

Treasures' from the Field

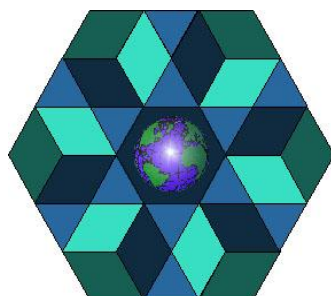
AAGT Regional Contact Persons'

Profiles

2012



(An international community with a local focus)





An introduction – Anne Leibig

April 16, 2012

I am sitting at my computer in Abingdon, Virginia, USA, on an Appalachian Sunny Spring day. I am imagining people worldwide who are enthused about Gestalt Therapy. The Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (AAGT) states it this way: *The purpose...shall be to support the professional and personal associating and advancing of persons interested in participating in a forum committed to the preservation and advancement of the philosophy, theory, practice and research of Gestalt therapy and its various applications.*

My imagination is affirmed by this collection of profiles of AAGT Regional Contact Persons from 16 different regions and from the creative working relationship I have had with Kerry Shipman from Australia North who has collected and formatted these treasures. At the beginning of April I sent Kerry this greeting: “Have a wonderful and spiritually deep Passover Seder, Easter, or any other Spring and/or liberation holiday you'll be celebrating in the coming months!” His reply speaks to the different places we come from and yet connect through Gestalt therapy. “Thank you Anne! Easter Blessings of new life to you and yours. Of course Easter is celebrated down here at the beginning of Autumn - we begin our journey into the tomb and you begin your journey out. There must be a Ph.D in studying this cultural reversal don't you think?”

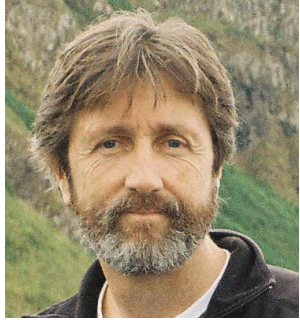
Every 6 to 8 weeks the Regional Contact Persons have a Skype phone call. We check in about ourselves and Gestalt Therapy in our place. We hear reports from the AAGT Board representative.

This year we decided to create an e-book* to affirm those who have been and those who currently are RCPs and to encourage any of you contemplating more involvement with advancing Gestalt in your place of origin.

We wanted to present to the larger Gestalt Community those of us who have volunteered to play the Regional Contact Person in our part of the world. The 16 profiles presented here show the diversity and enthusiasm that has evolved as an expression of the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy. Through each of us taking time to be on Skype phone calls, be listed on the web site, care about Gestalt therapy in our place and create this e-book we are contributing to the organization “growing out of contacting”.

The current Regional Contact Persons description in the AAGT constitution states: *Members of the Association who share common professional interests involving Gestalt Therapy and/or the Gestalt Community may desire to organize into Regions, each of which shall have an RCP (Regional Contact Person). The number of Regions in the Association shall be determined by geography and the interest generated amongst the membership. RCPs may be self-nominated/volunteers, or selected by constituents in their respective regions*

You will read here the stories of how people have become Regional Contact Persons. May these stories encourage more people from more parts of the world to say “Yes” I will be a Regional Contact Person for ----- . At the time I am writing this the AAGT web site says contact: Anne Leibig (abjl@mounet.com) or Marilyn Miles (mylestherapy@comcast.net). I am looking forward to hearing from you saying you will be a volunteer or nominating someone from your place. .



Brian O'Neill

Looking back, looking forward:

Regional Contact People in AAGT

A Brief History

Our literature in Gestalt therapy has tended to somewhat eschew an historical perspective with some notable exceptions (Bowman, C., 2005; Woldt, A. & Feder, B., 2009). In some ways this is understandable as we are a relatively “new” in the scale of world history, yet as an Irishman by birth, culture and begrudging conviction I come from a background where history is a core part of who we are, and our future in the world. In a similar manner this self definition within a historical lens is apparent when telling the story of the Regional Contact People (RCP) within the Association for Advancement of Gestalt Therapy: an international community (AAGT).

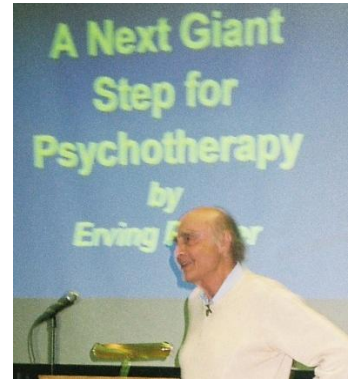
My first experience of AAGT was in attending the inaugural conference at the Doubletree Hotel in New Orleans, USA in October 1995. I walked into a setting of a large room with close to a hundred people, a panel out front and knew no one. I had not left Australia since we came there from Belfast 26 years earlier in 1969. If coming to the USA felt like stepping onto a large film set (having watched so many American films), the scene before me was one of “history in the making” and a film crew could have easily been in the wings. In those days in Australia a “true” gestalt therapist was one who had trained in the USA and as I had not I half expected to be called out and sent packing. Yet having trained gestalt therapists for about a dozen years at that time, I took a deep breath and entered the world of AAGT.



By the end of that day the current president, Carl Hodges, invited me to be the RCP for Australia, a weighty title indeed – responsible for a whole continent no less! Further, as an RCP I was now also a member of the governing Board (which I later discovered held upwards of 50-60 members). I had moved from the outer fringe to the centre of the AAGT – all in one day!

I quickly realized that when AAGT describes itself as “dynamic, inclusive, energetic” it truly meant it, as well as being “an ongoing organic process of gestalt formation”. Even though I was a stranger from a very long way away, I also felt at home and was swept into the excitement of what AAGT can be at its best – a place “to associate, develop community, enjoy one another’s company and energy, and share our work-in-progress, research, theoretical knowledge, strategies and values...”

Once the first conference was over and I returned to Australia my only contact with AAGT was through Board minutes and newsletters. I found I was an RCP of a large continent with perhaps at that time a couple of members – how that has changed. At first my experience of AAGT and of being an RCP was in travelling to the conferences and catching up with old friends. Yet as time and technology advanced I found the role of the regional contact person began to expand in two ways. First I found it becoming more and more “truly” international. In the earlier days the regions in the USA held large numbers of members and other countries were initially small in numbers, particularly as other they often had their own membership bodies such as EAGT and GANZ.



In contrast to these other gestalt organisations I found the unique quality of AAGT was that it did not exist to regulate or register therapists – it was a body purely and simply to bring together people interested in gestalt therapy in all its forms. The tension to remain an international body surfaced from time to time and for a while the RCP numbers shrank. When I became the first non-American president one of my goals was to help build the role of RCPs and the wider spread of AAGT to the world. This was something I thought was a growing and maturing process for the organisation as well as a water shed in determining was this a truly international body or an American Association with international members – and that is I guess still an ongoing experiment.



We have held conferences in Europe (Amsterdam), Canada (Vancouver) and Britain (Manchester) and our current conference for 2012 is in Mexico (Puebla). Each time we have ventured further afield our RCP base has grown. Currently the RCP list has a map which shows a spread across the globe with people (often two or more) in countries such as Australia, Bermuda, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the USA.

The early work of the RCP chairs have I believe been the life blood of connecting AAGT to the wider community, with particular mention of Nancy Woldt, Marilyn Myles and now Anne Leibig and to my delight Kerry Shipman (RCP for Australia) has held three AAGT retreats for AAGT members in Australia – what an achievement!

Gestalt therapists continue to train, expand, practice and associate in every widening circles in the 21st century. We are to be found with impoverished communities in Brazil, in the community of therapists in Belfast, or with the war ravages populace of the Middle East, and the developing countries of Eastern Europe. We work with children, organisations and community groups, with aged populations and those with mental illness and drug dependence, in court rooms and with couples, families and groups and with communities such as in Sydney, London, Mexico and Brazil. The future of AAGT and the RCPs will continue, I believe, to add to this in great measure, advancing gestalt therapy and associating happily and internationally along the way.

Nancy Woldt – A Reflection

The idea of AAGT having representatives in various regions of the USA and world was the brainstorm of Carl Hodges. During the presidency of Maya Brand (1992–1994) Carl was Vice President-Elect. His initiation of the idea of AAGT's regional development took hold immediately and he became the first Regional Contact Persons' coordinator. At that time RCP's were self selected or appointed to represent loosely defined geographic areas. A region might have been areas within countries or entire nations, depending on the Gestalt/AAGT interest in those "regions".

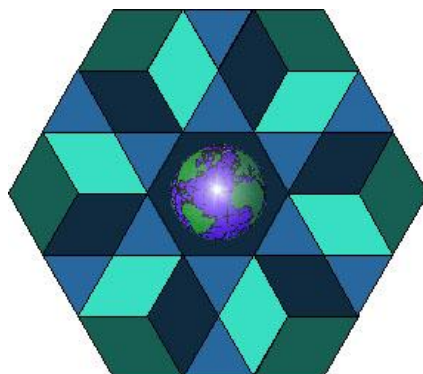
During the next ten years I volunteered to serve as an RCP and RCP Coordinator. Initially I shared the task with Carl and then with Emil Jech. I then took on the role alone in 2004. In those years the goal was to develop regions that would provide more intimate contact for the membership and support the associating and advancement of Gestalt.

RCPs held telephone conference calls each month during those years. These calls were meant to be a conduit for communication, the dissemination of organizational news and opportunities for involvement to AAGT members in each region. As a result of those early efforts a variety of events have emerged. Regions have held mini conferences (some annually), salons, writers' groups, and workshops, some as fund raisers to support scholarships for AAGT biennial conferences. RCPs have provided new individual and organizational members with a resource for contact within the organization.

Often at our biennial conferences the schedule includes time for the RCPs to meet face to face and a time for those attending the conferences to meet with others in their region. This opportunity has fostered many relationships and new ideas. I believe the RCPs contributions to the advancement and associating of Gestalt has grown into a viable and important role in the organization. A fine example of this growth is the Regional Development Fund. After a year of work in 2010-2011, a task force presented the idea of creating a Regional Development Fund at the annual meeting in New York City in June of 2011 and was approved by the membership present.

My own experience as an RCP and as RCP coordinator (along with coordinating the work study programs for 10 years) has been nurturing and fulfilling. Because of that service I have been a benefactor of many wonderful relationships and grown as a person. I recommend it!

Nancy J. Woldt
(Currently Membership co-chair with Maryanne Nicholls)





AAGT POLAND Regional Contact Person ADAM KINCEL

ABOUT POLAND

Poland is a country in Eastern Europe with 40 million residents. The country has a troubled history, partly destroyed during the Second World War as well as ruled by communist governments until 1989. Geographically it ranges from icy mountains in the South to sandy beaches in the North. The most famous cities are Kraków and Warsaw (Warszawa). Many outsiders imagine Poland as a cold country, which I believe is derived from the association with the term 'Pole'. In fact the name Poland comes from Slavonic name for meadow.

About me

I have been interested in Gestalt and Transpersonal therapy since I was sixteen. Initially I trained in philosophy and social work and then continued my education, completing degrees in psychodynamics and gestalt therapy. After living in Poland for twenty-five years I decided to move to the UK where I currently reside. I work in a private practice in the centre of London and am completing a doctorate in counselling and psychotherapy focusing on using large gestalt groups to enhance multicultural dialogue. I am linked with Polish gestalt institutes where I occasionally organise workshops.

Gestalt in Poland

Polish Gestalt developed in the 1980s. A group of passionate psychologists and friends shared the same interest in humanistic psychotherapy and founded an association which turned into the first Polish Gestalt institute in 1988. Today there are three main Gestalt training centres in Poland (all of them located in Kraków) with new organisations emerging in almost every city. With a strong focus on bodywork Polish Gestalt has developed into a unique merger of dialogic and bioenergetic approaches.

AAGT in Poland

AAGT is relatively unknown in Poland. To raise awareness I have translated a part of the AAGT constitution into Polish and started a web space to share ideas: <http://groups.google.com/group/aagt-polska>. As is the case in other parts of the world Gestalt therapists in Poland are overloaded with the number of organisations they can join. I hope that the non-hierarchical spirit of AAGT will eventually invite more members to create a dialogical, self-regulating community.

LINKS

Main Polish Gestalt Training Institutes:

Centrum Counselling Gestalt WWW.GESTALT.HALLER.KRAKOW.PL

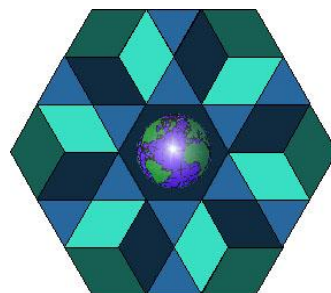
Instytut Integralnej Psychoterapii Gestalt WWW.GESTALT.EDU.PL

Instytut Terapii Gestalt WWW.GESTALT.PL

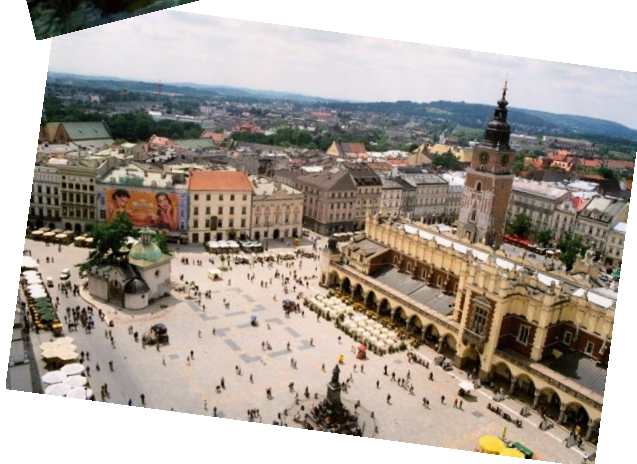
Other sites:

Poland's Official Travel Website WWW.POLAND.TRAVEL/EN-GB

My website WWW.GESTALT.UK.COM



APRIL 2012





AAGT

USA Southeast

Regional Contact Person

Anne Leibig

Ten years ago I traveled from my Appalachian Virginia Mountain home to Saint Pete's Beach Florida. I attended my first Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (AAGT) conference. Since then I have not missed an international conference – St.Pete's Beach, Vancouver, Manchester, Philadelphia and now in 2012 I plan to go to Puebla, Mexico. At my second St. Pete Beach AAGT conference (2004) I met Nicholas Emmanuel who lives near me in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. At that time Nicholas discussed co-creating the Appalachian Gestalt Therapy Institute in nearby Asheville, NC. This gives me local support.

My early training was with Erv and Miriam Polster in their San Diego California program. In the 80's and 90's I had pursued Gestalt Therapy training – with Eli Mitchell/Jon Hoover (Knoxville TN), Irma Shepherd, Joen Fagan, Edward W.L. Smith (Atlanta GA), with Sonia Nevis and Joseph Zinker (Cape Cod, MA)- and back again, every once in a while, with Erv and Miriam Polster. After attending a 1986 workshop with Laura Perls at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland I compiled "Laura Perls---In Memory". www.gestalt.org/laura.html.



I catch Gestalt Therapy by being with other pursuers. So I was delighted in 2002 to attend and become a member of the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy-An International Community offering biannual opportunities to associate and advance Gestalt Therapy, worldwide. At the Vancouver conference (2006) Marilyn Myles invited me to be a Regional Contact Person for the Southeast USA. The same year I retired from a 25 year Gestalt Therapy practice in Abingdon, Virginia, my current hometown. Marilyn's request released my energy to offer opportunities to others to pursue and catch Gestalt Therapy in the USA Southeast.



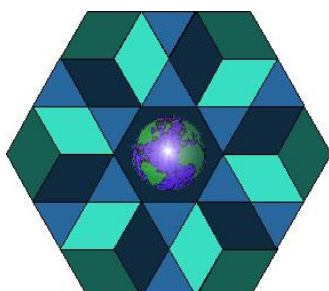
I feel bold when I say I am the AAGT Regional Contact Person for this large geographic area. I said yes to Marilyn's request because in the gestalt therapy sense I was willing to begin where I was in the here and now. This resulted in hosting five annual regional AAGT conferences in Asheville, North Carolina. My support base, the Appalachian Gestalt Therapy Institute and the Gentle Bio-Energetics Institute were co-sponsors.



I was inspired to organize these conferences because for several years there had been a Southwest AAGT Regional Conference. Ansel and Nancy Woldt and Sylvia Crocker attended the first several Southeast conferences, presenting and linking us to the AAGT continuing education credits. We designed each conference with the elements I had experienced at the biannual AAGT conferences: community meetings, presentations, process groups, and time for play and engaging with the chosen place of beauty. Through the five years many AAGT members from other parts of the United States have come to Asheville, as the leaves turn, presenting and participating. The conference runs from Friday evening through Sunday morning. We advertise on the AGTI.org web site and word of mouth. Each year there have been from 25 to 35 participants. After the last conference where my mentor Edward Smith presented I was delighted to hear him say “You throw a good party!”

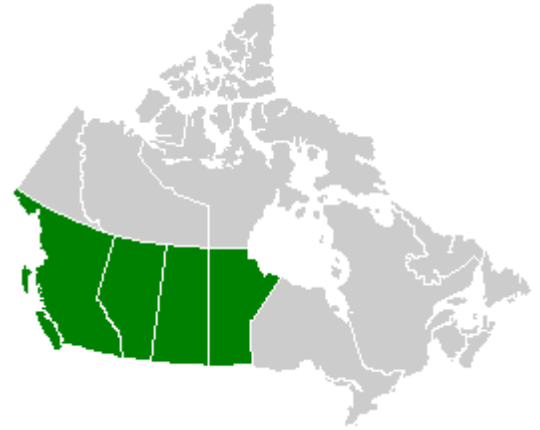


As I write this I think of the future. I want to continue the base we have in Asheville NC and want to divide up the southeast. Perhaps I will continue to be an Appalachian Mountain Regional Contact Person and at Puebla see if I can find a Deep Southeast regional contact person – maybe from Florida or Georgia – or wherever there is energy for advancing and associating gestalt therapy.





AGT
Western Canada
Regional Contact
Person
Bea Mackay



I am a Registered Psychologist in private practice in Vancouver, Canada working with individuals, couples and families. I offer workshops in Canada, USA, Europe and Australia.

I stumbled across Gestalt Therapy while I was doing my Master's at UBC (University of British Columbia) when I was asked to join a Gestalt Training Group that was starting up. I loved it from the start. It dovetailed well with the work I was doing in Individual Psychology regarding Adlerian Life Style Analysis and early recollections. My doctoral dissertation, *The Gestalt Two-Chair Technique: How it relates to theory*, investigated the theory. An article in **Gestalt Review**, *A Study of the Gestalt Two-Chair Theory using Divorce Decision-Making*, stems from the research.

A few years after I received my certificate from the Gestalt Experiential Training Institute (GETI), I became a trainer at the institute and taught many of the components. In particular, I enjoyed Two-Chair Work and have focused on it extensively.

In October 2011, Writeroom Press published my book: *Two-You Work: How to work with the self in conflict*: a manual for therapists and counsellors working with clients who are experiencing inner conflict or disowned aspects of the self. Both print copy and ebook are available at www.drbeamackay.com.



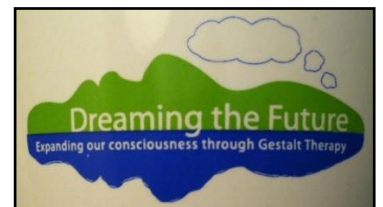
I have created interactive exercises on the Internet based upon the theory of Gestalt Two-Chair Work and resolving inner conflict about career and relationships. I invite you to take a look at my blog and quizzes at www.decisionquiz.com.

On a personal note, I love theatre and sports. I'm an avid tennis player. I also enjoy hanging out with my grandson.

Gestalt in Western Canada:

Western Canada is a huge area. Mostly I focus on Gestalt in the Vancouver area. In 2006 I convened the AAGT conference in Vancouver. Then, after GETI stopped functioning, I, along with two colleagues, Agata Burdziuk and Kim Burton, started *Gestalt Vancouver*, www.gestaltvancouver.ca, offering workshops in all aspects of Gestalt theory and practice.

I invite anyone in Western Canada to contact me.





AAGT Pacific Northwest - USA Regional Contact Person Brad Larsen

Something About Me.

I have been learning about Gestalt since about 2000 and have been a practicing therapist since 2007. The bulk of my training has been related to my doctoral psychology studies at Pacific University outside of Portland, Oregon and at the Gestalt Therapy Training Center Northwest in Portland, Oregon. In both settings I was trained by Jon Frew, Eva Gold, and Steve Zahm. I also trained with the Portland Gestalt Institute under Carol Swanson. My work is primarily focused on working with members of the queer community and people living with HIV/AIDS.



Willamette Valley and three hours north is Seattle. It rains here much of the year, but when the sun is out, nowhere else is as beautiful.

How I became an AAGT RCP.

I became an AAGT RCP at the AAGT Conference in Manchester in 2008 when I attended a meeting of the RCPs. If I remember correctly, I was encouraged to attend the meeting by Dan Bloom.

What happens in the region.

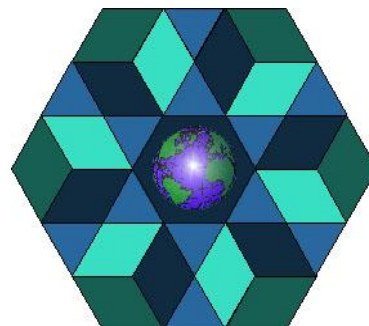
Here in Portland, there are two training institutes and a doctoral psychology program which offers students a great deal of exposure to Gestalt Therapy. To the north in Seattle, there is a regular gathering of 10-15 practitioners, where members discuss theory, engage in processing, and enjoy associating with one another. A handful of Gestalt practitioners from Portland and Seattle are planning a regional gathering for the fall of 2012.

Visions-2012 and Beyond

The future is bright for Gestalt practice in the Pacific Northwest. Once an initial regional gathering takes place, it is my hope that more practitioners will become united within the AAGT community.

Reflections.

I serve as an RCP and I am the Administrative Assistant for AAGT. I am grateful for the regular exposure to and interaction with gestalt practitioners, including the pioneers and newbies!





Germany

Stefan Hahn,

hahn.gestalt@googlemail.com

Koblenz

Deirdre Winter,

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Berlin

Olaf Zielke, mail@olafzielke.de

Hanover

About us

Stefan Hahn



I came to AAGT through my friendship with Bud Feder in 2005 and have been a member of AAGT ever since.

I was born and grew up in a small village near Koblenz in the Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. After finishing high school I first trained in commerce and then became a novice in a monastery in 1989, but left after one year. I then did a few semesters of theology before doing training in education for intellectually challenged persons, later going on to study education, psychology and sociology. In 1996 I began training in Transactional Analysis, but soon switched to Gestalt therapy, finally qualifying in 2005. My trainers were Josta Bernstädt, Klaus Bessel and Detlev Klöckner.

Since 2005 I have been working at a small psychiatric hospital where I am responsible for a psychotherapy ward, together with a psychiatrist and psychologists. I have had a private practice for 12 years, where I offer individual,

group and couple therapy. Together with Josta Bernstädt I also offer group work and training in group work and gestalt therapy.

I am currently on the editorial team of “Gestalttherapie”, the journal of the DVG (see below). In my free time I am a passionate photographer and lover of classical music. I am married and have three children.

Deirdre Winter



I was born and brought up in England and studied interpreting and translating (French and German) in Edinburgh, Scotland before moving to Berlin in 1975.

I came to Gestalt therapy in 1987 (Therapeutisches Institut Giesebrecht) after going back to university to study psychology (Free University Berlin). In 1991 I began working as a psychologist for a center providing psychotherapy and psychosocial support for traumatized refugees. When I also began to do psychotherapy with the refugees in 2003 I decided to go back into training. This time I joined a group run in Berlin by Gestalt Education Network International, Frankfurt. I am grateful to have learned much from Cordula Zimmermann, Peter Anhalt, Christoph Pewesin, Wiltrud Krauss-Kogan, Jim Kepner and other trainers. I have also attended further training workshops with Les Greenberg, Gary Yontef and Lynne Jacobs and am committed to a “relational” or “dialogical” Gestalt orientation.

I currently work with traumatized refugees from various countries and cultures and English-speaking clients in Berlin. I am interested in all aspects of relationality, the philosophical background of Gestalt therapy theory, trauma therapy, Emotion-Focused Therapy and research on Gestalt therapy.

I enjoy being in contact with other RCPs internationally on our regular Skype calls. Over the past year I have been liaising between the AAGT Board and the RCPs, a role I have found interesting and stimulating. It feels good to be in contact with committed Gestalt colleagues worldwide.

Gestalt Therapy in Germany

Germany is the birthplace of two of Gestalt therapy’s founders, Fritz and Laura Perls and it has many roots in this country. Brought and expanded here by second generation trainers, beginning with Hilarion Petzold, Hans-Jürgen Süß, and others in the 1970s, followed by training visits from Laura Perls, Isadore From, Bob Resnick, Ischa Bloomberg, Jim Simkin and Erv and Miriam Polster and many other leading trainers from the United States, Gestalt therapy rapidly flourished and became established among the leading psychotherapy modalities in Germany. There are currently two main branches of Gestalt therapy in Germany, each of which has its own association: “classical” Gestalt therapy (Deutsche Vereinigung für Gestalttherapie - DVG), Integrative Therapy, founded by Hilarion Petzold (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Integrative Therapie, Gestalttherapie und Kreativitätsförderung – DGIK)).

In 1999 a new law came into force in Germany according to which Gestalt therapy would not be accepted as a “scientific” form of therapy, which effectively barred Gestalt therapists from recognition by the regular German health insurances. Despite this setback, and the very real danger of becoming marginalized, Gestalt therapy has continued to be practiced privately and in institutions and the Gestalt approach is still widespread in a wide variety of health, educational and other settings.

There are currently roughly 12 Gestalt therapy training institutes in various parts of Germany. A new association, the Deutscher Dachverband GESTALTHERAPIE für approbierte Psychotherapeuten - DDGAP, has been founded for those Gestalt therapists who have obtained accreditation in other modalities and are committed to helping Gestalt therapy obtain “scientific recognition” under the German law, a goal which is also being pursued by the DVG.

The last decade has been a period of adjustment to the changes brought about by the law and much of the work of the Gestalt associations has been focused on standards and legitimation. They have been supported in this by their affiliation with the European Association of Gestalt Therapy (EAGT).

German Gestalt Therapists and AAGT

Partly as a result of the recent focus on standards and training following the legislative changes at the end of the 1990s, the community-building aspects that are such a strong part of AAGT have not been in the foreground in Germany, apart from a few notable exceptions, and to date few German Gestalt therapists have become members of AAGT.

We would like to see a revival of this emphasis and believe that AAGT could play an important supportive role in this endeavor.

Links: Gestalt therapy associations in Germany

<http://www.dvg-gestalt.de/>

<http://www.ddgap.de/>

<http://www.dgik-dgib.de/>

Information and literature on Gestalt therapy

<http://www.gestaltpsychotherapie.de/>

http://www.gestaltpsychotherapie.de/index_english.htm

<http://www.gestalt.de/gestaltkritik.html>

<http://www.ehp.biz/zeitschriften/gestalttherapie.php>

http://www.integrative-therapie.ch/zeitschrift_IT.htm



AAGT

Southwest USA

Regional Contact Person

Denise Kralj

About Me & Reflections

During my first experiences working as a therapist in practicum I was immersed in the Gestalt oriented training clinic that is Church Street Integral Counseling Center in San Francisco (affiliated with the California Institute of Integral Studies), then directed by Lu Grey. I didn't know when I chose Church Street (instead of the other analytic-oriented clinic) what a good choice I had made for myself, but looking back it is so obvious that one of the biggest markers of real change in my life is pre- and post-Church Street. I truly transformed myself with Gestalt work, and it felt more like coming home than like "work." I learned Gestalt on many levels: first and foremost, my training was grounded in the experiential and the personal, but we also learned the historical background and the theoretical underpinnings and influences—the big picture that I knew I would need more time and experience to understand more deeply. All of these levels have, overtime as I continue to use Gestalt in my private practice, continued to unfold and stay relevant as I mature as a therapist. Now licensed, I specialize in working with Adult Children of Alcoholics, for whom I am finding that Gestalt principles and practices are very well suited. Though I have had some cross-training to other ways of working, I keep coming back to Gestalt because in no other organized framework or community do I feel as much personal agency, aliveness, and full permission to be me without the usual measure of anxiety—a way of being which I can then practice bringing to other parts of my life, including and especially with my clients.

How I Became an RCP

After leaving Church Street I missed my nest of a Gestalt community, so I continued to enroll in practice groups, help organize weekend retreats with my cohort, go to day-long trainings when alumni were invited, and of course attend the AAGT-SW conferences where I had the chance to meet and engage peer-to-peer with a great bunch of people and practitioners, some of whose books I've read or whose workshops I'd attended. During the previous conference in 2011 in Santa Barbara, Lynn Stadler announced that she was looking for someone to replace her. Having been a stay-at-home mom for about a year and getting ready to return to work, I had been looking for opportunities to be more involved again and to network. I knew immediately that I was excited by the idea, but also a little nervous so I hesitated to volunteer right away. In the end it seems that saying "yes" to being involved in the Gestalt community tends to just feel right.

Demographics & What Happens in the Region

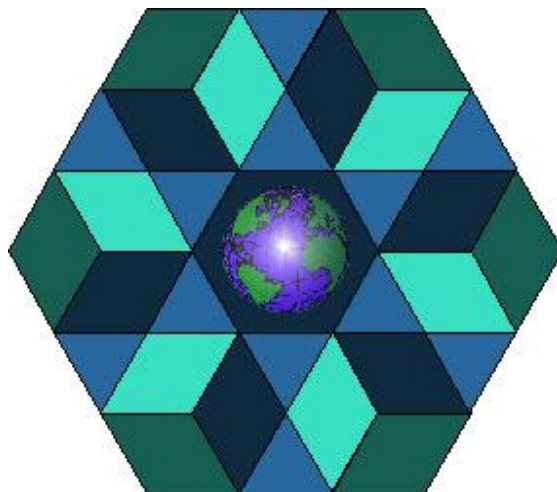
Our main event in the Southwest region, which includes California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, Utah and Texas, is our annual conference in October. Our participants are usually from California and the conference alternates southern and northern California locations. We also do a pre-Conference for writers to get feedback about something they are working on. There are several training groups throughout California and one in Nevada that I know about, which are too many to mention here. The annual conference is a chance for us all to come together and features a planned plenary on Saturday as well as time spent on topics of our choice that emerge at the beginning of the weekend. In 2009 we met in Los Angeles, and celebrated Arnold Beisser's life and work with a viewing and Q&A of Liv Estrup's wonderful film *Flying Without Wings: Life With Arnold Beisser*. In 2010 we met in Pacific Grove (near Monterey) and Todd Burley, PhD gave a presentation on "How Research and Neuroscience Inform Today's Gestalt Therapists." Last year's conference was in Santa Barbara and featured Lu Grey, Ph.D and her colleagues from San Francisco to share their "Success Story -- How the Integral Counseling Center at Church Street has Brought 20 Years of Gestalt Therapy Training to Graduate Students." (The Church Street center is affiliated with the California Institute of Integral Studies, and the group picture here is Lu Grey and the panel of folks who came with her.) This year's



conference is happening at a new location, at Green Gulch Farm and Zen Center in Marin (north of San Francisco). This year we will do experiential work regarding the "Evolution of Figure Formation and Age: How is our field impacted--and what are the concerns and values--when the emerging figure is related to aging and the influx of younger members in the AAGT-SW community?"

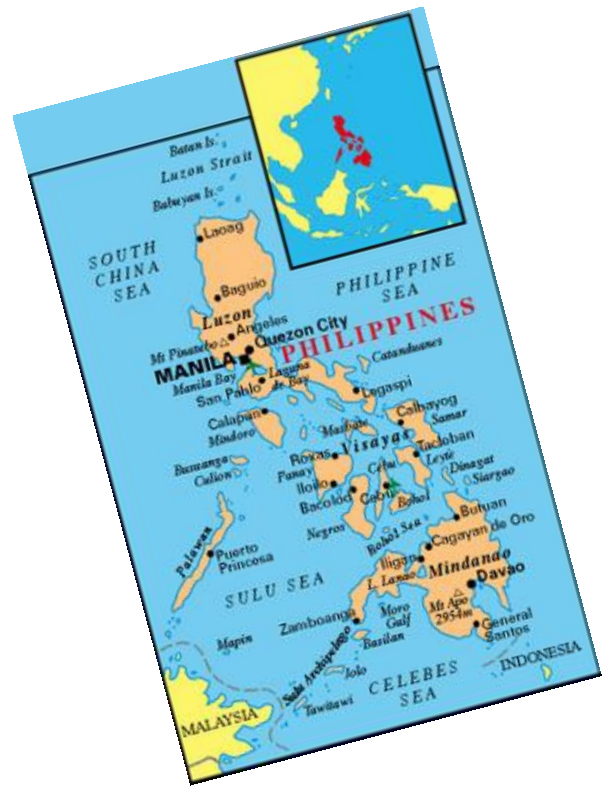
Visions

I'm looking forward to hosting the upcoming conference for the first time, and getting my feet wet in that role. I hope that we can keep the organization together and continue to meet every year, keeping it alive and relevant for everyone. I am excited that our conference this year will include an experiential piece, as to me that is Gestalt, and I am also excited that the community is bringing awareness to how the group is transforming and how that process is experienced by all members. I also extend my welcome to Gestalt practitioners from more states in our region and hope that, someday, we will meet in a state other than California.





AAGT Cebu, Philippines Regional Contact Person Emmanuel Villoria Hernani



I am a Gestalt practitioner since 1997. I am currently working as an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Counselling in a public university here in Cebu, Philippines. Aside from teaching, I have my own private clinical/counselling practice working with adolescents with problems, survivors of child abuse, domestic violence and substance dependency. I am also a radio broadcaster and consultant on psychosocial interventions (forensic cases), training and advocacy to organizations, institutions and corporation using the methods of Adventure Programming and Gestalt Therapy. I am an active advocate for human rights, gender equality and for the maximum development of human potential.



I have been an RCP for the Philippines since 2007. Ever since I became a member of AAGT-AIC, I have been active in promoting Gestalt Therapy in the region. I became deeply interested in Gestalt Therapy after my two year training with a training organization which is based in the university where I studied college. A teacher-priest from Germany introduced the modality to his students and from them, it cascaded from one batch to another through the organization founded by one of his students.



At present, Gestalt Therapy is a thriving modality especially in Cebu, Philippines. There are advocates and practitioners in the academe, human resources and in other industries. As RCP, I see to it that the Gestalt community is updated with current trends. Everything that I have learned and known through my participation with the activities of the international community I have shared these with my co-advocates. I also imbibe the theory and concepts of Gestalt in my involvement in research fora, seminars and workshops with the hope and thrust that others may learn and be informed what Gestalt Therapy is all about.





AAGT

Japan West (the Kansai region)

Regional Contact Person (RCP)

Hiroki HOSOGOSHI

Something about me:

I am a PhD graduate, a certified clinical psychologist, and a lecturer in the Department of Clinical Psychology at Kyoto Bunkyo University. Since 2007, I have been trained by Yoshiya Kurato, who is the oldest Japanese gestalt therapist. I am interested in the application of gestalt group therapy to graduate students' training and integration of various psychotherapies focusing on gestalt therapy.

Local demographic:

The Kansai region includes seven prefectures: Osaka, Kobe, Wakayama, Nara, Shiga, Tokushima, and Kyoto (the ancient capital of Japan and where I currently reside).

How I became an AAGT RCP:



I participated for the first time in a biennial conference held in Philadelphia in June 2010. My first trip alone to USA was ridden with anxiety owing to my poor English conversation skills. But I had a great time with many wonderful AAGT members. One special encounter was with Ansel Woldt, who

was the leader of my process group. We met again in September 2010 at a conference of Japanese Gestalt Therapy Association held in Japan. Then, Ansel recommended Noriyoshi Okada and me as new Japanese RCPs, and so did Seishi Harada, who is the first Japanese RCP. I feel proud and now enjoy communicating with the RCPs all over the world despite my poor English!

Activities in the region:

In the Kansai region in Japan, gestalt therapy was introduced and developed by Yoshiya, who was trained by Mr. and Mrs. Polster in San Diego Gestalt Training Center and received his diploma in 1978. He and his colleagues established Gestalt Institute of Japan (GIJ) in 1978 and Japanese Clinical Gestalt Therapy Association (JCGTA) in 2010. To receive training more from

Yoshiya, I found a job at the university in Kyoto and

moved into this region in 2009. Presently, I am the youngest foundation member and a standing director in JCGTA. GIA holds a workshop of four days in Koyasan-mountain every year and will hold a continuous closed training group for the first time in more than 10 years this year. JCGTA convenes an academic conference once a year and a training session twice a year.



Vision 2012 and beyond:

As mentioned earlier, I expect GIJ to resume the training program as Yoshiya completes his educational job at the university.

Reflections:

I want to gain further knowledge of gestalt and other psychotherapies, because the philosophy of gestalt therapy teaches us a fundamental attitude as a psychotherapist, a clinical psychologist, or a counselor regardless of their orientations; it enables us to make efficient use of other psychotherapies in response to our clients' needs. Hence, I am happy to be an RCP. Thank you.



Hiroki Hosogoshi, March 2012



Jon Blend AAGT-RCP England



About me....

My first experience of Gestalt therapy was in 1986 whilst working as a psychiatric social worker. Years later I began training as a counsellor at the Gestalt Centre, London. At this time I began fifteen years working at a child and family mental health service. I continued my studies at GCL, achieving my Masters in psychotherapy in 2007. I also trained with Violet Oaklander in 2000 whose expressive arts -based approach with young persons remains a major influence.

Nowadays I work in private practice seeing adults and children, teach expressive arts courses for child therapists at GCL and train and supervise with Terapia (child psychotherapy institute). My

chapter on adolescence - Am I Bovered, recently appeared in Relational Child, Relational Brain (eds Harris N and Lee R). I'm on the British Gestalt Journal Board with responsibility for arranging the annual Friends Seminars*. I also perform with a theatre company (www.playbacksouth.org) and work as a Community Musician.

Regional demographic.

It's hard to describe the diversity of the UK in a few words. As in many countries city life differs from town and village life, naturally. There are probably many more regions here than appear at first glance, each with its areas of interest historically and geographically, 'grapevine', and its own linguistic and cultural mores. There has been a sea change in the field of counselling and psychotherapy, with both increasingly seen as legitimate professions rather than personal



development. Though Gestaltists are still something of a rarity in terms of overall numbers there are several flourishing Gestalt psychotherapy-training institute. These include The Gestalt Centre and Metanoia in London, (TGC also runs a Gestalt counselling training) and other centres in Manchester, Nottingham, Scarborough Edinburgh and York. There has been a decline in take up of psychoanalytic psychotherapies with emerging interest in integrative trainings. There is interdisciplinary dialogue going on in places. Cognitive behavioural



therapy has become much in vogue, not least within State Health settings and other medicalised areas of practice. Many psychotherapy trainings are now being offered at Masters level; interest in pursuing psychotherapy as a first career is attracting younger trainees. For some this brings challenges- to gain life experience as well as to find suitable placements in an increasingly competitive market. And there is the perennial challenge to find secure work in a profession that is uncertain and change-

lead by definition. On the other hand, for those who make the transition, how wonderful to have a long life ahead that may be awareness- led and richly choicefull. And as the population ages and life becomes more complex some of us may yet need therapy in our dotage! As an RCP / former co RCP- I have received few enquiries from new or prospective members. Perhaps in these recessionary times overworked therapists become more insular and our 'communitas' spirit dissipates - or re-emerges in other forums.

How I became an RCP

I joined RCP Judy Graham after the 2000 Manhattan conference. We continued as RCP's for the region, collaborating periodically on events. For the last two years I've done this solo. This latter has also been a busy time for me with career change, family bereavement and ongoing carer responsibilities to contend with, as well as my own health problems. I've had little energy to develop the role here- (see Visions).



What happens in the region?

There is a growing national Gestalt practitioner's organisation called UKAGP, which aims to support and voice the interests of the UK Gestalt community in the UK and the wider field. UKAGP holds annual conferences- next is in Sheffield on 10th November 2012. In London the BGJ Friends Annual Seminars* are drawing capacity crowds with memorable presentations recently from speakers Sir David Goldberg, Roz Carroll, Prof. Renos Papadopolous and John Schlapobersky. This November our speakers are Dr Sally Denham Vaughan and Suzette Clough (for details see www.britishgestaltjournal.com or contact me). All are welcome to attend. In the past Judy and I held a number of informal AAGT gatherings at our homes in London. Gestaltists, some AAGT members, many not, gathered around a theme or simply shared news and views over a 'potluck' meal. Costs were minimal; attendance was variable. Most came from the locality with one or two travelling from the Midlands and Manchester. We planned a follow up event in Nottingham, which had to be shelved due to low take up. We learnt from this the need to select our dates carefully to avoid competing with conferences / teaching and other major events.

Visions 2012 and beyond

Sadly I won't be at Puebla, as I shall be undergoing a surgical procedure. I should be in fine fettle by the autumn and will arrange an AAGT soiree at my home, for middle of January 2013. This is to celebrate arts, arts therapies and creativity. Bring a song, tune, poem, story or just yourselves, together with some food -to -share. We can take stock of where our energy for connecting is, and see how people would like to carry UKAAGT forward. I feel ready to stand down as RCP and pass the baton to someone with fresh energy and vision. We could work together for a while with a view to my bowing out in May 2013. Any prospective RCP's who are attending Puebla (or other AAGT members) please bare this in mind. I am happy to discuss this by phone or email. I have enjoyed being on many of the international conference calls and connecting with other RCP's. It has enabled me to feel more in touch with developments across the international scene and closer to the 'heart' of AAGT. I feel the RCP link is useful and could be developed here further if there is sufficient consumer interest. The role could be shared across UK regions too - why not?



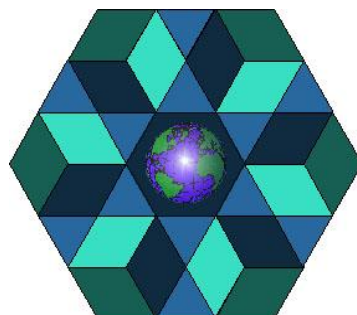
Good wishes,

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AAGT

Australia North

Regional Contact Person

Kerry Shipman

Article I: Section 2. AAGT Constitution.

AAGT shall encourage the development and application of principles and practices in the organisation consistent with the following tenets:

That an organisation can be created, rather than imposed, and that it will grow out of our contacting.....

Something about me: I am a relatively new comer to Gestalt. I trained at the Northern Rivers Gestalt Institute and graduated in 2005. Since then I have established a small private practice in Coff's Harbour and periodically conduct training and supervision. The main focus of my gestalt work is with sexual offenders currently on parole/probation. My background prior to gestalt was in theology and education.

Local demographic: Australia North covers an area from the Central Coast of New South Wales to the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. The majority of Australians live on the east coast and over 80% live in the south/east corner. Each region presents unique needs for therapists. In Australia North this format is meeting our need for contact and support due to our isolation and small population. Australia North is less urban than Australia South. Even though Brisbane is a capitol city its ambience is still largely rural compared to Australia's other capitol cities.



How I became an AAGT RCP: In 2008 I attended my first AAGT conference in Manchester, England. There were many wonderful encounters but one in particular left a lasting impression. I met Anne Leibig, the AAGT RCP for the Southeast USA . She invited me to be an Australian Regional Contact Person. I said yes and here I am. In the interim, Australia has been divided into North and South and I am now the RCP for Australia North. I was inspired by what Anne was doing in her region where she organised an annual gathering of therapists for support, networking and professional development so when I returned to Australia I decided I would organise a gathering where Gestalt therapists from the region could come together in a restful environment and share their stories and passions associated with their experience as gestalt therapists. I found a venue called *Gunnebah Retreat* at Nobby's Creek, an isolated rural setting in the lush subtropics near the Queensland/New South Wales border. Since then we have held three AAGT gatherings:



- 1) 6th- 8th November 2009 had 23 participants. The theme was Co-creating Unique Communities . We decided to call ourselves: ***AAGT Regional Gathering and Retreat*** .
- 2) 12th – 14th November 2010, 20 therapist with the theme Exploring the Spirit of Gestalt .
- 3) 25th – 27th November 2011 seventeen of us gathered under the theme Holding the Centre – Gestalt in a Changing World. Four therapists presented – some for the first time. The workshops covered topics on ***Impasse and Aggression; Gestalt Clinical Supervision-Cultivating the Dialogic Relationship; Myself, Yourself, Ourselves-The Gestalt Concept of 'Self' 1950-2011; and Family Constellations***.

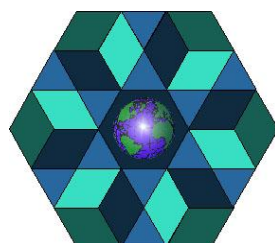
What happens in the Region: For our Gathering and Retreat everyone pays a fee of \$300. This covers the \$60 registration fee, two nights' accommodation, all meals, and 15 hours of professional development now endorsed by CAPA, the largest registration body for psychotherapists in Australia. No one gets paid to present a workshop and the emphasis is on a gathering of peers and building a supportive community. Workshops go for three hours. For the early birders there is yoga and meditation each morning before breakfast. Time is also set aside for rest and recreation. At the end of each gathering the group decides by consensus whether to reconvene the following year. So far thirteen therapists have presented since 2009, most for the first time and over forty gestalt therapists have experienced one of our gatherings. At a much deeper level we have all been enriched by each other's presence.



Visions-2012 and beyond: We are about to set up a Google Group for our region and smaller sub groups are forming especially in the Brisbane area. We are gathering again in November 2012. So far nearly \$2000 has been raised for the Scholarship Fund and starting this year we will alternate between the SF and the newly established Regional Development Fund.

Reflections: In the world of psychotherapy Gestalt Therapy has been designated somewhat on the fringe. We need to support each other in the promotion of gestalt and keeping the dream alive and relevant in the noise of the dominant discourse. We can't expect to be supportive of our clients if we can't find the time to support our peers in the development and deepening of gestalt theory and practice in our own region. Being an RCP has been, and is, a most enriching experience and I encourage anyone out there to get involved with advancing and associating gestalt in your local areas and regions. In conclusion, I am convinced that the advancing of gestalt emerges from the ground of our associating with each other.

Kerry Shipman, January 2012





AAGT

Midwest Region USA

Regional Contact Person

Marilyn Myles

About Myself

My three year Gestalt training in the 80's was with Jorge Rosner at Oasis Center, the Midwest human potential center patterned after Esalen. Oasis sponsored many pioneering mind-body teachers/therapists I was privileged to study with, like Virginia Satir, Deepak Chopra, Don Campbell. Their cutting edge concepts are now mainstream. The use of Gestalt principles remains my foundation; it fosters excitement and immediacy of contact unparalleled by other methods, and has created some of the most memorable experiences of my life. When I interviewed for the training, Jorge asked me for my vision of my future; it included traveling and establishing friendships worldwide, and providing therapy in a fulltime private practice. He assured me that my Gestalt studies would help me do both. Indeed, I have met and befriended people from around the world at AAGT conferences, and started my practice four years ago.



Local Demographics

The Midwest Region is comprised of twelve states running down the middle of the USA; we are fortunate in that several states have Gestalt training programs. The region is a combination of large, productive rural areas and busy urban centers. Many other body-mind-spirit therapies which clearly reflect Gestalt principles have flourished in the Chicago area, sometimes competing with "pure" Gestalt training.

How I Became An AAGT RCP

My first AAGT conference was in San Francisco, where I met Carl Hodges; he was the first RCP Representative/Coordinator, and invited me to be an RCP. I was unable at the time to volunteer. In 2003, Nancy Woldt, RCP Representative, again invited me; I accepted, and began participating in RCP conference calls. At times there were only 4-5 people on the call; no matter what the numbers, I was always thrilled to hear voices from the other side of the world – Holland, Norway, Australia, England. I felt supported in my love for Gestalt, and inspired by

others organizing communities in their region. I served for several years as co- RCP Representative with Tine Van Wijk from Holland, during which time more RCP's worldwide joined us. The Norway RCP at that time was holding a Gestalt "salon", an idea I found appealing and wanted to use in my region. A salon is a regular gathering of people, usually in their homes, to discuss and advance ideas about life and culture that are of interest to them.

What Happens in the Region:

In 2004 I contacted a number of people in Chicago and nearby suburbs I thought would be interested in forming a Gestalt salon; many were supportive, and we held our first meeting in my home in April. We've been meeting ever since, every 6 to 8 weeks, in each other's homes. We began meeting for two hours, but discovered that we needed three hours, 1 – 4 PM on a Sunday, which has worked well for us. Attendance varies from 12 to 4, and members' backgrounds range from therapists to physicians to yoga teachers. We have had people from other states attend from time to time. Two needs emerged from the beginning – for community, and for the study of Gestalt theory and practice. Over the



years, these needs have sometimes competed, and we have struggled for a balance that satisfies most people most of the time. To accommodate both, we check in about our lives first, sometimes giving each other feedback; we then take a break and do a potluck lunch. We reconvene for study; we have viewed and discussed video demonstrations of Gestalt therapists at work, some of us have presented specific topics, such as the use of music in Gestalt therapy, Improv to increase awareness, the roots of existentialism in Gestalt and Nonviolent Communication. Some of our most exciting sessions involved discussions of our own work as therapists and how we are impacted by trends such as Mindfulness and other spiritual practices. We have also grappled with issues of aging and death, as we have several elderly members present from the beginning who are no longer physically able to attend, and a beloved member who died. Liv Estrup's beautiful DVD of Arnold Beisser provided us with an inspiring example of the application of Gestalt principles to these issues. One year we sponsored Erv Polster for a two day workshop. Two of us have presented mini versions of workshops we did at an AAGT conferences.

Vision for the Future

We are presently discussing how to attract new members, particularly younger people, and interest them in joining AAGT, attend conferences, etc.

Reflections

The salon has been a vehicle for connecting different generations of Gestalt, which has been enriching for us all. Practicing Gestalt principles of awareness, response-ability and contact has been instrumental in dealing with differences among us and building the cohesion that still exists eight years later. Our relationships with one another have deepened over time, making the salon something that holds us steady through the seismic transitions of life. I am grateful for the inspiration and support that came from the RCP's and other AAGT members, and would like to provide the same for others who want to create similar support for themselves in their own communities.





AAGT Yokohama Japan Regional Contact Person Noriyoshi Okada

I first experienced Gestalt Therapy in 1986 in Tokyo when late Paula Bottome, who was once the chair person of the San Francisco Gestalt Institute, was in Japan giving a training course. I was fascinated by Gestalt Therapy at the first encounter and decided to become a therapist. I acted as Paula's interpreter and now I feel this experience was the best way for me to train myself as a therapist.

I now have my private practice in Yokohama and have training groups in Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya and Osaka. I was one of the founders of JAGT and am now the Vice President, a supervisor and a trainer in it. It was about fifteen years ago when I and Masa Momotake, who now is the President of JAGT, were talking about our future and decided we had to found a Gestalt Association in Japan. It was the time we had only few Gestaltists in Japan who were mainly Paula's students. Masa paved his way forming Gestalt learning groups here and there in the country and I joined Japanese Association for Industrial Counselor, which has more than twenty thousand members all over Japan, and started demonstration workshops and then forming Gestalt learning groups in it. I have been to all over Japan to teach Gestalt to JAICO members. We feel very happy to see the result of our long time activities in JAGT conferences where a lot of members enjoy experiencing and learning Gestalt Therapy with our guest therapists invited from AAGT such as Ansel Woldt, Gordon Wheeler and so on.



I first participated in AAGT Conference in Manchester in 2008. Until then, we, Japanese therapists had very little contact with the outside world. We occasionally invited Morgan Goodlander and some other therapists from USA but it was only for short workshops and we didn't have opportunities to learn what the modern current of Gestalt Therapy and what was happening out in the world. On the other hand, we have maintained and developed what we were taught by Paula that focuses on intrapersonal dialogue using empty chairs a lot rather than dialogue between a client and a therapist. So when I experienced Relational Dialogical way for the first time I felt quite strange although I had read a lot about it in books.

We are now eager to learn the new trend in the world and, at the same time, we'd like to introduce what we have developed to the world.



AAGT Eastern Canada Regional Contact Person Maryanne Nicholls



I am a practicing psychotherapist in Toronto, Canada, and have been in practice (part time until recently) for almost 10 years. While my practice includes mediation and divorce coaching, my main focus is on helping people transition out of old painful habits and into a more stress free, joyous and hopeful life. I am, more and more, combining gestalt practices and techniques with shamanistic principles and direction. The region I represent covers, I believe, Ontario.



I became an RCP by being in the right place at the right time. There was no representation for Ontario, which contains about one third of the population of Canada, and I wanted us to have some voice within AAGT.



What many psychotherapists in Ontario are focused on this year and next is the formation of the new College of Psychotherapy. I, as one of many in the Gestalt Institute of Toronto, have been involved in making sure our voice is heard and counted, and in preparing the Institute and its students and alumni for the transition. Once the new College is up and running - probably in 2013 - we will need to be registered with that College to practice as Psychotherapists. You might imagine, then, how important this is to us to make sure we are included.

Psychotherapy in Ontario will look very different in a year in Ontario, and I can hardly wait to see what changes are in store for us, challenging and otherwise. I expect it will change a lot in some ways, and perhaps not very much in other ways.



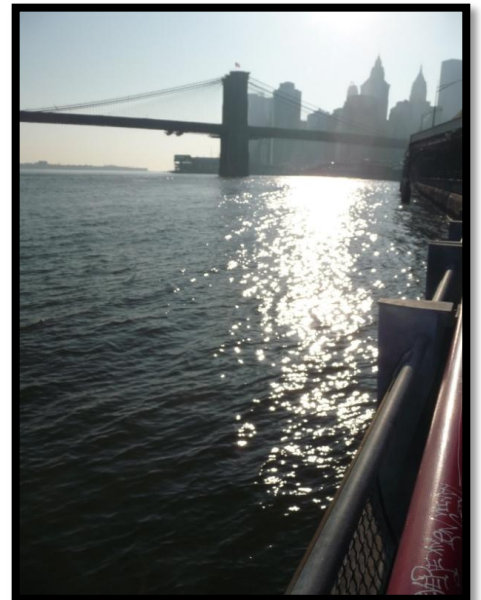
Until the new College is established, the focus for everyone is on making sure all our i's and t's are dotted and crossed. Very little energy has been put into other major projects and incentives. We will all, I am sure, breathe easier and freer once we are safely and securely past this challenge, and can then look to expanding our community.



Susan Gregory RCP At-Large New York City

Hello, my name is Susan Gregory. I am a Gestalt therapist practicing in New York City for the past 21 years.

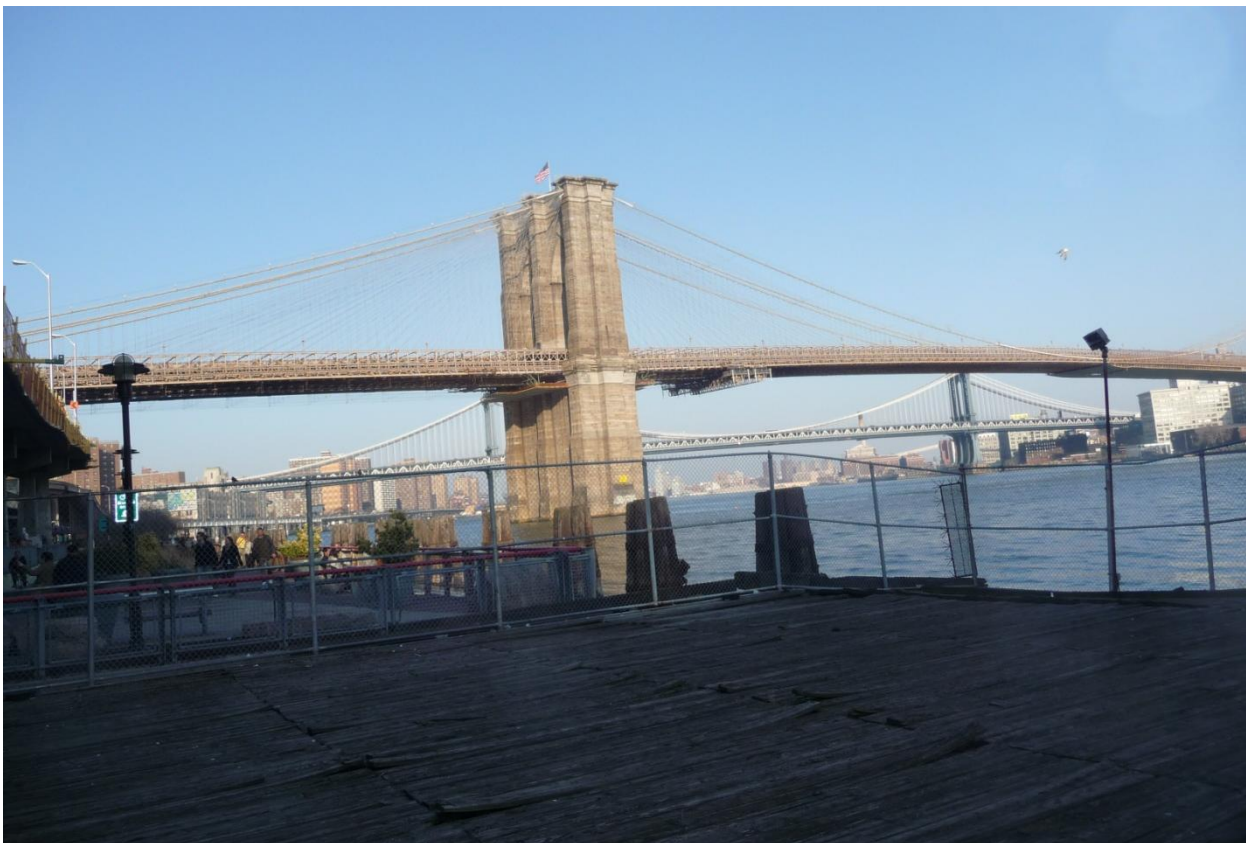
I am the at-large RCP, reporting from around the world whenever I travel as guest teacher in Gestalt communities far and wide. Here at home in NYC, we have three thriving Gestalt institutes, including the New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy, established in 1950 by Drs. Fritz and Laura Perls and still going strong. I had the honor of being president of NYIGT from 2007-2009. This season, I will be joining at least ten other members of our institute in presenting workshops, lectures and panels at the AAGT conference in Puebla, Mexico. We are very happy to be participating in this exciting event. Last August, I taught a workshop in Esalen, California as part of a Gestalt therapy and somatics week organized there by AAGT members Ruella Frank, Michael Clemmens and James Kepner. You can see parts of my workshop on my website:www.GestaltSing.com.





Also at the site, you can read of my latest article, published in *Clio's Psyche*, "Lives of some working class artists" and my third book chapter, published this year in *Continuity and Change*, edited by AAGT members Dan Bloom and Phil Brownell, called "A Gestalt Therapist Teaches Singing". This spring, I have been in touch with Gestalt institutes in Belfast, Warsaw, Philadelphia and Manchester, England and can tell you that they are thriving and filled with exciting discussion and investigation of Gestalt therapy theory and

practice in our world today. Also this spring, I launched a new addition to my helping practices at www.CoreSuccessLifeCoaching.com. I invite you to take a look. Address for contact: GestaltSing@aol.com



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(taken from AAGT.org, April 19, 2012)

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