



# AAGT NEWS

Association for the Advancement  
of Gestalt Therapy



## 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 community through patience and understanding.
3. We undertake to support the needs of the international members of our community.
4. We undertake to stay with even difficult dialogue, acknowledging the need for space and refreshment when hungry, tired, frustrated, but not abandoning one another.
5. We undertake to get and remain interested in the impact our behavior, words and intentions have on one another.
6. 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.
7. We undertake to attend carefully to language or other communication that "objectifies the other."

## Just the Facts

contact info, dates, connections,  
etc

### AAGT EC Contact information:

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**\*\*please feel free to contact us  
for ANY questions\*\***

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As many of you know I was officially elected president at the November conference and immediately began serving this two-year sentence —er... term. In my acceptance speech, which I think lasted about thirty seconds, I thanked everyone for the honor and promised; 1] to dedicate myself to trying to provide the type of leadership which we have always had...that is, of a very high order; and 2] to have fun. So far I've had a lot of fun not to mention a lot of warm contact.

Here are some goals for the organization which I've been thinking about [not in any order of priority; I trust priorities will emerge]:

- to stay in close touch with you, the members. I welcome hearing from you
- to continue the development of our new Service Exchange Program [SEP]. I suggest you see our new 2002 directory for detailed information on the SEP and on members' offerings in it. [If you didn't get a directory at the conference, you will receive one in January with your dues statement].
- to promote our new worker bees program, an idea which emerged during one of the community meetings at the conference. You'll be hearing about this and invited/cajoled to participate
- to continue the development of our new Organizational Members component. Please see our newsletter each quarter for the latest happenings in this subgroup of AAGT.
- to promote and enhance connections with other Gestalt organizations [ GANZ, EAGT, etc.] We've already begun this through the strong bond that has been created among our publications editor and those of GANZ and EAGT [one result already is that they are talking about a joint column]. There are many ways in which Gestalt organizations around the world can connect, support, stimulate and enrich one another. This is already happening and I would like to see it take a big leap forward.
- to support the continuing evolution of this newsletter e.g. through the inter-associational column mentioned above, a column for our own Organizational Members component, invited articles of interest, news of our individual members et al, including a venue for the creative side of our members. I am confident our new publications editor Marcy Stern will continue the great work of Elizabeth Revell and her other predecessors.
- to have fun [oh, yeah I said that already...yet it bears repeating. We've had a lot of tough times together in our short history. I sense that we have gone through that necessary phase

[completed that Gestalt]; we've chewed thoroughly and now it's time for a fun phase.....until the next phase.

I wish the best for all of us....Bud



**Bud Feder, President and Carol Brockmon, Past President**



**Opening plenary participants**

## **A TRIBUTE TO CHUCK AND CARA KANNER**

Our Sixth Annual International Conference held in St Pete Beach, Florida was a huge success.

It was great not only in terms of the quality of the professional offerings, the spirited and productive community meetings and the opportunity for associating with participants from many lands, but also because of the splendor and pleasant efficiency of The Tradewinds Sirata Conference center with its beautiful beachfront setting. One special memory I have is taking a needed break by walking on the beach one morning and on my way back seeing several dyads in relaxed conversation under umbrellas. [I joined one for a while, the incomparable dyad of Charlie Bowman and Brian O'Neill. I learned a lot and had a lot of laughs.] We loved it so much we are going back there in 2004 [which will make planning for the next conference much easier].

A great measure of the burden of making all this happen was taken on and magnificently seen to fulfillment by Chuck and Cara Kanner. They found the Center and spent many hours working out details with the center's staff; they hosted the Conference Planning Committee's pre-conference weekend six months prior to the conference, supplying us with meeting space, transportation to the center a hour away so we could experience it firsthand [this made planning so much more feasible —and creating great excitement and inspiration]; they bought many supplies; they stored supplies we sent them; they enlisted the children at their school to do mailings of brochures - I could probably fill this whole newsletter with a listing of all they did.

To top it all off, Chuck and Cara sponsored an elegant opening night social, underwriting it completely right down to the last glass of champagne, and doing so very discreetly and low-key.

We owe a tremendous debt and a pile of gratitude to them and I hope their ears have been burning ever since November with the praises they have elicited. I know I still hear it in my local circle and I imagine the same is true in Ohio and California and in Israel and Australia.

Chuck and Cara: thank you, thank you, thank you, on behalf of myself, the CPC, all the participants and the entire organization which gained a tremendous boost from the conference - a conference which would not have been possible without you.  
Bud Feder, President



Kanner Folds

## **What's Happening**

**Online: AAGT.org for  
more:upcoming events**

**June 12 - 15, 2003  
In New York City -  
The NYIGT conference  
Gestalt Alive: 50 years creating,  
developing, evolving**

**June 15th, 2003 through  
Tuesday afternoon  
June 17th  
The AAGT Annual Business  
Meeting will be held in  
Montclair, NJ - 12 miles due  
west of NYC, at the Unitarian  
Church.**

**May 2004-  
GANZ Conference in Sydney,  
Australia "Weaving the Fabric  
of Community"**

**November 10th - 14th, 2004  
AAGT Conference:  
"Re-creation: Transforming the  
Field Through the Processes of  
Gestalt Therapy."  
The Seventh International  
Conference of AAGT will return  
to the Tradewinds Sirata Resort  
in St. Petersburg, Florida.**

## A Call For Worker Bees

**At the conference in St. Petersburg, Peter Philippon introduced the idea for the Worker Bee Program. This proposal was enthusiastically received by the community. It came out of a discussion about how to have more members involved in the organization. Peter suggested that we have a pool of individuals who are willing to do a certain time limited task. This would support the various committees and the work load would be shared and we would have more voices heard.**

**If you are interested in being a Worker Bee please contact Helen Lindsey. She had volunteered to coordinate this effort. Helenmsw@hotmail.com Tel# 908-647-5196 Fax: 908-647-4050**

**Linda DiTullio will be the contact to the EC. Linbiker@aol.com**

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Well, here I am at the helm of the first AAGT newsletter of 2003 – and my first newsletter as editor. I feel like Bozo - these are some mighty big shoes!! I began writing this as the Conference ended, so my mind & spirit has been refreshed and renewed. I still amble along absolutely mystified by the power of the Conference. I am transformed. And I don't think I'm alone in that. Of course, by the time we all read this, life will have caught up with us and we probably won't be able to feel as much of the power any longer. I have my memories, but the experience fades.

As I look back, I remember so much, but what I feel is a sense of awe. I met people I'd only imagined existed somewhere in this universe. I mean, I MET them, talked with them, and, come to find out, I AM them. And that's how it goes for me in the Gestalt community.

I have spent an interesting couple of months trying to gather this newsletter together. I had a grip for a while there, then I had a full computer crash. I lost my entire external mind!! Everything I had in my electronic brains went to gigaheaven. May it all rest in peace. And to hell with it, too! I just started all over. For those of you who had to re-produce material, I send another THANK YOU!

For those of you who recognize the gaps here, I apologize. I also realize that perhaps the gaps are supposed to be.

As my new friend, Sharon Snir, says, creating and re-creating (or recreating) the newsletter is another new beginning. How exciting! My evolution has to start somewhere, so as Alice taught us, "Start at the beginning." Duh. And, so, I forgive my \*\*##\*!!!\*\* hard drive. The things I remember in my head must be what's important or what stands out somehow. That's why I can tell you about things. It comes from what I can actually pull up. Doesn't this sound familiar? So, what's important, anyway?!

These are the blurbs that I remember:

- the beach ~ the sun ~ the water ~ the warmth ~ the views ~ process group around sunset
- the familiar faces ~ the unfamiliar faces.
- putting faces to the names - as I sat in registration, it amazed me as people would come pick up their name tags - up til then, the faces didn't connect with the names.
- the lovely food ~ the irregular times we ate ~ eating outside ~ Publix across the street ~ The cafe ~ the tiki bars ~ Bennigans
- St. Ansel & the wholey mackerel!! My IIG initiation!!
- Meeting you ~ the rush to get there ~ the rush & the calming down ~ the not wanting to say goodbye
- The generosity ~ the kindness ~ the openness ~ the warmth ~ the humanness ~ the eye-contact! ~



Process Group lead by Ansel Woldt

- Shabat
- the opportunities ~ the respect ~ connecting ~ friends ~ intense dreams ~ that first exercise & how different my experience felt to how others seemed to perceive it ~ feeling indecisive then deciding to be recognized as a peaceful demonstrator (and being fully misunderstood!) ~
- balloons ~ black licorice ~ 3/4 pound of crab salad ~ lunch at the Hurricane ~ puppets ~ Jon's
- introduction with his puppet ~ finding my voice ~ trying to stay warm ~ do I have enough clothes? ~
- Is there a baby yet?
- proprietary "rule bending" ~ tears ~ where's the elevators? ~ where's 1201? ~ how did I get here? ~ the pool & jacuzzi ~ fresh fish & shrimp ~ fear
- no time to do the bizzy-work I brought in my briefcase (I brought my freakin LAPTOP for godzake!! -what was I thinking?! ~ connecting with friends from the past ~ observing others truly working together ~ overcoming ~ accepting ~ tolerating
- the parties ~ the food ~ the music ~ the talent
- the famous people in those rooms ~ trust ~ understanding ~ learning
- Mona's poor ankle!
- my dream
- the gorgeous quilt & paintings
- the flowers

My Visitors After the Conference. Living down the road from an AAGT conference is a gift. I was fortunate enough to be able to invite a few friends to my home in Sarasota after the conference, so guess who showed up? Jon Blend! (UK), Jack Neggerman! (OH)!, Sharon and Oren Snir! (Australia) Danielle Poupard! (Montreal), & Judy Robertson! (Sarasota). What a great time we had!! No one wanted it to end.

As I come to settle into life again, I am reminded that writing and editing is a job, a labor of love, and a public voice. I can only hope that I am a decent conduit. For those matters neglected or omitted here, I apologize & can only say that I'll work on it. For information you need to get in or out, get it to me for the next issue. This issue includes some amazing writings from individuals who attended the AAGT Conference. I have also duplicated some important information from previous newsletters. I have added a "Just the Facts" section so that finding numbers and names is easier. I also invite you to help me create a humor section - I'm open to suggestions, so feel free to share them with me. I encourage all of you to pay attention to the need to keep the SEP concept alive & to join the Worker Bees in getting the work done.

Keep the Spirit,  
Marcy Stern, Ed.D., LMHC  
941-379-8701  
imawareru@comcast.net

AAGT's Annual Business Meeting will take place right after the celebratory NY Institute's 50th Anniversary Conference in NYC in June. The NYIGT Conference will begin Thurs night June 12th and end about noon on Sunday the 15th and will be held in NYC. Our Annual Business Meeting will begin that night, Sunday the 15th and end Tuesday afternoon the 17th and will be held in Montclair, NJ - 12 miles due west of NYC, at the Unitarian Church.

To register for the NYIGT conference contact Lee Zevy [lzevy@cs.com].

Registration information for our AAGT annual meeting will be forthcoming soon!

Neither organization is making any hotel arrangements and both are eager to host personal free housing to all who want it. To request housing for either or both, contact Bud Feder [bfeder@comcast.net] ASAP. Again, you can always contact Marcy as she usually gets the details first for the newsletter.

I hope to see you at both....Bud Feder

## Report

### TREASURERS REPORT

**As outgoing treasurer I am pleased to report that we enter 2003 and Bruce Aaron's reign as treasurer a few thousand dollars in the black with no outstanding debts.**

**Our conference income was sufficient to pay the hotel the approximately \$25,000 which we owed them and we are fortunate that they are waiving the approxi-mately \$7000 penalty for insufficient room rent als [actually we have paid them the \$7,000 and they are applying it as a deposit on our next conference there in 2004].**

**A full itemized treasurer's report for 2002 will appear in the next newsletter. So I say goodbye as treasurer - yet you aren't rid of me since I will keep popping up as president.**

**Being treasurer was mostly a rewarding experience; I got to know a lot more of you and now I look forward to the easy job which is the presidency.**

**Bud Feder**

## More Gestalt Info

**Web sites of interest to Gestalt Practitioners:**

**The Gestalt Journal, and the International Gestalt Journal**  
[www.gestalt.org/index.htm](http://www.gestalt.org/index.htm)

**Gestalt Review**  
[www.gestaltreview.com](http://www.gestaltreview.com)

**The British Gestalt Journal**  
[www.britishgestaltjournal.com](http://www.britishgestaltjournal.com)

**Gestalt!**  
[www.g-g.org/gej](http://www.g-g.org/gej)

**Gestalt Critique**  
[www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/gik\\_gestalt/gestalt\\_critique.html](http://www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/gik_gestalt/gestalt_critique.html)

**Gestalt Bookmarks**  
[www.g-g.org/gestalt\\_bookmarks](http://www.g-g.org/gestalt_bookmarks)

**The AAGT**  
[www.aagt.org](http://www.aagt.org)

## "RESPONSIBILITY"

**by Phil Brownell**

The alarm clock jolted me out of sleep on the first day of the conference. I got into my car and headed west, southwest out of Wilmington, North Carolina, on U.S. Highway 74. Just north of the South Carolina border, Interstate 95 turned me toward Florida. When the sun came up, I was almost to Georgia, and I thought I'd be in Tampa way before I had expected. Then, the long road began to creep for some reason. The car seemed like it was running okay, but I had been throttled back; someone had latched onto the hands of my clock, dragging them down.

I stopped to refuel and saw some bear claws so had to eat a couple and down a Mountain Dew for the caffeine. "Who makes these things? They should be thrown into jail for the way they make you feel!" Bear Claws start out tasting so good, but they end up making you feel like crap, and I fell victim to miles of roller coaster blood sugar before my body brought me back to a sense of balance.

So I arrived in Tampa in one piece. The car held up, and nobody ran into me, but as I approached this long bridge heading toward St. Petersburg Beach, I saw a sign that warned there would be no gasoline available on it. That's when I checked the gauge and was seized by a panic. It was on empty! How did that happen!?

I gripped the steering wheel more tightly, which caused my fingers to grow cold. My forehead tensed. My lips pressed against one another, and my eyes scanned the horizon for the end of the bridge. They darted to the instrument panel to check the gauge for that little light that tells you the bottom is about to drop out.

I felt desperate! "Drive all that way, make it on time, and then run out of gas in the middle of a bridge with cars whizzing past and no way to get to a phone. Just my luck!"

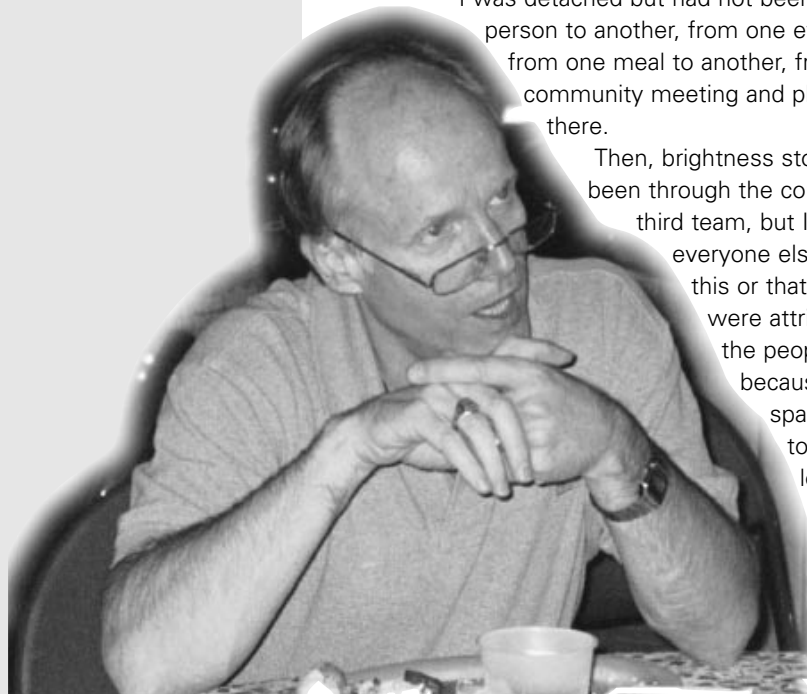
I kept the speed down to conserve fuel, and other cars raced past; I imagined they were frustrated with me. In self defense I yelled, "Sure! Drive like maniacs! And keep going right off the side into the drink, you idiots!"

When I finally arrived at St. Petersburg Beach, I found a gas station and then continued on to the hotel. I walked up to the counter at the front desk, but my brain felt flat. I used the right words to get a room. I saw people I recognized, and I was glad to see them, but there was no surge of excitement - not even anxiety. I smiled, I think. They were nice to me. I found my room. I dumped off my stuff. I went to the meetings.

I was detached but had not been purposefully detaching. I was floated from one person to another, from one event to another, through one exercise to another, from one meal to another, from one process group to another, from one community meeting and plenary to another. I did things. I said things. I was there.

Then, brightness stopped me. I was sitting with my process group. I'd been through the conflict experiment with Sean, and I'd been in the third team, but I was sitting in my process group listening to everyone else talk about that third grouping and describe it as this or that but miss it by what seemed like a mile. They were attributing motives and various kinds of experience to the people in that third company, and I was frustrated, because other people kept talking and I couldn't find a space to get in with my perspective. I was beginning to bounce with the excitement of holding onto it so long until finally someone noticed that I was ready to pop, and I exclaimed, "Yes! So finish already!"

Well, they must have blown a whistle. They must have stopped the play. Everything changed. People felt hurt. I had said they weren't important. I had tromped over their bodies with heavy feet. I must have reached out in my frustration. I must



have put my hand to their throat and extended my fingers over their soft, warm skin, and I must have squeezed the air, and their words, right out of them. I must have reached down their throats and ripped their hearts back up and out with a gurgling, bloody mess. I must have killed them.

The hint of delight blew out of the room on the wind of urgency and crisis. The moment may have been taken captive but not my energy. I took stock. I let one thing go in favor of another. I chose reflection. I watched the emotional first aid. I got up when it was over, but I kept thinking about the exercise, about the conflict among groups that reformed as conflict among the individuals of one group.

Who did what to whom? Who or what is to blame? Did I choose to let go of what I had to say, or was it stolen from me? Did I hurt other people by being impatient and insensitive, or did I respond with an innocent surge when someone removed their finger from my dike? Responsibility is more than the ability to respond; it takes ownership of one's experience. The boundary looks inward to gather up what is salient in the moment and to carry it to the boundary looking outward, helping the organism know how to orient to time, place, person, and event - providing load bearing walls in the organization of experience. To be fully alive in the moment is to take responsibility for how one is experiencing oneself.



Sarah Toman



Tine Van Wink &  
Gloria Melnick

Conference Participants



## Ganz Newsletter

**Advertising costs for the GANZ Newsletter conferences, workshops, seminars and professional development days will be as follows:**

**From April 2003 the cost of advertising will be as follows:**

**Quarter page:**

**\$60 Members &  
\$75 non members**

**Half page**

**\$100 members &  
\$125 non members**

**Full page**

**\$150 members &  
\$175 non members**

**Insert**

**\$160 members &  
\$185 non members**

**for more information contact  
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## 50 Years

**Gestalt Alive:**  
50 years creating,  
developing, evolving

### A Conference

- celebrating 50 Years of Gestalt therapy
- commemorating the publication of "Gestalt Therapy"
- marking the founding of the New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy June 12 - 15, 2003. In New York City

**Conference themes will include:**

- field notions of self
- group process
- working with body experiences
- evolving theory

**The weekend will include:**

- Experiential and theoretical presentations
  - Panels
- Process groups
- A Dinner-Dance

**The conference is in the planning stage, site and schedule to be announced.**

**For information:**  
**New York Institute website:**  
[www.newyorkgestalt.org](http://www.newyorkgestalt.org)

**or**  
**Institute Secretary,**  
**Susan Gregory:**  
[sgregory@gestaltsing.com](mailto:sgregory@gestaltsing.com)



**A group of dissention - at the Opening Plenary we formed 3 groups. This group sat & joined hands to express their position.**

## REFLECTIONS OF A PLENARY LEADER

*by Sean Gaffney*

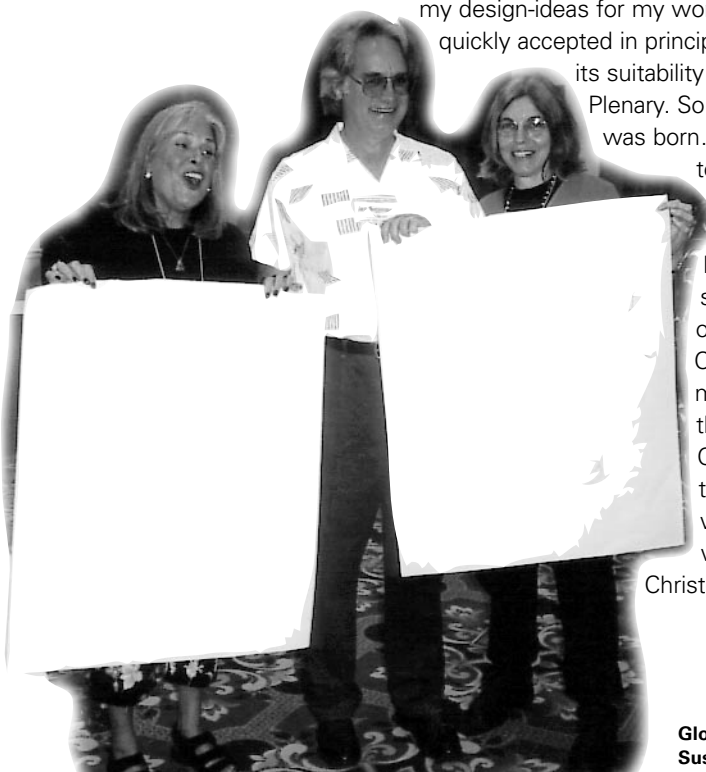
At AAGT 2002 in Florida, I led an experiential plenary around our Conference theme, "Holding the Heat". For me, this was an exciting event of many dimensions and complexities. I would like to share my reflections with Newsletter readers, aware that these include both Conference participants and others.

I had originally planned to do an experiential workshop, so I had an idea and a rough design forming. At the same time, I was involved in the Program Planning Committee, specifically around the Opening Plenary. After numerous conference-calls and e-mail exchanges, we had reached a position where a number of contrasting perspectives and design proposals had emerged. We were in the middle of finding a creative way to incorporate the alternatives into a satisfactory synthesis.

I was in Belfast, in the North of Ireland at the time of one of our conference-calls (a great name, considering what we were doing!). Apart from my formal work there, I was also working on my possible workshop, as it had a strong connection to life in Belfast (and Israel, where I had recently been working). In both places, "Holding the Heat" – and releasing some of it - is a way of life.

So, during the conference-call, when our dilemmas about the plenary were again evident, I found myself offering to do it as an experiential, based on my previous work of this nature and my design-ideas for my workshop. This suggestion was quickly accepted in principle, with some remarks about its suitability (= unsuitability!) as an Opening Plenary. So the idea of a second plenary was born...we now had three plenaries to plan – the Opening, Middle and Closing Plenaries!

The decision to run this Experiential Plenary was greatly supported by the fact that some others on the Program Committee had attended one of my experiential workshops at the AAGT Cleveland Conference, and were positive to my way of working. Others would be attending a similar workshop at GANZ, Christchurch.



**Gloria Melnick, Jack Neggerman and Susan Jurkowski**

Because of the possible numbers involved – anything up to 300 – it was clear that I would need facilitator support. Those mentioned above – plus some others – volunteered and were volunteered. I now had a Plenary 2 Committee.

Initially, this persuaded me to create a more formal design, which could be described and shared. This would also support those on the Program Committee who did not have any experience of this kind of work, and needed something concrete to relate to. At the same time, my experience told me that what I needed to do was think, dream, doodle, make notes, lose them, imagine, fantasies, worry, regret, feel unsure, feel over-confident, create, and most of all – wait until I stood there on Friday morning at 9 a.m. and follow the flow.

I've just read the over-complex and over-explained design proposal sent out sometime last year to the Plenary 2 Committee. Thankfully, it stayed as a paper exercise!

The reality was that I arrived in Florida with ideas still whizzing around my head, a growing excitement, a growing anxiety, an occasional calm, occasional forgetfulness. My main focus was organizing a meeting with the facilitators – and also my biggest problem! Getting a group together in the middle of an AAGT Conference is not an exercise for the faint-hearted. In addition, organizing the IIG Meeting tended to take precedence, not to mention our pre-IIG practice-sessions....



As the Friday approached, I also needed to co-ordinate with Perry Klepner, since the overall design as worked out on our many conference-calls included holding Process Group sessions as an integral part of Plenary 2. Perry was co-ordinating the Process Group facilitators. I also had a concern about the possible/probable debriefing needs of the Plenary 2 team – my experience of leading my experiential workshops was, that being such a major force of the experiential field

as a facilitator naturally is, the amount of unfinished business carried by the facilitators – and directed at them - can be impactful. As a facilitator team, in relationships with different forces of the dynamic field of Plenary 2, we would probably need support.

As Thursday rolled on, I became more and more convinced of the need for someone other than myself or any other team-member to close the Plenary. Again, my sense here was around the unfinished business with the experiential leader which invariably emerges, with all of its projective dynamic. I also raised this with Perry. With regard to the facilitator debriefing, I was still unsure. I had wanted a separate debriefing during the process group sessions at the Plenary – and fully accepted and agreed with the point that this would impact on the membership issue in the process groups. And yet...

As Thursday morning became afternoon became evening, a number of meetings were in place. Sylvia Crocker had 10 minutes that evening; Sarah Toman and Ansel Woldt had 15. Since Sylvia had participated in the GANZ workshop, she felt confident in the general method. Ansel had been at the AAGT Cleveland workshop. Sarah was graciously winging it...

So these three had a very brief intro into how we would open the following morning, some notion of an assigned role as the experiential emerged, and little else. Later that evening in Crabby Jack's or Jacky's Crab or whatever it was called, Brian O'Neill (who had attended the GANZ workshop) and I had a 5-minute shouted meeting against a background of crabs having the shit literally hammered out of them and the slurping of various liquids.....

## MINUTES

**If you would like to read the meeting minutes from the 2002 conference, e-mail Carol Brockman at: [cbrockmon@comcast.net](mailto:cbrockmon@comcast.net) with a request to be given a temporary ID and password to enter the interactive part of the members only site, [www.AAGTonline.org](http://www.AAGTonline.org)**

My next meeting was with Charlie Bowman as the crabs swam in digestive juices and watery American “beer”...Charlie and I went through the outline of the basic “start-up” design, and talked about how the team could facilitate such a dynamic and utterly unpredictable process. Sarah and Ansel dropped in, and we agreed on the probable facilitator role for each of the team. I would share these thoughts with Sylvia and Brian as we met.

One of my very last-minute requests at Cracky Jabbs was that the conference room be set up with all chairs around the walls, and the floor-space clear. This would save time – and time was an issue: we had to be ready to move into process-groups at 11.30, and, as of 9 a.m., nothing was predictable...

The Plenary 2 facilitator team assembled as a whole at 8.50...in a fully furnished cinema-seating conference room. I had come to the room earlier, and decided to leave it as it was and use the situation as part of the design. Everyone in the team accepted their role without hesitation, and at 9 a.m. we were ready to wing it. I had agreed with Sharon Snir to give her a few minutes for the GANZ 2004 lottery, so the morning opened innocently enough...

The next few moments are blurred for me...I remember asking the conference delegates to move all the chairs around the walls, introducing Plenary 2 and introducing the facilitator team, though in what order I can't remember. I am always nervously excited and totally in the moment at such times, fully present and on automatic pilot...

In presenting Plenary 2, I spoke of the conference theme – “Holding the Heat” – and how the intention was to create a sense of heat, and see how we held it.

Then I presented the basic ingredients: participators, who would engage actively in following the simple instructions which would initiate the process; observers, who would observe whatever was figural for them at any time, following their energy and interest; and bystanders, who would look on, without any direct involvement.

The bystanders were placed along the back wall of the spacious conference room, with Brian as their facilitator. The observers were free to roam around wherever they chose, and observe whatever caught their attention or curiosity. The participants were asked to gather in the centre of the room, in silence.

They were asked to mingle in silence, simply noticing their process. They were then asked to begin to focus on similarities and differences – “who do you feel similar to, for any reason, who do you feel different from, for any reason”. Again, in silence. In all of the work of this nature that I do, this is the defining moment – differentiation in silence. Giggles, short conversations, edging out to the periphery of the mingling – all this and more takes place now as the participators deal with the most existential aspect of our lives – irrational, non-verbal choice, with responsibility for the choice, the choosing and the consequences.

Slowly, the sameness/difference patterns began to emerge...at this point, Ansel + Sylvia and Sarah + Charlie moved into place, each pair associating with each of the emerging sub-groups. As a facilitator team, our agreement was that these two teams would support the process of each primary differentiation while awaiting any further differentiations that could occur. In each pair, Charlie would follow the flow of the more extreme of one sub-group, and Sylvia would do likewise with the other...if such a dynamic occurred...so the facilitator pairs of Sarah and Charlie, and Sylvia and Ansel, were on the floor fully in the unknowing position. They could only facilitate on the ground of what happened, dynamically, as the participators engaged in their process within the framework...and Brian was facilitating the bystanders of whatever might emerge amongst the participators...and the observers were moving freely around the room...and I was holding the boundary of the experiential...

Gestalt, field theory, existentialism...all there in the here-and-now of a whole-group experience...how beautiful, how

Sean Gaffney, Charlie Bowman, Brian O'Neill





**Some of the Bystanders express their feelings during the plenary exercise**

real, how lively...

At this point, there was another defining moment: now, there were two sub-groups differentiating from each other on the floor...there were dynamic issues bubbling up in each sub-group...the instruction to sense

and feel the sameness within each group as well as the difference between them, and to articulate that within each group was ongoing... So I asked the participants to check out if there was a sense of sameness or of difference which was distinct and distinguishing within each sub-group...defining moment 2 in this work. And WOW! Here was a turning point, when the experiential moved from my framework into a field of its own forces...the central Gestalted beauty of this process-work.

One of the two sub-groups began to differentiate – the other remained intact. The third sub-group was full of energy, so Charlie followed their process. Sarah stayed with the “original” group, and Sylvia and Ansel hung on in there with the other sub-group, which was moving towards staying intact..

As the process developed, the “breakaway” group – sub-group 3 – began to define itself as different not only from the original sub-group to which it had originally belonged, but also to the other original sub-group...at the same time as they were energized around NOT supporting difference, but rather unity and harmony...

Somewhere here, various attempts were made to get the microphone away from me...some not so subtle, and one most subtle: two men who stood very close to me and held a loud commentary aimed towards the mike...or towards me...

This was one of the times I myself really had to “Hold the Heat” of the dynamics of the experiential, the multiplicity of happenings, the attempts at the mike, the responsibility for being the human container of the wholeness of the Plenary...

“Group 1” now began taking a clear stance, creating posters and slogans. “Group 2” also began defining its identity with hugging-circles and noisy sharings...“Group 3” were asked to prepare their annual parade... As Group 3 were huddled over their preparations, Group 1 began shouting slogans and marching around with their posters...Group 2 began reacting to them...

A memorable moment: at some stage, a sprightly Ed Nevis found himself having a face-off with Anthony from the “Novice Track” (and that evening, inducted into IIG)...a poster was grabbed from its owner, torn up and used to make paper-balls, which were then thrown by some of Group 2 at Group 1. Ed did his aikido sidestep, and continued his march. Group 3 now emerged as some relic of the 60's, all peace, love and dialogue, with a silent demonstration in the middle of the room – and in the middle of the ongoing meeting of the forces of Groups 1 and 2...

It may have been at this stage that Charlie came up to me and asked “What will we do now?” and I replied “I haven’t a fucking clue”. “Fine” said Charlie, and wandered back to the fray...

I paid Brian a visit at the Bystander wall...someone was literally building a barrier of chairs between Bystanders and the Participators... By 11 a.m., the Conference Room had been transformed from a container for an announcement on GANZ 2004, to a boiling cauldron of

**Dates**

# AAGT WEB



**[www.aagt.org](http://www.aagt.org)**



## Read

**Robert Fulgram once wrote a book about things we learned in Kindergarten.**

**Well, one of AAGT's parts is its own "Kindergarten" ~ we are young, we are novices in many areas, and we are learning. As Crosby, Nash, & Young said: "We are Golden and we've got to get ourselves back to the garden." AAGT has come up with some guidelines to live with each other in fair and respectful ways. These guidelines have been around for a couple of years and here they are again to help us remember how to behave.**

**Please read the Covenant of Community on front cover.**

people...the field was self-organizing in a continual dynamic...

There was a point when I sensed some stability, and intervened. I asked the Observers to report in with their figures...diverse, dynamic, rich figures. A wonderful moment...

It was now time to move into the Process Groups, in the room, for an hour...

Perry had earlier spoken to Philip Lichtenberg, and we had agreed on a simple procedure to close the session. So, at 12.30, Phil called for attention, and invited comments from the room. There were plenty. At 12.30, he closed Plenary 2.

I had asked Bruce Robertson if he could facilitate a short debrief of the facilitators, which he then did. Unfortunately, Sarah had some arrangements to make for the afternoon. The rest of us huddled in a tight circle and spoke to our feelings...

This was the high point of the Conference for me: with a lot of emotion and confusion and gratitude, I became deeply aware that I had not only trusted my friends and colleagues Ansel, Brian, Charlie, Sarah and Sylvia...they had actually trusted me. My calm and presence during the morning were grounded in their trust.

Thank you, guys.....and thank you Carol, Cynthia and the rest of the Planning Committee for your enthusiastic trust of a wild idea..."

## PROCESS GROUP EXPERIENCE

*by Irv Gadol*

Regarding the process group.....first of all during the first session that I was there and I was confronted I was just sort of out of it at the beginning of the session. Being confronted like that was sort of a wake up call. I have learned a long time ago that being in a group is always a wake up call since there will always be people that are on a different wave length from myself and have very definite ideas about how things should be, especially with others including myself. I have learned over the years to not get too excited about that. In the beginning, in the past, I would get bent out of shape and take it personally, and feel criticized. Now I just blow it off as a regular and natural phenom of what happens when people find themselves in groups. In that process group I accepted that I wasn't doing what others wanted me to do, but I also accepted that I didn't have to necessarily accommodate the expectations of the others.

I was not really aware of what it looked like to others in the "audience", but you were in the audience and I sure would be eager to know what it looked like to you.

Nominating you (as newsletter editor): I was very glad to nominate you and have a part in hopefully getting you to be more active and perhaps a permanent figure in the organization. I had good vibes about you as soon as I became aware of you, and you too seem to be a gentle and a special person. Therefore, we couldn't afford to let you get away. So I'm glad that you have volunteered and will help to make the next meeting a reality. I still mean it when I say I will help you in any way that I possible can.

Regarding the group photo: I was really glad to be able to take that picture (the same photo that appeared in the GANZ newsletter). I have only recently become involved in digital photography and the camera that I was using is relatively new. The more I do with digital photography the more enthused I get and the better I like it. I had a special feeling about our group because it was so varied and had so many different kinds of folks in it. In general I felt that the people in it were kind, interested and engaging. It was a good process group and I was glad that I was in it.

The conference in general: I thought it was a good conference because it had so many parts to it. The larger plenary with Sean as the leader was really fun and it was illuminating. It really did illustrate well how complicated large groups of people tend to be. So many people, so many different experiences experienced by all, and so much wonderful energy displayed. It was engaging and so much fun for me. I approached lightheartedly and gave myself permission to just flow along with it. Turned out great I thought.

Fondly, Irv



Irv Gadol

## A DUTCH VIEW ON THE CONFERENCE

by *Tine van Wijk*

The Place: a Beach Resort Hotel with three different locations. The most exotic 'The Island Grand' with inner rivers, swans, romantic bridges, court yards with exotic flowers, swimming pools all over the place, shops with quick food to stack your refrigerator. Food that in my eyes is not food but candy. The hotels are right on the beach. Cabana's and of course towels are free for guests. One can go para sailing, dolphin watching, boat fishing and do other water sports. I really feel that I am in the deep south of the US. When I look at the swimming pool surrounded by a balustrade I am reminded of movies by – was it? – Elia Kazan and the plays of Tennessee Williams in which people are hot, slow, sexy and sly. Although it is November the sun is hot, dangerously strong and I can feel that I have to be careful not to get a sunburn. The sea is lovely not too warm, just right and with the wind we are having there are real waves.

This week I live in a suite with gorgeous view on a miles and miles long white sand beach. Hotels are not too high. Palms are everywhere. St. Pete beach is a strip of land between the Gulf of Mexico and the bay. Water on two sides. Being Dutch it makes me feel at home.

### PROCESS GROUP LEADERS.

The Conference opened for me with a meeting of the Process Group Leaders in the ballroom of the hotel on the eighth floor, view on the beaches. We are with sixteen. Perry Klepner is leading and invites us to say three words to make clear how we feel. Words that are mentioned more than others: tired, excited, tense, adventurous. Next step is to take some time with your co-leader and discover what the three words have to do with you being a group leader. I will be leading together with Burt Lazarin, the vice-president of the New York Institute. It seems that we are both types that like the group to do the work and are willing to wait and listen until it happens. For me this is the beginning of what turned out to be quite an adventure. I am used to lead my own groups alone or with a pupil. I felt challenged and even more so when the process group came together and it turned out that some very interesting and well known colleagues were in it. Who will be leading who I wondered in silence. In the first session I got bored when the topic turned out to be the conflicts and splits in the AAGT. Apparently during former conferences rather painful things happened and – may be – a lot of people were not attending this conference because of that. At first I thought this is not about me, I am new here, I don't have a history, I was not part of those conflicts and felt happy. In the course of the conference I felt my attitude change. I am new indeed in the AAGT but I know about conflicts, I know how painful it can be to be in a battle for power and I know how difficult it is to get out of it and be able to make contact in the end. I also know that often it doesn't happen. That is why I am happy that the AAGT conferences has process groups where there is room to attend to personal and professional unfinished business. To be able to be part of leading this process was healing. I have unfinished Gestalt business in my own country and have been looking for a way and a place to continue the process. I did not succeed but I hope that the experiences I had here will help me to contribute something valuable to the Dutch and Flemish Gestalt World.

### THE OPENING.

The conference as a whole opened with a plenary. Three women shared experiences related to areas of conflict today in the world. Sonia Nevis told about a pretty criminal client she liked nevertheless. Celia



Tine van Wijk



Ansel Woldt, Zeldi Friedman,  
Sylvia Crocker

Young from Taiwan told how her mother had tea at the fence with her neighbour while their kids were fighting and Marie Quiery from Northern Ireland touched me and - measured by the applause - the rest of the audience by simply sharing how she and her people suffer by the never ending conflict between the protestants and the Catholic Nationalists. I don't know if it was a coincidence but Ireland had a big place during this conference because - I learned later - the Irish Interest Group was present. I still don't know exactly what bind them together but I remember one night everybody was invited to come to an Irish pub and join the club by holding up a short of Ansel Woldt and exclaim 'Hail Ansel'. A lot of singing and a lot of beer gave the evening an authentic Irish Touch. I fully enjoyed myself and wished I was Irish, if it was only for one drop of blood.

But before all that happened the plenary went on. We were invited to form groups of about ten people and discuss about conflict and staying in the heat.. In my group were two women from Israel. One them surprised me by talking about conflicts in relation therapies instead of the conflict in her country, although the other one said something about wanting to be able to go to the Palestinians. This because in one of the introductions it was suggested that the best thing to do in a conflict is to face your enemy.

Then the microphone was passed through the room so people could tell whatever came up during the discussion. Alas, I forgot to make notes and from this distance I cannot recall what was said., but I do remember that it felt as a good start. My interest was woken, I was certain I longed for more of this.

#### **WRITING FOR JOURNAL PUBLICATION**

The next morning - Thursday - we could choose from fourteen workshops. I always get nervous on a moment like that. How do I choose and what will I miss once I have chosen. I saw names I knew then vaguely and do know better now. To help me remember I look into the program while writing and can feel a longing in my belly. I wish I was now able to attend some of the workshops I left alone then. Still, I am happy I did go to Joseph Melnick and his theme 'How to Write for Journal Publication'. We were with only two people. Joe explained that this was the xth time he gave this workshop and may be everybody interested already took part. I felt I was lucky to have his direct attention. What I learned was that 'to write is a courageous act'. I don't think I ever looked at it that way, but it helps me now while writing this report. What touched me was to realise that I as almost all writers have experienced shame in this field. I used to write and edit for women's and children's magazines. So I do know the ruthless red pens and scissors when an article is too long or not good enough.

According to Joe: two questions are vital: why do you write and who do you write for. My answer to the first is 'I have to, to stay healthy,' and to the second 'for people who know about Gestalt or who are longing to know.' Being on this path the next question that popped up was: will you write in Dutch or English? I am grateful for the support I got from Joe to choose for English. I know it makes my world bigger. I can, for example, take part in an English speaking writers conference or a writers group.

The next day I went to lunch and met two women. When we started talking it became clear that they know each other better because they are members of the AAGT writers group. For me it felt like an important synchronicity. Although up to now I didn't take action to join this group, I am happy to know it exists and am certain that my process of writing (also) in English will go on.

#### **COMMUNITY MEETING**

Everybody introduces him- or herself by microphone. I said that according to Bud Feder I am the only member of the AAGT in the Netherlands or even in the Benelux and I am in need of nourishment I think more people in Holland need. That's why I hope to make more members. In the program I read that in the ongoing experiment that is AAGT, 'we come each year together to discover who we are now. This is the ground from which our next step will emerge. We invite you to join us with your energy and interests, and participate in the creation



**Emil Jeck, Duey Freeman**

of our present and future community.' What this means became more clear to me in the half hour Zelda Friedman gave an impression of the history of the AAGT: 'What will an association built on Gestalt Principles be like? We asked : who do we speak for? Do we have legitimacy? We wanted not to have a boss of Gestalt. We wanted to be vital.' Then she told how she remembered Bud Feeder peeling of jackets, like he was peeling an onion. 'We wanted to build enough safety to keep the structure alive. We used big sheets of white paper, so people could write down what they thought. We were soda bottles that were intensely shaken. We had hope for consensus although getting consensus is not easy. We started trying to do the impossible and we continue trying to do the impossible. Thanks to people willing to do this. Bless them!'

Then Ansel Woldt and Cynthia Cook spoke and made me more and more enthusiastic. I felt happy to be there and be part of what was happening. That afternoon during the lovely Italian lunch on the beach with the Regional Contact People I felt myself bursting with energy. I told that while brushing my teeth I had a vision of the next conference being held in Amsterdam. The support I got for this idea was surprising.

### **SHAME AND SUPPORT**

In the afternoon I chose for Robert Lee's 'Shame and Support: Treating the Intimate Couple.' I felt I got good nourishment. Some statements set me thinking: 'Shame comes if there is no chance of being received; we have to understand shame from the prospective of the child that is shy when a stranger comes and pulls back, rather than feel that something is wrong with us; when a child is not received and it goes on long enough, the shame will present itself automatically; what happens with couples when one of them can't talk about shame is that he/she will trigger her/his partner and then the situation starts escalating; the only time of feeling shame is when you care; when there is shame, there is yearning; there are only two experiences: either you are received or you are rejected; the answer to shame is support.' A very helpful advise I took with me and use treating couples is: 'Look for the yearning underneath and find out how to support it.' When there is no yearning there is nothing you can do as a therapist, I learned from Robert Lee.

### **FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS**

After an exciting plenary workshop about 'Holding the Heat of Social Conflict' led by Sean Gaffney on Friday morning, free time I spend on the beach and in the sea – I saw a most spectacular sunset - I went to 'Fathers and Daughters: The invisible Relationship'. Four fathers simply told about their relationships and invited the participants to take part. At first I was confused. What were we doing? Was this Gestalt? Then I felt something very emotional happening with me. I was deeply touched first by those sincere fathers being honest about their feelings and then by the daughters telling their stories, although the noise of the air conditioning was bothering me. I noticed that the attitude towards the fathers at first was mild then changed when a woman told about her rage, because she was abused. After this workshop I felt broken. In my notebook I wrote down: 'This was a workshop that to my surprise affected me more than I expected. I believe it touched my deepest grief. We created sacred space by sharing men's and women's business not separate but together.'

### **SAYING YES TO NO AND EXPLORING AGGRESSION AND CONFLICT**

Saturday morning. My own workshop titled 'Saying Yes to No' did not take place. No people. Strange enough I was not too distressed. When I saw the overwhelming choice of workshops in the program I already prepared for this disappointment. At the end of the conference I learned that I was not the only one without participants. May be the organisers expected more people than came? Of course I felt hurt but I got so many other opportunities to say what I wanted to say and to show myself that I could take it lightly. What also helped was that many people showed an interest by asking how my workshop went. I felt seen after all.



**Laura Chapman**

## Humor

**Humor et al:  
latest diagnoses:**

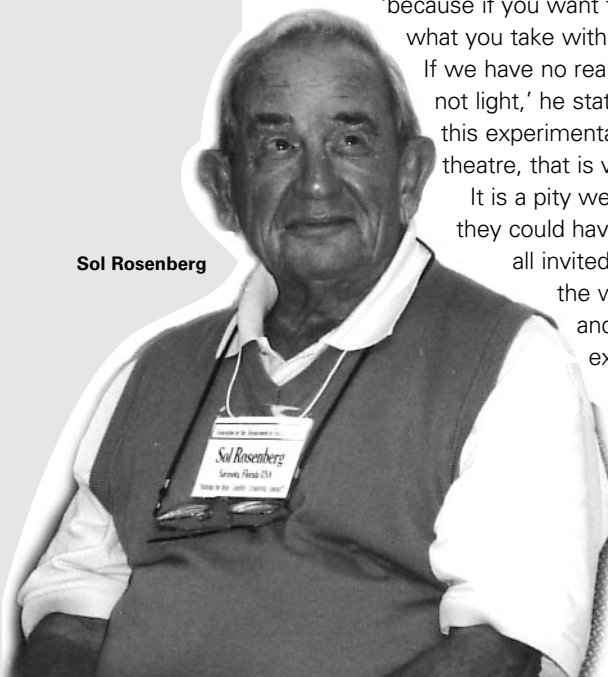
**Axis I:  
666.666 - purely evil**

**Axis II:  
Borderline with Money**

**"Thoughts are like people; if  
you don't entertain them, they  
don't hang around."**

**\*if you have any humorous  
stories, appropriate jokes, etc.,  
please send them along to me  
for the next newsletter -  
Marcy Stern -  
imawareru@comcast.net**

Sol Rosenberg



Anyway my not being lucky in this case gave me the opportunity to attend the 'Exploring Aggression and Conflict Workshop' of Perry Klepner. I learned about the chance we have to discover more about ourselves and the chance to use our power. Also about the challenge to get out of our automatism to withdraw and open up instead. Aggression always intrigues me. Of course I am daily confronted with it in my own work and I very much agree with Perry when he says that healthy aggression is contact full: 'Only when we are split it is dangerous. When someone has a continuous pain, aggression is an irksome threat. One sees a certain symptom and the pain comes. The concentration of the suppression of the pain is more pain full than the original pain. The question is: how can we organise our contact activities. To find out we did experiential work that brought me back to the suppressed anger in the home of my childhood. My body made me aware of the fact that I still suppress myself. My partner in this experiment got up to relieve the tension in my shoulders. It gave me so much air again that I could breath and make sounds. Then we started playing together by moving our shoulders, wave our arms and start singing. Yes, it's true that Aggression and Conflict can lead to creativity without having to be attacking.

### CONFLICT AND PLAY

'Don't do your best, we don't have time for that,' was one of the sentences Peter Mortola used to open this workshop about PLAY he gave together with Gordon Wheeler. Goals were: to know what play is; to explore tension, conflicts and resistances in play and the role of play in one's ongoing personal and professional life.; how can one play together.

### STATEMENT: 'WHEN PLAY STOPS, LEARNING STOPS.'

When invited to find your own goal, I decided that I longed to integrate play in my work. I think I am too serious and would love to have more laughter. Then Peter says: 'Play is fucking hard and it is scary because there is real power in it.' That is why it doesn't happen without support and it needs a structure. Play also implies an agreement and involves that we are interested in the topics. You have to be drawn into the activity to become one with it.

My expectation was that this would be a playful workshop but the play – draw, scribble, discover the figure in it and, be it and use it to play together - lost from the talking. Specially when Gordon Wheeler took the lead and presented us their contact model. The question is how can one create a transmission zone – SACRED SPACE - where it is safe to be creative, do experiments, give or do therapy and play.

Gordon asks his clients if they have two supports: one from inside and one from outside, 'because if you want to play more, you have to have more support. And support is what you take with you from a reference group.' Children give you a chance to play.

If we have no real play we distract our self by tv and other substitutes. 'Play is not light,' he states, 'play' is a lot of seriousness. That is why we have to have this experimental space.' As an example he mentions the role of play in the theatre, that is very serious.

It is a pity we only had two hours. Gordon and Peter had so much material they could have shared with us, but they will use this in a new book. We were all invited to contribute to this project if we knew more about play. I left the workshop with mixed feeling. My longing to play was awakened and had to be put to sleep again, because there was no space to experiment with it in this case.

### A SUNNY SATURDAY AFTERNOON

On this absolute fabulous sunny afternoon we are sitting with about sixty people in the air conditioned Royal Palm Room with drawn curtains. Conditions I hate. Still we realise we have important work to do, because the AAGT can only exist if enough people present are willing to take responsibility. All kind of tasks have to be divided. The new president – Bud Feder – has to be installed, officers has to be appointed and

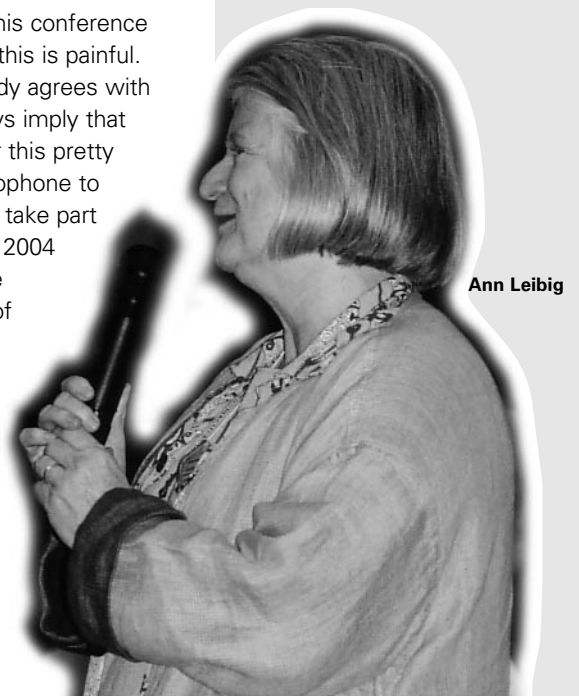
committees have to be formed. I am sorry, I got so involved that I did not make notes, but I do know that I had an overall good feeling of what happened. A good feeling that continued on Sunday morning, the day after the Saturday night dinner on the beach and the dance with auction in the ballroom. For me the morning started having breakfast with the Process Group Leaders. We all could say how we experienced our groups and our (co)leadership. Personally I find this issue quite complicated. I was so happy that I could do it and would have loved to have more time to really get into things. But time is limited during a conference. The other reactions were varied. I also heard some frustrated colleagues. May be a process group for the process group leaders would a solution. What I mean is there is no end to the process. There is always work to do.

Then the Community Meeting. On the program 'organizing the 2004 Conference'. First a discussion develops about the risk of involving yourself. The main organizer of this conference got angry a couple of nights ago, walked out and did not come back. Of course this is painful. Although there are different points of view on what happened I believe everybody agrees with that. What I learn myself while listening is that doing a lot of work doesn't always imply that you are really seen. It can hurt if you take that too personal. To my surprise after this pretty intense discussion a lot of people put their finger in the air or went to the microphone to let us know they were willing to do one job or more for the AAGT. I decided to take part in the committee that was going to think of a theme for the next conference, in 2004 also to be held in this beach resort hotel in Florida. And I proposed to see if the conference in 2006 could be held in Amsterdam. Then and also later I felt a lot of support for this idea..

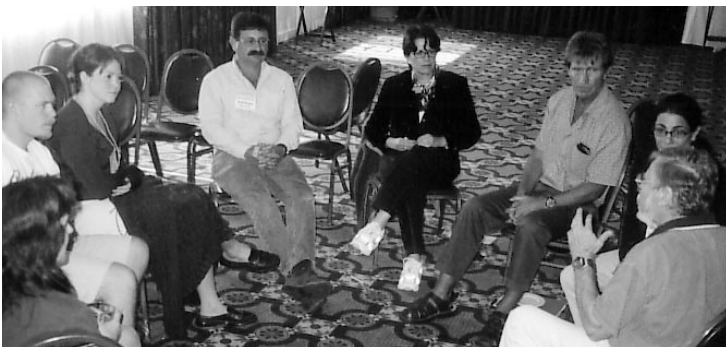
#### REFLECTING ON THE BEACH AND IN THE PLANE

Sunday afternoon half past four. Most people have gone home. I feel content I decided to stay another day. I enjoy being one more day in the sun. Temperature is mild. Not too hot. The wind is touching me barely.

**Continued on page 23**



**Ann Leibig**



**Philip Lichtenberg, Susan Jurkowski,  
Sue O'Rourke**



**Phyllis Sweitzer, Cathy Gray,  
Bea Mackay**

## **Gestalt Alive**

**"Gestalt Alive!  
Fifty Years  
Creating,  
Developing,  
Living,  
Gestalt Therapy."  
is being  
held from Thursday  
evening  
June 12  
through  
Sunday Midday, June  
15,  
at  
The Lighthouse, 111  
East 59th St, New York  
City.**

## **LETTER FROM BELFAST**

*by Marie Quierly*

Greetings to everyone in the AAGT. Marcy invited me to put a few reflections about the conference down on paper I am aware, as I write this, of the multiple realities that I, and you the reader are travelling in. So forgive me, if I list a few of my realities on a cold, snowy February afternoon in Belfast – many miles from the heat of Florida and the AAGT conference! On Sunday night, a few dissident nationalists planted a pipe bomb at an army base about a quarter of a mile from my house, a few miles further away loyalists shot and killed two men from a rival organisation in a feud that has revealed the divisions that exist within the Protestant communities. On the other side of town the first practising gay Catholic priest has 'come out' publicly to a mixed reception from the church and the press. I'm also aware that we all await the deliberations of the U.N. and George W. Bush to know if the conflict that the US is engaged in will become a fully-fledged war! You may even have friends and relatives among the thousands of, mainly young, men and women are serving in the army. So, I cannot assume that your minds are fully on the AAGT conference and the experiences you took home from it!

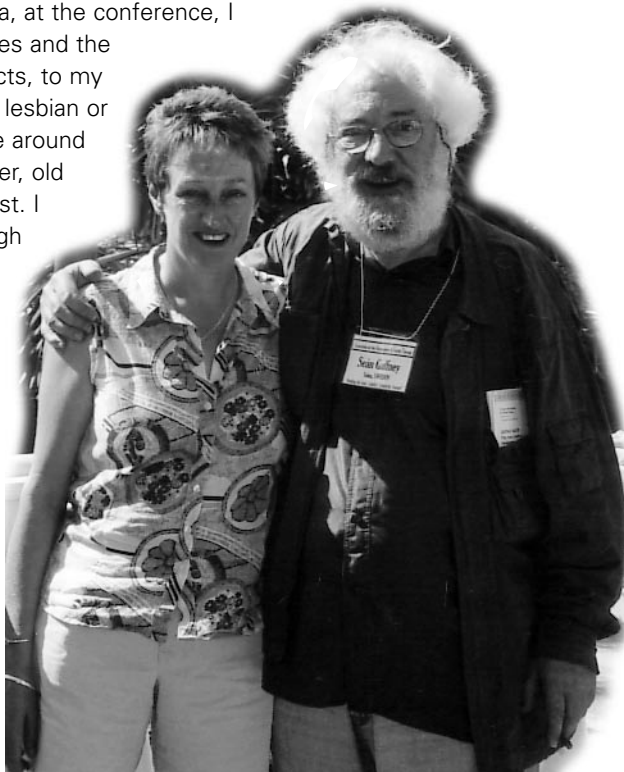
I felt very privileged to be able to attend the conference and to meet many of the Gestalt people I've only read about. I loved the opportunity to experience such a variety of workshops and to discuss ideas and experiences – a Gestalt Gourmet feast!!

I found the conference both challenging and supportive. I was challenged by the recognition that many of my opinions about the US and its citizens are my own projections and have had to go home and digest my own insularity and aggression! I also felt very supported by those who welcomed me, attended my workshop out of loyalty, conflicted with me and generously shared their trials and tribulations (including the shared bottle of champagne in the revolving restaurant of the hotel next door!!). I even learnt the difference between New York and New Jersey (apologies to both cities and their residents for not being aware of the difference).

I am reminded of Cynthia's words to me in a pre-conference e-mail (quoting Margot Adler) when she spoke about her interest in "travelling in many different realities and not being possessed by any of them". In times of conflict it is difficult not to be possessed by them and in Florida, at the conference, I struggled with some of those realities and the conflicts between them. The conflicts, to my surprise were not about being Irish, lesbian or even around my politics. They were around the polarities of being insider/outsider, old hand/beginner, East coast/West coast. I could relate to each of these although I didn't explore them fully at the conference. I found the large community sessions difficult to relate to and a bit intimidating, perhaps I could have supported the conflicts there by stating that at the time.

Thank you again for your generous invitation to me – I hope to return to other conferences with a few more Irish gestaltists to share the experience and excitement with me. Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

**Marie Quierly & Sean Gaffney**



## The 3rd International GANZ Conference in Christchurch New Zealand

### **MATTERS OF THE HEART- MAANAWATIA**

My father was born in Auckland and although he had shared some stories of his youth I know very little about my New Zealand family.

I was looking forward to coming to New Zealand. Most conferences offer an opportunity to connect with like-minded people and reconnect with friends and colleagues from near and far. This conference would be no different. But it was.

The opening ceremony invited us, the visitors, to become part of an ancient Welcome Ceremony called a Powhiri. (Pron. po-fer-y) This haunting ceremony invokes the ancestors of the land to be present. Two groups of The Tangata Whenua or People of This Land led the ceremony with age-old wisdom.

The first voice to be heard is the spine chilling call of the Kia Karanga, as she beckons the visitors into the room. This call called the Karanga call is something that once heard, is not forgotten.

This whole-hearted cry brought us powerfully into the present and connected us immediately to "Matters of the Heart" the theme of this conference. The response for the visitors is called the Manuhiri and came from another woman, the Kia Whakatu. Her cry welcomed into the main room, all who had journeyed to this land from Sweden, England, the United States, Canada, and Australia. We sat in places of protocol, following the Tangata Whenua tradition.

The welcome was made in the Maori language, and when completed was translated into English. Michael Reed, founding member of GANZ and past president, responded for the visitors, and threaded the ancestry of all the lands from which he and his family had come, into a warm and moving speech.

This stirring beginning touched many people in a way that quickly brought a sense of community to the whole. Seeds were planted in this conference for new initiatives, and a writers group was formed that promises to guide and nurture and support those interested in writing. We welcomed a new council at the AGM and fresh thoughts, opinions and ideas began to enter into the field.

As beautiful dresses swirled on the dance floor on Saturday night, bids were quietly offered to buy one of the several magnificent silk scarves painted for the conference by Jan Blythe. And as Carl masterfully held the audience in the palm of his hand, a mystery person was silently holding winning ticket number 92, offering free registration to the Sydney GANZ Conference in 2004.

The closing ceremony invited us to take a stone from this land back to our homes. Words of personal experience were shared in a huge circle and everyone seemed to know when to speak as if we had rehearsed. But of course there was no need for rehearsal. When sharing 'Matters of the Heart' there is time and space for all. Loose threads were sewn up as business cards were handed out, promises to keep in touch were made, and the owner of ticket number 92 was found.

I did not go home immediately. Monday, following the conference was Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. I went to Synagogue that day. I expected to fast and to pray and to feel far away from home. What I didn't expect was to discover that this synagogue was where my family had prayed for over fifty years. My family's name was on the memorial board in the hall and the members of the synagogue knew my cousin who had recently died. I had never met him but they told me he was well loved and had been highly respected. My heart sang that day.

Usually I feel hungry and thirsty on Yom Kippur, but not this time. None of that mattered this year. All that mattered was that I knew without a doubt I was in the right place, at the right time and that I had been given the opportunity to connect, not only with friends and colleagues, but also with my own ancestors here in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Sharon Snir

TRAVELLING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT-HEARTEDNESS



**Sharon Snir editor of the GANZ Newsletter, Lars Berg editor of the IGTA Newsletter, Elizabeth Revell, Past Editor of the AAGT Newsletter.**

## **SERVICE EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

*by Bud Feder*

AAGT has initiated a new program, called Service Exchange (SEP) and invites your participation, both as donor and recipient. Through this SEP, AAGT aims to further professional exchange and development among its members. We encourage participation in this program through which AAGT members will have access to complimentary professional and training services from other members, as well as the opportunity to provide such services to members who can benefit from their expertise.

### **HOW IT WORKS:**

AAGT members may contact other AAGT members and request "Service Time." All AAGT members are invited to pledge four hours of professional time per calendar year providing one or more of the services listed below. Members may make a direct barter agreement with the requesting member, or may provide the service with nothing in return. No member is required to agree to a request. In the event that a member has completed the four-hours of service, or if the member opts not to agree to a particular request, said member may offer the requested services on a fee-for-service basis.

### **SERVICES IN THE PROGRAM:**

- Phone consultation on a clinical issue or case
- Co-facilitation of another member's therapy group
- raining in a particular aspect of Gestalt Therapy
- Guest group supervision to an existing supervision group
- Mentoring a Gestalt institute student
- Seeing a client/couple/family along with the requesting therapist for consultative purposes
- Editing an article written by another member
- Other (as specified by the donor)

### **FOLLOWUP AND ASSESSMENT:**

In order to assess as well as promote the program, AAGT members who perform a service will be requested to make a very brief report on their activities and the outcomes to the Service Exchange Committee. Permission granted, such activities may be featured in our publication—and perhaps others—and serve to promote individual members, our organization and Gestalt Therapy in general.

### **INSURANCE CONSIDERATIONS:**

Please note that AAGT members who participate in this SEP must carry their own professional liability insurance for whatever service they offer. AAGT as a tax-exempt membership organization does not offer clinical consultation or treatment and cannot be liable for such activities which are conducted under a member's aegis, nor does AAGT carry professional liability insurance, only administrative practice insurance (covering possibilities of fraud, theft, etc). This insurance does not cover individual members for their professional activities.

Thank you for considering participation in the Service Exchange Program, and please feel free to contact any committee member if you need any additional information or clarification.

### **THE SEP COMMITTEE**

Dori Middleman, Chair, drdori@aol.com  
Susan Gregory, gestaltsing@aol.com.  
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Peter  
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**The Seventh International Gestalt Therapy Conference, Produced by the  
Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (AAGT)**



**AAGT CONFERENCE 2004**

November 10-14, 2004

Tradewinds Sirata Beach Resort in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida.

In November of 2002 the AAGT conducted a very successful international conference for Gestalt therapy in Florida. The food was fabulous. The beach was wonderful. The night life was varied and rich. The workshops, plenary meetings, process groups, and community meetings were stimulating. It worked so well, we decided to return to that location for our next conference. At that time we will explore the phenomena of re-creation, of new beginnings, and more specifically, we will investigate how re-creation takes place, about its transforming affect in the field, and how the processes of Gestalt therapy might be purposefully employed in each.

The AAGT welcomes all those who were with us in 2002 in Florida, and we invite all those who were not. AAGT members and old friends, visitors, and inquisitive guests - all are invited and welcome to contribute to the making of community at our seventh international conference.

A formal call for proposals, including registration information for the conference itself and appropriate procedures for reserving rooms at the hotel, will follow our June annual meetings. Please keep watching the AAGT web page for these things (<http://www.aagt.org>), as well as the AAGT Newsletter and email traffic from Gestalt practitioners around the world. Announcements and further information will also be available on-line through the virtual Gestalt community of Gestalt-L (<http://www.g-g.org/gstalt-l>), the electronic journal Gestalt! (<http://www.g-g.org/gej>), and the traditional, hard copy press such as Gestalt Review, The British Gestalt Journal, and others.

**Plan now to attend. Put it on your calendars!**

**Web sites of interest to Gestalt Practitioners:**

The Gestalt Journal, and the International Gestalt Journal(<http://www.gestalt.org/index.htm>)

Gestalt Review(<http://www.gestaltreview.com>)

The British Gestalt Journal(<http://www.britishgestaltjournal.com>)

Gestalt! (<http://www.g-g.org/gej>)

Gestalt Critique ([http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/gik\\_gestalt/gestalt\\_critique.html](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/gik_gestalt/gestalt_critique.html))

Gestalt Bookmarks ([http://www.g-g.org/gestalt\\_bookmarks](http://www.g-g.org/gestalt_bookmarks))

The AAGT (<http://www.aagt.org>)

Liv Estrup sent this and I thought it would be fun to share...

## **Humor**

**George Carlin's  
View on Aging.**

**Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions." How old are you?"**

**"I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five!**

**That's the key.**

**You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead.**

**"How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're gonna be 16!**

**And then the greatest day of your life . . . you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony . . . YOU BECOME 21 ! YESSSS!!!**

**But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk. He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?**

**You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all  
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## **BEING A REGIONAL CONTACT PERSON**

**by Brian O'Neill**

The first time I ever heard about being a Regional Contact Person was at the very first AAGT conference in New Orleans. Carl Hodges, as the current president of AAGT, was really encouraging people to step forward and take an interest in being available at a local level . To be the person on the ground who kept members up to date with this great experiment called AAGT. Without any sense of what I might be letting myself in for, I volunteered and have never regretted it since.

I found I was part of a large body of people (the Board) many of whom were doing much more exacting work for AAGT than I. However I always felt included and part of a big family that welcomed me with open arms. Being an RCP is a great way to be part of and contribute to the organisation without onerous duties and having to shoulder too much responsibility. The RCP is also, in a sense, a badge of honour as you represent your part of the world in the larger group of AAGT. This by itself offers a sense of identity and a tremendous feeling of being part of an organic process which is creating community.

In many ways the RCPs becomes the roots of the tree. You feed material to the members and are able to feedback issues and needs to the organisation as a whole. I've not experienced this in many of the organisations I've been a part of. I continue to feel an important part of a greater whole, even though I am in a region with only a few members and with its own Gestalt therapy organisation, while there are regions with large number of people as members..

The role of the RCPs is basically to hold this space as a representative of that part of the world you come from, and so the RCPs are a very international group. While so many members of AAGT are still in the USA and so much activity has been based in the USA, we RCPs have played a significant role in maintaining and recognising AAGT as an International organisation and not just an American Organisation with International members. This was recently affirmed by the Community of AAGT at the last conference in Florida. Hence the role of an RCP person who lives outside of the USA is particularly important in keeping the community where they live connected to the energy of the AAGT.

So this is my personal sense of being an RCP for the last seven years. I hope what I say might encourage some of you who are thinking about stepping into vacant positions to step forward. I can assure you that Nancy and I as RCP co-ordinators will be there to support you and provide ongoing contact. We are now doing more to sustain connection through the internet and through phone link ups and we both have a lot of energy to keep the roots of AAGT well nourished. So if you are considering being an RCP or just want more info or a chat before deciding, please contact us.

## **THE NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF GESTALT THERAPY'S CONFERENCE:**

**"Gestalt Alive! Fifty Years Creating, Developing, Living, Gestalt Therapy."**

is being held from Thursday evening June 12 through Sunday Midday, June 15, at The Lighthouse, 111 East 59th St, New York City.

Our key-note speakers will be Richard Kitzler and Phillip Lichtenberg on "The Past, Present, And Future of Gestalt Therapy." Other institute members will be presenters throughout the remainder of the conference and will address various aspects of the NYIGT model and its various national and international developments. These include Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb (Italy), Peter Philippson, (UK), Jean-Marie Robine (France), Carmen Vasquez Badin (Spain), Dan Bloom, Perry Klepner, Karen Humphrey, and Joe Lay (all from New York). The conference will be structured with small and large group experiences so that the conference itself will be an experiment in developing Gestalt therapy. This is explained in the brochure.

On Saturday night June 14, we will have a dinner/ dance at the Upper East Side super club, Au Bar. This event will be our anniversary party.

All my best, Dan Bloom., President, NYIGT

## **PROPOSAL**

### **Task Force for Engagement With the World Field of Gestalt Therapy**

Whereas AAGT is an experiment in an on-going, organic process of Gestalt formation and destruction in which old forms are destroyed and new figures emerge through contact that is bright and lively, energetic, graceful, and fluid and

Whereas in 2002, in the field of Gestalt therapy worldwide, there are many co-emerging Gestalt organizations with which AAGT could have contact,

Be it resolved that the membership of AAGT encourages its Board, Executive Committee, Interest Groups, Regions, and Members to engage with the world field of other Gestalt organizations in such a way as to enrich the ground of Gestalt therapy and AAGT.

AAGT's outreach and contact may include, and is not limited to the following:

- inviting other Gestalt organizations to contribute items of interest to the AAGT

Newsletter

- considering a membership fee structure which would allow multiple group affiliation
- attending to the scheduling of conferences of other Gestalt organizations so as to encourage maximum participation with all the constraints of time, money, and geography

Anne Leibig and Allan Singer

### ***Continued from page 17***

I have to settle for the fact that I cannot by any means catch all my experiences in writing. But thinking back the most important for me were the Community Meetings. It is what I tried to establish in the Flemish Dutch Gestalt Network, but I was not heard or understood. The idea that every single person is invited to take part in whatever is on the agenda, that every voice can have a place I think great. It touches me. Also that there is hardly any patronizing as far as I have noticed and when there is, there is room for confrontation.

A month before this conference I went to the Dutch Conference of the NVAGT, linked to the European Association for Gestalt Therapy and Theory and while sitting in the plane on my way back home I realized that the Community Meetings were the big difference between those two conferences. Although I found the Dutch conference also nourishing, I knew I missed something but did not know exactly what it was. Community Meetings offer a lot of possibilities.

For example

- to speak up and be seen and heard
- to feel invited to take part in whatever happens
- to see, hear and give critic
- to see and hear the transformation of resistance
- to feel the excitement to sit with hundred people and know something is going to happen
- to feel and experience equality
- to get out of the authority conflict and into strength
- to feel that one belongs
- to enjoy the laughs and the kiddings
- to share the seriousness, sadness, sorrow, fear and hope
- to show and receive gratefulness

So I thank all of you for coming. I loved being part of this circus.

## **Humor**

slipping away.

**Before you know it, you REACH 50 . . . and your dreams are gone.**

**But wait!!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would! So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE it to 60.**

**You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70!**

**After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday!**

**You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime.**

**And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; "I was JUST 92."**

**Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"**

**May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!**



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Association for the Advancement  
of Gestalt Therapy

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GESTALT THERAPY

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