

Advancing Gestalt Internationally

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AAGT Newsletter

April 2020

This is NOT a safe emergency!



I must swiftly creatively adjust to living in the novelty. I am making new choices every day and even multiple times a day. I am adapting, somewhat, and failing to adapt too. Surely, the last time I had to integrate and assimilate this quickly must have been childhood when I did not have intellectual development, consciousness, nor fixed Gestalts. I am attempting to be more fluid in the constant motion. A time when ground and figure are rapidly changing and interchanging. My mind swirls as I hear daily accounts of where Corona is now and where it may be headed. This mixed with facing my own private battle with my husband's health crisis. I feel a profound respect for Gestalt theory and practice. I know I have something to offer myself and my clients, who are my fellow humans in a world gone viral on so many different levels. I talk to clients through a screen. We are both here and now and there and then at once. I am very grateful for phenomenological awareness and my ability to practice it and impart on my clients. I can't imagine these days without it. In all the tossing about, I am thankful for the constancy of my Gestalt community.

~ Laura

AAGT President , Tali Bar-Yoseph Levine



"The sameness strikes me! Difference, we have been talking about for a long while."

"A newsletter is on the way", dear Laura reminded us. Thank you Laura for holding your role with so much grace. "The first is the deadline" you said, and I smiled – April fool's day... well, I do not smile anymore. A few short weeks later, April fool's day feels real rather than like a jolly day for practical jokes. I am sitting in my garden, the consistent Shabbat/Christmas-like silence is odd. Where did the rest of the days go? The storm is here, what else does it predict?

I am lost between the devastation of the number dead or critically ill and angry and saddened by the crushing of the health services, dare I say in every country? My heart goes out to the medical teams who are out there risking their lives and to any other person who is willing to take care of more than themselves. My hat is off to you, in admiration. I bow in gratitude

There is much that I would like to say, ask, think about, feel, and explore, at the same time that I welcome the soothing from joining nature in the silence resulting because humans are letting nature be.....Now, here is some hope.

An upside of this chaos might end up being in some, however small, healing of our injured globe. Already the sky is cleaner, the birds are happier, spring is prettier than usually at least here. Yes, I can 'catch' the cynical smile 'it won't last' on some of your faces. Sure, we do not know and cannot predict. It is more than we offered the planet just a very few weeks ago.

Which reminds me of an obvious -

We are the masters of the here and now, are we not? We preach about the art of staying with discomfort, invite/develop internal support to be in the void

to allow a figure to emerge, to sustain ambiguity and Chaos by no means close Gestalt prematurely. This is some of what this situation presents us with and demands of us to manage. So much unknown is thrown into the contact boundary. Not to mention those who are obliged to lead that must do that in a changing field without the ability to support in a familiar manner. We know how to do this and how to support others to do so. This is our time to consider utilising our unique contribution to the field.

Some say nothing will be the same, others predict that all will return to what was even if for a while compromised by dire economic crisis. I am moved by witnessing the sameness between all cultures inclusive of many of the political systems, as well as, the profound differences. The sameness strikes me, difference we have been talking about for a long while.

(continued next page)

(Tali continued)....The AAGT opened 'a casual meeting place' A place to drop in and out, to share and to listen. We are looking for more ways to support and add a ray of light to members like offering personal use of the AAGT Zoom pro to individual members. Only today at the casual meeting, I heard about distress and wonderfully creative solutions. We walked through the fields of the republic of Ireland, we heard about the history of Gestalt in Germany, the sadness in the eyes of the 1.5 years old who does not understand why grandma does not hug him. A USA rep from the west coast and another who joined from the east. We touched the lack of safety for mental health workers at some hospitals in Slovakia, parked for a moment in Northern Ireland, the Sunday meeting that fits the Southern Hemisphere clock had members from Canada, the USA and Australia. At another (casual meet up) Mexico and Israel had a chat about the virtual and the face to face meetings combined which we continue on task forces of the board.

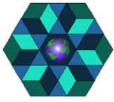
The convenors work closely with the board minding the conference in Ireland. We listen, assess, practice what we preach about staying with. Thank You Sinéad, Billy, Toni, and Maryanne for holding the fort. I take my hat off to your patience and care.

I am encouraged by voices that I hear on the list, by the photos, poems, trips down memory lane, by the generous presence that enables space for scare, worry, loneliness, peace, and hope. There is more to be said and to reflect upon, a lot more. Allow me to put a comma here and invite anybody and everybody to come in with anything and everything they see right. Together we can keep an eye on one another and get to the other side of this crisis at least in a good enough place, we have the tools and, as a whole, the resilience

AAGT President, Tali Bar



-Yoseph Levine



ANNOUNCING UPCOMING ELECTIONS for BOARD POSITIONS

From: Gayla Feinstein, Marlene Blumenthal, and the Elections Committee

To: All AAGT Members

In preparation for our upcoming AGM, the Board has appointed us, Gayla and Marlene, as Chairpersons of the Elections Committee. We have taken on this single task, usually assumed by the Vice President, and have eagerly formed a committee comprised of volunteers and recruits. Committee members are Charlie Bowman, Nickei Falconer, Piotr Mierkowski, Eduardo Rubio Ramirez, and Ansel Woldt. Carolina Edwards will be working with us, as well.

It is incumbent upon the Elections Committee to nominate members who meet the requirements and who are willing and able to serve AAGT as leaders on the Board of Directors. We are prepared to meet our assignment in having considerable dialogue with candidates in order to communicate the essence of open positions

We invite all members to consider standing for one of the open positions. Serving on the Board is a wonderful way to be involved in our community. We share in our joy of contributing to the growth and well-being of our international Gestalt community as well as to the greater good.

Click on the link on the following page to view the open positions and the accompanying responsibilities. Then, please click on the next link to view the document provided for New Board members describing expectations of our Board members.

If you wish to make a nomination, or suggest a person for us to reach out to for a dialogue about becoming a Board member, please contact the following committee members: Gail13feinstein@aol.com, marlene@aagt.org, aagtone@gmail.com (Charlie), nickeifalconer@hotmail.com, Piotr Mierkowski@gmail.com, laloterapeutagestalt@gmail.com (Eduardo), or Ansel@aagt.org. We will be happy to contact the member and discuss the options that may be interest. You may nominate yourself, as well, via the same e-mail contacts.

If you are interested in standing please note the following:

*You need to send us brief statements about 1) your qualifications for the position that you are seeking; and 2) the reasons that you wish to take on this responsibility and become a member of the Board.

*You are invited to contact a member of the Elections Committee or any current Board member to learn more. Board members' e-mail addresses can be found on the AAGT website.

***IMPORTANT** All nominees and their statements will be posted on the Membership list and the AAGT listserv and possibly in the next Newsletter at least 45 days before the AGM, so please send in your statements well before then.

Our Constitution states that members may also be nominated or self-nominate at the AGM. **Those nominated at the AGM are also expected to provide written statements about qualifications and reasons for wanting to assume the responsibility of the position and of being a Board member.**

In addition to the open elected positions, the Board appoints people to fill some positions. If you are interested in being considered for any of the positions listed via the link on the next page, please contact our Board President at Tali@aagt.org.



HELPFUL INFORMATION REGARDING THE AAGT UPCOMING ELECTIONS

[Open Offices 2020 with Descriptions](#)

[Board Officers Appointed by Board](#)

[New Board Member Orientation](#)

Opportunities provided by the Regional Development Fund - a Reminder!

As the Covid-19 pandemic confronts us everywhere with dire and stressful situations, unpre-cedented in their global scale, we are also experiencing how it is drawing many of us in places far apart together.

Coming together and supporting each other is what AAGT's **Regional Development Fund (RDF)** was created to promote and we want to remind you of its existence, especially in this situation - and encourage people to find creative ways of using it.

We hope that the "**casual places for peers to convene**" recently set up by AAGT in response to the pandemic situation will be a first step in the direction of getting to know others in our regions and also connecting across regions.

However, the **AAGT Regional Development Fund (RDF)** was founded (in 2011) to do **more than that**. Its mission is to support the development of AAGT activities in the various different regions of the world where our members live and work. In so doing, it also helps to connect individual regions and groups, some of which are in places where Gestalt therapists are few and far between, with AAGT members living and working in other parts of the world.

One way it does this is through using the financial contributions from AAGT members that are collected in the Fund to provide loans and grants. We also encourage groups having received support from the Fund to report on their gatherings, activities and projects (see below under Some activities supported to date).

The RDF has moneys at its disposal that can be made available to existing regions and also groups of any size that would like some help in launching activities to advance Gestalt therapy and support Gestalt practitioners in their area.

Applying to the Regional Development Fund

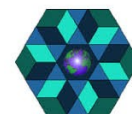
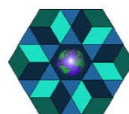
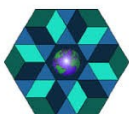
In contrast to the Scholarship Fund, to which individual members can apply for themselves, the RDF is intended **for groups of Gestaltists** wanting to engage in activities together.

Some suggested uses are seed money for booking meeting venues in advance, creating online events and/or setting up announcements of activities on the web. The RDF provides **financial support** in the form of **loans - or, sometimes, grants**.

The RDF Committee also provides - along with the recently formed **(Regional) Activities Coordination Committee ((R)ACC)** - other **non-financial forms of support** for group activities. We are open to many creative ways to use the Fund and the RDF Committee.

Would you like, for example, to have more contact and **opportunities for exchange with colleagues in your area**. but find there is no structure for doing so? And could you imagine taking the initiative to organize an activity to get colleagues together?

For more information on the Regional Development Fund, please visit its page on the AAGT website at <https://aagt.org/contributions/regional-development-fund/>



More from the Regional Development Fund...



The **RDF Committee** generally **meets about 3 times a year** (end of January, end of April and end of September) to consider applications, so please keep this in mind when applying. During the Covid-19 crisis we will also try to process applications faster.

Some **activities supported to date** have been

- Small gatherings of Gestalt therapists in the Australia North Region
- The first conference of the Pacific Northwest region
- Training in Gestalt Therapy by Gestalt Education Nepal
- The Habitat conference in La Paz, Mexico, February 2020
- See AAGT Newsletter May 2018, p. 1, <https://aagt.org/newsletter/> *
- A forthcoming Gathering in Halifax, Canada.

Future plans

The two AAGT committees responsible for supporting regional activities are also planning to actively get in contact with AAGT members and other Gestaltists internationally. We want to do this particularly in areas where there are few AAGT members with a view to finding out from them how AAGT could be useful to them and how we could support them.

Our plan is to start by setting up dialogues on Zoom in different time and/or language zones. This is intended to expand and build on the facilities put in place as a support during the pandemic. It will also allow members to **participate in meetings without having to speak English**.

Later we want to support groups in various geographic and language areas in using these AAGT structures to organize their own meetings and activities online.

Donating to the Regional Development Fund Committee

Every year the Regional Development Fund receives a fixed amount of AAGT general funds. However, these funds are limited and the Fund is also reliant on donations from AAGT members.

Please consider contributing generously to the Regional Development Fund - we believe its work is crucial to the future of AAGT internationally.

You can **make your donation here**:

<https://aagt.org/contributions/regional-development-fund/>



EDGES OF EXILE AND BELONGING



Hi everyone

Everywhere, all over the world, people are being impacted by Covid-19. Some more than others, we are all feeling it and learning to live in a world that has greatly changed in a very short time. We hope you are all keeping well and safe.

The conference planners have met with the AAGT Board to review how we can support our members and non-members during this time in terms of the Biennial Conference, scheduled to be held in September in Ireland. We are very aware that many of us are impacted financially by the pandemic. In response, we have extended the early bird registration deadline 2 months to the end of May, honouring the early-bird cancellation and refund policy for this full period.

We continue to monitor the situation, and will keep you updated should any further adaptations be necessary in response to the evolving global challenge. We *do* want you to know that your well-being is most important to us.

Meantime, we hope you take advantage of the Zoom rooms that AAGT is setting up for people to connect with others in our community, of listserv, and other social media links.

During this time of change and chaos, it's more important than ever to keep in touch.

Here's how: You can follow us on Instagram and Twitter @aagtireland2020

Conference Convenors
2020 Ireland, *Edges of Exile and Belonging*

Maryanne Nicholls, Sinéad Kavanaugh, Billy Desmond, Toni Gilligan

The BFSF and the 2020 Ireland Biannual Conference

Our scholarship program is one of the reasons the AAGT is unique as an organization. It helps create a field of kindness, of connection, of trust in our community. It promotes sharing because we want to meet during our events and know that is the best way to learn from and enrich each other.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak and along with the Conference Planning Committee for our 2020 Ireland conference, we decided to offer more time for conference attendees in need of financial support to make decisions about coming to Ireland and to have a more accurate estimation of the cost of attendance including travel.

The new deadline for the first round of applications is May 15th.

In the tradition of Bud Feder's passion and dedication to bringing as many as possible to our Conference, let us continue to take gentle care of the Scholarship Fund by donating what we can and asking for no more than we really need, doing both from a place of awareness. We as a committee will work hard to maximize available funds to expand our field of connection as an organization, in a spirit of trust.

In the meantime, we hope you and your close ones are safe and supported. Take care!

The AAGT Bud Feder Scholarship Fund Committee:

*Adam Kincel and Dominique Chabre, Co-Chairs.
Heather Keyes, Lori Farley. Members*



CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED FOR OUR FRIDAY NIGHT CABARET & CÉILÍ!

Calling all budding poets, musicians, singers, rappers, dancers, comedians, mime artists and storytellers. Do you play the blues, moonwalk, paint or juggle plates?

On Friday night we are co-creating our own entertainment in the form of a Céilí (pronounced kay-lee). Céilí is originally a Gaelic term for a social gathering - often involving folk music/dancing. In this case, our focus will be on the folk arts of storytelling, music making, song, verse and worse!

We welcome songs, musical pieces, stories, poems, your latest dance moves, conundrums, rants and whimsy. Or perhaps you wish to create something artful in the moment...

We welcome all artistic expression!

Our emphasis is on fun and soulfulness rather than slickness - a cabaret put together for the people by the people. We also need an audience so, if you prefer to sit tapping your toes, joining in for the chorus you are very welcome to do so!

To take part please contact either:

Jon Blend jon.blend335@gmail.com

Allan Singer asingerlicsw@aol.com

Information we require:

- 1) Type of offering (title, author/composer)
- 2) Approx. length (minutes- time yourself!)
- 3) Any additional needs (accompaniment required etc.)



Thank you for adding to our bill of fayre!

Allan, Anne, Jon, Suzanne

(Céilí hosts)



aagtireland2020



"Hope, as Kierkegaard noted, is a recognition that 'there is more than what is apparent' in any given situation. **Hope shifts the figure/ground gestalt. Hope isn't far off in the future but in the next moment and then the next. . . .** We are as much related to our environment as to each other, that our vulnerability and interconnection mean we are infectious and susceptible to infection, this also means that we are open to being cared for and can care for others and that we are not alone, even six to ten feet from each other." (by Dr. Todd DuBoss, from *APA Society for Humanistic Psychology March Newsletter*) Contributed by Ansel Woldt



GRACIAS!!

On behalf of the AMPG, the local community groups that participated in the social intervention workshops in La Paz, and all of us who had the opportunity to be part of Habitat 2020 in La Paz and Online from all over the world- THANK YOU. The generous presence of the AAGT was clearly felt through BFSF scholarship and Regional Activity support making the event possible. To the presenters and attendees who braved the early days of COVID-19 to travel to Mexico (with no idea what was about to happen in the world)- we can't thank you enough. While it may be the last trip many of us take for a long time, it was memorable and will stay with us in our hearts and in our practice.

The videos from Habitat Online will be available shortly, and we will welcome you all back to Mexico with open arms for more international Gestalt with a Mexican flavour as soon as it is safe to do so.

Warmly, Heather Anne Keyes

www.gestaltmexico.org

**www.
humans
of
gestalt
.com**

An Experiment in Dialogue

**Heather Anne Keyes
Kamila Bialy**



Born of an interest in preserving the lived experience of being with our colleagues, mentors and friends in Gestalt, as well as a deep curiosity about those we have not yet met, **we would like to invite the international Gestalt community to get to know each other better through this experimental series of informal documentary and personal interviews.**

We want to speak with individuals from any level of experience, location and background about what Gestalt is for you and who you are in Gestalt. We are happy to have the conversation with you individually, or to facilitate meetings between pairs, trios or quartets. We can follow along in **English, Polish, Spanish, French and Italian** and welcome collaborators in other languages as the project grows.

Just email us to set up a meeting time, and we will email you a link to speak via ZOOM for approx 30 min per session. The conversations will be recorded, and the material made available on our website.

We are excited about the possibilities a “simple” encounter offers for presence, experience, spontaneity and dialogical embodied relation to work their Gestalt magic.

Interested? Email us at humansofgestalt@gmail.com or book a time on the website.

Donations welcome. www.humansofgestalt.com



**New Contemporary Gestalt Therapy Films with
Robert W. Resnick, Ph.D.**

**[Free 30-minute Introduction To Contemporary
Gestalt Therapy Theory](#)**

as well as eight actual therapy sessions
with **subtitles in seven languages**

For “old school” DVDs, con-
tact resnickfilms@gmail.com

Robert W. Resnick, Ph.D.



A Letter from Gestalt Africa Research & Advocacy

Please accept my sympathy/condolences over the worries as cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak pandemic continues to rise in Europe, and indeed the entire world, even as many countries have placed their entire countries' under a state of public health emergency. With over 11000 deaths, countries around the world have tightened their borders to contain the spread of COVID-19. Hospitals are like the gates to another world.

China, Italy, Spain, Germany, Iran and indeed the entire world are in a state of Health WAR against this global crisis of Coronavirus outbreak spread. This puts into confusion the state of all the world economy. Many global industries face total destruction and many of them may close within weeks.

Seeing ghost streets and cities including the Vatican City over the news made one cry. I had been to many Europeans countries several times and I know how busy the streets always were with tourists and other people, but now (Zero Tourists). Pubs, restaurants, and gyms ordered to close in many world capital cities and key places.

As the fear of coronavirus spreads faster than the disease, raising more questions than answers globally, the only alternative is to keep praying while taking sensible precautions at all times. We believe the world will slowly, but surely, come back to normalcy thereafter and the entire world, that has been psyched out by the novel coronavirus and its meteoric rise across the planet over the last few weeks will heave a sigh of relief.

We felt a special connection to the entire GESTALT World in Europe, United States, Canada, Asia, and every country!

Once again, at this critical time of fighting coronavirus pandemic, we express our sincere sympathy for Italian people and pray for the speedy control and victory over the invisible enemy.

Lest we forget, please accept our condolences over the passing of the great scholar, scientist-practitioner and our best International friend and mentor Dr. Simon Maurice Feder (known to the world as "Bud"), who died of complications associated with congestive heart failure on October 16, 2018. May his friendly soul rest in perfect peace. May all his great Gestalt ideas continue to germinate.

Please have a wonderful weekend while you take good care and be well.

Indeed, we are an EXPERIMENT! GESTALT is for all races, religions, ages, sexual preferences, and differing abilities/disabilities.

GESTALT Blessings,

Williams A. Akande, Ph.D., MILR
Interim Secretary-General
Gestalt Africa Research & Advocacy