

Unexpected twists in life have forced each of us to change values and integrate new meanings which allowed us to grow beyond ourselves and change ourselves. Let us share where we are now and what lessons we have learned.

Nathan (27 yrs, old):

- My worldview isn't necessarily the best.
- The importance of discerning when my worldview works and when it doesn't.
- Life doesn't have to be about the accumulation of pleasurable experiences.
- The value of work

Joan (lots older):

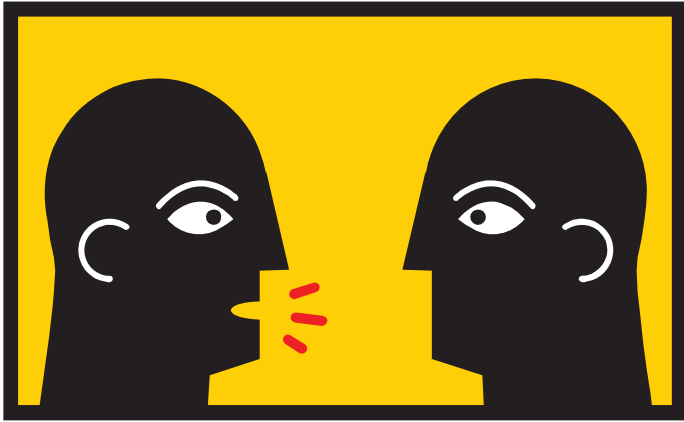
- It is more important to be happy than right.
- I don't always have to know why.
- I need people; doing it yourself isn't necessarily a strength.
- I need to explore my spiritual beliefs.

Many clients have faced unexpected twists in life as well. They may feel powerless

(Continued on page 5)

Conversations (Cont.)

(continued from page 4)



erless, hopeless, overwhelmed by sadness and grief. A discussion of Frankl's beliefs may serve as a catalyst for a conversation that leads clients to explore lessons they have learned. We may find, as Nathan and I did, that lessons need to be examined- not all lessons serve us well. For example, a client who has lived through a painful divorce may arrive at a lesson such as, "I can't trust." As therapists, we need to be prepared to reframe, offer alternative views, and offer hope. We can help clients look at other interpretations of life events which

may be more helpful and conducive to personal growth, yet still honor the truth of their life experience.

It is our belief that in order for this process to be effective, the therapist must continuously engage in the examination of their own life lessons. It is our hope that this conversation inspires similar conversations for each of you.

(Editor's Note: Joan Fischer is the Director of the Thomas E. Chambers Counseling and Training Center at Our Lady of Holy Cross College. Her son, Nathan Fischer, is a graduate student in Marriage and Family Counseling at Our Lady of Holy Cross College.)



Stay in Touch!

If you recently moved, changed ISPs or email addresses, please take a moment to send the new information via email to forsyth99@cox.net!

With Your Membership in the AAMFT and LAMFT

You Have Perks

- Policy and Advocacy on behalf of the profession
- FamilyTherapyResources.net (online resources available 24 hrs. a day/7 days a week)
- TherapistLocator.net (free online directory)
- On-Line Networking Directory (make referrals to other AAMFT members or connect with fellow students)
- Job Connection
- Practice Tools, as well as other resources to keep you informed
- Division Membership
- Ethical Advisory Opinions (Free!)
- Legal Consultation
- Professional Liability insurance
- Help in locating health insurance



LAMFT 2009 Conference A Systems Approach: Circles of Influence



February 26 – 28, 2009, Hilton Baton Rouge Capital Center

The LAMFT Board of Directors is extremely proud to announce its 2009 annual conference, scheduled for Thursday February 26th, Friday February 27th, and Saturday February 28th at the Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center.

We are particularly pleased to inform you of the fabulous line-up of featured presenters: **Nora Bateson, Bradford Keeney, Michael Kerr, and Wendel Ray**, all trained and/or influenced by master cyberneticians and system theorists and clinicians such as Gregory Bateson (Nora's father), Murray Bowen, Milton Erickson, Don Jackson, and Carl Whitaker.

Nora Bateson, an educator, media producer, and youngest daughter of Gregory Bateson, is dedicated to creating portraits of her father's work that bring his philosophy to broad audiences, beyond the academic community. Central to all of her work is the idea of utilizing media and storytelling aimed at bringing about cultural understanding, social justice, and environmental awareness.

Bradford Keeney, Ph.D., systems theorist and psychotherapist, is the author of several classics in the field of marriage and therapy including *Aesthetics of Change*, *Mind in Therapy and Improvisational Therapy*. After spending over a decade traveling the globe, living with spiritual teachers, shamans, healers, and medicine people who trusted him to share their words with modern cultures in need of Elder wisdom, Keeney authored the critically acclaimed book series, *Profiles of Healing*, and eleven-volume encyclopedia of the world's healing practices.

Michael E. Kerr, M.D., succeeded Murray Bowen as Director of the Georgetown Family Center in 1990, following a close twenty-year association with him. Dr. Kerr is the coauthor with Murray Bowen of *Family Evaluation: An Approach Based on Bowen Theory* and author of many articles and book chapters related to Bowen theory and its applications.

Wendel A. Ray, Ph.D., Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and Director of the Don. D. Jackson Archive, MRI, Palo Alto, California, is coeditor of *Evolving Brief Therapies: Essays in Honor of John H. Weakland* with Steve de Sharzer and *Propagations: Thirty Years of Influence from the Mental Research Institute* with John Weakland. He is coauthor of *The Cybernetics of Prejudices in the Practice of Psychotherapy* and *Irreverence: A Strategy for Therapists' Survival* with Gianfranco Cecchin and Gerry Lane and Resource Focused Therapy with Bradford Keeney.

We look forward to your joining us for several days of immersion into systemic theory, clinical application, demonstration, continuing education, networking, and fun. Besides our usual concurrent presentations, plenary address, and keynote speakers, do not forget our networking reception and awards dinner, scheduled for Friday 7:00pm. Visit the LAMFT website at www.lamft.org regularly, for more information.

If you are interested in presenting a workshop or a poster at the conference, please e-mail LAMFT president Annie Forsyth at forsyth99@cox.net.

Celebrating 25 Years of Educating Marriage and Family Therapists in Louisiana: The University of Louisiana at Monroe

By R. Lamar Woodham, Ed.D., and Jana P. Sutton, Ph.D.

As a profession, the field of Marriage and Family Therapy has a long and honorable history which predates many other mental health professions. The American Association of Marriage Counselors, which later became the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, was founded in 1942.

Under the leadership of Dr. Don Locke, who became the first University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) Marriage and Family Therapy Program (MFT) Director, ULM developed a master's degree program in MFT in 1981. The first graduate of this program, Ron LeLeux, graduated in 1983, and is now the Major of Sulphur, Louisiana. The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) initially accredited the master's degree program in MFT in 1987. In support of continuing educational excellence at ULM, the University established the Hanna Spyker Endowed Chair in Marriage and Family Therapy in 1991. Dr. Ray Becvar served as the program's first endowed chair. In 1998 the International Honor Society for MFT, Delta Kappa, was established by the programs with Dr. Charles Cole, second endowed chair, as faculty sponsor. To date, the Master of Arts Program has graduated over 300 students.

In July of 1995, the Louisiana Board of Regents approved the development of a doctoral program in marriage and family therapy which was implemented in the Fall of 1996. The first graduate of the Ph.D. program, Dr. Mark Finton (1999), is now serving as assistant professor of psychology at Freed-Hardeman University in Tennessee. The program, which was fully accredited by COAMFTE in 2007, has graduated more than 40 Ph.D.'s in MFT.

The ULM MFT Programs are specifically designed for clinicians to integrate systemically oriented theory into their clinical practice and to work effectively with individuals, couples, families, and/or larger systems in a variety of contexts, from an interactional and relational perspective. All clinical training is supervised by the MFT Faculty, Drs. Charles Cole, Harper Gaushell, Wendel Ray, Jana Sutton, Pearl Wong and Lamar Woodham, who are AAMFT Approved Supervisors.

The programs value diversity and actively recruit not only locally but nationally and internationally. Graduates include international students from Argentina, Barbados, Canada, Germany, Finland, Israel, Kenya, Korea, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

In order to celebrate 25 years since the program's first graduate, ULM's MFT Programs are delighted to announce an evening of "Giving Thanks for 25 Years of Marriage and Family Therapy." The event will be held on Saturday November 8th on the campus of ULM. All alumni and MFT family members are invited to join our silver anniversary celebration, a milestone of which we are extremely proud. Please visit www.ulm.edu/mft or call (318) 362-3005 for more information and reservations.

Student Update

By Robyn Jardine-Randel, LAMFT Student/Associate Representative

This year has been a very busy one for the student/associate members of LAMFT. We can only hope that 2009 will be as exciting and productive.

Many of you may have noticed student volunteers bustling around the 2008 LAMFT conference. Their energy and level of enthusiasm was electrifying and inspired a new wave of curiosity which flourished through out the conference. LAMFT was delighted to accept a total of 21 volunteers from Southeastern University, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and the University of Louisiana at Monroe. These students represented our profession proudly by being reliable, flexible, and evoking a sense of poise and professionalism.

When you notice a

volunteer at our

2009 LAMFT

Conference "A Systems

Approach: Circle

of Influence",

please take a

moment to thank

them for their

efforts and

contribution to the success of the LAMFT conferences.

One of the new and exciting developments in the student membership arena is the conception of MFT student organizations, developed in much the same vein as regional chapters. Such organizations have been developed at The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and The University of Louisiana at Monroe. These student organizations were created and are being run by the students themselves. They have therefore generated much excitement among students about becoming involved in the organization specifically devoted to MFT, as they strive to positively promote and impact the profession.

Eric Edmondson is the Chair for The New Orleans

Baptist Theological Seminary MFT student organization. This group hosted a luncheon February 29th, with 23 in attendance, previewing sexual addiction resources which lead to certification. Future presentation topics will be Death, Grief, and Loss to be presented by Dr. Bozeman, and De-escalation Techniques to be presented by Kris Gonzalez.

CJ Aducci is the Chair for The University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) student organization. Matt Borer, a Ph.D. Candidate in the ULM MFT Program, stated that the newly formed student organization in MFT "has provided the students with a sense of belonging and professional development in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy, and has encouraged all of the members to be active members of LAMFT". During the 2008 LAMFT Annual Conference there were a total of 7

ULM student presentations, including poster presentations.

One of the

student

presentations

was given by

Bethany

Simmons, past

LAMFT Student /

Associate Representative (2005 – 2007), who was awarded the Student of the Year Award by LAMFT. Simmons was recognized for her work on the board with conference preparation and leadership training, while actively assisting with the commencement of the new student organizations and mentoring program.

Student and Associate Members are encouraged to contact Robyn Jardine-Randel at jardinerandel2@hotmail.com with ideas for future LAMFT projects and possibilities.

**The LAMFT Family wishes
our Future Scholars Luck On
The National MFT Exam**

**Maria Williams: AAMFT Minority Fellowship Recipient
By Bill Riddle, M.A.**



Maria Williams, a University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Ph.D. student, was recently awarded the AAMFT Minority Fellowship. Williams says the fellowship will facilitate therapy services for those among the underserved minority community and persons who are also dealing with substance abuse issues.

The scholarship will be used to further her professional training. Already, Williams has worked at Serenity House, one of the nation's largest substance abuse centers, in Abilene, Texas while working on her masters in MFT.

She has also taken a leadership role in numerous civic organizations in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Monroe which aid the underserved population. Certified as an HIV/AIDS and Sexual Assault Counselor, she has also led in the Upward Bound program at Dillard University, the Arc of Greater New Orleans and the McNair/SROP Research program at Michigan State University. She has worked to help minority children improve their standardized test-taking skills, to assist children with intellectual disabilities and delays, and to teach children life skills that reduce the likelihood of substance abuse.

Williams is a Baton Rouge native who received her undergraduate degree from Dillard and her M.A. from Abilene Christian University. At ULM, Williams is beginning her second year as a doctoral student. Through research, she hopes to significantly contribute to the mental health of ethnic minorities and to substance abuse prevention. Williams wants to open a private Marriage and Family Therapy practice and author books, offering practical and accessible approaches to creating and maintaining healthy family and marital relationships.

Heartfelt congratulations to Maria from all of us in the ULM MFT family.

Re-Membering: A narrative Tribute to the Life of Michael White

By Jana P. Sutton, Ph.D.
LAMFT President-Elect
The University of Louisiana at Monroe MFT Programs



Michael White, co-founder of Narrative Therapy with David Epston, died April 4, 2008 at the young age of 59. His approach to therapy, and his unique style of storytelling and externalizing of the problem have been influential to many within the field of marriage and family therapy.

Externalizing conversations encourage the experiencing of identities separate from the problem in such a way as to allow individuals to no longer view themselves as the problem, but the problem itself, by “the mapping of the problem’s influence in the person’s life and relationships” (1990, p. 16) and the mapping of “their own influence in the “life” of the problem” (1990, p. 42). Through such conversations and through the possibility of alternate realities and multiple truths carrying with them visible options for successful problem resolutions and futures, those that consulted him usually found a preferred story and unique outcomes, much more appealing and useful than the dominant or problem saturated story in which they came in speaking of.

Michael’s style allowed those with whom he was in consultation to locate opportunities and resourceful metaphors that enabled them to “explore neglected aspects of the territories of their own lives” (2007, p. 5) and took “persons out of a fixed and static world, a world of problems that are intrinsic to persons and relationships, and into a world of experience, a world of flux. In this world, persons find new possibilities for affirmative action; new opportunities to act flexibly” (1989, p. 8).

The maps that guided and assisted Michael in these
(Continued on page 11)

Here It Is: The Most Important Appointment For The New Year

Mark your calendar now
2009 LAMFT Annual Conference
February 26 - 28, 2009
Hilton Baton Rouge Capital Center



A Systems Approach: Circles of Influence

Featured Presenters:

**Nora Bateson, Bradford Keeney, Michael Kerr and
Wendel Ray**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See our website at www.lamft.org

If you are interested in presenting please email LAMFT President Annie Forsyth at
forsyth99@cox.net

If you are reserving an exhibit table, please email Walker Marsh at
walker@northshorefc.net

(Continued from page 10)

Re-Membering: A Narrative Tribute to the Life of Michael White (Cont.)

conversations can be found by journeying into any one of his publications, of which there are numerous journal articles and the following books ~ Selected Papers: Michael White (1989), *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (co-authored with David Epston) (1990), *Experience, Contradiction, Narrative and Imagination: Selected Papers of David Epston and Michael White 1989-1991* (1992), *Re-Authoring Lives: Interviews and Essays* (1995), *Narratives of Therapists' Lives* (1997), *Reflections on Narrative Practice* (2000), *Narrative Therapy with Children and their Families* (co-authored with Alice Morgan) (2006), and *Maps of Narrative Practice* (2007).

In Michael's own words "When we sit down together I know that we are embarking on a journey to a destination that cannot be precisely specified, and via routes that cannot be predetermined. I know that we will probably take some extraordinarily scenic routes to these unknown destinations. I know that as we approach these destinations we will be stepping into other worlds of experience" (2007, p. 4).

Louisiana Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Executive Board - 2008

Annie Forsyth	President	forsyth99@cox.net
Jana Sutton	President-Elect	drjanasutton@aol.com
Joan Fischer	Secretary	joanfl107@cox.net
Carolyn White	Treasurer	walker@northshorefc.net
David Legendre	Board Member/Director	drdfsua@aol.com
Kathy Steele	Board Member/Director	eksteele@cox.net
Walker Marsh	Board Member/Director	cwhite@olhcc.edu
Pearl Wong	Board Member/Director	si_pui@hotmail.com
Tim Dwyer	Past President	jahlove3@gmail.com
Lane Brigham	Past Past President	lane.brigham@nicholls.edu
Robyn Jardine Randel (ULM)	Student/Associate Rep.	jardinerandel2@hotmail.com

Committees and Chairs

Committee

Professional Development
Finance
Legislative
Advocacy
Health Plan Committee
Community Outreach
Awards and Recognition
Nominations & Elections
MFT Exam Preparation
Liaison to NOBTS,
OLHCC, SELU

Chair (s)

Kathy Steele
Carolyn White
David Legendre/Annie Forsyth
David Legendre/Annie Forsyth
Annie Forsyth
Kevin Fall
LAMFT board
Lane Brigham/David Legendre
Pearl Wong
Eric Edmundson

Committee

Membership
Communication
Diversity
Bylaws
Conference
Technology
Newsletter Editor
Student Mentoring
Liaison to ULM

Chair (s)

Annie Forsyth
Annie Forsyth
Annie Forsyth
Chuck Cole
Walker Marsh
Pearl Wong
Jana Sutton
Jana Sutton
Jessica B. Baudoin

Special thanks to Greg Baxter, ULM Graduate Student, for his assistance with newsletter editing.



Annie Forsyth, LMFT, LPC
President
Louisiana Association for Marriage and
Family Therapy
P.O. Box 1811
Gretna, LA 70054