

AAGT

Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy

Katya Kosheleva (from Russia)

Something extremely important happened to me at the conference, more than I can really describe at the moment. It feels as if someone or something very powerful and strong reached out a hand to me, which got right down to the core of my entire being and pulled me out. I needed it. I feel re-created to face the world I have to face and make a difference. A pleasure to meet everyone, I feel connected to the world and supported by it. I also feel that I got in touch with the roots of Gestalt Therapy, as if I met my wise beloved grandfather, whom I had never met, but always felt was there. Many revelations made. I am very happy to have found AAGT. Spreading the word about the annual meeting in Amsterdam next August. Hope more colleges from Russia will be able to come. I look forward to meeting everyone again!

♦ Our Board:

- ♦ Brian O'Neill, President
- ♦ Bud Feder, VP Past-President
- ♦ Peter Philipppson, VP President-Elect
- ♦ Ann Bowman, Secretary
- ♦ Bruce Aaron, Treasurer,
- ♦ Chuck Kanner, Treasurer-Elect
- ♦ Peter Cole, Membership Chair
- ♦ Ansel Woldt, Archivist & Continuing Education Officer
- ♦ Marcy Stern, Publications Director
- ♦ Jack Aylward, Interest Groups' Coordinator
- ♦ Morgan Goodlander, Organization Members' Representative
- ♦ Marilyn Myles, RCP Representative

The Publisher's 2-cents—by Marcy Stern

Welcome to this **very** late edition of the AAGT Winter 2005 Newsletter! Various technical difficulties have delayed this publication to the point that I'm almost embarrassed to send it out. Better late than never. Besides, there's SO much to tell you about here. First of all, we decided to tell you some things about ourselves because we are now (since the Conference) a new board. Some of us have shared some things about who we are and what we do in real life.

We are planning our next 2 gatherings at a furious pace—read on, call us, sign up, join us~ How exciting is it that our next meeting is in Amsterdam & the next conference in Canada? We're growing, the news is abundant, the excitement is vigorous.

On a personal note, I'm in Sarasota Florida, not far from St. Pete Beach. I have a private practice within a very busy medical practice and a neuromuscular physical therapy practice. We are about to have 2 chiropractors join us. We also have one nurse practitioner and an oral surgeon who specializes in treating TMJ. The practice focuses on spinal injury, pain and pain disorders. Additionally, I work full-time as Director of Counseling at Jewish Family & Children's Services. My Gestalt training took place in Sarasota when Beth Prothro was here as the director of the Gestalt Institute of the Gulf coast. What an education! I was also trained by Sol Rosenberg, Bill Deacon, Terry Palmatier, Jane Gerber, Ed Lynch, and others who visited from time to time. Until I came to Sarasota in 1989 with 2 children, I was quite the gypsy. I went to college at the University of Copenhagen. When I returned to the US, I lived in California and then I moved to the Dominican Republic where we had a gold store and a dive concession. So, I dove every day, sold gold & listened to Reggae. I decided that if ever I was going to have children, I'd have to go back to the US. So, 21 yrs. later here I am. Who would have thought- with a kid in college even!

WHO ARE WE?? (from some of the members of the new Board) □

I came out of the community meeting where I was elected in something of a state of shock. I feel very warmed by the friendship I was shown in the meeting, and rather overwhelmed by what this will mean for me and my life. I hope that my election will help to get more Europeans involved in AAGT.

I am going on a year's sabbatical from the end of July 2005, and hope I will be able to keep up with things while sometimes traveling. I will definitely be in Amsterdam though! It does mean that I will be organising how my work life will be from September 2006 on, and that will have to take into account my commitment to AAGT.

Best wishes to all, Peter (Philippson), Manchester UK

Hello to all, I'm Ann Bowman - the new (gulp) Secretary of AAGT. Like Peter, I'm still kind of saying to myself "What happened?" And..... here I am. I am a Clinical Nurse Specialist by formal training. I am a trainer as well as the Secretary and part owner of the Indianapolis Gestalt Institute (my partners are Steve Roberts and Charlie Bowman). My initial training was there as well when it was operated by a group of folks who were in the early groups at the Cleveland Institute. I have also had extensive training with Richard Erskine who practices Integrative Psychotherapy (Gestalt, Psychoanalysis, TA, Object Relations, Developmental). From that training, I have become more focused on the relational aspects of gestalt ... I love the fullness of our theory. I work in private practice part time and Charlie and I have a blended family of 5 kids (three are up and out and the youngest two are in high school). We also have two grandchildren ages 4 (almost 5) and 18 months. Did I mention we have a dog too? I have attended all the AAGT Conferences (except Dallas) and also attended the Gestalt Journal Conferences in the 80's and early 90's (unbelievable dynamics). I intimately lived through Charlie's experience being the president of AAGT and his love for the organization has been *slowly* becoming my own experience as well. I'm looking forward to working with you all. Ann Bowman, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Sacramento CA. My wife, Daisy Reese and I have been the co-directors of a small Gestalt Institute here in Sacramento for the last 15 years -- SICGT The Sierra Institute for Contemporary Gestalt Therapy. I also run a financial planning firm called Insight Financial Group -- and am a Chartered Financial Consultant. I split my professional time between three activities -- running the institute, running Insight Financial Group, and with a small private practice. Daisy and I have a blended family with three of her kids and two of mine. Just one is still at home -- Hannah -- who is in the ninth grade. I went to college at UC Santa Cruz and majored in psychology. Then onto Bryn Mawr College for my MSW. Philip Lichtendberg and Joyce Lewis -- the founders of the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Philadelphia were there, and I took every class from Phil I could. He was a big influence. From Bryn Mawr -- I came to Sacramento, where I trained with Cindi Sheldon and Jim Doak - both from the San Francisco Institute. I did a year of training with GTILA and two summer programs with GENI -- Gestalt Education Network International. I also trained with Dick Olney of Milwaukee Wisconsin. Dick called his work "Self Acceptance Training" -- he was a student of Fritz and Milton Erikson -- and did truly inspiring work. Daisy and I are the authors of a book newly published by Brunner-Routledge: Mastering the Financial Dimension of Your Practice: The Definitive Guide to Private Practice Development and Financial Planning. I'm glad to open up this new Gestalt chapter in my life, and am very much looking forward to being a part of the AAGT board! Peter Cole, new Membership Chair, Sacramento, CA, USA

So about me... I'm a Gestalt therapist in Chicago. Very much want to be involved in training, but there is none here at this point and I've not been the entrepreneurial type to get that momentum started. But all that will have to change very soon as plans are moving ahead for me to purchase my first home. I am to move in to my condo at the end of July (I am so excited! Last week I went to pick out the color of granite for the kitchen counters and marble for the bathroom floors. Oh my gosh - marble in the bathroom! Woof!!) I know that my current income comes nowhere close to what I will need to make monthly payments on this place, where I will have my office as well. So I give myself two years to at least double my current income, or I may have to sell soon afterward. All this to say that I am up for increasing my practice and other related activities in a way that I've not felt previously. Support any of you might have to offer over the course of the next couple of years about gaining momentum and the like would be most welcome.

I will also come out and say that arriving home to all this busyness, part of me has responded with: "What? You agreed to another 9 months of being treasurer? You promised!!" So Chuck, I am hoping that we can start to work together so that in January we'll be running this treasury thing together. I am hoping that that's a possibility. This feels complete to me for now. I eagerly await our first conference call. And I want to remind you Brian O'Neill of our talk in which I let you know of my interest of having some time for connecting on a personal level along with all of our tasking, if that is at all feasible.

smiling, Bruce Aaron, Treasurer, Chicago, Illinois, USA

I first experienced Gestalt therapy in the mid '70's when one of our lecturers in psychology, Don Diespecker, returned from training in the USA with the Erv and Miriam and offered classes in Humanistic Psychology which included weekly gestalt therapy groups. I remember I sat two oral exams, one on Encounter groups and one on GT - and I only got a credit for the gestalt one. I remember I didn't really like the approach at first and was more taken with Psychodrama and Encounter. When Don began a training program I was part of the first intake, and when he left to live in Northern New South Wales I took up the training program with his support in 1984 and the Illawarra Gestalt Centre was born. We are now celebrating 21 years as a training program. In the same year I married Jenny Quinn and two years later we gave birth to our first son Ben and then in 1991 along came Sam. Both our boys have grown with two parents as Gestalt therapists and have now enjoyed a stream of local, national and overseas visitors, many of whom are now family to them. I've often thought what a great influence this has been on their lives....although recently when Ben told his friend I was projecting my expectations onto the noisy people in the camp site and that's why I was getting annoyed, his friend just said "huh?" For the first seven years of my life as a psychologist I worked in the Drug and Alcohol field with individuals, couples, families and groups and this was a very rich learning time. I worked with another Gestalt therapist and we offered Gestalt therapy groups as part of the outpatient clinic and experienced countless hours of peer supervision with each other. I left to manage three community mental health rehabilitation teams where of the dozen staff, over half had experienced some level of gestalt therapy training. In this setting I learnt the value of the gestalt approach as part of a community, living in community with others beyond the traditional clinical role. This helped me experience Gestalt therapy as a way of life, as we cooked, cleaned and played tennis together (Bud will be pleased to hear this! ;-)) as well as group work and counseling. I was then seconded to the University to set up a Rural mental health training program and returned to the health service to become the Regional Director of the Drug, Alcohol and HIV/AIDS service. I saw in these positions the application of Gestalt therapy at an wider organisational level. I resigned from the Health service after 23 years of service (I have a gold medal!) and as the new millenium dawned I was finally ready to enter into private practice with Jenny, and we established the Centre for Counseling and Psychotherapy. In all this time Jenny and I, no matter what other jobs we were doing, have year after year continued to offer training to people in Gestalt therapy. For the last ten years or so this has consistently been about 50 to 60 people a year across the four year program. In many ways this contact is an invisible part of "me" that wells up in my being as I experience these memories... Brian O'Neill, President AAGT, New Adelaide, Australia

I am an Illinois, USA, native, a country girl at heart, from a racially/ethnically blended family that is religiously (in both senses) fundamentalist. I was shaped by this background to become an explorer, leaving home by reading voluminously about other psychological and spiritual worlds. Excited by the activism of the 60's, I became a social worker, married, moved to Chicago, had a son, divorced, and began working on my inner development in earnest. An "aha" moment I vividly remember was during a piece of Gestalt/T.A. work when I really GOT that my inner critical/moralizing voice was just a PART of me. I did group leadership and Gestalt training in the 80's, continuing my social work at a medical center and starting a private practice - I now do both part-time. I am nourished by AAGT and the Chicago Area Gestalt Salon we have created. I also practice meditation regularly, and lead a couple of meditation groups - spirituality remains the "ground" of my life. I do ballroom dance for exercise, stress relief and fun, fun, fun. I feel fortunate to be part of a group of such fine theoreticians, clinicians and just plain good folk! Looking forward to talking soon. Marilyn Myles, new RCP Coordinator

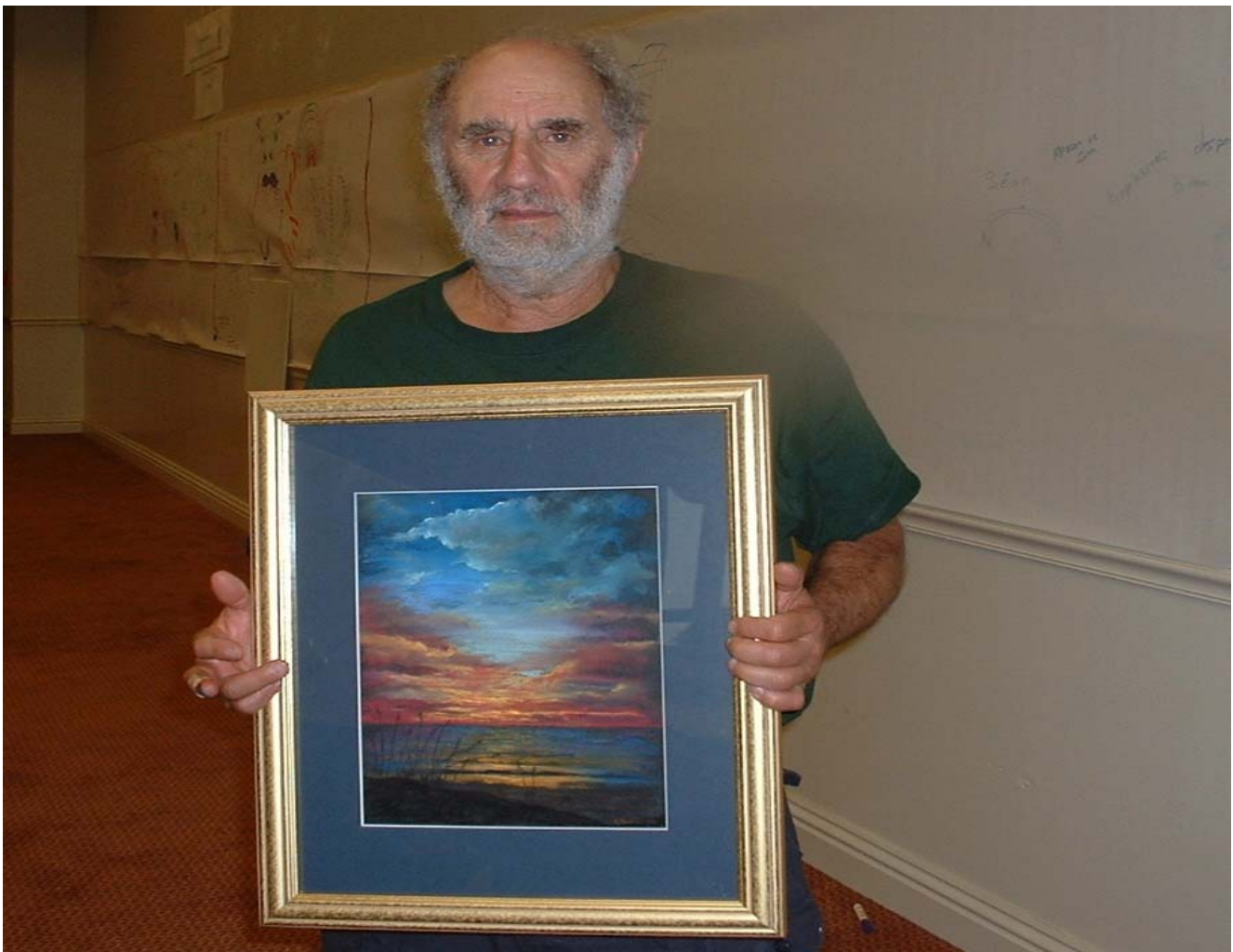
I am born in Amsterdam, three years before the Second World War started and Holland was occupied by the Germans. For me this means paradise was over then and serious living started, also because my father who as a soldier participated in the fighting that lasted a few days, came back with wracked nerves that never healed. He was in and out psychiatric hospitals where he was electro shocked and got sleeping treatments of sometimes two weeks. He died of a liver illness when he was 53 in an institution where he had been for the last 10 years. I tell you this because I believe this part of my history raised my interest in the human soul and the human mind and at last made me decide I wanted to be a Gestalt Therapist after having been an editor of magazines for thirty years. Gestalt Therapy came my way after I divorced and decided I wanted to know about The Truth, went to a School for Practical Philosophy, learned to meditate and become aware and did a retreat in Spain that was given by a woman who was a member of A Buddhist order as well as a Gestalt Therapist. She was the one who directed me to Gestalt. When I started the training program I knew within one week that I found what I had been looking for: a path that was about love between people. In my philosophy school that was what I missed as they believed love was between people and God and not between people in themselves. So here I am twenty years later, more and more convinced that I am on the right track although it is not always sunshine and moonlight. That is why I am happy to belong to the AAGT Community where I feel I am not the only one dedicated to this not so easy way of life. Tine Van Wijk

My name is Chuck Kanner and I am the founder and Executive Director of a school for very troubled kids and families. We operate in Sarasota, Florida, USA, where we have been for the last 7 years. I came to Gestalt not as a therapist, but as a 12 year old client. I have studied and used Gestalt principles in my life and work ever since. Our school is a "Therapeutic Community" with group dialogue, responsibility and consensus as its core. Having been chair of a previous conference process, I have an idea how much fun this can be, and also, that over time, conflicts will arise. I plan to make an effort at being clear and understanding of differences. Warmly, Chuck Kanner, Treasurer Elect

Hello everybody, I'm Silvie Falschlunger from White Plains, NY, USA & the "AAGT database keeper" for the last 3 years. I know all your names & some of your faces. I was at the last Conference & missed this one - hearing all these wonderful stories my mouth gets watery! I'm Austrian & the last 4 years involved in big transitions: left my job as an art historian & museums educator, moved to New York, got married, got a baby (today we celebrated Ilea's first birthday!) & thanks Bud, whom I met right at the beginning of my sabbatical year, got involved into Gestalt Therapy. I went through some heavy ZaZen training & hold a certificate in Tibetan Philosophy & Psychology from Tarab Tulku. Right now I study at the New York Institute with Bud Feder & Dan Bloom & I'm in the Somatic Developmental Training of Ruella Frank. I'm a little stuck with the whole NYState license question & curious how I will proceed. Happy to be part of the team I send you all warm greetings!

I was born and raised on a farm in Manitoba, Canada. I attended school in a near by town. I went to a boarding school for grades 7-12. I married my first boyfriend and was married for 25 years (plus a 4 year courtship). I have been divorced since 1994. I moved to B.C. and was a Phys. Ed teacher until I had my children (2 sons). My first experience of Gestalt occurred when I was in my mid 30's when my troubled marriage forced me into therapy. I had no knowledge or experience of therapy at that time and it is only in hindsight that I realize that I had a Gestalt therapist, fortunately for me, a good one. When my youngest was five, I started a Master's in Counseling Psychology at University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, B.C. While there, someone approached me to see if I wanted to join a Gestalt Institute that was just starting up. The trainers were Les Greenberg and Delores Bate. I entered their program and I was the first graduate three years later. Sue Johnston was doing her doctoral studies on Emotionally Focused Couples therapy with Les Greenberg at that time and I volunteered as one of the therapists. I benefited from the training I received from them. When Les Greenberg left UBC to go to York University in Ontario I was asked to come on faculty of the Gestalt Institute and teach parts of the program he was teaching, two chair was one of them. Pretty big shoes to step into. I taught at the Institute for many years. I left when I was not able to work things out with the one remaining Director of the Institute. I started my private practice in 1985 and continued to work part time throughout my doctorate. I am in private practice full time now. I finished my Ph.D in 1995. My doctoral research focused on the theory of two-chair. Serendipitously, something came out of my research. To investigate the theory I used Q-Methodology and had to build the principles of two chair into a Q-Sort. I gave 8 participants the Q-Sort before and after 6 sessions of therapy using two chair (done by other therapists). The participants were not supposed to like doing the Q-Sort because it was only about the theory but I noticed that they loved doing it. Since finishing my doctorate I have been developing it. After going thru hundreds of names I decided to call it the B-Sort. Check it out: www.B-Sort.com. I met Warren Weir in the doctoral program at UBC and in the Vancouver Gestalt Training Institute. Warren and I have been developing the B-Sort for many years. My youngest son is a computer engineer and he wrote the software program. Without these two I never would have been able to take it this far. Warren is a fantastic person to work with. I have also trained for many years (about 14-15) with Richard Erskine. I belong to a group of psychotherapists who have brought Richard in for intensive three day weekends and week intensives over the years. I still occasionally attend these workshops. I have never been to Richard's place in Kent. Suffice it to say I love Gestalt and it has taken my life in amazing directions? Nothing I could have planned. I love sports. I ski, hike, bike and golf. Three years ago I took up tennis and it is my latest passion. I joined a great tennis club on the beach in Vancouver which I enjoy a lot. That's it folks! Bea McKay, Van Couver, B.C.

Born 1930 in Passaic, NJ, USA, and raised there. Obtained a Ph D degree in Clinical Psychology from Columbia University in 1961. In addition to private practice have worked in Headstart, nursing homes, clinics hospitals and schools. Found Gestalt Therapy in 1971 and be involved ever since with NY Institute and later AAGT. Co-editor of two Gestalt books as well as numerous articles. Married in 1952, divorced in 1978 with three offspring as a result [and a purpose], all fine people one of who may be famous someday. No grandkids yet. Passionate for yoga, tennis, gardening, books and classical music. Thanks Bud Feder/Past President AAGT/Current Vice President



Bud Feder, AAGT Past President— holding his “farewell and Thank You!” gift given in appreciation for making this conference happen



President's Message ~ By Brian O'Neill

The seventh conference of our Association has now successfully completed. The final plenary culminated in a spontaneous circle of people in the ballroom, moving in rhythm to Australian Aboriginal music, melting into noisy, heartfelt hugs and farewells. The new Board is elected and you will read in this edition of the newsletter there is a grand mixture of old and new AAGTers.

The new President Elect is already in place and congratulations go to Peter Phillipson as well as to our new Secretary Ann Bowman, our new Treasurer Elect Chuck Kanner; to our new Membership Chair Peter Cole and to the new RCP Co-ordinator Marlyn Myles. We also welcome a new position of Organisational membership chair which has been enthusiastically filled by Morgan Goodlander.

From the first time I attended the Inaugural AAGT conference in New Orleans in 1995 I was aware of the way in which the meetings with others was so immediate and without much background. So I am enjoying hearing about the other people on the board in this Newsletter and learning things about them I'd probably never find out through the meeting process of the conferences.

There is a great new energy in the Board and I believe this is reflected in the Association as a whole. We will be having our first Annual Meeting outside of the USA when we meet in Amsterdam this year and this opportunity is being capitalised on to provide a local conference for two days adjoining the AGM. I attended the first meeting of the planning committee whilst in Florida and there is much enthusiasm and spirit driving this, particularly from the convenor Tine.

The same enthusiasm is evident with the convenors of our next conference which will be in Vancouver, Bea Mackay and Warren Weir. They have already done a tremendous job organising and are well ahead of the timetable for planning. More information about Amsterdam and Vancouver will be in the Newsletter so please feel free to be involved and don't be shy.... Just like the Irish Interest group, the more the merrier!!

As we move into this new phase of AAGT life this is a timely place for me to extend the thanks of the Association to those who have recently put so much energy into making AAGT happen... and the top of the list is Bud Feder for the outstanding job he has done as President... and just like you promised in your first Presidential message, you had fun Bud! Bruce Aaron had done a stirring job as treasurer and is now working alongside Chuck so we can feel more secure with our money!

A very special mention goes to Nancy Woldt... Nancy thanks you for so many many years of chairing and invigorating the RCPs... and I always knew who'd be on work study and womaning the front desk at conferences....we thanks you!

And of course, the very Newsletter we are reading is due to our current and spirited editor Marcy.... Keep the spirit!

So as newly elected president I feel very supported in our current team of people and truly blessed to have been tutored and mentored for the role by Bud.... And he's still here looking over my shoulder!

Brian O'Neill



Brian O'Neill, AAGT President

Newsletter Deadlines:

September 1, 2004
December 1, 2004
March 1 2005
June 1 2005
September 1, 2005
December 1, 2005

AD RATES

To advertise in our
 Newsletter

1/4 page: \$50.00

1/2 page: \$85.00

Full Page: \$150.00

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Gestalt Revisited at St. Pete Beach

By Deborah S. Kaufman, LCSW

The 2004 AAGT conference was a very gratifying experience that provided me with the opportunity to reconnect with parts of myself that I needed to reawaken. The rich contact that I made with some people from other parts of the country and other parts of the world encouraged and supported this reawakening. I remembered why I had chosen to become a Gestalt therapist in the late 1970's before I had even established a clear career path such as getting the type of academic degree that would enable me to practice psychotherapy.

I remembered that in my gut, I knew that this was the way I wanted to be in the world, valuing authentic contact and working to deepen my experience of myself and to help others in a similar process.

Wednesday evening, my excitement was mounting as I crossed the Skyway Bridge traveling northwest with the setting sun from Sarasota County to St. Pete Beach.

By 8:00pm, I had a red dot on my forehead signifying that I was a new member and I was sitting in my first process group of the conference. What a wonderful group we were and what a wonderful component of the conference was the process group meeting every day! Over the course of the next three days, I participated in an exploration of human experience from the perspective of infant attachment. I savored the exploration of relationship and sexual issues from the perspective of dueling parental introjects, a disconnection from the body and the animal component of human experience. I pondered with my peers how to challenge organizational dynamics with rigidified expectations that exist within most organizations. I was able to celebrate parts of myself and others from which I retreat for fear of being put in a box that is more confining than comforting. And on a lighter note, there was a whole lot of being going on which meant overall good times whether being in a workshop, in the calm gulf waters, in Dovebear's room at sunset for Shabbat celebration or at Bennigan's for my initiation into the Irish interest group. And on another light yet poignant note, to my friends from the Northeast and anyone else for whom this resonates, let us not forget to take off one more piece of clothing and put on one more piece of jewelry as we revel in our glittering essence.

As I evaluate and integrate the sum of my experiences from the 2004 AAGT Conference, I realize how powerful the theme of Transforming the Field was and is for me. Over the past five years, I had been in a challenging life process that was very consuming such that I had put some of my cherished professional and personal traditions on hold. I also had some unfinished business left over from my original training twenty years ago which I had the opportunity to examine. I realized that I had been taught to focus on contact boundary and the layers but while figure/ground was part of the overall teaching, for me there had been too much attention on figure and not enough attention given to tending the ground. I only became fully aware of this over the course of the conference; therefore, transforming the field brings me back to the field theory roots of Gestalt and I am once again alive with excitement like I was thirty years ago when I first saw Fritz on film only better because now the appreciation that comes from experience matches the excitement of initial flame.



Bernice and Sol Rosenberg



Beth Prothro and George Dovenmuehle

AAGT in Amsterdam – 2005

Theme: **CO-CREATING GESTALT RELATIONSHIPS**

Dates: **Regional European AAGT Conference 4-7 August 2005**
Annual AAGT Business Meeting 7-9 August 2005

The Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy is a community building association, which means that everybody present at the conference or otherwise involved is invited to co-create this international and even intercontinental event. Co-creating our Gestalt community is an opportunity, not a requirement!

Place: **De Ruimte (The Space), Weesperzijde 79a, 1091 EV Amsterdam**

De Ruimte can accommodate around 100 conference participants. For an impression of this meeting place go to www.deruimteamsterdam.nl and click on ruimteverhuur - foto's. It is a two story renovated grain silo on the embankment of the River Amstel with mattresses and showers making it possible for about 30 people to stay there without further cost, with some services being expected (e.g., rooms to be cleared of luggage, towels, etc. by 8.15 AM; make tea and coffee to welcome the other conference participants) Access: To enter the top floor necessitates climbing an iron staircase. We will hold community sessions on the street level, and there will always be workshops and process groups on that level as well.

Program: 24 Peer-Reviewed Workshops, 4 Process Group Sessions, Daily Orientations, Early Morning Activities and Gestalt Community Sessions will be the heart and soul of the conference.

A pre-conference Gestalt Marathon Group will also be offered on Wednesday. While new program proposals are invited, we are making special appeal to invite presentations from previous AAGT, EAGT and other “peered” Gestalt conferences. Look for the Amsterdam Call for Program Presentations on our Web site (AAGT.org). Selection for this conference will be based in part on the workshop’s proposal’s proximity to the Conference Theme – “Co-Creating Gestalt Relationships.”

Co-Created Conference: Several people who attended the AAGT conference last November are participating in co-creating this conference.

If you were not in attendance at the 2004 AAGT Conference in St. Pete, Florida and want to volunteer to help co-create this conference, please contact the Conference Coordinator, Tine van Wijk (dewalvis@xs4all.nl) and send an Email to Gail Zinberg (yes@taconic.net) who will advise you on joining the Amsterdam Conference List Serve (AAGTAmsterdamConference@yahoogroups.com)

Fees: **100 Euros (c. \$130.00 USD) for Early Registration**
150 Euros (c. \$195.00 USD) Registration after April 30, 2005
75 Euros (c. \$100.00 USD) for the Marathon Group
25 Euros (c. \$30.00 USD) for Continuing Education Credit



Meals: Everybody is responsible for their own meals.

There are no cooking facilities in De Ruimte except for making coffee and tea. There is a supermarket close by where anything for breakfast and lunch can be obtained. Within 5 minutes walking distance there are a good Pizzeria, Greek, Italian, African, Portuguese and Dutch restaurants. Fifteen minutes away there are numerous other possibilities. Some of the restaurants have a terrace on the bank of River Amstel where we can lunch and dine. If we decide to use a catering service we have a choice of many international kitchens.

Extras: Extra nights at the De Ruimte will cost approximately 10 Euros (c. \$13.00 USD) per day. Additional fee for the pre-conference Marathon Group is 75 Euros – limit 12 people, 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM Wednesday preceding the conference.

Hotels: Information about nearby hotels in different price classes will be available to those interested in attending.

Contact the Conference Coordinator, Tine van Wijk (dewalvis@xs4all.nl)

Transportation: De Ruimte is five minutes walking distance from the metro that can take you anywhere in the City of Amsterdam.

Touring Amsterdam: The City is known to be popular with tourists.

AAGT Donna Cotzen has agreed to guide a tour along the Amsterdam musea. Arrangements will be made for other guided walks through old Amsterdam. Of course seeing Amsterdam on your own is not difficult as it is not so big (not even 800.000 people) and De Ruimte is close to the center. Not to be forgotten is that Amsterdam has a Museumboat that comes close to most musea. We will also try to arrange a Jazz Boat Trip through the canals at night. Several other popular tourist possibilities will also be presented.

Continuing Professional Education: Continuing Education credit will be provided at an additional fee of 25 Euros (c. \$30.00 USD).

AAGT is an approved provider for Continuing Professional Education by the American Psychological Association (APA), National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), California Board of Registered Nurses, California Board of Behavioral Sciences for Licensed Marriage, Family, and Child Counselors and Licensed Social Workers. For further information contact AAGT's CE Officer, Ansel Woldt (nanselw@aol.com).

Registration and Further Information: Early registration is encouraged as the “early birds get the worms.” To register go the AAGT website (AAGT.org).

To obtain additional information, to volunteer as a “co-creator,” to save a sleeping space in the De Ruimte, or to obtain a list of nearby hotels, Email the Conference Coordinator, Tine van Wijk (dewalvis@xs4all.nl), or contact AAGT's Administrative Assistant, Sylvie Falschlunger (scfalschlunger@optonline.net)

Conference Evaluation and Feedback

AAGT's Seventh International Conference

Ansel L. Woldt, Archivist and Continuing Education Officer

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CONFERENCE EVALUATION REPORT

This report was generated through the distribution of the 3 page Conference Evaluation and Feedback Form during the community meeting on Saturday afternoon. Completed forms were either given directly to the Continuing Education Officer or placed in a box near the entrance / exit to the Grand Ballroom. Completion of an evaluation is mandatory for persons desiring continuing education credit. 45 people completed the requirements for CE credits. Sixty-five (65) people completed and returned the Conference Evaluation and Feedback forms. Having 112 registrants for the conference (4 of whom were part-time), this approximates 60% of the total number attending the conference. In any type of conference this would be considered a viable and valid sample.

Participants were asked to rate their responses to 30 questions about the conference based on a 6 point "Likert" scale, using the following instructions:

- 0 = Not Applicable to Me**
- 1 = I Disagree Strongly**
- 2 = I Disagree Somewhat**
- 3 = I am Neutral on this**
- 4 = I Agree Somewhat**
- 5 = I Agree Strongly**

The 30 questions they rated using the Likert system are itemized by number below. In computing percentages, the positive responses (#4s and #5s) and the negative responses (#1s and #2s) were grouped together to simplify the report. All percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number. In summarizing the numerical (Likert) data, raw numbers are reported for each of the "Likerts." Additional questions were responded to in narrative form with handwritten responses following the numerical rating. These are summarized in context with the numerical data with the number of people who said generally the same thing.

HISTORY OF ATTENDANCE AT AAGT CONFERENCES (*Narrative Responses*)

The range of attendance at our conferences was from 1 to 7 times, with the mean average being 3.7 times and the median being 4 times. Interestingly, of the 65 respondents, 12 were "first-timers" and 20 were "old-timers," attending 6 or 7 conferences – these 2 groups comprised 49% of the respondents – in other words, about 50% of the folks who cared to have their ideas known were either beginners or old souls dedicated to AAGT.

PLENARY SESSIONS

1. OPENING PLENARY SESSION

A. The Opening Plenary achieved its purpose of opening the conference in a contactful and creative way.

10 raters were not present, thus the percentages are computed on those present.

78% Positive, 5% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 10, 1 = 0, 2 = 3, 3 = 9, 4 = 20, 5 = 23

B. The most important aspect of this Opening Plenary Session was

CONNECTING! I felt welcomed. It was neat forming a group this early in the conference based on meaningful beliefs. It was WELL RUN! The directions, though difficult to follow were timely and direct to the point. The best part was meeting and greeting – oldees and newbees. Videotape of the founding of AAGT, although not the greatest quality, it was great. Reconnecting was the best part. BEGINNING CONTACT. I liked the visuals. Warm visits. Forming task groups this early was surprising and worthwhile. I did it! Getting people connected and forming meaningful small groups. Support for getting people connected. Defying the odds that this could be done in such a short time and in an opening session. Experiencing folks assuming responsibility for their thoughts and artistic presentations. Meeting some of the "founders" was exciting. Just being there (here)! My small group was warm and meaningful to me. Sorry I wasn't here yet, but I want to see the video clip of the founding of AAGT that so many people talked about – can I purchase a tape? Great use of visual tools, movement, poetry, art, etc. Orienting to ourselves as individuals and as groups – a difficult task in such a short time.

C. Comments on your experience of the Opening Plenary Session

The directions given were timely with regard to present world conditions and recent election. I was surprised at how exciting it was (I was). The large group process was useful in looking at the Global Field of Gestalt therapy. I wasn't clear about the purpose – not articulated clearly. The questions used to direct our interactions were too BIG, too SOON. The bonding experienced in this group happened amazingly fast and interfered with contact in meeting the folks in my Process Group. I'd like more physical activity in the opening – even dancing with the music would have been enlivening. The brief video presentation of the founding of AAGT was an inspirational experience and amazing to visit with these people now. I wasn't here for it but heard so much about it. I'm sorry my plane got in so late. While the questions seemed much too big and broad to address, they somehow tapped into what many of the people were carrying into the conference (e.g., presidential election, Iraq, dissonance). I'm pissed, I missed – arrived too late. I'd have welcomed more physical activity and less task focusing (more groping, less grouping). Some unnecessary structuring in open-space experiences but it worked out well.

2. SECOND PLENARY SESSION

A. The 2nd Plenary Session was a valuable experience in transforming the field.

66% Positive, 1% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 2, 1 = 0, 2 = 5, 3 = 15, 4 = 22, 5 = 21

B. The most valuable aspect of this 2nd Plenary Session was

RECONNECTING! Continuing what was started. In deciding which group to join, I went with my attraction to the “people” not the idea/theme. I loved the human interaction (Very Human and Humane!). Being in a group that felt neutral about transforming the field, it was interesting to watch and participate in its evolution. ADVANCING CONTACT. This was a hard session as it felt too loose and chaotic, although a loose figure did emerge. Having 3 people new to AAGT and 5 “oldees” (previous officers) in our group created some fresh ideas and I was amazed at the transformation from disinterest and stale energy to excitement and lively energy about performing together on Sunday. It helped me identify where I wanted to be and to “question the questions.” Appreciating similarities and differences. Helped me sharpen my passion for Gestalt – the world needs more of it. In depth discussion stimulated my thinking about my values – I wish we could have recorded it. The small group sharing connected me more with the international Gestalt community. Our group deciding to meet on the beach was neat.

C. Comments on your experience of the Second Plenary Session

Our small group started in chaos and ended in a surprising complete gestalt. I realized how important it is to me to be able to question authority. How neat – we emerged. The continuation of the 1st theme went smoothly. The deeper level of interaction with others who I had no bonding with before was a welcome experience; amazing how trusting these people are; are all Gestalt conferences like this – so open and trusting? I don’t understand the group dynamics that got us so involved with so little of the norming and storming that usually has to occur before we become a workable or satisfying group. I didn’t participate in this one, went to the beach for some needed time away from the group and think I missed a link but can’t put my finger on what it is I missed. It was not clear to me how this session was linked to the other 2 plenaries. It was a little flat. The music was too loud and I couldn’t follow the instructions – so, we floundered through and discovered a meaningful gestalt (maybe this was intentional and paradoxical – eh?) I experienced healing. I felt scattered during the session; when it ended I wanted to start over. I was disappointed and angry when “participating.” Seemed to restrict the energy of the large group. Having the visual/artistic reminders on the walls was helpful and valuable – what a neat idea to keep them up and present throughout the conference.

3. FINAL PLENARY SESSION

A. The Final Plenary achieved its purpose of obtaining closure with the conference theme in a contactful way. At least 5 people had to leave before the final plenary, thus not included in percentages.

91% Positive, 1% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 5, 1 = 1, 2 = 0, 3 = 4, 4 = 20, 5 = 35

B. The most valuable aspect of the Final Plenary Session was

CONNECTING, RECONNECTING, DISCONNECTING! The energized performances were amazing! Experiencing and witnessing the creative expression of our beliefs was a spiritual experience for me – an amazing process to participate in! I actually felt closure. Brian and Jenny were very elegant – their lithe figures moving about in such graceful form, beautiful just to watch them. I am liking and appreciating that everyone is included in the presentations/activities, not “just” the usual voices. Performing our creative rituals seemed to facilitate good gestalt formation. So much positive energy – people laughing, acting up and having fun that I rarely experience doing so – as fun as the dance last night, only more spiritual. Seeing everyone for the last time was happy/sad. COMPLETING CONTACT. The reconfiguration of our large group (that I felt lost in before today) into an intimate experience was tremendous. Very satisfying closure – the best I’ve experienced at any of our conferences. Most valuable for me was honoring the past, present and future leadership of AAGT. We have lots of good people to be thankful for – so much dedicated time, thought, energy, personal commitment, financial contributions, wisdom and yes, even spiritual presence. Great to see the mixture of old and new energies merging creatively – gives me a sense of hope and help with responsibilities for AAGT. Allowing feelings to emerge and people to connect and giving AAGT a focus.

C. Please comment on your experience of the Final Plenary Session

An **ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL CONCLUSION!** It was fun! **AMAZING – IT JUST HAPPENED!!!** What a lovely ending – thanks for including the permission for non-verbal possibilities in the sharing. I **just experienced CLOSURE IN THE MIDST OF “LIFE” NOT “DEATH” – WOW, WHAT A GESTALT!** What FUN, this is the most I’ve laughed in ages – maybe it broke through my somber and angry presence. It gave us a chance to experience so many different modes of completion – **PHENOMENAL! I’M FLABERGASTED BY WHAT JUST HAPPENED!** I loved the creativity of the presentations – so lively! A couple of the presentations were a bit too long – **a time for action, not words/speeches. OUTSTANDING GESTALT!** This morning’s plenary felt rushed. **WHAT A FASCINATINGLY CREATIVE BUNCH!** The only other large group experience I’ve had that was as good as this one was the closing of the NYIGT Group Conference. It would have been better to give groups more planning time for the “finale.” Sorry I can’t be here for this as my flight leaves too early – I’ll miss the fun and the goodbyes. **WONDER of WONDERS, the “DOING” turned into BEING!**

PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

4. Out of the 5 Presentation/Workshop Sessions offered, how many did you attend?

All but 3 of the respondents attended 5 workshops.

5. The workshops I attended were interesting and challenging

0 Not Applicable	1 Disagree Strongly	2 Disagree Somewhat	3 Neutral	4 Agree Somewhat	5 Agree Strongly
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97% Positive, 0% Negative**Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 0, 3 = 2, 4 = 24, 5 = 39****6. The presenters for workshops I attended were well qualified for their topics.****94% Positive, 0% Negative****Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 0, 3 = 4, 4 = 24, 5 = 37****7. It was difficult deciding which presentations to attend because all were interesting.****88% Positive, 1% Negative****Likert Ratings: 0 = 1, 1 = 0, 2 = 1, 3 = 6, 4 = 29, 5 = 28****8. My professional expectations were met in the workshops I attended.****92% Positive, 1% Negative****Likert Ratings: 0 = 1, 1 = 0, 2 = 1, 3 = 5, 4 = 32, 5 = 28****9. Workshop sessions made a worthwhile contribution to my professional growth.****89% Positive, 1% Negative****Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 1, 3 = 6, 4 = 30, 5 = 28****A. The most valuable presentation/workshop I attended was: (Narrative responses)**

A very positive observation of responses to this item is that nearly every presenter was mentioned one time. If you tally up the number of votes in the parentheses below, it is obvious that people had difficulty limiting themselves to naming one most valuable workshop. Those most named (with # of elections in parentheses) were:

Duey Freeman "Gestalt, Infant Attachment and Development" (6)
Lynne Jacobs "Inevitable Intersubjectivity of Selfhood: The Intersubjectivity of P.H.G." (6)
Ann Bowman, Jenny O'Neill, Gail Feinstein & Judy Graham "Intimacy of Being Woman" (6)
Phil Joyce & Charlotte Sills "The Shadow of Gestalt" (5)
Peter Philippon "Paradox: Naive, Strategic and Gestalt" (5)
Dan Bloom "Isn't It Pretty: The Aesthetic Criterion for Gestalt Therapy" (5)
Ansel Woldt & Charlie Bowman "Pre-Conference Gestalt Marathon Group" (4)
Stuart Simon & Carol Brockman "Fixed Gestalts, Repetition-Compulsion: GT with Couples" (4)
Susan Gregory "The Song Is You" (3)
Carl Hodges "A Field Approach to Race and Diversity" (3)
Anne Teachworth "Stopping the Cycle of Abuse in Couples and Families" (3)
Elizabeth Revell & Sharon Snir "Re-Creating Our Selves through Self-Exploration" (3)
Morgan Goodlander & Organization Members "On the Training of Gestalt Therapists" (3)
Perry Klepner "The Power of Contact" (2)
Joe Melnick "Love: Living out Commitment" (2)
Tine van Wijk "Awakening the Sleeping Serpent" (2)
Daisy Cole & Peter Reese "Dance of Prosperity" (2)
Tine van Wijk "Awakening the Sleeping Serpent" (2)
Jackie Cohen "Adult Children of Narcissistic Parents" (2)
Charlie Bowman "Interactive History of Gestalt Therapy" (2)
Sylvia Crocker "A Dramatic Approach to Gestalt Dream Work" (2)
Robert Lee "The Values of Connection: A Relational Approach to Ethics" (2)
Stella Resnick "Body-Centered Gestalt for Sexual Concerns in Couples Therapy" (2)
Michelle Billies "Social Oppression and Privilege: Habitual Interruptions in the Field" (2)
Rachael Brier "Discovering Unfinished Relational Patterns: An Intersubjective Method" (2)
Steve Zahm & Eva Gold "A Radically Phenomenological Approach to Couples Therapy" (2)
Sarah Toman, Ansel Woldt & Gestalt Authors "Advancement of Gestalt Therapy through Publication" (2)
Jack Aylward "The Gestalt Therapist's Goodness of Fit Guide to Consultation and Organization Development" (2)

B. Comments on other presentations/workshops. (Narrative responses)

They were all good workshops. All 5 I attended were theory driven and I appreciate that very much. They were all so excellent I can't decide on a best one. All were of a high level. These were the best developed presentations I've ever experienced at a conference – theoretically and experientially. I was impressed with the quality of the workshops – only one (of 5) fell below my standard of "excellent" (and I'm difficult to please). Have you considered having a few workshops that run 4 hours – in back-to-back slots? I'd like to have spent the whole day with Lynne Jacobs. I'm hard to satisfy at conferences, but these workshops were good – I even learned something new, things I'll use in my practice and teaching. Too bad there were so many difficult choices, as I couldn't be in 2 workshops at the same time that I wanted to attend; maybe you can consider offering some workshops twice next time. Phil and Charlotte's workshop, "The Shadow," was novel, transforming and applicable. Sills raised some important ideas that I need to consider. "Dance of Prosperity" was most relevant to what it important to me. "Gestalt Infant Development" was completely new and an exceptional experience. "The Training of Gestalt Therapists" was excellent. "The Song is You" was personally enlivening and increased my self-awareness. I enjoyed designing my workshop and doing it – the interaction, mutual learning and creativity came together as a great experience. Carl Hodges' "Field Theory & Diversity" enabled me to see people "freshly." Lynne Jacobs brought important ideas from Intersubjectivity to bear on Gestalt theory. Sylvia's "Gestalt Dream Work" was well informed, highly relevant and intellectually stimulating. Ansel, Sarah and the Gestalt Authors gave me support to write things that should be published – articles, maybe even a book. The presenter of "Awakening the Serpent" was very warm and exciting and she had a good serpent process. Perry's "Contact" workshop re-established the meaning and power of contact. "Fixed Gestalts" was a wonderful blend of theory, experiential and humor. Michelle Billies' "Habitual Interruptions in the Field" was provocatively presented and a superb workshop.

PROCESS GROUPS

Nearly everyone reported having attended all 5 of their process group sessions. Process Groups received the greatest number of “5s” (42) of all conference activities.

- 10. The Process Group was a vital part of my conference experience.**
97% Positive, 3% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 1, 1 = 1, 2 = 1, 3 = 0, 4 = 18, 5 = 42
- 11. As a Process Group Leader, I found the orientation & training to be valuable.**
94% Positive, 6% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 49, 1 = 0, 2 = 1, 3 = 0, 4 = 3, 5 = 12

Comments on Your Process Group Experience (*Narrative Responses*)

UTTERLY AMAZING! This is the best part of our conferences (8X). Our group was excellent. They are important, I should say “essential” for our conferences. Ours was a nice piece of the conference. It kept me feeling connected. I received great support from the members of our PG but not from the leader. We were slow to engage but it became important to be there to process our experiences. I’m amazed how much I learned in the Group Leader Training and our meetings. Ours was challenging, upsetting and rewarding. I want deeper contact in the PG. The PG this year lacked structure and it was boring. This group was very interesting. I’m surprised to find how much happens in a group when it seemed so little was done by me as the leader – the group just took off. I think the Process Groups should be led like the marathon group – much more meaningful experience. The PGs are essential for our conferences.

CONFERENCE FORMAT AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- 12. I liked the organization and format of this conference.**
92% Positive, 4% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 2, 4 = 29, 5 = 31

A. Comments on the design of the Conference

Not enough time on the beach. I liked the overall design – especially the work at making the plenaries experiential and tying them together, instead of listening to disconnected speakers. Too crammed – I need more time between sessions. Overwhelming but great! Not enough slack time. Here we are on this great beach and don’t get to it except early morning, late in the day or night – let’s consider having some workshop presentations at night so we can enjoy our environment in daylight. For everything we want to accomplish and enjoy at our conferences, maybe we should schedule them for 5 days. I wish we had some pre-conference and/or post-conference offerings – more in-depth, full-day workshops – the idea of the Marathon Group was great and I hope it is offered again – it was the highlight of my being here.

- 13. The community meetings were a worthwhile part of my conference experience.**
75% Positive, 9% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 1, 2 = 5, 3 = 10, 4 = 20, 5 = 29

A. Comments on design of the Community Meetings

You need to prioritize the agenda. It’s okay to provide a venue for egotists to be heard, but the business meeting is not the place for it – maybe at the IIG. Planners need to do some work on differentiating “community” and “business” and schedule them separately. We need to schedule community meetings in the mornings. I found it very long to sit through the last community meeting and am glad that “time and prioritizing” are seen as subjects to discuss. I thought the meditation would never end -- not appropriate for our community meetings? The circle was too big, I felt lost and insignificant – wish I’d suggested forming a double or triple circle to make it smaller and more intimate. The business meeting shouldn’t be shoved to the end when we have no time left to discuss things – not even time to give adequate consideration to being nominated for an office. I felt officer elections were forced – not enough thought put into such an important part of our coexistence and even survival. I’m glad we decided to elect the President-Elect at our larger gatherings (conferences) where more people can have a voice and consider the position. The chair needs to know how to morph the people with big mouths who have little or nothing to contribute to the task at hand but just need to be seen or heard. Prioritizing the agenda and having a time-keeper might help us get through community meetings with less anxiety and pressure.

SATURDAY NIGHT DINNER DANCE AND AUCTION

- 14. The Saturday night Dinner was pleasant and satisfying.**
91% Positive, 3% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 1, 2 = 1, 3 = 4, 4 = 30, 5 = 29
- 15. The Saturday night Dance was pleasant and satisfying..**
91% Positive, 0% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 0, 3 = 5, 4 = 25, 5 = 34
- 16. The Saturday night Auction was worth attending and a good money maker for AAGT.**
85% Positive, 1% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 1, 1 = 0, 2 = 1, 3 = 8, 4 = 19, 5 = 36

A. Ideas for improving our Saturday night affair

We definitely could have had better food for our main dinner. Next time get live music. I’d like to have had an opportunity to view the auction items in advance. Consider having the auction at dinner; since I don’t dance and chose not to attend the dance, I missed the auction. The auction took too long and the energy dropped. Charlie is a fun, funny and energizing auctioneer – GREAT JOB CHARLIE! We could have more fun things to auction. We need a bigger space for dancing. Could we have some advance info on the auction and its purpose? More slow dance music. Let’s have the same kind of Saturday night activity at the next conference. Consider having the auction at our Saturday Community Meeting. Elicit auction items through the Newsletter and display them ahead of time in a community meeting. Start dinner earlier and have the auction at the end of dinner. Better music – something I can dance to (slow). I had more fun at the dance than I’ve had for years – really let my hair down and had a fantastic time. We have some really good dancers.

ADMINISTRATION AND FACILITIESI was SATISFIED with the Administrative Procedures and Facilities concerning:**17. Registration Procedures****92% Positive, 1% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 1, 2 = 0, 3 = 5, 4 = 20, 5 = 40****Comment:** Not enough assistance at the Registration Table. Nancy Woldt deserves a plaque – what a hard worker, good organizer and wonderful person .**18. Continuing Education Procedures****100% Positive, -% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 15, 1 = 0, 2 = 0, 3 = 0, 4 = 5, 5 = 40****Comment:** Superb handling of the CEs.**19. Exhibits (books, journals, brochures)****81% Positive, 3% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 2, 3 = 10, 4 = 22, 5 = 31****20. Meeting Room Comfort (size, temperature, seating)****49% Positive, 28% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 2, 2 = 16, 3 = 15, 4 = 15, 5 = 17****Comment:** Either too cold or too hot, very poor temperature control in this facility.**21. Ease of Traffic Flow to Meeting Rooms and Events****92% Positive, 2% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 1, 3 = 4, 4 = 30, 5 = 30****22. Aesthetics of the Physical Environment****85% Positive, 2% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 2, 3 = 8, 4 = 26, 5 = 29****Comment:** Not enough day time to enjoy the aesthetics of the beach, art museums, etc.**23. Guest Room Accommodations****87% Positive, 8% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 2, 1 = 1, 2 = 4, 3 = 4, 4 = 26, 5 = 29****Comment:** The hot water was slow coming. I had a lousy room for the price they charged – no view.**24. Meals and Dining Facilities****62% Positive, 15% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 5, 2 = 5, 3 = 15, 4 = 23, 5 = 17****Comment:** Many negative comments re. menu and poor food choices – especially vegetarians (see below).**A. General Comments on Conference Administration and Facilities**

I LOVED the morning introductions of daily workshops!! Those few minutes spent after breakfast were very beneficial – keep this in future planning. Very good idea to put the “new blood” dot on Newcomers’ name tags. The food was not as good this year. Very friendly staff. Loving Bread. Too cold (12X). Meals were average. No vegetarian menu (6X). No proteins for breakfasts. Menu didn’t take healthy eating into account. Good service. Need more time between things – hardly enough time to pee. No hot water. Environment was great. Outside areas (pool, etc.) kept very clean.

INTEREST GROUP OPPORTUNITIES IN AAGT**25. The AAGT Interest Group concept is important to me.****31% Positive, 27% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 12, 1 = 11, 2 = 7, 3 = 11, 4 = 13, 5 = 7****A. My primary Gestalt interests are:**

Singles (I’m interested in starting a Singles’ IG). The Irish Interest Group is a fantastically fun thing – I’m glad to have discovered it and was toasted in as a new member. GLBT Interest Group is always a good point of contact (6X). Creativity. Art. Theory. Associating. AAGT. Children & Adolescents. Developing my institute. Social implications of Gestalt therapy. Professional development. Organizational aspects of AAGT. Couples (4X). Groups (10X). Body work (4X).

B. Comments on Interest Group concept

I want to see them continued. They provide an opportunity to interact with kindred souls. I want to develop an interest group for singles. The whole concept needs stimulation and leadership. I was surprised to see how vital the IG concept was in the founding and I wonder what’s happened? We seem not to be able to remain connected in IGs. I think they are VITAL to AAGT but don’t know how to integrate them into our on-going existence or into the conferences. I’m not sure what they are. I expressed interest in joining a couple of IGs when I joined but nothing happened – no one contacted me or anything. The GLBT Interest Group breakfast helped me feel more connected as a new member. I’d like the IG Chairs to comment about their Interest Group in the opening plenary or in the first community meeting. They are a good idea but too much to fit into our conferences. Why are they called “Interest Groups” when the interest has died? Maybe we should call them “Live Groups” or “Dead Groups.” I think if they are to survive we need to invigorate new life into them and figure out how they can function meaningfully between conferences. A few of them might continue to be important to meet during the conference, but most of them are not viable for conference meetings. It seems that when the IG Chairs were dropped from the Board that very few of them attended the conference. The ones that have no leadership should be dropped from the AAGT Web site.

REGIONAL (RCP) STRUCTURES FOR AAGT

- 26. The use of Regions and Regional Contact Persons (RCPs) is important to me**
38% Positive, 14% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 12, 1 = 4, 2 = 5, 3 = 19, 4 = 10, 5 = 15

A. Comments on RCP concept

I like the idea of regions, but haven't experienced it in the NE-USA region. I think we should support more Regional Meetings during the "in-between years" when we don't have a regular conference. They sound valuable but I'm not sure what they are for. Please do something about the SWAAGT scheduling their conference so close to these – maybe they could meet every other year, in that way supporting attendance at these conferences. They are a good vehicle for getting folks involved in AAGT without a lot of responsibility. I'm interested in helping organize a Regional Meeting in Florida.

OVERALL CONFERENCE EVALUATION

- 27. The conference as a whole contributed to my professional acumen and growth.**
95% Positive, 0% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 0, 3 = 1, 4 = 25, 5 = 37

- 28. The conference as a whole contributed to my personal development.**
92% Positive, 0% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 0, 3 = 5, 4 = 20, 5 = 40

- 29. The conference expanded my awareness of valuable aspects about Gestalt Therapy.**
89% Positive, 1% Negative Likert Ratings: 0 = 0, 1 = 0, 2 = 1, 3 = 6, 4 = 18, 5 = 40

NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND GENERAL FEEDBACK ON CONFERENCE

30. What was most important to you about this conference?

The goodwill, the connecting, and the learning. Gathering of the Gestalt family. Experiencing renewal. The people who come here. The Process Group as a "grounding experience" throughout the conference. Reconnecting with the Gestalt community. Meeting and greeting. Connections with others. The openness and good will of the people in this organization. Being recognized and valued. Personal growth. Meeting new people. The process group experience and other fellowship with old and new colleagues. Contact. The depth of connections here and great conversations. Contacting friends and colleagues. The high quality of the workshops. Watching and enjoying peers present. I feel full as a person living and practicing and living humanity. Time spent with individuals. The satisfaction that my presentation "made" – doing it was a blast. Being with therapists/people I respect to think about theory and practice issues. Intellectual stimulation was satisfying. Contact with the underworld of Gestalt. Re-connecting with people I love – feeling that "I'm home!" Positive confluence – no in-fighting, fun plenaries, great program! Experiencing a true community -- feeling held by the group with an expanding awareness of the field. New learnings in the workshops.

31. What was most satisfying about this conference?

Overall ambience and good balance between personal and professional issues. Our Process Group (17X). Friends who have become "family." Meaningful contact with people and ideas. Associating. Connecting and personal achieving. Realizing my needs were met and my expectations were exceeded. Meeting, greeting and gaining knowledge. I achieved my primary goals: reconnecting, learning and growth. Connections with others (18X). Wonderful to see old friends and enjoy conversations. Workshops and the Party. Interaction with Gestalt colleagues. Contacting old friends and making new ones. I truly enjoyed Lynne Jacobs who brings challenging point of view to the field. Personal satisfaction of being with people I love and respect. Leading my process group and learning so much from the group leader training – thank you Perry! The singing and dancing workshop with Susan. Being with other Gestalt therapists. "Extreme dancing." The experiential aspects of workshops and plenaries were the best part. Discovering what it's like to be and feel included. Contact, connections and integration. The pre-conference Marathon Group with Charlie and Ansel was fantastic – bring it back next time. Being part of the "ebb and flow."

32. What was most disappointing about this conference?

Not enough free time. I was not disappointed in anything. I was disappointed that there were not more people here. The business meeting on Saturday because individual speeches took up the time and there was no agenda, no time limits, plus that stupid 15 minute meditation. The plenary sessions (5). The disorder of the 2nd Community Meeting. I was disappointed that the elections were shafted into such a small space with so much pressure on people to volunteer; other than that, the meeting was handled with grace and sensitivity. I wasn't disappointed in anything. Big meetings – too big of an agenda, too little time. The dance – no live music. Community meetings too long, got bogged down. My process group. The Food (15X). Room temperatures. Poor food choices. Stress of the schedule. The hot water was slow coming. That I had to miss some workshops because I couldn't be in 2 places at the same time. Too hectic schedule. Spottiness of presentation quality. Lack of time-keeping. I didn't have a fun get-away with others; last time we went on a sailing trip. The plenary sessions were not connected enough. Lack of focus in community meetings. Cold rooms made it hard for me to sit thru meetings. Lack of warm veggie food. Crowded schedule – hardly time to go the bathroom. I wasn't disappointed but would like day-time to enjoy the "sunshine and water." A member of our process group made this experience upsetting.

33. If you could add one thing to our conferences, what would you add?

Two days. More people. Audio-taping of presentations. Have only 5 presentation slots with only 4 choices in each of them. Time and space between process groups and other programs. More contrast between workshops. Another dinner together with real food. More students. Time for Interest Groups to meet. I'd add a priority list and agenda for community meetings. Better food choices.

Separate business meetings from general community meetings (18X). More active process group. Time to walk on the beach together. More time between events. Nothing. More focus and structure in the community meetings. Be sure to continue with the early morning "YOU!" More free time (16X). Not that we need to add it, but to keep it now that we experimented with early morning activities and the overview of the day is an excellent addition. Some time for withdrawal. Provide structure and holding power along with the openness of community meetings. More time in process groups. Full-day workshops – pre- and/or post-conference. Take better care of newcomers RIGHT AWAY! Have a smaller more intimate venue – workshops that are continuous, e.g. Part 1, Part 2. I'd like more open time but don't want to delete anything either.

34. If you could take one thing out of our conferences, what would you delete?

Eliminate the process group meeting at lunch (8X). Take out all the extras that got added to the community/business meeting on Saturday afternoon. Nothing – I like it the way it is. I'd take out the COLD in rooms. Workshops that excluded any "type" of person. I'd take out 1 workshop series for free time. The plenaries could go. I'd take out half of the number of workshops. No meditations in Community Meetings. Long community meetings. Business meeting. Balance of free time in the sun and workshops. I'd take out the tedious aspect of the community meetings *[tending to peoples' egos]*. The middle plenary could go. Plenaries should be the place for interpersonal dynamics and the community meetings run rightly to take care of business. I'd not take anything out as I learn something from every aspect of it.

35. Something I learned at this conference that I hope to use "back home":

Some new ideas about working with couples. Reaffirmed standing with my integrity. Fuller use of self in therapy. New tools for couples' work. How to connect. That we Gestaltists are everywhere. Robert Lee's "2 models of constructing the world" theory. I realize how important it is for me to be back and I'll be back again. The importance of and how to make better contact. Improved use of paradoxical interventions in therapy. This is Big Time stuff!! How to hold deep compassion (grief, rage). Clinical techniques and the fact that we are still out there and active. Ideas for using "attachment material" from Duey's presentation. I learned about letting go of my control and try to see and experience walking in the other person's shoes. I have anew reading list and am anxious to start on it. That there is so much to learn and I'm sure it will emerge. Respect for the different rhythms of interventions and responses. Attachment theory. The simplicity of language describing Gestalt theory. Organizational connections. Increased attention to clients and self-somatic experience. Too numerous to list. The innate power of a group to develop even when it seems like nothing is happening. I learned another dimension of group facilitation. Added energy for spreading GT. Sense of Gestalt community and love. The wonders of telling people I belong to a growing, caring and supportive association. To be myself and strengthen the ground for figure to emerge. The availability of the connections I made here. OD information and contacts from institutes who can help me. I learned that intent and impact are not the same. Use of physical contact to work through loss and anger. Great ideas to think about from Lynne's Intersubjectivity.

INTEREST IN ASSISTING WITH FUTURE AAGT CONFERENCES (Narrative Responses)

Twenty-five (25) people included their Email address as a solid indication of their interest in assisting with our 2006 Conference in Vancouver, BC and even selected areas of expertise in which they are willing to help. People identified the following areas for volunteer work: scholarship, program design, plenary design/leadership, logistics, publicity, organizational tasks, process group leaders, administrative assistance, peer reviewers, on-site coordination, work study coordination, continuing education work, name tags, welcoming committee for newcomers, and executive functions for officers. This information will be passed on to the conference planners.

Although a smaller number of volunteers (11), it is well that there are this many interested in assisting with the 2005 European Regional Conference and Annual Meeting in Amsterdam. People identified the following areas of interest: being a process group leader, program planning, publicity, administration and on-site coordination. This information will be passed on to the conference and annual meeting planners.

36. Do you feel like you'll want to come to our next conference?

Almost everyone checked **YES** to this question. Those who checked **NO** cited: "Cost – not enough money to come to every conference." "I don't think so, at least not for now." "I need to think about it."

37. Would you recommend our conference to colleagues?

Again, almost everyone checked **YES** to this question. The only people who commented on their **NO**, said. "I'm not ready yet." "I don't have any "colleagues."



Conference participants Bea Mackay, Helen Lindsay, and Jon Blend

Conference Experience by *Charlie Bowman*



Under Bud's leadership, changes have occurred that he has nourished and allowed to unfold. One of these has been to engage differences and at the same time not hold onto conflict that is perpetual. The old notion of a split in the conference along the lines of professionalism, for instance, is really now a moot point. It is very clear that the conference this time was what people wanted. And while the argument was raging, people were in the background measuring feedback responses from the last conference, identifying CE requirements and planning this conference (and the last, too) based upon this feedback. As a result, a very satisfying, professional experience was had by most. The peer reviewed presentations were excellent and the plenary sessions allowed for maximum contact in multiple small groups to consider the significance of Gestalt therapy and theory in our world today. Unquestionably professional and unsurpassed in community-building. These, as Phil pointed out years ago, are not polar!

For me, a major development at this conference was the gathering and subsequent meeting of the former Presidents of AAGT to provide support for the office and offer a resource to the leadership of the organization as a collective. I think this is an example of organizational stability. I do not believe the community, led by the past Presidents, will allow for grandstanding or belligerent attacks based upon differing ideologies or personalities to persist and damage the fabric, or Self, of the community. We are past simple statements like "appreciating differences," etc. The Covenant of Community, which is available at aagt.org, is a statement which I disregarded at first (a result of my own wounds in this community) which I now thoroughly embrace.

There was much less concern with the quantity of participants in the workshops than there was the quality of the material presented. So, some of the sessions with 10 or fewer participants led to brilliant discussion and

stimulating new ideas for me. There were somewhere between 40 and 50 peer reviewed presentations, several orientation and welcoming sessions for newcomers, a process-oriented business meeting that was extremely well attended, and a marathon group! The usual dance, auction and meals were fun, allowed us to meet in less-than-professional style, and were highlighted against the perfect backdrop -- the beaches of St. Petersburg.

This sounds too much like an advertisement for AAGT Conferences! You can see that I really enjoyed myself. There were many newcomers and younger folks - really warmed my heart. Of course a lot of my old friends made it, and I missed many folks like you Alan and you Gary (and Bob, Malcolm, Sean, Liv, Rita, Gordon, Phil L. and many more).

Finally, the Irish Interest Group reigned supreme, as usual. We set the record straight that Brian and myself were the founders and there was no one there to dispute the claim. Someone named Sean was mentioned as a founder, but that's all in the past now (-:-) We inducted many, many new members, including folks from around the world, 2 waitresses, a bartender, two bikers and an elderly couple - all local participants glad to partake the festivities. Does this matter? Well, a Londoner sitting at the bar got his hackles up when he heard an Irishman (Brian) lead off with "God Save the Queen." By nights end he was joining us for songs from around the world, recognizing that differences need not make enemies. Of course, it didn't hurt that he rode a Harley and I had on one of my many "Live to Ride, Ride to Live" tee-shirts!

See you in Amsterdam or in Vancouver!

Charlie



Why “Women Only”? by *Judy Graham, Gail Feinstien, Ann Bowman*

The Presenters' Comments Regarding THE INTIMACY OF BEING WOMAN Workshop at the 2004 AAGT conference in St. Pete Beach, Florida

At the conference we were challenged about our preference for a "women only" workshop. These objections came primarily from men who wanted to attend our workshop and from women who felt excluding men was wrong and contrary to AAGT's guiding principles.

As the presenters and members of AAGT committed to the community's philosophy, we thought hard about what to do. We discussed the possible consequences of having an all women's workshop and knew that we faced the possibility of cancellation. We also thought about changing our presentation to better fit a mixed audience which meant creating an entirely different workshop. This didn't interest us and felt overwhelming.

Our original vision of the workshop was for it to be part of an ongoing process. Part I would be for women only and then, Part II, for men and women.

We did present Part I at the conference in St. Petersburg. We believe that women change how they relate to themselves and others in the presence of men, so "women only" was an important part of this experiment. Our design was to make figural women being intimate and authentic with other women within a background of a community of women.

The workshop itself was experiential by design. We danced, read poetry, shared intimately in small groups and within the larger whole. Through this process, we cried, laughed, and demonstrated our strength and vitality as well as our vulnerabilities. "Being a woman my way" was a universal and beautiful reflection that touched us all. A hand signal in the form of a "V" spontaneously arose from the ground which became a symbol of connection to other women for many members after the workshop.

Judy Robertson sent this feedback regarding her experience of the workshop which seems to say it all. We feel much gratitude that she agreed we could share it here.

I sit, surrounded by you, Women. Some of you I know, and others I don't.
 We are joined by the fact we all have body parts named the same.
 Some of you have lost some of them, a breast, maybe two. Surgeries have
 removed some of what we have in common. I am not afraid of you, and for once, I'm not comparing. We are all together, and I can
 feel the bond, even though I do not know your
 stories, or your names. I look around and our eyes make contact, and I sigh "where have you been my whole life? Have I not no-
 ticed? Have I not cared? I crave
 being with you. I long for shared stories, of rebirth, of struggles and triumph.
 We are in each others company. We are each other.
 And for that I sigh a big-----yes.

As the presenters of this workshop, we see our work as women continuing to develop. We hope to enrich individuals as well as our organization and we welcome dialogue in this process. Exclusivity in what ever form it appears does not fit comfortably within our community. And yet, we certainly feel that moments of exclusivity are precious and necessary for contact. Our hope is that this work supports us, as women, to become more visible to ourselves and to others.

AAGT's 8th International Conference

University of British Columbia

Vancouver, BC, Canada

August 9 - 13, 2006

AAGT's next international conference will be held on the campus of spectacularly beautiful University of British Columbia located on a peninsula surrounded by the Pacific Ocean with miles of beaches, walking trails through a forest, inexpensive hotel housing (not dorm rooms), and already a well-planned venue! Reserve the dates on your calendar now, as this conference will be held in the summer of 2006. All members are invited to participate in co-creating the conference. Consider volunteering for one of the planning committees. Visit the AAGT Web site for more details -- www.AAGT.org.

Dr. Bea Mackay (bea@drbeamackay.com) and Dr. Warren Weir (wbweir@telus.net) are the Local Co-Coordinator in Vancouver.



AAGT DUES

Please make sure your dues are current! Your dues will facilitate planning our exciting 2004/6 Conference in Van Couver B.C., and our 2005 Annual Meeting in Amsterdam.

You can pay your dues with VISA or MC on our Website: AAGT.ORG or Mail your dues to:

Bruce Aaron
AAGT Treasurer

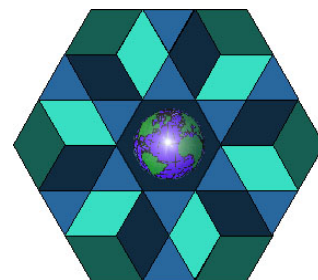
• \$150 (or more) **Outreach Benefactor** –

Everything beyond \$100 goes to Outreach & Development

• \$100 Full-Time Professionals (Regular Dues)

• \$50 New and Part-Time Professionals (3-Yr Limit)

• \$25 Full-Time Students and Retirees



CONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES

November 11, 2004

Community Meeting

Bud proposed: Likes and Dislikes



Members have a chance to "shout out" what they like and dislike.

LIKES: Process groups, Beach, Yoga on the Beach, Community support, Massage, Opportunity to choose where we can go, Paying attention to the background/field, Thankfulness for those who prepared the conference, Newcomers group, The warmth and intellectual interest and the freedom to express this.

DISLIKES: Problems with facility, Too much structure

REQUEST: That publicity material be available very early for the next conference which will be in British Columbia:

Bea Mackay has worked on this and is proposing a Theme to be chewed on by the community: "Dreaming the Future, Expanding our Consciousness through Gestalt Therapy"

Peter Phillipson: Could we produce a Publicity CD that shows the original planning of AAGT.

Charlie Bowman acknowledged that there are individuals present at this conference who have been away for a while. Having them here is very gratifying.

AGENDA: Annual Mtg in Amsterdam, Attend to Elections, RCP Report, Relationship with other organizations, CEU's, Information about By Laws, Treasurer report, Request form UK, Feedback from newcomers,

Interest Groups/ The disinterest in interest groups, although the Irish Interest Group seems to be quite popular among various cultures.

Newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENT: There is a used book sale and the proceeds will go to the scholarship fund. There is also a magnetic message board for sale.

Tine: Amsterdam 2005. There is the opportunity to rent a building for the annual meeting. This would be in August. Tine is suggesting that the members who presented at other AAGT conferences have the opportunity to present in Amsterdam.

Question: What if there are more presenters than slots. The board would have to "chew" on this.

Structure growing out of the emerging process. This was experimented with by Peter Phillipson in London. This was very successful.

Competing needs. 1. That we reach out to the organization in Amsterdam and presentations give the opportunity for us to meet and interact with people from Europe. And most of all to expand the "international aspect of the association"

A committee will form around these ideas.

Relationship with other organizations:

Walter Arnold and the board from IGTA International Gestalt Therapy Association. They are interested in collaborating with AAGT.

Bob Resnick put forth the idea that all the Conferences overlap and it was proposed that we have our conference every 3 years in order to allow more people to attend. EAGT, GANZ, AAGT, IGTA

In the interest of globalization and uniting the Gestalt Community. Presidents of each organization could conference call regularly.

A website could be developed that all the organizations could participate in. Ansel pointed out that there are over 400 gestalt websites that need to be coordinated.

Many questions??? **PROPOSAL:** That a task force be formed to address the technical points around collaboration. Brian O'Neil, Charlie Bowman, Morgan Goodlander, Victor Daniels, Burt Lazarin, and Tine have volunteered to be on the committee.

A VOTE: To keep the conference 2 or 3 years. The group voted for 2 years.

RCP report. There will be a rotating coordinator. New RCP from Ottawa and Norway.

A member from Norway, Remi Marents, has been translating some parts of the newsletter into his language.

Several of the regions have been having Salons that have had meetings sharing ideas, programs for new students and many other exciting ideas.

Nancy Woldt has worked hard to enliven this group and it has been very successful.

Constitution and By laws. Every two years new elections for Secretary and Treasurer and Membership Chairs. A proposal is being made for the treasurer to stay on for an additional year along with the new treasurer elect. Bruce Aaron, the present treasurer has agreed to this. Last year the board was reconfigured from the unwieldy number of 44 to approximately 10. The constitution will reflect this.

Current Structure:

Executive Committee consists of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer

Board consists of the Executive Committee and the Membership chairs, RCP Chair, Newsletter Chair and CEU Chair.

The president elect is typically elected at the annual meeting:

Suggestions: Could the president elect be chosen at the conference rather than the annual meeting? This would allow more members to have a voice.

Suggestion:

Could the members be asked to vote by e-mail or mail. In this way we wouldn't have to change any dates.?

There is a collective energy that takes place in the larger group that can't be felt over e-mail.

It helps to have people be present when the vote takes place.

PROPOSAL: We find a way to have the elections at the conference.

The larger group voted yes.

PROPOSAL: Nominations at the conference and then election by e-mail . This may not be practical given how hard it is to get people to respond.

Committee: Possibly the executive committee and anyone who wants to participate. Ansel Woldt, Jack Aylward, Charlie Bowman, and Cynthia Cooke.

When AAGT started there was a conference every year so this wasn't an issue. As this changed and we moved to every other year the ground of the election changed.

GISG The Gestalt International Study Center...Joe Melnick has requested to be involved in any collaboration with other organizations.

Linda DiTullio

Secretary

Community Meeting November 13, 2004

AGENDA: New Comers Check In, Irish Interest Group, Amsterdam, Vancouver, President Elect, Elections

Constitution

Other Business

Passing of the Gavel: Prior Presidents: Jack Neggerman, Carl Hodges, Charlie Bowman, Bruce Robertson, Carol Brockman, and Bud Feder. The work and contributions of each individual was acknowledged as each president had an opportunity to speak and share the context and history of their time in office.

The new President is Brian O'Neil.

All past presidents, board members coordinators, and chairs were acknowledged.

Brian addressed the fact that there is a lot of new energy especially from the newcomers and we want to do everything we can to support their interest and involvement in AAGT

The newcomers were invited to report on their experience.

THOUGHTS:

We have a collective responsibility to take care of one another, What are we really here for? There is sometimes a lack of congruence between what is said and what is experienced. Lack of representation of different countries and areas of the country. What does this mean? Deep appreciation at the opportunity to be involved in AAGT, Appreciation that there is an International Organization, Resurrection of passionate interest in Gestalt Therapy, It feels like family to be here, After being away for many years I was reluctant to return, but I feel loved and welcomed back home and glad that I have returned.

Peter Philippon spoke about the developmental process of AAGT. The way a family has its misunderstandings, conflicts, and moments of healing so does AAGT. He encouraged us all to remember the COVENANT that was developed in Dallas.

I'm impressed with the depth of thought and theory that has emerged in AAGT - I could be myself in the moment and have "buddies" - I could be an intellectual person and get support for that — I arrived wounded and I am leaving with a strong connection to the roots and depth of gestalt therapy. I am healing from all the connections I have experienced here this week -I think we have a lot to offer other areas of life. I hope we all look for opportunities to show others what we do. It has to be experienced. Be sensitive to opportunities to teach others about Gestalt Therapy "Maybe we can throw away the Gloria Tape"

THE IRISH INTEREST GROUP: Charlie Bowman reported:

"We inducted at least 25 new members including two waitresses, a waiter, A Harley Rider and many others, some I can't remember."

AMSTERDAM: Planning the annual meeting: Tine reported that her fantasy of having the annual meeting in Amsterdam is possible both financially and logistically.

Tine has found a place for us all to have the meeting and sleeping room; it may cost approximately 100 Euros plus airfare. The facility is an old silo that has been renovated in a lovely way and there is a beautiful Zen Garden; we could order food in or plan other options and there will be an opportunity for 24 presenters. The dates are 8/4 thru 8/9 2005. There was a show of hands of about 60 people who expressed interest in attending; There is a sign up sheet available and anyone who is not at this conference and wants to help can contact Tine. More information will be in the newsletter and will be announced at the time gets closer.

PROPOSAL: to support the committee that is working on the annual meeting in Amsterdam

The community voted yes.

Charlie Bowman offered to peer review the proposals for the meeting in Amsterdam.***This is not intended to be a large scale conference, but an opportunity for individuals to participate in some of the workshops they couldn't make during the conference. These events will "piggy back" on the annual meeting or visa-versa.

VANCOUVER: There is a contract signed for the 2006 conference at the University of British Columbia. Suggested Theme: Dreaming the Future Expanding our Consciousness Through Gestalt Therapy.

Bea Mackay has support from Warren Weir and Phil Brownell. The Gestalt Community in Vancouver is on life support and there is hope that the conference will help revive it.

The dates are August 9th –13th 2006. Bea has asked for support from the community.

Joe Melnick expressed awareness that many people are still missing from this conference and he suggested a theme having to do with healing ourselves and healing the world—Lynda Osborne stated that a theme about dreaming was not enough and that we needed something more definite and pragmatic.

Healing the Splits Respectful; Challenges; another suggestion by Phil Joyce

Nancy Woldt suggested the formation of a Theme Committee.—A sign up sheet for all those interested in helping Bea.

Bruce Aaron suggested a Program Planning Committee— Ansel Woldt requested someone to take on Publicity—There is a lot of excitement around this conference. Thank you Bea and Warren!

TREASURER'S report from Bruce Aaron: Year 2003. Summary:

Income:	\$18,402	Expenses:	\$12,509.10
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Net for 2003 \$5892.90

Ansel Woldt stated that CEU certificates would be mailed to participants—Please fill out all evaluation forms since CEU credits depend on this information and we want feedback for future conferences.

At the Annual meeting in New Jersey there was a major change in the number of people on the board. Ansel will make changes in the By-Laws and he will make this information available on the web site. Another change: PROPOSAL: that the Treasurer be elected on the odd years so that we don't have all board members changing at one time; this will mean that the present Treasurer will continue for another year.

Another PROPOSAL: for the CEU officer to become a member of the Executive Council. This was voted on and approved.

Organizational Membership Group:

PROPOSAL: that there be added to the board the position of Organizational Member Chair. One objection stated that this could lead to the board again becoming unwieldy—Morgan Goodlander expressed that the Organizational group has a lot to offer and needs to be supported - Cynthia Cooke suggested an amendment that we include this proposal as an experiment for the next 2 years. This was voted on and accepted.

ELECTIONS: In the community meeting on Thursday, Chuck Kanner stated that electing the new president at the Annual Meeting did not allow for enough Community representation. This was supported and so the board met with a committee to discuss this issue and make some suggestions at the present Community Meeting. There is a dilemma about electing a new president elect at the present conference, there are only half the members present.

We can also do the voting by e-mail, which presents another dilemma in that it has been tedious to get the community to respond by e-mail and the concern is that most of the community will not be represented—We can also have a nomination today that is put out to the community via e-mail

Cynthia Cooke and several other members expressed not wanting to lose the energy of the conference and meeting possible nominees in person.

Stella Resnick proposed another alternative: The past president can chair a nominating committee to meet and get a short list and then approach the candidates. All candidates can develop a bio and position statement that can then go out to the members.

Carl Hodges addressed the pressure the group was feeling of time running out and then rushing. PROPOSAL: that we would get the agenda for the community meeting set and then prioritize and give a specific amount of time to each issue. This has been done in the past but the procedure has slipped by. There is energy here and lets begin a nominating process; we don't have to elect today but it would start the process. PROPOSAL: That we open nominations tonight and see if there are nominees and anyone who will accept.

Susan Gregory, suggested that we elect tonight and send it out to the membership for ratification—Dan Bloom suggested that we open the nomination tonight and leave it open for the larger community to respond to

Perry Klepner nominates Cynthia Cooke, and Cynthia declined, Anne Teachworth nominates Gail Feinstein and Gail declined, Bruce Robertson nominates Alan Singer who initially declined but stated he will consider this position.

Ansel moves that we change the by-laws to say that we elect the president at the conference. The group votes yes!

Perry nominates Peter Philippson and he ACCEPTS! The group voted yes for Peter as president elect

Ansel nominates Chuck Kanner for Treasurer elect and he accepts and he is voted in.

Nomination for membership chair: Self-nomination of Peter Cole. He is voted in.

Nomination for secretary Judy Graham and she declines

Ansel nominates Marilyn Myles and she declines

Charlie nominates Ann Bowman and she accepts. Ann cannot attend the Amsterdam meeting so Linda DiTullio will go to Amsterdam and take the minutes for her and the community.

Bud Feder nominates Morgan Goodlander for Organizational Chair, he accepts.

The community votes yes.

Linda DiTullio

Secretary

Service Exchange Program by Bud Feder

AAGT has a 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.

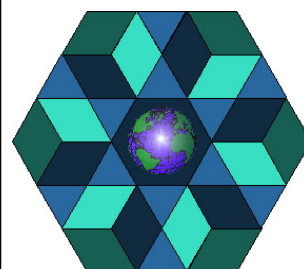
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In the Midst of a Blizzard of Snow by Sonia March Nevis

The wind, close to hurricane force, blows the snow around and mixes with the falling flakes. Amazing to watch. It is on the way to being the largest recorded snowstorm on Cape Cod.

The telephone rings regularly, my children, my brother, my sister-in-law, my friends. I began to think of a book I read last week which has stayed in my mind these last days. It is the *Ethics of Memory* by the philosopher Avishai Margalit.

His topic is the obligations we have to each other. Who we do hold firmly in our memory, for as long as we can, who do we let go of quickly and easily?

I remembered conversations with my friends in very early childhood. I'm sure children all over the world talk to each the same way even now. The question we considered was - if I am in a lifeboat with my mother and father and one of them has to be sacrificed in order to prevent the death of all of us- whom would I choose. I think Dr. Margalit is exploring the same question of how am I to untangle the complex web of my obligations to others.

I saw the movie *Hotel Rwanda* last week. A powerful film and I watched as the hotel manager tried again and again to make choices about whom to try to save when there was no possibility to save everyone. His family, his neighbors, his relatives, people begging him to save them?

Dr. Margalit offers a frame to try to help. He distinguishes thick relationships from thin relationships. Thick relationships are with those people nearest and dearest to us, those who are tied to us emotionally and practically, through their life and beyond. To them we owe holding them in memory in the now and for as long as we can after their death. The thin relationship are obligations emerging

from the experiencing of others as humans similar to us. To them we are obliged to respond but have no obligation beyond the immediate situation and the awareness of them disappears easily.

Do you remember the oft-told story of the two monks who, walking, came to a river and saw a young woman in need of being carried across. One of the monks picked her up and crossed with her.. On the other side of the river the two monks continued walking. After a while, one monk said to the other "Should you have picked up the woman? Isn't that forbidden?" The other replied "I put her down and have forgotten her, you are the one who is still carrying her". One thick relationship and one thin relationship.

Understanding our obligations to each other has been examined endlessly, from Plato through Freud, to all children as their awareness opens to the larger world. It may seem like an abstract question, and it is, but it has tremendous practical implications. Globally, what is our obligation to each other as nations if our goal is to be an ethical and moral world? Similarly, how do I balance my life so as to be an ethical and moral person?

For me, for now, I take as my obligation to continue to struggle with the question. I've been reviewing my own relationships and am pleased by what I do well and saddened by my imbalances. I have old good friends who I don't visit. There are people who I wish I called more often, just to talk to them.

I think that is the best I can do, to review every once in a while and to work to do better.

Now, turning to some news from the Center. We're particularly pleased with the Next Phase program that we did last year and will do again in April and October. The program was developed and

presented by a group of executives, therapists, consultants and academics who are facing their next phase. They want a model for decision making and want to be with others who are also asking themselves the same questions: what do I want now and what should I be doing to get there?

The participants were people who are approaching a new phase of their adult life. Some came with their significant others and some came alone. The mix was wonderful and everybody was excited by what they discovered.

Come if you can.

I also want to urge you to attend our Membership Forums on the Cape. The Cape Cod Forums are on April 1-3 and on September 30-October 2. Even if you are not a member, come, become a member, and meet people you will be glad to know. Also, if you want to present some current work you are doing, contact Cynthia at the office at 508-349-7900 or e-mail her at office@gisc.org. Sharing our work is one of the purposes of the Forum.

Take care, Sonia



In a world so torn apart by rivalry, anger, and hatred, we have the privileged vocation to be living signs of a love that can bridge all divisions and heal all wounds.

Henri Nouwen



Submitted by: Susan Roos

As is our custom, the writers' conference was held prior to the 2004 annual regional meeting. We met Thursday, October 21st, and Friday morning, October 22d. Joe Melnick, Editor of Gestalt Review and homme du monde, was our leader. Joe is both tolerant and encouraging of creative ideas (defined as new syntheses) that emerge in the writing process, while also being pragmatic about ways in which one's writing can see the light of day. He knows the part of the publishing world that we are all most interested in. The writers who participated also shared their own considerable expertise regarding publishing.

Participants included: Joe Melnick, Isabel Fredericson, Joseph Handlon, Marsha Hudson, Mary Ann Huckabay, Jan Gerard, and me. Lynn Pelsinger joined us on Friday. Books, book chapters, articles, and poetry, all on interesting and provocative topics, led to critiques, suggestions, strategies, and birthing of new ideas. We all benefited from the kind of support that helps us stay the course and keep moving with our projects. This is no small thing. Writing for publication often requires courage in transcending the real life constraints and demands that can so easily take priority. Sometimes it also requires a willingness to free oneself from the professional straitjacket. To offset these negative influences, the writers' conference includes contracting for follow-up support and accountability. After all, we're serious about our writing. We're also serious about getting our fonts straight! (This is an inside joke.)

I encourage all writers and aspiring writers to consider joining us at the next SWAAGT writers' conference on September 8th & 9, 2005, in Santa Barbara. The SW conference will immediately follow the writers' conference on September 9-11th.

