



Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Members and Friends:

I'm sitting here in rare January sunshine, thinking hard about how much life and love and this moment matter to me, especially in the face of news about illness and trouble in the lives of dear old and new friends. I hope this message finds you well, well supported, strong and hopeful.

The Executive Council has continued in some dialogue with the Southwest Region of AAGT. Unfortunately, the dialogue has not yet been productive enough to move forward with a Southwest hosted 2002 conference. I have put the gist of the dialogue together so you all can see the conversation to date. Meanwhile, with hope still alive (though not robust) that we can resolve these issues soon and have a Southwest hosted conference in the near future, Phil Brownell and Chuck Kanner have agreed to be Conference Planning Committee co-chairs for a Southeastern AAGT International Conference in 2002. The first CPC meeting will take place at the membership meeting, "Evaluating the Experiment," in Philadelphia, April 26th through 29th.

One of the highlights of the Dallas conference was the creation of a Covenant of Community, to be further developed over the years. It was designed in order to respond to the unnecessary pain we have cost each other as we have struggled to simultaneously make room for ourselves and create a community. Here is what was arrived at in Dallas:

The Covenant of Community

Proposals for the description and values of the covenant of community:

1. We as members of AAGT undertake and encourage one another to undertake engagement in ongoing dialogue with one another and to remain open and in contact when choosing to withdraw temporarily from dialogue.
2. We undertake to own our own projections and to check out our assumptions, and to encourage one another to do so.
3. We undertake to maintain our community through patience and understanding.
4. We undertake to support the needs of the international members of our community.
5. We undertake to stay with even difficult dialogue, acknowledging the need for space and refreshment when hungry, tired, frustrated, but not abandoning one another.
6. We undertake to get and remain interested in the impact our behavior, words, and intentions have on one another.
7. We undertake to put our desire for and interest in power (in whatever form) out on the table, along with being honest and direct in other arenas.
8. We undertake to attend carefully to language or other communication that "objectifies the other."

I hope to see many of you in Philadelphia, building AAGT.
Love, Carol

TREASURER'S REPORT— JANUARY, 2001

Greetings! I'm pleased to report that despite some temporary concerns AAGT entered 2001 in the black with a bank balance of about \$5,000.00.

Members will soon receive (or perhaps already have received) a dues statement for 2001. Our dues year coincides with the calendar year. Some of you paid rather late for the year 2000, so this statement will be hard on the heels of your last payment. Nevertheless we will appreciate a timely payment of this year's dues. For new members who paid dues after November 1, 2000, you are already paid up for 2001. If you receive a dues statement, let me know.

Best wishes to all for a rewarding 2001 personally and in your AAGT involvement.

See you in Philly, I hope.

Bud Feder, Treasurer

ELECTIONS

Elections and Appointments, April 2001 Meeting

At our meeting in Philadelphia this April one of our most important items of business will be to elect those officers whose terms expire this year. There are also several appointed officers whose terms expire in 2001 who will need to be selected by the Executive Council.

For all of these offices we need nominations and volunteers. Here are the offices:

ELECTED OFFICERS

- **Vice President/President-Elect**
- **Regional Contact Person Coordinator**

APPOINTED OFFICERS

- **Co-Coordinator of Interest Groups**
- **Membership Co-Chairperson**
- **Continuing Education Officer**

If you would like to volunteer to be considered for one of these offices, or if you would like to nominate someone for one of these offices, please contact Bruce Robertson, Chair of the Nominating Committee, bruboo@aol.com, 940.566.3200.

AAGT MEMBERSHIP MEETING - PHILADELPHIA, APRIL, 2001

EVALUATING THE EXPERIMENT

Dear AAGT members and potential members:

The 2001 annual meeting of AAGT in Philadelphia April 26th through 29th is an opportunity to build AAGT as a dynamic force in Gestalt Therapy, beyond the International Conferences we produce. We are looking at the structures we have devised up until now to create networks with each other over time and distance (structures such as the regional and interest group affiliations) and evaluating that experiment. We are looking at the dynamic tension between using AAGT for our personal professional growth and development and using AAGT as a vehicle to disseminate Gestalt Therapy in the wider field. We are engaging in face to face contactful dialogue about issues of conferencing. We are looking to grow and develop as an organization.

The 2001 mandated yearly membership meeting and mini-conference of AAGT will take place in Philadelphia PA from the evening of April 26th through 29th, 2001, with a meeting of the current Executive Committee (EC) on the 26th, and a meeting of the newly elected reconstituted EC on the afternoon of the 29th. Our plan is:

- to have our mandated membership meeting
- to have a board meeting
- to hold elections
- to establish a Conference Planning Committee for 2002
- to pick up the pieces on interest groups and regions that we did not get to explore fully in Dallas
- to formulate relevant information on AAGT's history
- to devise some future plans and directions for AAGT
- in general, to evaluate the experiment.

We hope to include a panel (dead and living presidents?) facilitated by Ed Nevis on the history of AAGT as well as some workshops. As you see, it will be an important time for participation and dialogue. If you care about the future directions of AAGT, your voice is important.

The actual meeting place will be Jay Cooke Hall of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 7805 Old York Rd., Elkins Park, PA. We expect to have a Saturday night social/cultural event or events, good food, good company, good conversation. The registration fee will be \$100. You can register at the web site or by mailing your check for \$100 or credit card number with an authorization for \$100 to Bud Feder.

We also want to add members to the planning committee for this meeting, and we hope you will volunteer to join us. To join, just email Carol at cbrockmon@home.com. You will then be informed of dates and times for planning committee conference calls.

We are trying to keep down the cost of lodging, as we have with the registration fee. If you know people who will put you up in Philadelphia, this is an excellent option. Please take care of those arrangements yourself; it will cut the workload greatly. If you would like hospitality with local Gestalt people, we can probably arrange that. Send an email to Carol at the above address, and state limitations (such as allergies and transportation) that would limit your options. We also have some local hotel-like accommodations arranged and can arrange more.

Here is the housing information we have as of now:

1. If you have friends or relatives you can stay with in the Philadelphia area, GREAT!!!
Make your own arrangements.
2. If you would like to stay in a hotel or bed and breakfast, here are some options:
 - We have eight rooms reserved at **Elkins Park House**, an apartment building with some hotel rooms only two blocks from our meeting site and from Carol's house. There is one suite, which has a king size bed, a sofa which opens, and a kitchen, which rents for \$100 per night. The rest of the rooms are \$80 per night. One room has one king size bed. Another has one queen, one has two doubles, and the other four have two singles.

These rooms will be assigned on a first come first served basis. Email Carol for information about availability, (cbrockmon@home.com), and then send your deposit check, (one night's room rent), made out to Elkins Park House, to:

Carol Brockmon
7861 Spring Avenue,
Elkins Park, PA 19027

- **Chestnut Hill Hotel** is a charming place in an old Philadelphia neighborhood, full of great shops and restaurants, fifteen minutes from our meeting site by car or cab. The regular room rate is \$149.

Nine rooms will be held for AAGT for April 26th, 27th, and 28th. Any rooms not reserved by AAGT members by March 26th will be released. I have blocked the rooms at our corporate rate of \$114 per night, plus tax. This rate includes breakfast. To reserve, call the hotel at 1.800.628.9774. Guests should refer to the group abbreviation AAGT, or the group number 0426 to reserve at that rate.

For more information about the hotel, visit the website, www.chestnuthillhotel.com

- To find a bed and breakfast try <http://www.bnbphiladelphia>. If you are driving, Mt. Airy, Jenkintown, Chestnut Hill and Wyndmoor are good areas.
- If you would like to stay in Center City Philadelphia, a commuter train from 12th and Market Street goes to the Elkins Park Railroad Station, two blocks from our meeting site.
- If you would prefer to ask for hospitality from local Gestalt people, please contact Carol Brockmon as above.

EDITORIAL

As you will see from this issue, plans are afoot for our membership meeting in Philadelphia in just a few more weeks. Highlights of our meeting will include the selection of the new President-elect. It will also include the formation of the Conference Planning Committee for the 2002 Conference. This conference will take place in the southeast US and will include professional workshops and opportunities to earn continuing education credits in addition to our membership meeting.

It will be wonderful to see many of you in Philadelphia, relatively soon after the Dallas meeting. This was a significant meeting for many of us (see the articles on the conference, including my own) and I'm glad that it's only a short time before I will see many of you again.

As Publications Editor I was delighted that the Dallas meeting generated so much interest in our ongoing projects. There are several people interested in working on the website to develop its full potential. There are others who are interested in an international website/newsletter project. Finally there are some of you who seemed willing to contribute to this newsletter. Development of the website is only awaiting my turning my attention to it and making the way for those of you who volunteered. As for our international association I continue to be gratified by the interest of the editors of the GANZ (Gestalt Australia New Zealand) and EAGT (European Association for Gestalt Therapy) newsletters. The three of us have worked together on a writing workshop designed to bring out the writer in all of us, and with any luck we'll actually get to present it somewhere.

In this issue of the newsletter we are continuing to invite involvement in AAGT, as the experiment continues in our ongoing publications, our Philadelphia meeting, our 2002 conference, and beyond.

Warmly,
Elizabeth S. Revell, Ph.D.

TICKETS

Philadelphia Meeting Saturday Night April 28th

**We have the
opportunity to attend
a local concert of the
funk band**

**Tower of Power ,
opened for by the
Average White**

**Guys'Band,
at the**

**Keswick Theater ,
ten minutes from our
meeting site.**

**The cost will be \$27.00
per person, to be
sent to
Bud Feder**

**198 Lorraine Ave.,
Montclair, NJ, 07043
with the notation
"concert Tickets."**

**before March 27th,
when our unpurchased
held tickets will be
released.**

**This represents a
ten percent discount.**

**Tower of Power
is famous for having
people dancing
in the aisles.**



AAGT WEB



www.aagt.org

WHO'S WHO IN AAGT

[Editor's Note: Here is a list of officers and other functionaries within AAGT. Please let us know if you find errors in this list.]

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Jack Aylward, Interest Group Co-Chair, JackatPCC@aol.com
Carol Brockmon, President, cbrockmon@home.com
Todd Butler, Membership Co-Chair, Todd-Butler@msn.com
Cynthia Cook, Interest Group Co-Chair, Cynthea3@aol.com
Linda Ditulio, Membership Co-Chair, LinBiker@aol.com
Bud Feder, Treasurer, befeeder@home.com
Gail Feinstein, Vice Treasurer, UrsaLuna@aol.com
Carl Hodges, RCP Coordinator, CWHVOSGE@aol.com
Elizabeth Revell, Publications Editor, revell@blazenet.net
Bruce Robertson, Outgoing President and Vice President, Bruboo@aol.com
Sarah Toman, Secretary, s.toman@csuohio.edu
Ansel Woldt, Archivist, Continuing Education Chair, NANSELW@aol.com
Linda DiTullio, linbiker@aol.com

REGIONAL CONTACT PERSONS

Bruce Aaron, Midwest USA, dovbear@earthlink.com
Jacques Djete Beugre, Cote d'Ivoire (West Africa), dbeugre@jhsph.edu
Nifont Dolgoplov, East Russia, nifont@glasnet.ru
Isabel Frederickson, Southwest USA, FREDDY9282@aol.com
Irwin Gadol, RCP Southwest, irwingad@airmail.net
Judith Graham, United Kingdom, jugrfrog@dircon.co.uk
Susan Gregory, Northeast USA, sgregory@Gestalsing.com
Emil Jech, Northwest USA, gerremil@iname.com
Daniel Khlomov, Russia, Cyril@online.ru; greathlo@adacom.ru
Bea Mackay, Canada, bea@drbeamackay.com
Jack Mulgrew, Southeast USA, mulgrewjp@conrad.appstate.edu
Marilyn Myles, Midwest USA, 708.848.8652
Brian O'Neill, Australia and New Zealand, boneill@uow.edu.au
Nilhan Sezgin, Turkey, reiki.nil@hotmail.com
Ceylan Tugrul, Turkey, pdtem@ada.net
Rosemary Wulf, Germany, rosemariewulf@gmx.de
Valeria Zakharova, Urals, Russia, uigt@basko.ru

INTEREST GROUP CHAIRS AND CO-CHAIRS

Cynthia Cook, Philosophy and Purpose, Watchdog and Braking, cynthea3@aol.com
Iris Fodor, Academia and Higher Education, Fodor@is.nyu.edu
Paul Schoenberg, Academia and Higher Education, Schoetyne@aol.com
Peter Philippson, Theory Development and Philosophy, Peter@mgc.org.uk
Allan Singer, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Interest Group, 617.266.9456
Joyce Vinson, Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Interest Group, crose1@compuserve.com
Ruth Wolfert, Women's Interest Group, Ruwol@aol.com
Alice Gerstman, Women's Interest Group, AliG37@aol.com
Irv Gadol, Integrative Psychotherapies, Irwingad@airmail.net
Gordon Wheeler, Men's Issues in Gestalt Therapy, GICPress@aol.com
Jay Ferraro, Men's Issues in Gestalt Therapy
Carl Hodges, Gestalt Applications to Diverse and Special Populations, CWHVOSGE@aol.com
Anne Teachworth, Gestalt Institutes Training and Development, Louisiana
Morgan Goodlander, Gestalt Institutes Training and Development,
Morgan@gestaltinstitute.com
Susan Gregory, Somatics Interest Group, sgregory@Gestalsing.com

Gina Fitzmartin, Somatics Interest Group, cfitz@icubed.com
Susan Jurkowski, Gestalt Dreamwork, 212.472.0415
Gail Feinstein, Gestalt Therapy and Spirituality, ursaluna@aol.com
M'lou Caring, Gestalt Therapy and Spirituality, Mlouc@aol.com

Vacancy, Gestalt Therapy and Social Change

Vacancy, Gestalt Therapy with Children

Vacancy, Ecological Dimensions of Gestalt Therapy

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

David Alexander, DLA1ex@aol.com
Susan Baker, sbaker@pepperdine.edu
Effie Bastas, EBastas@aol.com
Charlie Bowman, Agt1@aol.com
Judith Brown, jrbrown@education.ucsb.edu
Sylvia Crocker, Crockersf@aol.com
Janice Roosevelt Gerard, JanGDreams@aol.com
Judith Kushnet, jkushnet@pobox.com
Bob Lee, rlee@dr.com
Christine Mullen, Krispet@aol.com
Bob Resnick, BobResnick@aol.com
Jan Ruckert, DelilahR@aol.com

CPC 2002 CO-CHAIRS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Joseph Charles Kanner, chuck@kanneracademy.com
Phil Brownell, Philbrownell@earthlink.net

THE MATING SITE

*Like an untouched bride she lies
prone on the back seat
seasoned and ready.
But, is she ready for him
with his fancy genes—
years of experience—
his nose with the scent of other spicy bitches.*

*He watches her spring from the car,
his tail twitches—
then, he sniffs her butt—
twists around
raises his rear
presses his part inside her.
She digs her feet into the grass.*

*Mist drops fall on their heads
this wet Hesperia morning,
this stud place where he lives
waiting for such a pretty bitch,
while we three women watch,
wait for them to finish.*

*I wonder, is my dog touched
by this first tie?
Will she remember
a knowing stud,
his warm part inside her?*

*They are together twenty-two minutes
before he drops off, strolls away,
the male cue it is over.
We move her to a cave crate
to preserve the sperm,
just like a woman
who lies on the bed
with hope and hips cradled up.*

Jan Ruckert

ADVERTISERS

**Ads in the
AAGT Newsletter
are priced as follows:**

**full page
(7.5" w x 10" h): \$150**

**half page
(7.5" w x 5" h or
3.5" w x 10" h): \$85**

**quarter page
(3.5" w x 5" h): \$50**

**To advertise in the
newsletter ,
please contact:**

**Elizabeth S. Revell,
Ph.D.
1120 Range Road
York, PA 17402**

**Phone:
717.840.1356**

**Fax:
717.840.8792**

**Email:
Revell@blazenet.net**

COMMENTS

My only complaint was that it ended "all to soon!"

A powerful, emotional learning experience managed with grace, integrity and congruence of process, theory and practice.

Gut wrenchingly positive experience—Deep Catharsis!!

Most meaningful, powerful, empowering presentation I've seen in years.

Wonderful group. Real work!!!

Wonderful Experience! She did a dynamic presentation that helped me personally and professionally. I'll take more from her.

Exciting work! Well taught...I appreciated the experiential floor work and experiment, and the presenter's clear description of the theory, rationale and practice of this work.

WOW!

Note from our Regional Coordinator: For our AAGT World Community, "the Regions" provide a way to reach in and reach out, with contact, information, support, resources, and concern. Sometimes just a little help can touch, connect, change.

**CARL HODGES, RCP
Coordinator**

CONFERENCE 2002 PLANNING

Open Letter Regarding AAGT Conference 2002

Hello Members of the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (AAGT). We hope this letter finds you when in good health, energy, and optimism. We hope your interests lead you freshly into new adventures and you are grateful for every one of them, because if that is so, here is an offer you may not be able to refuse!

The Conference Planning Committee for the 2002 conference is beginning to form and the conference co-chairs are inviting everyone to the party.

The AAGT will be having their next international conference for Gestalt therapy in 2002. Chuck Kanner and Philip Brownell will be conference co-chairs, meaning that we will coordinate the efforts of the Conference Planning Committee (CPC). Realizing that a lot of work will need to be done, and wanting experienced and capable people to participate, we're asking that all AAGT members consider joining the CPC. Right now we are in the very beginning stages of our planning, so you could have significant influence on the venue, time, themes, and general program, or you could find a place helping with some of the logistics, or in publicity and outreach to students and others who might be new to the field of Gestalt therapy. We have many needs, and many opportunities.

Working on a subcommittee of the CPC is a rewarding experience—often challenging and sometimes frustrating—but overall extremely fulfilling. The relationships with other committee members last well beyond the frame of the actual conference itself. This is like being part of the cast of a stage play or movie in which everyone has a different contribution, but in which we all come to regard one another as a kind of family because of what we experience together. We, Chuck and Phil, are looking forward to making new friends and re-inventing old friendships. We're asking that you consider this invitation seriously and get back to either Chuck or Phil with an answer, any questions or concerns that you might have, and/or comments based on past experience.

Here is contact information for us:

Joseph "Chuck" Kanner
Executive Director
Kanner Academy/The Farm School, Inc.
133 McIntosh Rd. Sarasota FL 34232
Phone: 941.379-8399 Fax 941.379.5179
email: chuck@kanneracademy.com
<http://www.kanneracademy.com>
<http://www.thefarmschool.com>

Philip Brownell
Senior Editor, Gestalt!
Director, Gestalt Global Training Center
Senior Psychologist, Pathways
315 Golf Course Road, #1806
Morganton, NC 28655
Phone: 828.438.0735; 704.476.4062
email: pbrownell@g-g.org; phil@g-gtc.com;
pbrownell@pathmhdds.org
<http://www.g-g.org>
<http://www.g-gtc.com>

For your information,
here is an initial list of
likely subcommittees of the overall CPC:

Program Committee

with subcommittees as determined by program design, likely to include:

- Formal Presentations (Peer Reviewed)
- Peer Review
- Experiments in Community Building
- Process Groups
- Plenaries
- Community Meetings
- Social/recreational opportunities
- CEU (continuing educational protocols for various professionals attending the conference)

Logistics ,

with subcommittees determined by practical need:

- Welcoming conference attendees when they arrive (and registering some "at the door")
- Orientation for conference attendees
- Support for international attendees
- Support for program needs
(i.e., getting a band for a dance, setting up transportation, securing equipment)

Fundraising:

- Registration
- Scholarship
- Work Study
- Donations

Advertising

(as in paying for space in the program and/or promotional tables at the conference itself)

Publicity and Outreach Committee.

Works closely with program committee in the development and distribution of public relations materials related to the conference, including the outreach to student populations.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this invitation. The new CPC will be gathering for the first time face to face during the annual meetings of the AAGT, which will meet in Philadelphia, April 26-29th. If you are interested in participating in the CPC, please block that time off on your calendar so you can join us and let us know so that we can help you make arrangements. We would also be curious to hear what you might have to say if you have any suggestions for the next AAGT conference but cannot involve yourself with the actual planning.

One way or the other, we wish you well and hope to hear from you soon.

Warm Regards,

Philip Brownell and Chuck Kanner

Conference Co-Chairs, AAGT International Conference, 2002

CONGRATULATIONS

Gestalt Institute of Phoenix:

Robert Mosby

Arnold Thaw

Katharina von Rhau

Judith Geer

Scott Hendrickson

for 25 years
of continuous training
in the theory and practice of Gestalt therapy.

*Your commitment to gestalt therapy
and training excellence is deeply appreciated
by those you have trained.*

COMMENTS

Well-supported, well-modulated presentation. I really liked it and learned from it. Very helpful, the concepts were clear and clearly illustrated and demonstrated.

The process group experience was the richest experience I had at the conference, and it is one of the most meaningful and growthful experiences in my life. I feel the Process Groups are essential to the conference. They are part of what makes this conference so unique and created the feeling of community.

Phenomenal, sensitive and effective process group leader. The group was diverse, open, honest, dependable, (everyone was there for every session, if they were at the conference).

An integral, significant, meaningful part of the conference. This was the finest process group experience I ever had, and this is my 3rd AAGT conference.

The process group was a very powerful forum for enhancing my learning and warming my heart.

Leaders were a good balance. Lovely to see 9 people become close.

Group was dynamic, supportive, and spontaneous.

COMMENTS

Broad range of ideas well articulated, sincere interest in understanding "the other."

Time to be in a small group without a pre-designed topic, could "eat" at my own pace.

Well organized and lively discussion, stimulating me to further thinking.

A very supportive and available group to bring myself to deal with concerns

The honoring ceremony was honest, moving and very satisfying, not to mention fun.

The ceremony was wonderful and I appreciated the opportunity to be a part of this.

**Loved it!
Great dancing.
Lovely ceremony.
It was great to honor Ansel.
Marvelous!**

The ceremony was wonderful, touching, and (at all the right moments) hilarious! I particularly liked the idea of honoring someone who has worked so hard and so consistently for AAGT.

1000 points. I now hold the Holy Relic of Ansel's short's hah hah!

SOMATICS INTEREST GROUP INVITES MEMBERS

The Somatics Interest Group is composed of AAGT members with special interest in attending to body process as an integral part of practicing Gestalt therapy. We welcome both practitioners who specialize in this work and those who want to explore and learn more about it. The group will evolve according to the needs and interests of its members.

Co-Chairs Gina Fitzmartin and Susan Gregory aim to facilitate communication between Somatics Interest Group members throughout the year. Here are some of our preliminary ideas:

1. If the group wishes, we plan to establish a contact list of members, including addresses, email information, and a listing of specialties.
2. We will distribute a list of resources—books, journals, videos—and will update it regularly with suggestions from Interest Group members.
3. We will seek to facilitate ongoing discussion around members' interests and excitements, either through a round-robin newsletter in which specific topics are taken up and added to as the newsletter circulates, or through e-mail discussion, or through local meetings where members demonstrate and experiment together, reporting on their experiences to the Somatics Interest Group as a whole.
4. We will coordinate any collective projects which may emerge from group activity, perhaps including planning a future Somatics Interest Group workshop or paper which expresses the conversations we have sustained as a group.
5. We will assist in organizing any other activities members want to undertake.

The form of the Somatics Interest Group will emerge according to what its members want and have energy to accomplish. We hope to become a resource for the Gestalt therapy community as a whole, encouraging ongoing engagement with somatic experiences as an integral part of practicing Gestalt therapy.

We invite your participation. Please contact us.

Co-Chairs:

Gina Fitzmartin
cfitz@icubed.com

Susan Gregory
sgregory@gestaltsing.com

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is available for \$14 from Amazon.com, your favorite bookstore or us at :
Gestalt Institute Press, 1539 Metairie Rd., Metairie, LA., 70005**

(Editor's Note: This was an email message sent by Paul to the Executive Committee. It struck me as a post-conference reflection that many people could relate to, so it is being reprinted with Paul's permission.)

APPRECIATIONS, FORM AND CHRONIC CONTACT FATIGUE SYNDROME (CCFS)

by Paul Schoenberg

Dear EC members,

While some of these things are fresh in my mind, I want to pass on just a few of my assimilations while at the conference. First and foremost I want to let you know of one of my most meaningful appreciations in the midst of many appreciations. While returning to my room Sunday afternoon, I was overwhelmed with emotion and burst into tears. When I leaned into my experience, I was suddenly struck by how much, in that moment, I loved and appreciated myself for all the sacrifice, energy, time, loss of sleep, brain cells that I had put into the experience of the conference (and groundwork before). I spent a little time with myself cataloging all the things (and non-things) I had contributed to our sense of community such as reaching out to new people, facilitating dialogue between members, listening to someone who needed to be heard, etc., and filed them away for those times when I might feel less kindly towards myself. As I know all of you have invested so much of yourself into the conference experience, my wish for all of you, if you have not already done so, is that you take a moment and direct your appreciation internally.

I also want to offer one semantic change that may make a difference in future dialogue. We have focused so much on the dichotomy (false, I believe) between process and structure. I would like to propose that the word "structure" itself may cause some of the discomfort, as it suggests monoliths and rigid hierarchy. Maybe instead, we could use the word "form" which suggests fluidity, grace and transient rather than frozen boundaries.

Lastly and most importantly, I want to warn you all of the emergence of a disturbing new DSM V classification, initially recognized and labeled by Jack Aylward (takes one to know one) that emerged in this conference, only to apparently recede when the conference ended. The new classification is that of Chronic Contact Fatigue Syndrome or CCFS. CCFS is a disorder usually placed in the category of disorders usually first diagnosed in organizational infancy, childhood, and adolescence. Differential diagnoses include other childhood communication disorders as well as attention deficit/hyperactive disorder. Essential features include: the tendency to speak in a strange localized vocabulary first sighted in PH and G, unique verbal behavior patterns such as clanging (example: unanimous, pusillanimous, or contact, contract, retract, impact, etc.), spending long periods of time in immediate proximity to others, resisting sleep and other personal hygiene behaviors, tendency to interpret language and behaviors in erotic context, blurting out answers before the questions have been completed, becoming resentful about awaiting turn (both speaking and in lines), emotional outbursts, and having difficulty organizing thoughts into brief cogent sentences (ex. "Meeting the adjourned is goddamn hope I?" vs. "I hope the goddamn meeting is adjourned"). Severity specifiers range from profoundly severe to beyond hope. Associated features often include: the tendency to consume large quantities of alcohol at late hours, migraine headaches, nausea and upset stomach, vulnerability to illness, and difficulty remembering family, friends and one's home address. Specific cultural features note that the syndrome is only found at large gatherings of the Gestalt therapy tribes. CCFS prevalence has increased over the past five years and has been traced from New Orleans (with perhaps primitive strains noted at previous Gestalt Journal conferences) to the current outbreak in Dallas, Texas. Although the course of treatment has not been clearly identified or researched, theoretical discussion and debate is expected to continue during future conferences and final consensus is expected during the next millennium. Treatment considerations include: dramatic reduction of scheduled activities during future conferences, encouragement for such intrapsychic process as reflection, pondering and introspection, and support for such isolated and hermit-like behaviors such as sleeping, watching TV, reading the newspaper and eating with one's mouth closed. If you or anyone you know appears to be suffering from the above syndrome, please rush them immediately into isolated hyperbaric oxygen tents, eliminate their professional Gestalt colleagues and duct tape their mouths tightly shut. Attention for you thank your.

COMMENTS

I felt safe in asserting myself and supported.

The community process solidified my faith in Gestalt values; since I saw them operating in what seemed to me to be a very difficult conflict.

[I liked] the workshops describing how people approach the work, especially those that encouraged participation in exercises.

[I liked] coming together as a community that supported both our individuality and our need for community.

[I liked] the sense of hope and working together that emerged from it.

[I liked the] opportunity to meet new people and connect with old friends. The workshops contribute some valuable aspects to my own learning.

[I liked the] community meeting: The way divisiveness was handled with everyone having a voice.

It was small enough so that I got to cross and recross paths with people and got to know many, many, more than at either the Cleveland or New York conferences.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE DALLAS CONFERENCE

By Elizabeth S. Revell

I wanted to write about the Dallas conference this year because for me, after many years of practicing Gestalt therapy, I left the conference with a deeper faith in it than I ever had before. In watching the outcome of our meetings I noticed that I had harbored reservations about Gestalt's power that I never knew I had until I saw them melt away.

I went into the conference with much excitement and a little dread. The dread came from the fear that interaction in the community meetings would be as I experienced it in New York, filled with argument and empty of movement. I was sad to see that the number of attendees was only about 1/3 of the number who attended in New York, and I believed that this was in no small part to how painful the interactions at the previous community meetings had been.

As the community meetings unfolded there was more healing than I ever believed possible, and it occurred by meetings being run with adherence to our own Gestalt principles. Differences were not glossed over confluent, people did much more to own their projections, there was much genuine contact. (Note the article in this issue that proposes a new diagnostic category: Chronic Contact Fatigue Syndrome.)

I am embarrassed that I apparently didn't have enough faith in our own theory to be able to predict that it could play out as well as it did. Naturally given the gravity of the differences that were experienced in 1999, this didn't end up in a "love fest." What did happen was that people kept talking, demonstrating mutual respect, and acknowledging that there were some (few, at times) areas of agreement, that although we had widely divergent ideas of how to get where we wanted to go, we could acknowledge common values and goals. Also, a few of the deepest conflicts were owned by individuals as belonging to them and not to the whole organization.

My good friend at Gestalt Australia New Zealand talks about our work involving the question of "...how organizations can adapt to and support the wide diversity of needs and wants of their members; [if] strong minded, opinionated, creative and intrinsically good hearted people can unite... can you imagine the impact this would have on the world as a whole?"

We are certainly "strong minded" and "opinionated!" During the community meetings in New York I wasn't sure about the goodheartedness, because our hearts weren't often showing. I got more of a glimpse of where people's hearts were in Dallas. At the same time I am learning that dialogue doesn't always result in consensus, that it is possible to "agree to disagree" and still be in community, that no matter how strongly we hold different viewpoints we can still be together in, if not always love, mutual respect.

I feel as though there's something important and fragile here, and I so much want to be a part of extending it to my colleagues whom I value so much. I believe that some of our members still feel alienated, that they don't think there is a place for them in AAGT. I'd like to invite all who have this experience please to speak, to write to the newsletter. I'd also like to invite each of you who have attended the conference to share your experience and its meaning for you.

To those with whom I connected at Dallas, I want you to know how much I enjoyed our time together. To the many who were not there, I miss you and hope that we will be together in AAGT.

AAGT 2000 Conference:

**I came
I watched
I left**

**I came
I was seen
I went**

away

changed forever.

I came back.

by Judy Robertson

Editor's note: The following is the written exchange that took place between the AAGT Executive Council and members of the Southwest Region of AAGT between October, 2000, and January, 2001. The subject matter concerns the possibility of the 2002 AAGT conference being sponsored by the Southwest Region. As we are going to press, we have received some additional correspondence from members of the Southwest Region. These will be summarized in our next issue.

October 21, 2000

To the AAGT Executive Council:

The SW region of AAGT has met as a body of 29 participants for the AAGT-SW Conference in San Diego over October 20-22, 2000. Our discussions have raised concern and interest about the viability & future structure of AAGT as a professional organization. From our discussions, we (27 of 29, 1 abstention, 1 opposed) offer the following proposal in a constructive effort to support the AAGT leadership and promote the professional association of the membership.

Proposal:

That the 2002 AAGT conference be a large-scale type conference, attracting national and international attendees, and providing professional workshops for CEUs via a "call for proposals" & peer review committee process (as has been done in past conferences).

That the conference be hosted by the AAGT-SW area members. The following potential locations offered are: San Diego, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles.

That the 2002 conference planning committee would be comprised of members from AAGT-SW. Any additional persons who wish to participate on the CPC would be agreed upon by the Executive Council and the CPC-SW. We offer the suggestion that future conferences can be hosted by other geographic/demographic groups who have interest in doing so.

We are very interested in dialoging about our proposal and are eager for your feedback. We are also interested in the views of the greater AAGT membership body and ask you to please put this item on the agenda for discussion and decision by the membership at the appropriate meeting of the AAGT Conference in Dallas, November 2000.

We have asked Susan Baker to be the contact person for this proposal. Susan and a number of additional members from this body will also be in attendance at the AAGT conference in Dallas and have stated that they are available for further conversation about these matters.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views and our proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Baker, Todd Burley, Felicia Carroll, Liv Estrup, Isabel Fredericson, Cara Garcia, Janice Gerard, Nickie Godfrey, Lucanna Grey, Joseph Handlon, Larry Hutchison, Andre Kuenzli, Fabienne Kuenzli, Marilyn Maini, Violet Oaklander, Chari Phillips, Erving Polster, Miriam Polster, Robert Resnick, Rita Resnick, Stella Resnick, Susan Roos, Jan Ruckert, Lynn Stadler, Katy Steinkamp, Vernon Van De Reit, Judith Yeager. Susan M. Baker, M.A., MFT

From the Minutes of the AAGT Community meeting, where this proposal was discussed:

Susan Baker presented the proposal from the Southwest Region to host the 2002 conference. The membership identified some discomforts around language contained within specific parts of the written proposal. As we dialogued with each other about our discomforts with the language, we noted that as an organization we are still struggling to find ways to speak to each other about our discomforts/fears in the present. We acknowledged that some of this may contain our unfinished business regarding the differences in creation and implementation of past AAGT conferences and even philosophical differences related to values and principles of Gestalt therapy that then cloud our respective perceptions of organizational process such as occurs in our annual meetings. As the dialogue became slightly heated, we agreed to take a brief break and return to the dialogue using the first hour of our scheduled luncheon break.

Upon return from our mini-break we broke into small groups to discuss our response to the SW proposal and the fears that underlay our responses. We sought to have at least one representative from the Southwest Region in each group. We returned to the larger group to offer some statements about our experience in the small groups and our needs for the next step. We agreed that there were some underlying differences in philosophy and interpretation of AAGT bylaws that appeared "irreconcilable." We agreed that we needed the AAGT board to

COMMENTS

[I liked] witnessing the process of the community meetings, the space was made for all the diverse voices, opinions, and orientation

The conference was richer for me than any of the others I've attended. The effort at inclusion rather than exclusion and spirit of cooperation that emerged from our experiments was remarkable and revolutionary, for us.... Thanks to all who were responsible.

I have never felt so welcome and warmed by such a large group of people as a person coming in.

My experience from the conference was wonderful! I still feel a resonance of the love that was exchanged and the holes that were filled. I want to add my heartfelt thanks to all of you who did such an enormous amount of work at what I judge a very successful conference

I especially liked the community meetings being spread out within the conference. It allowed the energy to resonate with people in better rhythm than in previous conferences.

The workshops I attended were all high quality in both content and especially process.

COMMENTS

Experiencing Gestalt theory at organizational and community levels was awesome. Despite the occasional awkwardness and discomfort that seems innately part of the process of inclusion of diverse viewpoints, this conference demonstrated for me that working toward consensus is a viable way to operate organizationally. I loved the Friday evening plenary when I experienced the shift from debating diverse needs/wants/viewpoints to focusing on respecting the differences and striving for a harmonious dialogue within our organization. I think having the community/business meetings spread throughout the conference was very effective in inviting participation of the membership. I hope that some version of this can be maintained in the future.

And, last but not least, I had FUN! The band on Saturday night was great; I loved dancing and wish we could have danced all night! I am honored to claim membership in the Irish Interest Group and hope someday to make a pilgrimage to Australia to the Holy Shorts of Ansel.

meet prior to tonight's meeting and then utilize tonight's meeting time to further discussion and understanding of the underlying philosophical differences, to see if they were reconcilable. The board agreed to meet prior to the meeting to review the by-laws and first determine if the SW proposal could function within our written articles of constitution.

IV. Plenary Session: Future Conferencing

The AAGT board met with representatives of the Southwest Region prior to meeting with the entire membership to determine how their proposal fit with the AAGT by-laws. We identified that one of the essences of the by-laws was of the nature of inclusion and that we felt that one of the statements in the SW proposal contradicted that essence, a statement that put power to select members into the conference planning committee solely under the Southwest Region. (The statement read "Any additional persons who wish to participate on the CPC would be agreed upon by the Executive Council and CPC-SW.") We agreed that our recommendation to the membership was that the representatives of the Southwest would take back the AAGT board request to modify or eliminate this statement and continue in negotiation with the AAGT EC. We brought this recommendation back to the larger membership.

Carol and Bruce presented the recommendation of the AAGT Board to the larger membership. Concerns identified included: that large numbers of the Southwest Proposal Committee were not present during this dialogue (we acknowledged that we projected onto the SW Proposal Committee based on the names we saw on the list), and fears about what would happen next if the negotiations reached an impasse in the interim period between this conference and the next community meeting. We asked members of the Southwest Proposal Committee who were present about their personal response to our request to modify that statement, acknowledging that their personal response would not reflect the Southwest Proposal Committee as a whole. Some members of the Southwest Region identified that they personally did not wish to remove the statement but other members reported that they did. One member reported that she believed there would not be room for compromise while another member identified the dissenting belief that there would. We stayed in dialogue in expressing some of the underlying concerns, such as conflict over different dichotomized models of conferencing (associating vs. advancement). One member expressed a desire to see in the moment if the membership present had faith that the EC would act in good faith in negotiating with the Southwest Committee. The membership responded generally in the affirmative, although there were a few dissenters who were concerned about what other dimensions of the proposal might need negotiation and what alternatives lay if the negotiation failed.

We then discussed whether the process we were engaging in with each other as we discussed this issue was useful to our organizational growth and the general response was yes. We also asked what was necessary for the EC to move forward into the negotiations. The EC responded that they needed the support of the membership to accept the EC's role as the negotiating body for AAGT in such dialogue.

We also asked persons who had not spoken to offer their experience of this meeting and the conference so far. Some members spoke about their experience of fear or anxiety in being able to speak within the larger group. Others spoke about the difficulty in orienting into the organization and understanding what our organization, in going through the community meeting process, spoke to in relation to Gestalt therapy. Some persons identified their appreciation for watching Gestalt values in action. We acknowledged that some new persons may have spoken through not attending the meeting.

We broke with some relief present in the community.

Dear Members of AAGT Executive Council:

After much consultation over cyberspace, we of the AAGT Southwest Region are pleased to submit our proposal for the 2002 AAGT Conference. We have attempted to deal with the issues that were raised during the discussion at the AAGT Board meeting in Dallas.

1. The basic design of this conference will be similar to the first four conferences which were held in New Orleans, San Francisco, Cleveland, and New York. That is, they were large, professional conferences including: invited speakers, invitational presentations, with emphasis on workshops, plenaries, and process groups.

2. Community meetings will be held before or after, or perhaps at both times, but not during the conference itself.

3. Anyone unable to support this basic design is asked to refrain from joining a committee and to wait to work on a committee at another conference that is more compatible with their own ideas about conference design.

4. All members of the conference committees will be expected to participate in communications and in completing tasks within agreed-upon deadlines. If a task is not completed by a deadline, and there is not a reasonable excuse, that person will no longer be considered to be a member of the conference committee.

5. When a disagreement among members of the conference committee occurs, the final decision will be that of the committee chair person.

6. In case of a disagreement between the Executive Committee and other members of the Conference Committee, mediation will be used to arrive at a decision. Each side will choose one person, and these two people will choose a third. The decision of this trio will be final.

7. The Southwest Region will choose the Conference Coordinator. That Coordinator will be paid as has been done previously.

Respectfully submitted,

Isabel Fredericson

Joseph H. Handlon

Dear AAGT Southwest Colleagues:

The Executive Council and most of the AAGT members present at our Dallas conference are grateful for your proposal—especially the willingness of such a large and talented group of AAGT members to want to facilitate our next large scale conference. We hope and believe that our dialogue on this issue will be open, generous and fruitful, and that we will be able to work together to make this happen. We are certainly in agreement with you that we'd like to attract national and international participation and expect that, as in all five of our previous conferences, we will continue with a call for proposals and a peer review process.

We will shortly have the evaluation results of our conference just completed to add to the body of feedback and experience to assist in planning of future conferences. We also need to let you know that AAGT's financial situation is pinched and tenuous. As a result we need to be very careful about taking on any high level expense or committing to any large financial risks.

In your proposal, you stated: "That the 2002 Conference Planning Committee would be comprised of members from AAGT-SW. Any additional persons who wish to participate on the CPC would be agreed upon by the Executive Council and the CPC-SW."

There was considerable discussion of this sentence by the members present at our Conference. As a result of that discussion, we, the Executive Council, representing the Board of Directors and the vast majority of AAGT members present at the Dallas Conference, find this sentence to be in violation of both the letter and the spirit of our By-Laws—particularly parts of the sections quoted below.

The concern behind that sentence, as expressed and confirmed by Southwest members present in our discussions, is that the EC and CPC for the next conference needs to be able to work effectively and harmoniously and without obstruction in order to diminish (and hopefully eliminate) the blocking and counter-blocking of energy during conference planning deliberations. Obviously, the EC and Board share this concern and want to let you know that we care deeply about improving on our planning processes to make it easier for everyone concerned with organizing and administering our future conferences. It has been recommended that we of the EC develop some dialogue, mediation, arbitration and grievance procedures that would lead to smoother and more open and harmonious functioning of any CPC. The EC and the Board are willing to cooperate with that, and design such procedures.

Therefore, we invite you to dialogue about how that might best happen given the constraints of our By-Laws which provide for openness and inclusion. We very much desire a dialogue that will work to include both sets of needs. How do we best meet our figural concerns while respecting our differences and finding and affirming our common ground? We are eager to hear more about the structure and spirit of the gathering/conference you propose.

COMMENTS

... my sense of these few days remains with me, collected into sounds, stories and smells....Music - such a great band - the smell of sweat and the heat of dancing, such a pleasurable erotic experience. And yes the food, plenty of it, but I have to say it is the strangeness of the combinations that will remain with me. Mostly though it is the faces of people that I remember, conversations, connections, re-connections and brief glances across a room... the rich sense of what becomes possible as a group finds itself moving into a space that is more communal, more relational.

I have attended all of the previous conferences and while I enjoyed the others I found this conference to have such a tremendous personal impact on my awareness that I am still trying to sort out the implications.

I have conjured consistently workable metaphors for my conference experience, and these have led me to take a longer and wider view of Gestalt Therapy in general. It is this contemplative view of the big picture that has become the most important and enduring effect of the conference.

COMMENTS

First of all, outstanding job to the conference planners and on-site logisiticians! And of course to all the others who invested in its creation but especially Bruce, Carol and Cynthia. I thought it was a huge success. The conference was great...thanks to all of you

I arrived in Dallas with less than no expectations. I also have to say that I left Dallas with awarenesses and deep personal experiences that are still reverberating.

It is also important to note that our By-Laws are clear that the Executive Council will determine the time, placement and structure of our community/business meetings. In the EC's discussion of this it was clear that we are desirous of working together with the Southwest AAGT Region to find a creative design that satisfies all of us.

Please trust that considerable growth and healing have taken place and will receive our utmost support to continue to take place in our beloved organization. We have a lot to offer and to learn from each other; and as a result of being open to that, we can be awesome! Our hope is that we will work out these details soon so we can get on with planning for 2002. We look forward to seeing you at our next gathering and meeting in April in Philadelphia.

Yours truly,

Carol Brockmon, President

ARTICLE III. CONSTITUENCY, MEMBERSHIP and PRIVILEGES

Section 1. Constituency: The Association is a voluntary organization of individuals expressing their interest(s) in Gestalt Therapy. Participation shall be open to persons of all nations in the world, who shall be treated with respect and without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical disability. The Association shall undertake and encourage activities and may also develop programs which have as their goal the amelioration of conditions that may restrict members from full participation in the Association.

Section 3. Membership Privileges: Members shall have the right and be encouraged to express their individual opinions and convictions, to secure fair consideration, to vote at Annual Meetings, to hold office (providing prerequisites are met), and to have their voices be heard in this Association. Membership in the Association is not credentialing nor is it intended to imply or to convey that members have met any minimum standards of training, any criteria for certification, any level of knowledge, nor the mastery of any skill as a Gestalt therapist.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS, CONFERENCES and CONVEYANCES

Section 3. Meetings as Form, Forum and Process: The form and forums of all meetings shall be based on Gestalt Therapy principles of organismic self-regulation, good figure/ground formation, quality contact and respect for the functional resistance necessary for structure that supports sufficient flexibility to provide nourishing ground for personal and professional integrity, meaningful interpersonal interaction, inclusionary decision-making, personalized networking, and professional development among the members of the Association.

Dear EC members,

We apologize for our tardiness in responding to your reply to our revised proposal, but we first wanted to hear from the people who had signed it. As you may well imagine, there was no uniform response; however, the majority by far said that they feel that we are still too far apart in our differing views to want to continue to put energy in trying to reach an agreement with you.

While we appreciate the care and thoroughness of your reading of the proposal, we feel that you do not really understand what we were trying to accomplish. What you call "adversarial" we see as creating structures to make the process of creating a conference more expeditious for the organization. Rather than endlessly trying to deal with differences in basic views, we requested that people be committed to a particular kind of conference before joining a committee. Although you reiterate the final authority of the EC as if we challenged it, we do not question it. We were hoping that we could work with you in ways that would be mutually agreeable without requiring enormous energy in discussions about every detail. You spoke of a "dialogue" while we thought that we were in a process of negotiation in which each group compromises somewhat. Your response was simply a critique of our proposal and not a compromise. We cannot simply keep agreeing to your demands without some "give" on your part. However, although we are still very invested in the future of AAGT and hope to be able to participate in future conferences, we no longer wish to continue this process of "dialoguing." The energy in the southwest region for creating a conference is no longer present.

Isabel Frederickson and Irv Gadol

CONFERENCE EVALUATION

AAGT'S Fifth Annual Conference - Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas
November 8 through November 12, 2000
Submitted by Elizabeth S. Revell, Ph.D.

From November 8 through November 12, 2000, the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy held its fifth annual conference. As in AAGT's previous conferences, for this conference the evaluation process was integral to the event. Evaluation was conducted in a number of ways. Each individual workshop was evaluated in writing by participants, as was each Experiment in Community Building (ECB) session. Participants were asked to provide a written evaluation of the series of four process group meetings. And finally each participant was asked to submit a written evaluation of the conference as a whole. Different survey forms were constructed to be used for each of the four categories (workshop, ECB, process group, and conference), and each form included opportunities for participants also to include narrative feedback. Data collected from tabulation of these forms show clearly that the conference and its individual events were very well received. It is the purpose of this report to present the data in summary form and, in the appendices, in detail.

Workshops

From workshop evaluations it is clear that these events provided a strong background for the conference, whose theme was "Gestalt Therapy for Our Time: Social Vision and Personal Growth." At each workshop the following feedback form was distributed, and each participant was asked to complete and return it. On this form participants were asked to look at the following statements and decide whether they agreed strongly, agreed somewhat, were neutral, disagreed somewhat, or disagreed strongly. "Agree strongly" was assigned a point value of 5; "Agree somewhat," applied value of 4; "Neutral," a point value of 3; "Disagree somewhat" was assigned 2 points, and "Disagree strongly" was assigned 1 point. In the tables that follow, the mean point value is displayed.

AAGT 5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, DALLAS/FORT WORTH, 2000 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

Event title: _____

Presenter
name(s) _____

Your presenter(s) will review at the beginning and close of the session the educational objectives for this event.
List briefly the three most meaningful items of "Learning" you acquired.

Item 1 _____

Item 2 _____

Item 3 _____

In reviewing the stated goals of this event, and in considering the nature of what you learned, answer all of the following questions by circling one number of the five point scale that best reflects your opinion:

1 Strongly Disagree **2** Disagree **3** Neutral **4** Agree **5** Strongly Agree

The stated educational objectives for this event were largely fulfilled	1	2	3	4	5
In this session and I gain new knowledge and/or organized existing knowledge better	1	2	3	4	5
The presenter(s) discussed the material in a clear and orderly fashion	1	2	3	4	5
The presenter(s) rear geared the level of the material introduced to that of the participants	1	2	3	4	5
The presenter(s) responded to the needs and questions of the participants	1	2	3	4	5
The physical facilities were appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this presentation to my professional colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
What I found least useful about this presentation was:					

Additional space for any other comments is provided on the reverse side.

The following chart shows the mean scores on the evaluation questionnaire for all the presentations:

Mean for all presentations	
The stated educational objectives for this event were largely fulfilled	4.78
In this session and I gain new knowledge and/or organized existing knowledge better	4.65
The presenter(s) discussed the material in a clear and orderly fashion	4.74
The presenter(s) rear geared the level of the material introduced to that of the participants	4.72
The presenter(s) responded to the needs and questions of the participants	4.73
The physical facilities were appropriate	3.94
I would recommend this presentation to my professional colleagues	4.44

Note here again that by far the lowest mean score referred to the physical facilities rather than to the presenters or the content.

The following chart lists each of the presentations that were given during this conference and shows the mean score for each of the above questionnaire items for that presentation, as well as the number of respondents. Narrative comments on each workshop appear in Appendix A.

Workshop Title and Presenter	No. Resp.	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7
A Balancing and Juggling Act Between Strategy and Intimacy— Joseph Melnick, PhD	9	4.56	4.67	4.44	4.78	4.89	3.33	4.78
A Gestalt Approach to Dealing With Anxiety— Norman Shub, PhD, BCD	13	4.62	4.46	4.15	4.38	4.54	4.38	4.54
Understanding Trauma and Dissociation: Developing Gestalt Theory— Cynthia Cook	13	4.54	4.62	4.69	4.62	4.62	1.69	4.46
101 Years of Gestalt Therapy...Yours, Mine and Ours— Charles Bowman, MS, LCSW, LMFT	8	4.71	4.88	4.88	4.75	4.88	4.13	5.00
The "EXPERIMENT" in Gestalt Therapy— Ansel Woldt, PhD	5	4.80	4.80	4.60	4.60	4.60	3.60	4.60
The Experience of Shame: A Gestalt Theoretical Approach— Peter Philipson, MSc	13	4.92	4.69	4.69	4.77	4.62	4.15	4.85
A Dramatic Approach to Gestalt Group Work— Sylvia Fleming Crocker, PhD	10	4.80	4.70	4.80	5.00	4.90	4.00	5.00
Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence: Understanding the Link— Elizabeth Revell, PhD	4	5.00	4.75	5.00	5.00	4.50	3.25	5.00
The Introjected Couple: An Intergenerational Approach— Anne Teachworth	9	4.44	4.33	4.33	4.44	4.56	4.44	4.44
Evolution and Intersubjectivity: A Gestalt Synthesis— Arthur Roberts, PhD, Gordon Wheeler, PhD	7	4.86	4.71	4.57	4.57	4.71	4.14	4.71
Here and New Fatherhood for Us and Our Clients— Alvin Revell, PhD, Bruce Robertson, Brian O'Neill, Joseph Dreiss, PhD	7	5.00	4.86	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Workshop Title and Presenter	No. Resp.	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7
Developing Character: A Somatic Approach— Ruella Frank, PhD	14	4.79	4.86	4.71	4.71	4.79	3.57	4.79
The Therapeutic Change Process in Interactive Gestalt Group Therapy— Jay Earley, PhD	8	4.63	4.38	4.88	4.88	4.75	4.50	4.63
Experimenting With Crossing Boundaries: Finding a Middle Ground— Bud Feder, PhD	4	4.75	4.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.75	4.75
Troubleshooting for Gestalt Two-Chair Work— Bea Mackay, PhD	13	4.85	4.62	4.92	4.62	4.54	4.46	4.23
The Gestalt Reflecting Team— Rachel Brier, EdD	6	5.00	4.83	5.00	4.83	4.83	4.67	5.00
The Developing Field: Toward A Gestalt Developmental Model— Gordon Wheeler, PhD, Deborah Ullman, LMT	9	4.67	4.44	4.56	4.78	4.89	4.44	4.67
Working Through Writing Issues— Susan Baker, Cara Garcia, Judith Kushnet	8	4.63	4.38	4.75	4.63	4.63	3.63	4.63
Struggling With God: Buber and the Practice of Gestalt Therapy— Edwin Harris	6	4.80	4.83	5.00	4.83	4.83	4.83	4.42
The Erotic Field: A Gestalt View of Sexuality— Carol Brockman, MSW, Leanne O'Shea, Arthur Roberts, PhD, Deborah Ullman, LMT, Gordon Wheeler, PhD	32	4.58	4.31	4.39	4.35	4.23	4.35	4.60
Gestalt Group Therapy with Borderline Personality Disorder— Paul Schoenberger	9	5.00	4.78	4.89	4.78	5.00	4.22	4.89
Breathing into Contact— Susan Gregor	4	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.75	4.75	2.75	5.00
How to Write for Journal Publication— Joe Melnick	4	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.50	4.75	3.25	5.00

PROCESS GROUPS

Including process groups as an integral part of conference programming is an aspect of which AAGT is quite proud. In conference after conference this program aspect is hailed by attendees as one that they prize very highly. The importance of the process group to the overall conference experience emerges most clearly from data extracted from overall conference evaluation forms. However, we also asked each participant to evaluate his or her individual process group. This is the form that was used for this purpose:

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON YOUR PROCESS GROUP EXPERIENCE

Process Group Leaders, Continuing Education Providers and Conference Organizers want your help in improving the functioning of the Process Groups (PGs). Your comments will be held in confidence, but general findings will be made available to the post-conference evaluation and continuing education committees.

Answer all of the following questions by circling one number of the six point scale that best reflects your opinion:

5 Agree Strongly **4** Agree Somewhat **3** Feel Neutral **2** Disagree Somewhat **1** Disagree Strongly **0** Not Applicable

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My PG leaders worked well as a team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 2. Process Groups (PG) are a very important part of the AAGT conference experience. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 3. The PG provided me an opportunity to meet people who I may not otherwise have met. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4. The PG is one of the important things that makes AAGT conferences unique. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 5. Much of the talk in my PG was about things that mattered to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 6. I found myself being with members of my PG outside of our scheduled group sessions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7. There was someone in my PG who wanted to monopolize our group sessions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 8. The PG was one of the best experiences I had at this conference. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9. I would like to be considered as a Process Group Leader for AAGT's next conference. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 10. I would recommend that the PGs be eliminated from future AAGT conferences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 11. Write any additional comments that you care to make about your PG experience on the reverse side. | | | | | | |

Point values were assigned to participants' responses as follows: "I Agree strongly" was assigned a point value of 5; "I Agree somewhat," applied value of 4; "I Feel Neutral," a point value of 3; "I Disagree somewhat" was assigned 2 points, and "I Disagree strongly" was assigned 1 point. "Not applicable" was assigned no points, and that response was not counted in the denominator in calculating the mean.

The following table shows the mean scores for the survey questions above across all process groups. In interpreting the scores please note that, unlike the other questions, number 7 is a negative question, such that the lower the score the better.

	Mean
1. My PG leaders worked well as a team.	4.34
2. Process Groups (PG) are a very important part of the AAGT Conference experience.	4.98
3. The PG provided me an opportunity to meet people who I may not otherwise have met.	4.63
4. The PG is one of the important things that makes AAGT conferences unique.	4.90
5. Much of the talk in my PG was about things that mattered to me.	4.78
6. I found myself being with members of my PG outside of our scheduled group sessions.	4.15
7. There was someone in my PG who wanted to monopolize our group sessions.	1.20
8. The PG was one of the best experiences I had at this conference.	4.20
9. I would like to be considered as a Process Group Leader for AAGT's next conference.	2.49
10. I would recommend that the PGs be eliminated from future AAGT conferences.	1.20

EXPERIMENTS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

This is the second AAGT conference to include Experiments in Community Building as part of the program structure. The purpose of this conference element is to provide a framework to allow time for emerging topics of concern and interest to the conference participants to be discussed in an open forum. Topics are selected from among ideas of conference participants and community process. Topics are announced and posted on the day before the session.

At this conference groups assembled around ECB topics during three of the five time periods that had been set aside. The three topics were as follows: Checking Out Projections, Staying Centered in Conflict, and Evaluating the Experiment. In each of these ECB sessions participants were asked to complete an evaluation survey that was tailored to ECBs. This form was used for this evaluation:

AAGT 5th ANNUAL CONFERENCE—DALLAS/FORT WORTH, TEXAS
November 8-12, 2000

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM: EXPERIMENTS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

Topic of Session You Attended: _____

Please answer the following questions by circling one number of the five-point scale that best reflects your opinion:

1 Strongly Disagree **2** Disagree **3** Neutral **4** Agree **5** Strongly Agree

As a result of this ECB meeting, I feel more connected to other Gestalt therapists.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that my voice was supported and heard during this meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
The ECB made a positive contribution to my overall conference experience.	1	2	3	4	5
The facilitators helped the group develop its agenda, without imposing an agenda of their own.	1	2	3	4	5
I learned something from this experience, its method and design, that will help me in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this presentation to a colleague.	1	2	3	4	5

What did you learn? _____

What did you contribute? _____

What was satisfying about the group? _____

What was unsatisfying about the group? _____

Other comments and suggestions _____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this Participant Feedback Form!

The following chart shows the mean response to each question for each of the items on the ECB evaluation questionnaire. The narrative answers appear in Appendix C.

	No. Resp.	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6
ECB #1: Checking Out Projections	5	4.60	5.00	4.80	4.80	4.00	4.60
ECB #2: Staying Centered in Conflict	6	4.67	4.83	4.50	4.83	4.17	4.60
ECB #5: Evaluating the Experiment	3	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.33	4.67

OVERALL CONFERENCE EVALUATION

After the conference ended participants were asked to complete a comprehensive questionnaire asking about their entire conference experience. This section consists of a narrative summary of the results. The full text of the questionnaire, along with the tabulated results, appears in Appendix D.

There were 11 main sections to this evaluation:

1. AAGT Membership and Attendance at AAGT Conferences
2. Meeting Places for Conferencing
3. Opening Plenary Session
4. Presentations and Workshops
5. Conference Format and Community Meetings
6. Process Groups
7. Experiments in Community Building
8. Administration and Facilities
9. Interest Groups and Regional Structures of AAGT
10. Saturday Night Dinner Dance and Honoring Ceremony
11. Closing Plenary Session and Overall Evaluation

Thirty-three people returned responses to this questionnaire, more than 1/3 of the conference participants. Of the respondents, 79% were AAGT members, having attended a mean of 2.27 previous AAGT conferences.

The portions of this evaluation for which the results are predictable are those that apply to the workshops, the process groups, and the ECB events. Respondents attended, on the average, 3.58 (out of a possible 5) workshops, and the mean responses to the questions about workshops ranged from 4.24 to 4.76 on a 5 point scale, where 5 is the most favorable response possible. Process groups were similarly highly rated, with a mean response value of 4.87 to the question which asked whether the groups were a vital part of the conference experience. Respondents, on the average, attended 3.61 out of the 4 sessions, with 73% of the respondents attending all 4 sessions. ECB sessions were less well attended, although 42% of the respondents attended at least one session. The ECB sessions are clearly considered to be of value, judging by responses to the questionnaire. The mean of responses to questions concerning several aspects of the value of ECB sessions ranged from 3.58 to 4.44.

The opening and closing plenaries were also viewed in a positive light. The opening plenary received a mean participant satisfaction score of 4.19 out of 5. The closing plenary was rated 4.39. Interest groups and regional events were somewhat less important to participants, earning mean importance ratings of 2.70 and 2.82 respectively. The single interest group event was attended by 64% of the survey respondents. The conference format which included having community meetings woven throughout the conference was a somewhat more controversial feature, although a mean response of 3.97 in favor of having the community meetings interspersed throughout the conference indicates significant support for this model. Response to the question about the favorability of the overall conference format drew a mean score of 3.82, with most people commenting that there needed to be more free time scheduled in.

Questions about administration and facilities drew responses that reflected information that appeared on the evaluation forms for specific conference events. People were lukewarm about the guest room accommodations and meeting rooms, although people greatly enjoyed the meals and dining facilities (with a mean rating of 4.70 out of 5). They were more favorable about those administrative aspects that were handled by AAGT staff and work study students, particularly appreciating the continuing education procedures (rated 4.80). With regard to exhibits, people seemed to like what was there but to want more.

Participants were also asked their preferences about meeting places for conferencing. Respondents most liked the idea of a small hotel (mean rating of 4.00), than that of a retreat center (rating of 3.77), and they least like the idea of meeting in a large hotel (mean rating of 2.39).

By far the most highly valued aspect of the conference experience was the dinner dance and honoring ceremony, achieving a rating of 4.84 on a 5 point scale.



**NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GESTALT THERAPY**

AAGT

108 East Oak Street

Denton, Texas 76201-4240