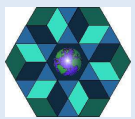
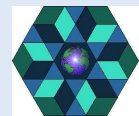




AAGT NEWSLETTER 2014



Asilomar Special



Hello from Alex, newsletter editor:

Welcome to the Asilomar conference special. Even though I was not there myself I have got a sense of it from the contributions and images that I received when putting together this newsletter. I have also gained an impression of it from the emails that have been sent to the members list. Together with my experience in Puebla two years ago these enable me to feel what I imagine it must have been like for those of you who attended. I remember the sense of community, belonging, excitement and inspiration that I experienced and see this when I look at the pictures of smiling faces, huddles around fires, dramatic scenery. I know also of some of the energy and cooperation that has gone on behind the scenes for the last two years to plan the conference and that also adds to my sense that this was yet another very special conference. I feel a certain sense of loss that I was not there myself this time and take enjoyment from experiencing it through the communications of others. I invite you to do the same in reading this newsletter and am also very excited about attending and meeting some of you at the next conference in Sicily.

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GREETINGS

From the president, Patricia Tucker



Greetings! As late Summer turns to early Fall here in the Northeastern United States, I am dreaming of Asilomar still – seeing so many of your faces in my mind as we worked and played and laughed and cried and danced together. And still missing those of you who were unable to join us!

As I begin my time as President, I am filled with gratitude for our organization – for the commitment and hard work of our Conference Planning Committee and of our Board – as well as the commitment and dedication of each of you

who contributed so much to our coming together!

Our 12th Biennial Conference, entitled “Exploring the Diversity of Gestalt Therapy” was indeed filled with diverse offerings from Gestaltists worldwide that to me seemed to have one thing in common – that many of the aspects of Gestalt therapy that are often spoken of as separate – such as Gestalt techniques and experiments, relational work, group work and individual work, field-theoretical work, embodied work, cultural diversity with a focus on power and oppression – are being presented in more and more integrated ways that truly respect and reflect the complexity of our theory as the matrix from which we can intervene as clinicians (and as people) grows ever more rich and complex.

It was thrilling too, to see our move towards becoming more and more truly an International Community as our attendees reached California from all over the globe! We have continued to grow and develop as an organization since the decision to become, “...an international community” was made and with it came a new set of challenges and exploration into shifting priorities. Our community meetings continue to reveal the unfolding of new questions: How can we create the most access to our conferences for all of our members? How can we create the most access to members with fewer resources? What is the best way to accommodate our different languages within our financial constraints? What does it mean that most of our members are currently from the United States and how much priority should be given to this? Just who is an “international member” anyway? Should there be an American, or North American, Gestalt association in addition to the AAGT? How can enhanced technology help us to reach more of our members? Who gets marginalized and how can we continue to refine our awareness of the marginalizing process? How can we best work to keep stay aware of the limitations of each of our own cultural lenses? Some may feel that we keep trying to “reinvent the wheel” as we discuss many of these same questions again. I feel, though, that this IS the process of our development; that in the limited time we have to come together in person as a community, while it often feels that we are back at the beginning, we are in fact lurching towards something new and that we do continue to learn and develop and change from conference to conference! I look forward to more of these conversations both online and in person!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PATRICIA TUCKER

I'd just like to mention one other aspect of the conference that was especially meaningful to me and this was the Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Bud Feder. Bud was especially influential to me personally in welcoming and embracing me in AAGT. He was kind enough to attend my first AAGT workshop back in St. Petersburg in 2002 and I felt his gentle support ever since. I am so pleased that we honored him as he has given so much to AAGT – in his spirit, his enthusiasm and his unstoppable work for our Scholarship Fund. His honoring was perfectly fit for Bud – he allowed a bit of others' admiration, but only a bit, and devoted the rest of his time to talking about the Scholarship Fund. It was very moving for us in our small groups to hear the stories of scholarship recipients and how the fund allowed them to be with us at the conference! And I was reminded then of not only how much Bud has done to make this happen, but of the rest of you, too, who have given so generously to allow others to be with us!

AAGT leadership continues to flourish as Gail Feinstein is of course continuing on as Vice-President, Burt Lazarin has accepted another term as Treasurer, Dina Miller is continuing on as Continuing Education Officer, Brad Larsen will serve another year as Communications Director, Alex Schlotterbeck takes on another year as Newsletter Editor, Nancy Woldt and Maryanne Nicholls continue on as Membership co-chairs and are being joined by Bud Feder as their mentee. Marlene Blumenthal has accepted another term as Organizational Membership chair. Deirdre Winter is continuing in her term as Regional Development Liaison and Mark Reck is continuing his term as Research Liaison. Adam Kincel once again was selected by the Regional Contact Persons as RCP Chair. And, of course, Ansel Woldt continues as Archivist extraordinaire! And, we have some really terrific new additions to the board: Monique Mercado is our new Secretary, Janneke van Beusekom will be joining Marlene Blumenthal as Organizational Members Representatives, Dominique Chabre and Adam Kincel are taking over from Bud Feder as Scholarship Fund Coordinator. Bud will stay on the board as Member-at-large! Daniel Bak and Robert Witchel are teaming up to be our new Interest Groups Coordinators and Toni Gilligan is our President-elect!

Finally, I am so proud to be representing AAGT over these next two years as President. We have much to be proud of. I only hope that I can represent you all well and include as many voices as possible as we continue to associate and to advance!

OH, and I am so excited that our next conference will be a joint conference with our European Association for Gestalt Therapy sisters and brothers in Taormina, Sicily in September of 2016! I look forward to seeing you all there!

With fond, warm memories,

Patricia



GREETINGS FROM TONI GILLIGAN , PRESIDENT ELECT

This is new to me – I am not sure how to start – Hello, or Dear Colleagues and Friends, or Greetings – but that last sounds too much like Star Trek – and fan as I am....



I gave the 2014 Marianne Fry Lecture yesterday – and am still with the aftermath of that. All my spare time for the last six months has been consumed by frantic reading and pacing and the whole, horrible, roller-coaster process of writing! I was still adding bits at breakfast on the day, two hours before kick-off. Those of you who write have all my admiration and sympathy. So today, I feel a bit disorientated, and reflective. My theme, of how we put our theory into practice outside our consulting rooms, reminds me of our meetings in Asilomar. Wonderful as the conference was – and it was, deeply satisfying and stimulating and fun – once again we left with a painful rift between some members, and with a decision that required a vote, which means winners and losers. Having started opposed to our next Conference being a joint one with EAGT, I came round to supporting that. And I am sad that this has left some of my fellow members unhappy, perhaps feeling unheard. How can we do these situations better?

And now that the lecture is over, I can begin to find out just what exactly a President-elect, does. Today we have the first Meeting of the new board – I am looking forward to starting, and keeping my fingers crossed that the technology works out here in rural Worcestershire. Oh, and now I have time to read a novel for a change, and to pick my tomatoes and beans and chillies before it is too late.

Good wishes to you all





The Board Retreat

From top left clockwise: 1) Maryanne Nicholls and Nancy Woldt, the membership committee, 2) board photo with Burt Lazarin, Ansel and Nancy Woldt, Michael Sasiain, Maryanne Nicholls, Patricia Tucker, Marlene Moss Blumenthal, Gail Feinstein, Dominique Chabre, Adam Kincel, 3) Board dinner at Italian restaurant in Pacific Grove, 4) Ansel appreciating birthday card from the Board.

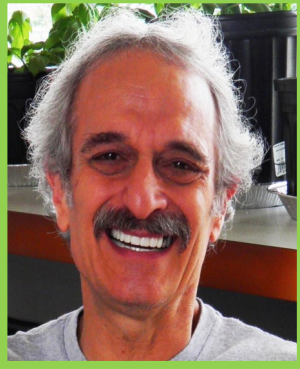
Saturday Evening Picnic Dinner



Meet some of the new board members.....

Bob Witchel—Interest Group's Co-Chair

I am Bob Witchel, and I have been connected to gestalt therapy since 1970. I felt very welcomed during my first AAGT Conference at Asilomar and am delighted to be a member of the Board and co-chairing Interest Groups with Daniel Bak.



I was initially introduced to Gestalt in a year-long personalized training experience with Mel Foulds and Jim Guinan in Ohio. I wrote my doctoral dissertation (1973) on using Gestalt awareness experiences in a group setting, and over the past 44 years, I've been developing expertise in the use of Gestalt therapy with individuals, groups, couples, families, and abuse survivors. I have made presentations and published on Gestalt Therapy and published on the use of imagery and music with Gestalt. I have taught a graduate level Gestalt Therapy course since 2003. In addition to my practice, I have been and am a Professor of Counseling at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (and coordinate our Pittsburgh program), a licensed psychologist, and a nationally certified counselor.

I believe I am one of the few who, while identifying myself as predominantly Gestalt, has never attended a formal Gestalt Training program. I liked my journey and didn't feel that a "formal" training program fit me and met my needs. Throughout the years, I was drawn to Gestalt folks who contributed to my life and kept Gestalt alive in me. AAGT feels like home for me and I am excited to contribute and receive.

Daniel Bak—Interest Group's Co-Chair

I am a psychologist and Gestalt psychotherapist. I was born and live in Poland; I have my own private practice in Warsaw. My personal way to Gestalt was through my own psychotherapy. The group therapy I participated in had been led by a Gestalt therapist and I had had this 'I want to be a Gestaltist-like you' experience. Later, I finished a four-year School of Therapists and Group Trainers in the Institute of Integrative Gestalt Psychotherapy in Krakow, Poland. So, here I am: a Gestalt therapist among other Gestalt therapists. What I love in Gestalt theory and practice is embracement of human diversity without making assumptions.



Most of my clients are LGBTQIA people [Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (Transgender, Transsexual, Cross-dressers), Queer-identifying, Intersexual and Asexual]. I have created and run the Programme of Psychological Help & Personal Growth for LGBTQIA Clients. This programme has existed since 2009; at the beginning it had been dedicated only to LGB people, later a scope of my interests and competence expanded to LGBTQIA issues. As a LGBTQIA-informed psychotherapist I teach psychotherapists, pedagogues, sexologists (regular workshops), write book chapters and present my work and affirmative practice with LGBTQIA clients during conferences/discussion panels/interviews. To my best knowledge the programme described above was one of the first of this kind in Poland.

I have a Ph.D. in medical biology, since my first faculty was molecular and cellular biology; psychology was the second one. For many years I was working on molecular basis of Huntington's disease - the incurable, neurodegenerative disease of human brain. I finished lab work in 2011.

I am new on the Board. As one of two Interest Group Co-Chairs (together with Bob Witchel) I hope to help you to revive dormant interest groups and to set up new ones. Being on the Board is a great chance for me to stay in contact with all of you. This contact is very important for me and constitutes strong motivation to work within AAGT Community.

Janneke van Beusekom — Organizational Membership Rep



I first became interested in psychotherapy when I was in college and fell in love with existential psychology and epistemology. I took a major detour, however, and got a PhD in Economics first; I loved the cool graphs economists used to analyze problems and at that point in my life I couldn't imagine actually being a therapist! In my early thirties I began therapy with a Gestaltist and found her relational approach (something I had not experienced in prior therapy) immensely validating and growth full. That facilitated me dropping my Economics gig, going to social work school, and entering the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Philadelphia's training program. I had found my fit! After graduating, I continued working and studying with Philip Lichtenberg, first by collaborating in some writing, and later by joining a study group and supervision group with him. For several years I was also in a training group with Bud Feder. I live and practice in Lancaster, Pennsylvania where I work with adults and couples; chronic physical illness is a special interest and area of focus. I am an adjunct faculty member of the Gestalt Therapy Institute of Philadelphia. My involvement with AAGT began as treasurer for the Philadelphia conference (2010), a position that I held for the Puebla (2012) and Asilomar (2014) conferences as well. Now I am excited about becoming involved with AAGT in a new capacity and look forward to my responsibilities on the Board and working with organizational membership.



Scholarship Fund Committee: Co-Chairs: Dominique Chabre & Adam Kincel; Committee Members: Bud Feder, Cathy Gray, Ariel Valenzuela

Dominique Chabre



The Scholarship Fund committee is deeply thankful to all who have helped in raising the most money ever during the two years prior to the Asilomar Conference. About 30,000 USD! This effort enabled us to make the most individual grants ever, 30, to persons from 13 countries. Diversity was the theme of our conference in many ways.

This wonderful achievement could not have been made without Bud, whose dedication and generosity throughout the history of the AAGT scholarship fund has helped so many of us come to our conferences. Even though he now has stepped down as co-chair, he remains as an invaluable member of the SF committee.

A little message from Bud:

Many people have told me that the event at my award ceremony where many of you identified yourselves as recipients and facilitated small groups was one of the best ever and helped members be aware of what the fund really is: not a bunch of numbers but a vital flesh and blood contingent that contributes so much to the conferences.... and to the organization [many SF recipients have joined and been very active, serving on committees and on the board.

Thank you so much, SF Class of 2014! Bud Feder



Even though many of you understand what the fund does for our conferences and our organization, we want everybody to get it. That is why we decided to share the following feedbacks graciously sent to us by some members of the SF Class of 2014. Enjoy!

Alex Levine

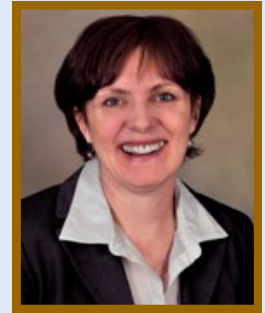
I know words are still not doing it justice, but I hope this gives each and everyone one of you a sense of how much gratitude and joy I feel for having known you and our time at Asilomar.

VIEW FULL TEXT AT END OF NEWSLETTER

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Lorraine Stidd

The generosity of the committee created the opening for me to be able to attend and I received many rich benefits from the experience. ***VIEW FULL TEXT AT END OF NEWSLETTER***



Daniel Bak

This very sense of Community is something which I took with me to Poland. Thank you! Without all of you, as a Scholarship recipient, probably I would not decide to participate in the Conference. ***VIEW FULL TEXT AT END OF NEWSLETTER***

Nickei Falconer

I was delighted to see my old AAGT friends, to make new friends and connections, and to be able to contribute by presenting my 2 hour workshop; wonderful to share with my colleagues on something I feel passionate about.

Jon Blend

A heart problem diagnosed in 2011 prevented me from travelling to Puebla and led to my withdrawal from a teaching commitment in St Petersburg whilst waiting for surgery. By 2014 I had recovered sufficiently to start seeing clients, facilitate some training and supervise. [...] Much as I had wanted to attend my sixth AAGT conference at Asilomar I felt unable to find the airfare. ***VIEW FULL TEXT AT END OF NEWSLETTER***

Myriam Sas de Guiter

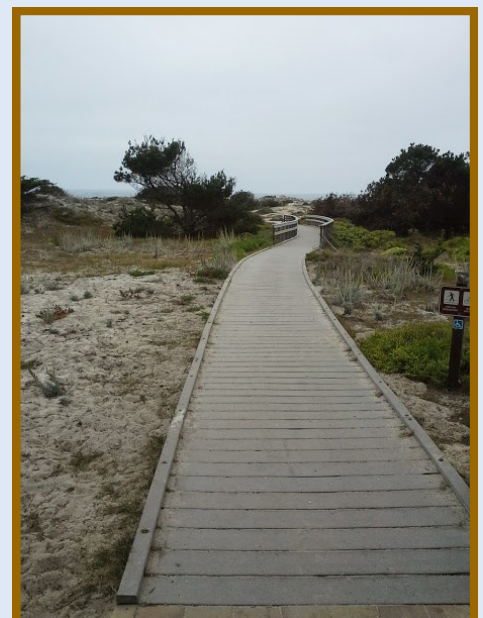
Receiving a grant from AAGT to attend the conference was of crucial importance to me. Early on I had been invited to contribute my thoughts and experience as a Gestalt practitioner. I felt truly honored by this invitation. I had a wealth of enthusiasm yet very limited financial possibilities to accept the offer. The expense of airfare -Buenos Aires/Argentina being 6,500 miles away- compounded with a historically low value currency just made the trip unimaginable. ***VIEW FULL TEXT AT END OF NEWSLETTER***

And last but not least: Our next conference will take place in Italy and we have now started to raise funds for it. We anticipate that the cost of traveling from the US to Europe may create an increase in demand for funding and hence would like to encourage you to donate generously on <https://www.aagt.org/contributions/>. As shown in the testimonials our fund helps our community members not only at the beginning of their career, but also to deal with illness and high cost of travelling. Please help us to keep the community together regardless of health, age and location.

Thank you. The Scholarship Fund Committee

Adam Kincel and Dominique Chabre, co-chairs

Bud Feder, Cathy Gray and Ariel Valenzuela, members



By Charlie Bowman

The Scholarship Fund has been a staple at AAGT Conferences for decades. The goals of the fund have always been to enable persons to attend who otherwise couldn't and to enrich the conference and the organization through the diverse nature of the recipients, many of who subsequently joined AAGT and continue as active, contributing members. The value to individual recipients is a given and is captured in this feedback, *"As a new member of AAGT I am looking forward to getting involved and staying involved. I received overwhelming support for my presentation and am hoping to now work toward publishing in the British Gestalt Journal upon their request. This was an amazing experience. You can't put a price on that!"*

Well, we can put a price on some of the fund activity before moving on to the relationship of part to whole. We granted \$29,200 in scholarships for the Asilomar conference. This included about \$2,400 raised through pre-conference workshops, \$1,000 bestowed by two plenary presenters donating their earnings and \$1,000 donated by AAGT in honor of Bud Feder's lifetime achievement award. The auction brought in several thousand dollars and a work-study recipient even donated the \$100 stipend received! The budget for the conference was roughly \$100,000. The scholarship disbursements made for this conference was over 25% of our budget. That is huge! Now, about the relationship to the whole...

At Asilomar Bud Feder was the recipient of AAGT's Lifetime Achievement Award, partly a result of his tireless advocacy for the Scholarship Fund for many years. During this plenary session the value of the Fund to the whole of the organization was explored in community. To this end, the membership was invited to engage in a group experience in his honor. Current and past scholarship recipients were asked to facilitate small groups and consider the question "How does the scholarship fund impact diversity in AAGT?" They were also invited to identify suggestions for changing and improving the fund.

One recipient's home was destroyed by hurricane Sandy, dashing her hopes of attending the conference until the scholarship fund came to the rescue! She felt this was just one way Gestalt has been a "life line" for her. She brought to Asilomar a diverse experience of de-constructing, constructing, and valuing action within a supportive community. There were many stories of how the fund has had an impact! Here are a few comments and ideas offered during the small group discussions:

Scholarship makes diversity possible and allows AAGT to be international

The Scholarship Fund not only impacts SES diversity but also age diversity, ethnic, and geographic diversity

Increase our awareness of what can be auctioned

Invite recipients to participate on the Scholarship Committee

Post recipient bios on the AAGT website

Offer a workshop for scholarship recipients and newcomers at the beginning of the conference

Identify "scholarship fund ambassadors" comprised of past recipients throughout the regions

Consider differentiated fees related to travel costs depending upon conference location

Offer improved regional conference support

Share training and outcomes of conferences with members who are not able to attend through Facebook, regional meetings, etc.

Money is such a taboo subject! Make it easier to say what one needs

Sponsor individuals to come (personal sponsorship)

Gift certificates for scholarship

Publicize how people raise money for the scholarship fund

A number of respondents suggested that "scholarship" didn't capture our intentions as well as, say, "outreach fund," which reflects the desire and commitment of AAGT towards increased diversity without the connotation that it is meant for students rather than professionals. Another group suggested an endearing change – *"The Bud Feder Scholarship Fund"*

Of course, as the Auctioneer-in-residence at AAGT I found the best suggestion regarding scholarship fund donations to be this one: *Find Fritz Perls car and auction it off!* And to all who have made it possible for so many Scholarship Fund recipients to participate in AAGT throughout the world over the last 20 years through their donation of money, time and effort, I say, *"Thank-you for your donation to the AAGT Scholarship Fund!"*

THANK YOU!!!

THE AAGT SCHOLARSHIP FUND, 2014

GRATEFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES THE
FOLLOWING FOR
CONTRIBUTING TO THE
FUND, ASSISTING US TO
AWARD GRANTS
TOTALING \$30,000 [USD]
TO 29 PERSONS FROM
THIRTEEN COUNTRIES,
ENABLING THEM TO
ATTEND THIS
CONFERENCE:

INDIVIDUALS

Bruce Aaron
Claire Asherson Bartram
Jack Aylward
Anita Barnes
Laurie Barron
Janneke van Beusekom
Dan Bloom
Marlene Blumenthal
Ruth Boerger
Ann Bowman
Judith Brown
Abril Cantarell
Meghann Case
Dominique Chabre
Kirk Castro
Maria Trinidad Cardenas
Ponce
Michael Clemmens
Sylvia Fleming Crocker
Victor Daniels
Joseph De Paula
Razi Farahani
Bud Feder
Gail Feinstein
Iris Fodor
Michael Feliciano

Zelda Friedman
Eva Gold
Cathy Gray
Lynne Jacobs
Simon Jacobs
Melissa Kelly-McCabe
Richard Kite
Perry Klepner
Burt Lazarin
Anne Leibig
Philip Lichtenberg
Peri Mackintosh
Dina Miller
Karla Morse
Marlin J. Myles
Paula Nascimento
Carilin Paltin
Karen Pernet
Peter Philippson
Robert Resnick
Stella Resnick
Jane Rirodan
Amanda Rowan
Stephanie Sabar
Michael Sasiain
Alan Schwartz
Beth Scherer
Alan Singer
Betsy Smyser
Mark Stevens
Eva Taravella Aragon
Patricia Tucker
Deborah Ullman
Irina Vakhyanskaya
Sebastian Wagner
Nancy Woldt
Ansel Woldt
Lee Zevy

ORGANIZATIONS:

Asociacion Mexicana de
Psicoterapia Gestalt

Gestalt Training
Associates
Gestalt Therapy Center
NW
Manchester Gestalt
Centre

And special thanks to the
following for efforts
above and beyond writing
a check: JACK AYLWARD,
JANNEKE van BEUSEKOM,
CHARLIE BOWMAN,
DOMINIQUE CHABRE',
PETER COLE, BUD FEDER,
GAIL FEINSTEIN, BETTY
FORBES, CATHY GRAY,
ILDIKO RAN, DAISY
REESE, MICHAEL SASIAIN,
PATRICIA TUCKER, ARIEL
VALUENZUELA.

Conference photos

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From left to right:

- 1) "GIRL" Workshop, L-R: Heather Keyes, Leticia Braga, Pilar Ocampo, Ansel Woldt, Stephanie Sabir, Lori Farley.
- 2) Nancy & Ansel Woldt
- 3) Maryanne Nicholls & Dina Miller



- 1)Burt Lazarin & Dina Miller
- 2) Michael Sasiain & Mark Winitzky



- 1) Perry Klepner conducting training session for Process Group Facilitator
- 2) Gail Feinstein, Patricia Tucker, Nancy Woldt & Maryanne Nicholls
- 3) Fernando Gonzalez smudging members at the bonfire.



- 1) AAGTers singing songs around the bonfire.
- 2) Guest accordionist accompanying opera singer Susan Gregory.
- 3) Stella Resnick & Elinor Greenberg



- 1)Alessandra Diniz from Brazil enjoying her clay-play.
- 2)Christine Stevens' Gestalt art therapy workshop.
- 3) Michael Sasiain

Work Study Committee's Reflections—by Ildiko Ran

I got involved with the conference as an innocent offer to Peter and Daisy to help out a little bit. It was December 2013 and I had no idea what I got myself into! From January on I participated in monthly Skype conference calls to get a sense of the needs of the community so I could organize the volunteer efforts. But soon I was co-chair of the Work study Committee, a third-chair of the transportation committee and the coordinator of the Scholarship Fund Auction. Soon I started regular communications with Domi, my co-chair for the Work Study Committee. We worked long-distance through Skype calls and emails yet her warmth and good-hearted nature transpired through the internet and when I first met her later at the conference, it felt like she was an old friend. As we prepared in those months, we exchanged emails and through the webcam I saw Domi's kitchen cupboards covered in stickies trying to arrange the needs and schedules of the other committees, special events, our 25 work study helpers, their varied arrival, workshop and departure times, as well as the complex system of the Asilomar rooms, hoping to match helpers with nearby workshop spaces to save time as they ran from a



room they served to their own workshops. We worked with shared google docs and many printouts that got outdated as soon as we printed them as we heard from other CPC members that some workshops needed to be canceled or moved rooms due to budget considerations, cancellations or other logistics reasons! We used color codes, highlighters and other magical codes....

As soon as we started communicating with the WS helpers we knew that we were dealing with some capable and enthusiastic folks! Some of them also lead workshops or process groups, so our scheduling really went crazy. We emailed all 25 of them their schedules and hoped for the best. As we arrived at Asilomar we had lots of various handouts in our hands and ordered bright orange ribbons to attach to the WS Helpers' badges so they could be located from afar by all participants and could be asked all sorts of questions. The first day when I arrived during the preconference, Domi was already familiar with the conference grounds and sorted out the jobs to those who had already arrived at Asilomar. The next 48 hours we did a lot of the footwork ourselves, including the 40 minute morning routine - Asilomar had not warned us that it was our job - walking around

campus and opening all the workshop room doors by 7am. But as the first day of the conference arrived, so did all our helpers. And they absolutely took over. They sorted out the discrepancies in the schedule that did not match. When someone forgot to attend their post, another person jumped in. I know quite a few of the 25 helpers made heartfelt connections and spent meaningful time together alongside doing good for other conference attendees. They did have to negotiate time that could have been spent with more relaxation or more settled attendance at some of their workshops. But the responses we got from them was that it was worth it. Armin said "Being around the Work Study team was one of the highlights of the conference for me! What a great group of folks."

A large portion of the WS Helpers' work is to distribute and collect the evaluation forms. We are really hoping that the majority of the attendees will shift to online evaluations at our next conferences. Some did this year, which is an important step towards easier processing of the evaluations and CE's.

We got many compliments from attendees for a good job well done by this year's Work Study helpers. They will be a hard act to follow years to come! We welcome your feedback to the WS committee! We both thoroughly enjoyed this task and felt the work was well worth our efforts and time commitment. We gained so much and had full appreciation of the conference by serving on this committee.

Just one more thing: who would like to volunteer to be Work Study Co-chairs for the next conference???

With gratitude to the community,

Work Study committee, Ildiko Ran and Dominique Chabre, co-chairs.

Membership Committee—Maryanne Nicholls, Nancy Woldt, Welcome New Members

The 12th Biennial International Conference at Asilomar is a glowing memory. For those of you who are new members of AAGT we welcome you to our community and your first **AAGT Newsletter**. We hope that your conference experience was rich and challenging.

On Thursday of conference week, a special "Newcomers Luncheon" was held to provide support for those who were new to AAGT and the conference experience. Given the full schedule of choices it is likely some of you missed this luncheon opportunity. We hope you felt supported in the many ways that AAGT functions, for instance our unique process groups.

It is not too late to receive the gift we prepared for new members that was distributed at the luncheon. In 1990 the founding of AAGT was filmed at Manhattan Beach, California. The 8 hour film documents the style of contact and community building the founding members developed for us to emanate in AAGT. The film demonstrates the founders' devotion to the process of consensus in which all voices to be heard. While the quality of the film is indicative of the technology of the time, one hour of key moments of the meeting have been extrapolated and downloaded onto a zip drive/memory stick. This film is a piece of AAGT's and Gestalt Therapy's history and now it is AAGT's gift to new members. If you would like to receive your gift copy, please contact Michael Sasiain, our administrator at admin@aagt.org and he will send your gift.

We encourage you to become actively involved in the organizational processes of AAGT. There are many opportunities to participate in interest groups, regional development, research activities, scholarship fund raising, annual meetings and conference planning. Remember that AAGT is an organization that is run by its membership. Please support AAGT with your talents and time. If you have any questions please feel free to be in touch.

Nancy Woldt
Maryanne Nicholls
Bud Feder

**Start Planning Now! AAGT joins EAGT
for a joint conference in the beautiful
Taormina, Sicily in
September 21 -25, 2016!**

Regional Contact Persons Report

AAGT, Asilomar, August 2014

Adam Kincel

Introduction

There is a lot of joy in contacting Gestaltists all over the world. Diversified contact and connections often generate a lot of energy and help us to see the world in a new way. However, this has not happened very often during the last few years in the Regional Contact Persons group.

In the last two years we had several international conference calls which were attended by only a few people on each occasion. We experimented with changing times to allow people from all countries to participate, sending reminders a week and then a day before the event, getting people to RSVP but none of these worked. This led me to question my style of leadership but I was assured that RCPs often have low levels of participation, and even motivation.

On occasion, co-ordinating the RCPs has felt like a draining task. I believe that this is for several reasons:

The RCPs do not have any decisive power. It is a representative body which is supposed to support regional conferences, however, in the last two years, regions had either established their own conferences or did not have enough local engagement to organise them (with exception of the conference in Mexico). The absence during regional calls seems to be in contrast to highly attended board calls which I was also a part of. I started to wonder if the separate structure between the board and RCPs is really benefiting the organisation or just keeping the regions unmotivated? Could we distribute more real power to regions and include more regional representatives (also those who need translation) on our board?

RCPs were created by AAGT members to fulfil a need which I believe is no longer present. Regions do not have a grass root structure as suggested by our constitution (except for regions which do not have other associations e.g. most of the USA) and support is provided in other forms to both individuals and groups in various regions. For example, our Regional Development Fund offers financial support to regions, so they no longer contact RCPs. The people who founded the RCPs are either not present within its structure or believe its structure to be redundant.

In my opinion AAGT including RCP calls need to be more aware of the linguistic diversity. Several members, all of whom speak English as a foreign language, have complained about how hard it is to participate in the Skype calls due to difficulties with the language. There is a lot we have to do both to slow down our discussions and processes as well as to learn and start using international English (not British, Canadian, US or Australian) but English which is taught as a foreign language.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

Regional report continued.

Actions

Although there are improvements we can make I believe that at this point in time the RCPs, as described by the AAGT Constitution, are no longer necessary for the organisation and may inhibit the development of AAGT as an international community. As Gestalt therapists we believe in the dynamic structure of figure formation and figure destruction. Low participation and lack of clarity of purpose would alarm any therapist working with such a group, leading to its goals and purpose being reviewed. This is why I would like to request another year to discuss:

- Transfer the responsibility for keeping a database of region contacts to regional development fund board representatives.
- Turn regional contact people' form into an AAGT interest group.
- Dissolve the position of the Regional Contact People Representative.

Additional thoughts

My research on regions differentiates between three different types:

Regions where Gestalt therapy is unknown or unpopular e.g. India

Regions where Gestalt therapy is present and there is another national or continent-wide association e.g. UK

Regions where Gestalt therapy is present and AAGT is a main Gestalt association e.g. USA North-West.

Each of them requires a different approach and has different needs. I believe the needs of these regions can be only met if AAGT members living in these regions become part of the management of the organisation and real decision-making power is distributed to them. It also requires a different fee structure as most of the regions either can't afford our current fee or are already stretched paying fees to other organisations. A possible solution would be to use a sliding scale depending on incomes. This fee structure will enable us to bridge both regional and economic differences amongst our members in the same region.

NEW TASK FORCES

Two task forces were created by the AAGT Board at its pre-conference retreat at Asilomar. Members interested in volunteering should contact brlazz@aol.com

Task Force on the Relationship of the Regions to AAGT (based on the question, what does it mean for AAGT to have its name attached to an activity of a region?).

Task Force on Developing a New Dues Structure (to better reflect people's ability to pay).

THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE Mark Reck. Psy D.

With the ending of the Asilomar Conference, which was filled with energy and excitement, I wanted to update you all with news from the Research Committee (RC).

Although work is still underway in figuring out how to structure and use the monies in the Research Fund, some progress has been established regarding its funding in the immediate future. Specifically, the AAGT Board and I discussed and agreed upon a plan in which AAGT would replenish the Research Fund up to \$500 for the first three grants the Fund provides. I believe that this agreement will aid the RC in its ongoing exploration of how to best use and administer the Research Fund, especially given the omnipresent need for multifaceted support around research.

Some of the members of the RC were able to meet during the AAGT Conference in Asilomar, albeit in an informal manner. Despite the lack of firm structure and preparation in that meeting, those in attendance made their passion about research evident, including sharing some great ideas and having creative discussions about how to consider the larger role of the RC in supporting research efforts. On a more logistical level, those present agreed that ongoing email exchanges would be the way for us to communicate, coordinate, and share ideas, rather than continue to unsuccessfully establish a set meeting time for a conference call or Skype contact, given the multitude of time zones represented on the committee. We also agreed that, given the diversity of native languages represented on the RC, English would be the language that RC business would be conducted, since it was the language with which those presented were familiar, proficient, and preferred. With these practical points tentatively established, I am hopeful that the RC can move forward in collaborating on how best to support research, both through grants from the Research Fund and through means other than financial support.

Finally, next year, the second International Research Conference will be taking place in Wellfleet, MA, USA on May 27-30, 2015. Subtitled *The Challenge of Establishing a Research Tradition for Gestalt Therapy – Part II*, the research conference will seek to continue the work done in 2013 in creating a community around and practical, supportive networks for gestalt therapy research. The International Research Conference is being hosted and sponsored by the Gestalt International Study Center (GISC), in cooperation with AAGT. Both GISC and AAGT members will receive discounted registration prices for the conference and a percentage of any proceeds from the conference will go to the AAGT Research Fund. More information about the International Research Conference can be found at GISC's website: <http://www.gisc.org/practitioners/programs/researchconference2015.php>

For anyone interested in more information about the Research Committee or for those who would like to join the Research Committee, please contact me (mark.reck.psyd@gmail.com).

Wishing you all the best with the final four months of the calendar year!



**ASSOCIATING
&
ADVANCING**



BEGINNING IN FALL 2014 INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR ON THE WORK OF WILHELM REICH

A video-conference seminar for practicing psychotherapists, health practitioners, and undergraduate and graduate students in psychological and health sciences

Seminar leaders: Daniel Schiff, PhD and Mitch Singer, MA

This seminar will present an introduction to Wilhelm Reich's forty years of studies on life energetic functions, studies which culminated in what Reich called Orgonomy – the science of life energy. As true today as during its inception in the mid 20th century, Orgonomy has wide application in the many of the social and physical sciences, but unfortunately it remains either unheard of or unrecognized, or if referenced is often portrayed in a distorted form. Thus, unbeknownst to many, within Orgonomy one can find the foundation for ideas which are now moving to the forefront of current scientific study. In the fields of psychology and the health sciences the contemporary focus upon character style rather than just upon symptoms in psychological treatment, the psychosomatic identity between mind and body, the relationship between social conditions and psychological problems, the existence of a 'life energy' and its relationship to health and disease, are all topics of current interest which Reich addressed in detail. In addition his work provided the jumping off point for the psychotherapeutic approaches of Gestalt Therapy, Bioenergetic Analysis, and contemporary somatic psychology.

The focus of this seven-session seminar will be on presenting an overview of whole of Reich's work with an emphasis on the application of organomic thought in medical and psychological practice. This seminar is appropriate for all therapists, health practitioners, and students who are interested in broadening their understanding of the life energetic basis of health and disease. In particular it is highly recommended for those who are interested in participating in the four-year training program in Contemporary Reichian Psychotherapy (orgone therapy) beginning in the fall of 2015.

Format: In order to accommodate students living in diverse localities, this seminar will be offered in a monthly video-conference format.

Meeting times: Friday mornings 7-8:30 AM, or Friday afternoons 3:30-5:00 PM depending upon group preference. 1.5 hours per session for 7 sessions.

Meeting dates: 11/7/14, 12/5/14, 1/9/15, 2/6/15, 3/6/15, 4/10/15, 5/8/15.

Fee: \$300. \$210 for full time students enrolled in college programs

Text: Reich, Wilhelm. (1961) Selected Writings – An Introduction to Orgonomy. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

CE credit may be available depending upon credential.

If you are interested in participating contact Daniel Schiff at dschiff@dschiffphd.com. There will be a maximum of 15 participants. Preregistration required.

You can find out more about the seminar leaders on their websites:

Daniel Schiff PhD www.dschiffphd.com

Mitch Singer MA <http://seattleorgonetherapy.com/index.html>

INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR ON THE WORK OF WILHELM REICH
A JOINT READING OF ‘SELECTED WRITINGS – AN INTRODUCTION TO ORGONOMY’

COURSE OUTLINE

<i>Session 1:</i> 11/7/14	Chapter I:	The Workshop of Orgonomic Functionalism	
	Chapter II:	The Development of the Orgasm Theory	
	Chapter III(1):	On the Technique of Character-Analysis	
<i>Session 2:</i> 12/5/14	Chapter III(2):	The Breakthrough Into the Vegetative Realm	
	Chapter III(3):	The Expressive Language of the Living in Orgone	Therapy
<i>Session 3:</i> 1/9/15	Chapter IV(1):	The Discovery of the Orgone	
	Chapter IV(2):	The Carcinomatous Shrinking Biopathy	
<i>Session 4:</i> 2/6/15	Chapter V(1):	Animism, Mysticism, and Mechanism	
	Chapter V(2):	The Function of Superimposition	
	Chapter V(3):	The Living Orgonome	
<i>Session 5:</i> 3/6/15	Chapter VI:	The Oranur Experiment	
<i>Session 6:</i> 4/10/15	Chapter VII(1):	DOR Removal and Cloud-Busting	
	Chapter VII(2):	The Emotional Desert	
<i>Session 7:</i> 5/8/15	Chapter VIII(1):	The Trap	
	Chapter VIII(2):	Mocenigo	
	Chapter VIII(3):	The Bio-Energetic Meaning of Truth	
	Chapter VIII(4):	Hideous Distortions of Orgonomic Truth	
	Chapter IX:	The Rooting of Reason in Nature	

Existential-Humanistic NW Professional Organization Presentation Luncheon

Friday, October 10th, 2014 at The Lucky Lab (915 SE Hawthorne St, Portland · 503 236-3555)

Time: 1:00 to 02:30PM.

Fee: none

Topic: Moving Toward Authenticity: Character Analytic and Somatic Interventions in Contemporary Reichian Therapy.

Presented by Daniel Schiff, PhD.

All humanistic and existentially based therapies share the understanding that many of the symptoms that clients bring to therapy stem from their inability to live an authentic life. The fostering of authenticity is therefore one of their primary goals. Contemporary Reichian Therapy, a humanistic therapeutic approach based upon the integration of Wilhelm Reich's character analytic and bioenergetic therapy, gestalt therapy, and affect and attachment theory, approaches this endeavor through addressing the cognitive, emotional, behavioral and somatic defenses that prevent one from making full contact with their authenticity. It is this interlacing of defenses which Reich termed armor. Armor is a literal somatic and psychological wall which, though formed as a means of protection in the process of development, unfortunately prevents one from making direct contact with self and other and thus prevents one from living an authentic life. In this talk I will present the basic theoretical and therapeutic principals which guide Contemporary Reichian Therapy practice and, through a series of clinical vignettes, portray some steps taken on the therapeutic road to authenticity.

Agenda:

01:00 Order lunch (at bar, waiter will bring your order to your table) and networking (please be on time, only chance to order)

01:10 Introductions

01:30 Presentation begins

02:15 Question and Answer period

02:30 Presentation ends

Please RSVP to Paul Rakoczy at pmr1354@hotmail.com, if you plan to attend. Information about the presenter can be found on his website www.dschiiffphd.com.





Ruella Frank, Ph.D.

New York City

Theory and Supervision Group

with Ruella Frank, Ph.D. & Michael Vincent Miller, Ph.D.

Nov. 7, Dec. 5, 2014, Jan. 16, Feb. 13, 2015, 4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

For further information and to register call Ruella Frank at 212-662-3322

Oslo

Open Workshop: Developing Presence

Norsk Gestaltinstitutt, November 20 - 21, 2014

For more information and to register go to www.gestalt.no

New York City

Introduction to Developmental Somatic Psychotherapy

February 20 - 22, 2015, 9:30 am - 5:00 pm

For more information and to register go to www.somaticstudies.com

Edinburg

Developmental Somatic Psychotherapy: An Introduction

Edinburgh Gestalt Institute, June 8 - 11, 2015

For more information and to register email info@egi.uk.com

Edinburg

Traumatic Attaching: A Phenomenological Approach

Edinburgh Gestalt Institute, June 13-15, 2015

For more information and to register email info@egi.uk.com

New York City

Two-Year Training Program, 2015-2017

Developmental Somatic Psychotherapy

developmental process embodied within the clinical moment

Module One, October 25 - 30, 2015

Module Two, February 14 - 19, 2016

Module Three, October 2 - 7, 2016

Module Four, March 12 - 17, 2017

Developmental Somatic Psychotherapy, created by Ruella Frank, Ph.D., is a relational and movement-oriented approach to psychotherapy within a gestalt therapy framework. Inspired by the work of developmental psychologists and somatic practitioners, Developmental Somatic Psychotherapy is a template for understanding and working with early psychophysical blocks as they emerge in the here-and-now of therapy. Attending to movement patterns is particularly powerful when guided by contemporary developmental theory.

For further information and to register email Ruella Frank at ruellafrank@gmail.com

Ruella Frank, Ph.D., has been exploring infant movement patterns and their relationship to the adult since the mid-1970s. She is founder and director of the Center for Somatic Studies, faculty at the New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy and the Gestalt Associates for Psychotherapy, and also teaches throughout the United States, Europe, Mexico and Canada.

Ruella has authored chapters in various publications as well as the book *Body of Awareness: A Somatic and Developmental Approach to Psychotherapy*, available in four languages (GestaltPress, 2001), and co-authored the book *The First Year and The Rest of Your Life: Movement, Development and Psychotherapeutic Change*, Routledge Press, 2010, available in three languages. She also wrote and produced the video *Developmental Somatic Psychotherapy: An Introduction*, available as download or DVD at www.somaticstudies.com.

¿Study Gestalt in Mexico?

On a golf-cart ride through the more “remote” cabins of Asilomar, Tali Mirkin asked me a very interesting question- “how many international students do you have in your training program in Mexico?”. Dumbfounded in the midst of an “aha” moment, I looked at her and said “none” while my brain raced through my own process as a Canadian now holding a Mexican MA in Gestalt Psychotherapy.

Here are the series useful facts (aside from the obvious lure of beaches down both coasts, pre-hispanic ruins, the cuisine and the FUN of it all) that might inspire some of you to consider or consider recommending someone for Gestalt training in Mexico:

“El Papelito Habla” or “the paper speaks”.

Here, many institutes have official recognition from state and federal education authorities as degree-granting institutes on Post-Graduate levels (Post-graduate Specialization, Masters or Doctoral). Pre-requisites are different among the institutes, but many are open to undergraduate degree-holders in ANY field of study. Some consular stamping and paper-shuffling bureaucracy, and you and your degree are ready to enter.

Time- Programs last from 1 to three years, depending on their respective titles to be earned. Special intensive programs can be arranged in advance for groups of students.

Most schools session on Friday, Saturday and Sunday once per month which allows prospective students ample time to get a job while they study (Teaching, Private therapy Practice, or work in their area).

Cost- tuition is anywhere from \$200-\$800 US/month, weekly groceries around \$50 US, and rent of a two bedroom apartment anywhere from \$200 US- \$800 depending on the city and area you choose to live in.

Language- at least in the **Instituto Humanistico Integral** my husband and I run in Durango, we have a policy of inclusiveness for people with “disabilities” ranging from mobility issues to, extending the same logic, language differences. Translation is readily available to and from English and French, as are intensive University language courses designed to incorporate “foreigners” into Mexican linguistic life in two months.

Mexico is a very welcoming culture in general, and the majority of the Gestalt texts are available in English to make academic life even easier for those who speak or read it.

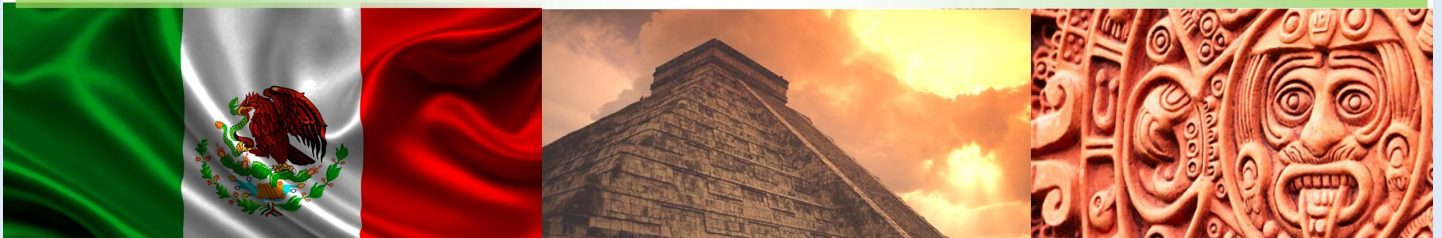
Potential market for Spanish-speaking Gestaltists- The latino diaspora. Enough said.

Now for a taste of Mexican Gestalt, check out www.asociacionmexicanadegestalt.com or look for **Asocaicion-MexicanadePsicoterapiaGestalt** on Facebook to see what bi-lingual international and inter-institutional events we have coming up (ie. **Stella Resnick’s** workshop in **Mazatlan oct 17-19**) or what events you could present at such as our biannual Conference.

There are over 25 Gestalt Training Institutes in Mexico, many with over 20+ years of experience in the field.

You will be pleasantly surprised to discover how alive, how passionate and how loved Gestalt is in Mexico if you take the time to have a look.

Atentamente,
Heather Anne Keyes
heatherannekeyes@yahoo.com.mx



Who is coming to Mazatlán, Mexico with Dr. Stella Resnick Oct 17-19?

A FULLY Bi-lingual event!

www.asociacionmexicanadegestalt.com

“Sexuality and Pleasure:

Intimacy and the expansion of awareness.”

Conference Friday, oct 17th, 6-8pm

“Love, Sexuality, Brain and Body:

**A wide-spectrum Gestalt approach to sex and
couple’s therapy.”**

Workshop Sat oct. 18th– Sun oct. 19.



Asociación Mexicana de
Psicoterapia Gestalt



**THE PALMS RESORT
OF MAZATLAN**

Costs: Conference: \$200 Mexican Pesos

Workshop: \$1500 Mexican Pesos

All inclusive hotel– from \$800 pesos/night,
alternative lodging available.

Info: ampgestalt@gmail.com

**JOIN THE ONLINE AAGT COMMUNITY
AT AAGT.ORG**





The Gestalt Institute of Cleveland's (GIC) mission is to enhance the awareness and skills essential to building authentic relationships and powerful, positive change in individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

UPCOMING TRAINING PROGRAMS

Working with Physical Process Training Program (WWPP)

October 30, 2014-June 14, 2015

Gestalt therapy, as a holistic approach, views physical experience and expression as intrinsic to a person's being and functioning. This advanced program is designed to refine and extend a practitioner's skills in working with physical processes beyond those developed in basic Gestalt training. The program focuses on developing greater awareness of one's own body experience and its use in relationship, developing a client's body sensation and awareness, and working with breath, body structure, movement, developmental movement, and the energetic system of client/facilitator. Curriculum includes practicum with in vivo supervision, body-oriented personal growth group work, didactic with experiential processes, and skill labs.

Chairpersons: Donna Marie Berwald, MA & James I. Kepner, PhD

Faculty: Michael Clemmens, PhD; Richard B Hancock, MA, PCC, GPCC; Ellen Hoffman, MA, PCC; Renee Jennings, LISW, CHT; & Arlene L. Luberoff, MA, CCC-SLP

The Coach Certification Program at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland

Beginning November 9, 2014 – 4 Sessions over 6 Months

The Coach Certification Program at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland provides a proven conceptual foundation building awareness and skills essential for self-mastery, authentic relationships and powerful, positive change. Coaches using the Gestalt approach facilitate deep, robust and sustainable changes in individuals and groups. The International Coaching Federation (ICF) accredits this transformative certification program integrating coaching knowledge and skills and ICF core competencies with the Gestalt approach. The certification program also offers eligibility for two additional certifications; a Gestalt Professional Certified Coach™ and a Board Certified Coach.

Chairperson: Juliann Spoth, PhD, PCC, GPCC, BCC

Faculty: Jay C. Brinegar, MA, GPCC, BCC, Ann Attayek Carr, MS, MCC, GPCC, H. Timothy Ewing, PhD, BA, MIIM, Linda Miller, PhD, PCC, GPCC, Rick Hancock, MA, PCC, GPCC, BCC, Melissa Kelly-McCabe, MS, MCC, GPCC, BCC, Linda Koenig, MA, PCC, GPCC, Mary Ann Kraus, PsyD, GPCC, BCC, Lynne Kweder, MPA, LSW, GPCC, BCC, Jackie Lowe Stevenson, MSSA, LISW, EAGALA Crt, GPCC, BCC, Jacqueline McLemore, PhD, GPCC, BCC, Herb Stevenson, MA, CDP, CPC, BCC, Victoria Winbush, PhD, MPH, MSSA, LISW, GPCC, BCC



The Gestalt Institute of Cleveland is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Gestalt Institute of Cleveland maintains responsibility for this program and its content. The Gestalt Institute of Cleveland is approved by the Ohio Psychological Association to offer continuing education to psychologists. It is the responsibility of the provider to abide by the OPA-MCE guidelines. The State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board grants the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland approved provider status to provide continuing education for Counselors and Social Workers. *Approval for Social Work contract hours varies from state to state. Please consult your state's credentialing Board for more information.

registrar@gestaltcleveland.org

Call 001-216-421-0468 www.gestaltcleveland.org



The Gestalt Institute of Cleveland's (GIC) mission is to enhance the awareness and skills essential to building authentic relationships and powerful, positive change in individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Isolation to Intimacy: Working with Shame and Belonging

This workshop opens the door to a relational evolutionary perspective that supports new integration of our human potential. The other side of paralyzing isolation is that experiencing this universal shame in a receptive space opens us to the relational resiliency we all long for. The workshop leaders co-create the ground for sharing stories that transform the longings we have for connecting into new experiences of support, balance and belonging.

Carol Swanson, LSW & Deborah Ullman, MA

October 24-26

Continuing Education: 11 hours

Forgiveness: Recognizing the Gestalt-Reframing Grief

Therapists, counselors, social workers and clergy will discuss the tasks of grieving, revised to determine tasks of forgiveness from a gestalt perspective. They will learn through embodied experiences, group process, and lecture, co-creating a definition of forgiveness that can be utilized in their professional and personal lives. The workshop leaders co-create the ground for sharing stories that transform the longings we have for connecting into new experiences of support, balance and belonging.

Pamela Gleisser, LISW-S, RMT & Philip Belzunce, PhD, ND, BCC

November 19

Continuing Education: 6 hours

Ethical Experience and Our Attitudes Toward the Other

Through lecture, discussion, reflection, and experiments we will develop an understanding of attitudes toward the other informed by an ethical sensibility which can potentially shape the practitioner's quality of contact. This exploration of ethics will challenge our conceptions of subjectivity and expand our capacities for contact. Conversations may engage the works of thinkers such as Levinas, Buber and de Beauvoir.

Dan Jones, PhD & Jen McWeeney, PhD

January 17

Continuing Education: 6 hours

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Scholarship fund recipients— full text

Alex Levine

Words cannot do the way I feel justice. As I walked through the airport on my way back to Portland, I began to miss the friendly faces and acknowledgements that I had come to expect walking around Asilomar. When I wake up early for breakfast, I eat my oatmeal alone and miss the dining hall. When I have a break in the middle of the day, I long for the dunes and my process group. As the sun begins to sunset, I remember watching the same sun set during our lovely final outdoor dinner (our beloved Domi by my side). When I sit in formal group supervision, I recall our raucous, exciting, emotional, and cathartic community meetings. As I type these words, I remember hugging Bud warmly, the man who made it possible for me to join this incredible family. I know words are still not doing it justice, but I hope this gives each and everyone one of you a sense of how much gratitude and joy I feel for having known you and our time at Asilomar. Until next time.

Jon Blend

I want to express my gratitude to those who contributed to the scholarship fund, making my trip to Asilomar possible. I joined AAGT in 1999 and my experiences at the Manhattan conference and of the kindness of my hosts were life- changing in many ways, not least through meeting Violet Oaklander and finding a direction for my clinic based work with children. At my last conference in Philadelphia I enjoyed setting up the musical soiree, facilitating a workshop and moderating a panel discussion on child & adolescent therapy at Philadelphia.

A heart problem diagnosed in 2011 prevented me from travelling to Puebla and led to my withdrawal from a teaching commitment in St Petersburg whilst waiting for surgery. The operation the following summer was successful though I was unlucky in contracting hospital MRSA a form of pneumonia that compromised and delayed my recovery. Convalescence proved erratic over the following year with impromptu fevers and much atrial fibrillation - a recurring unpleasant experience whereby I felt faint, as my body appeared to go into overdrive.

Throughout this time I was unable to work: I had wound down my small practice prior to hospitalisation. With no income coming in and our savings dwindling my wife Roz and I lived on whatever money she could bring in from her therapy practice. She worked long hours to sustain our family for which I am profoundly grateful. Whilst recuperating I undertook weekly probono work facilitating a baby watching project (<http://www.base-babywatching-uk.org/>) with a class of eight year olds in a local school. I also ran a music group themed around managing transitions, for pupils with additional needs who were moving on to secondary school.

By 2014 I had recovered sufficiently to start seeing clients, facilitate some training and supervise. Having applied to become additionally accredited by our national psychotherapy body (UKCP) as a child therapist via a new 'grand parenting' route I entered a race against time to produce an assessed portfolio documenting eighteen years of clinical work with young people within just three months- before this route closed forever. I was delighted to receive my qualification this July.

Much as I had wanted to attend my sixth AAGT conference at Asilomar I felt unable to find the airfare: I had already spent much of my savings on flying to North America this summer to visit Violet, my mentor, in LA, who rarely travels now. It was so good to see her and catch up after many years. I was delighted to combine this with presenting at the Oaklander Foundation's conference in Malibu. I did not think I could afford another trip after that however for some time.

It felt so confirming and supportive to receive help from the scholarship fund: without it my trip to Asilomar would not have been achievable. It was lovely too to travel down with Bud and Alex, exchanging news and views en route. It might have felt so very different travelling with strangers. It was marvellous too to renew my contact with that beautiful coastline (I lived briefly in San Luis Obispo years ago and have fond memories of travelling Highway One).

Alas having sat next to someone on the plane who coughed throughout I succumbed to bronchitis shortly after our arrival though kept going through the kind efforts of Alan Singer- my daily supplier of Altoid mints and Nancy Woldt who found Echina-cea cough sweets in Monterey! With careful pacing I managed to continue participating and was rewarded subsequently by feeling better as my body returned to health.

What did I get from attending conference? Many things. Firstly fellowship through our associating. I experienced a deep sense of warmth, acceptance, of coming home. There was opportunity in some of the smaller groups I attended to learn about current concerns affecting other Gestalt communities, to contribute to the debate around AAGT and internationalism, to discuss the pros and cons of having a national body represent the interests of psychotherapists.

I liked that our international mix at Asilomar offered opportunities for dialoguing with Gestalts from different countries and regions- though I yearned for more diversity too. I loved singing show tunes together late night spurred on by Allan's wonderful piano playing. Adding our homegrown entertainment al fresco at intervals between the accordionist and the dancer proved fun too.

alongside other schools of relational thinking. Another workshop inspired me to read more of William James and investigate the writings of Cornel West.

I look forward to participating in our ongoing experiment, exploring our relations with EAGT in Sicily. Once again my heartfelt thanks for those who helped make my participation possible this year - I hope to contribute similarly in future.

Scholarship fund recipients— full text continued

Jon Blend continued

I also enjoyed being around younger therapists and catching their vibe. I felt moved by the photos projected during the Saturday dance, some depicting members who are no longer with us. Hanging out at the fire pit, exploring the boardwalk, listening, to the sea, to others, listening, listening with an increasingly open heart.... wonderful. I had my best ever experience of being in a process group too, feeling so well held (Thanks, Ansell and Nancy). I attended thought provoking, well-facilitated workshops including one on personal and professional experiences of ageing - where contributions were both profound and enjoyable. A session, on inter-subjectivity helped me contextualise Gestalt alongside other schools of relational thinking. Another workshop inspired me to read more of William James and investigate the writings of Cornel West.

I look forward to participating in our ongoing experiment, exploring our relations with EAGT in Sicily. Once again my heartfelt thanks for those who helped make my participation possible this year - I hope to contribute similarly in future.

Nickei Falconer

The scholarship funding I received was a great decider in whether I would attend the 2014 AAGT Conference in California. Without the funding, I wouldn't have considered coming, because the costs are significant. New Zealand is almost at the bottom of the world. It's isolated geographically, it's expensive to fly out from here, it takes additional time to travel and to recover (which is more time off work), and our dollar is inevitably weaker than the countries we travel to. To have the scholarship funding made the burden of getting to the USA much relieved.

I was delighted to see my old AAGT friends, to make new friends and connections, and to be able to contribute by presenting my 2 hour workshop; wonderful to share with my colleagues on something I feel passionate about.

I felt humbled and very supported by those in the AAGT community who'd contributed to the fund, and it was great to have the opportunity to express my gratitude during the conference at Bud's award ceremony.

The entire AAGT community is enriched and extended by the diversity of practice and beliefs from people coming from different places and cultures in the world. The scholarship funds supports this extension and enrichment. I was made aware of this (again), within my process group; we had 6 countries represented within the 10 participants, and I know I was not the only scholarship recipient in that group.

So, the scholarship funding I received was a very practical encouragement and enabler to be part of the AAGT community again, to extend connections and to reconnect, and to have good hearty "Gestalt" conversations.

Thank you.

Daniel Bak

Having been with you in Asilomar was for me so human experience. During one of our (I love saying it!) Community Meetings someone said that for him the Conference was a tribal event/experience. That time I said nothing but thought: "I could not agree more!". Yes, I feel I have got my own Gestalt

tribe now and this feeling is a sort of empowerment for me – in professional and private terms. This very sense of Community is something which I took with me to Poland. Thank you! Without all of you, as a Scholarship recipient, probably I would not decide to participate in the Conference. Thank you for your kindness, warmth and support. It has been so important and touching for me that you decided to trust me as a new Board member. This work on the Board will be a chance for me not only to have a new experience with some organizational tasks, but also to stay in contact with you, with AAGT. It makes me happy:)

Lorraine Stidd

I arrived safely back in NY very full from my time at Asilomar. I have been reflecting on my experience at the conference and I would like to send my heartfelt thanks again to Scholarship Fund Committee for its support and consideration. The generosity of the committee created

the opening for me to be able to attend and I received many rich benefits from the experience. Not only was it a very valuable learning for me - I have already started to use my learning in my work with myself and my clients

- but it also provided me with the chance to meet so many people and relate on so many meaningful levels.

All of that going on in such a beautiful setting !

Myriam Sas de Guiter

At the conference's gathering in honor of Bud Feder's lifetime achievements Bud himself talked lovingly about the fund and the need to grow it and sustain it. As Bud put it *"...the fund really is not a bunch of numbers but a vital flesh and blood contingent that contributes so much to the conferences...."* I was deeply touched by his words. I felt that the financial assistance I had received had been offered from the heart with understanding and conviction. I am very thankful to Bud for his vision and to the Scholarship Committee for considering my request and facilitating my participation in the conference. It was for me a most meaningful experience.

President (2014-2016)

Patricia Tucker
36 W. 25th St. 10th Floor
New York, NY 10010
Email: PTucker@aol.com
Phone: 347 306 1576

Vice President

Until AGM April 2015
Gail Feinstein
80 East 11 Street - Ste.517
New York, NY 10003
Email: gail13feinstein@aol.com
Phone: 917-495-8941

President Elect

Toni Gilligan
22 Cottage, Throckmorton
Worcs, UK
W10 2LA
+44 (0) 1386 561 528
Email: toni.gilligan@gestaltcentre.co.uk

Secretary

Monique Mercado
1000 Westbank Dr., Bldg 6-250
Austin, TX 78746
Email: moniquemercadophd@gmail.com
Phone: (512) 902-4357

Treasurer

Burt Lazarin
276 Fifth Avenue,
Suite 1011,
New York 10001-4509
Email: brlazz@aol.com
Phone: 917 647 3203

Continuing Education Officer

Dina Miller
P.O. Box 141122
Columbus, Ohio 43214 USA
Email: Dinamiller3@aol.com
Phone: (614) 563-6571

Archivist / Associate CE Officer

Ansel Woldt
511 Beryl Dr.
Kent, OH 44240 USA
Email: nansew@aol.com
Phone: (330) 673-8729

Communication's Director

Brad Larsen Sanchez
3050 SE Division St, Ste 215
Portland, OR 97202
brad@bradlarsenpsyd.com
Phone: (503) 715-5468

Newsletter Editor

Alexandra Schlotterbeck
4a Wynell Road
London, SE23 2LN UK
Phone: 0044 (0) 7728 565 353
Email: alexandra@gestalt.uk.com

Research Liaison

Mark Reck
436 S. Prospect St., Wright 113
Burlington, VT 05405 USA
Email: mark.reck.psyd@gmail.com
Phone: 802-656-3340

Membership Co-Chairs

Maryanne Nicholls
42 Harriet St
Toronto, ON M4L 2E9
Canada
Email: maryanne.nicholls@gmail.com
Phone: (647)-299-1045

Nancy Woldt
511 Beryl Dr.
Kent, OH 44240 USA
Email: NanseW@aol.com
Phone: (330) 673-8729

Organizational Rep Co-Chairs

Marlene Blumenthal
21403 Chagrin Blvd #210
Beachwood, OH 44122
Phone: (216) 513-1805
Email: marloblum@yahoo.com

Janneke van Beusekom
822 Marietta Avenue, Suite 23
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603
jmvanbeusekom@comcast.net

RDF Liaison

Deirdre Winter
info@gestalt-approaches.de

Administrator

Michael Saslajn
POB 42221
Portland, OR 97242
Email: admin@aagt.org
Phone: (503) 877-9606

Scholarship Fund Co-chairs

Dominique Chabre
Jimenez del Campillo # 77
Col. Centro
91500 Coatepec, VER
Mexico
Tel: 55 228 8163226
Email: Dominique.chabre@comail.com

Adam Kincel
6a Bessborough Place
London, SW1V, 3SG
UK
+44(0)7920 255 542
adam@gestalt.uk.com

RCP Coordinator

Adam Kincel
6a Bessborough Place
London, SW1V, 3SG
UK
+44(0)7920 255 542
adam@gestalt.uk.com

Member-At - Large

Bud Feder
100 Valley Rd
Montclair NJ 07042USA
Email: bfeder@verizon.net
Phone: (973) 746-6815
Co-Chair of Scholarship Fund

Interest Group Co-chairs

Bob Witche
244 Park Square Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Email: bwitche@iup.edu
Phone: (412) 252-2450

Daniel Sak

Pracownia Psychologiczna JA-TY
Dubois 10/7
00-188 Warsaw
Poland
Tel.: +48 693 348 341
E-mail: dbak@gestalt.waw.pl

The next newsletter will be published in January 2015. The deadline is Sunday 18th January, 2015.

Please send submissions entitled 'newsletter Jan 2015' to alexandra@gestalt.uk.com



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Communications Director:

Brad Larsen

Newsletter Editor: Alex

Schlotterbeck

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