

AACT

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GESTALT THERAPY

The Future of Love: Commitment & Compassion

**THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF INTIMATE SYSTEMS
OF THE GESTALT INSTITUTE OF CLEVELAND**

(Including Sonia and Ed Nevis,
Gordon Wheeler, Rich Borofsky, Antra Kalnins,
Iris Fodor, Carol Brockmon, Alan Singer,
Joe Melnick, Penny Backman, Joseph Zinker,
Bev Breifman, and Debra Ullman)

**April 6-9, 2000
on Cape Cod**

Registration: \$295.00

Contact GIC at:
Gestalt Institute of Cleveland
1588 Hazel Drive
Cleveland OH 44106
(216) 421-1700

The future of love depends upon how love is put into action. Loving actions create real quality of life. In this conference we are focusing on commitment and compassion as the essential loving actions. Commitment is the intention and ability to stay with a relationship through time, growth, transitions and difficulties, while compassion allows one to hold both the self and the other simultaneously in one's heart.

We will explore together: our struggle to carry on and endure through the hard places in our ongoing relationships with partners, family and friends; organizations, work; the arts; politics and community, and the wisdom we have developed as individuals, as well as what our Gestalt theory and practice offers the future of love.

We have engaged resource people who already live their love in the areas of work, couple and family life, community, politics, and the arts to participate with us in this conference as inspirations and examples of how love in action can effect the future.

AAGT

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GESTALT THERAPY



WINTER 1999

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Will AAGT Survive? It has been several months since we were together in New York. We dispersed throughout the world and took with us the joys of being together again, furthering the development of Gestalt Therapy, and attempting to expand the quality of our community. We owe many thanks to the Conference Planning Committee for once again providing our community with a high quality of presentations, great opportunities to be together (What a boat ride!) and, as usual, the relatively smooth flow of countless details and "behind the scenes" work.

This conference also provided us with some major challenges that have spawned a period of unexpected transition for AAGT and its members. With the uncertainties of the financial issues of this conference and the difficulties that arose from our community meetings we all faced an undertone of a sincere and troubling question: Will AAGT survive?

While we left with a general sense of optimism about what is possible for us as an organization, we also went away with nothing very specific about the financial viability of our organization, or our ability to support meeting together in the future. So what do we know for certain?

First, at this point it appears that the financial issues from our conference are resolved. It is certainly possible that those issues could arise at some point, however, it is the view of the Executive Committee that we will proceed under the assumption that as time passes it becomes less and less likely that any action will be taken by the hotel. Simply stated we will be moving on and our organization is alive and relatively well, financially.

Second, the Meeting Design and Process Committee has been discussing some important issues about how we communicate in our planning process and developing some ideas of what we would like to have in our next meeting. Currently, the Committee is making a transition from its current form into the Planning Committee where we will begin the concrete planning of our next meeting. I think that it is extremely important that we have a date and place very soon so that all of have clarity about when we will be together again.

Thirdly, we are facing a major transition with many far-reaching implications that require some careful examination of where we have been and where we are going next. While our framework of Gestalt therapy shines in regards to the deconstruction and reconstruction of change, we continue the struggle of applying these principles on the scale of both our size of our organization and the distance of our relationships. Some things have gone very well while others things have not. As we move on to this next phase of the development of our organization I encourage us to take with us what we have done well and the progress we have made in conferencing and continue to expand the scope of who we have been while contemplating who well become.

I would like to outline what I think are the important issues that we are facing in this transition.

1) The primary issue organizationally is more effectively using the human resources that we have available. While all of our conferences have been extremely successful it has

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REGIONAL NEWS

LARGEST NUMBER YET ATTENDS THE SOUTHWEST REGIONAL MEETING

The largest number of participants ever, 46, attended the Fourth Annual Southwest Regional Meeting held in Santa Barbara, October 1 - 3, 1999. As was done in the previous get together, the agenda was developed during our opening session. By consensus, the group decided to discuss the following topics:

- * Possible Gestalt Applications (beyond Gestalt Therapy)
- * Supervision & Training of Gestalt Therapists
- * Gestalt Therapy with Couples
- * Increasing the Visibility of Gestalt Activities

Plenty of time was built into the week-end for sightseeing and for socializing, such as a dinner together at a local restaurant and a twilight picnic at the home of Isabel Fredericson and Joseph Handlon.

The next Southwest Regional Meeting will be held in San Diego, California on October 20 - 22, 2000. Todd Butler will be host and in charge of arrangements.

Joseph Handlon
Rita Resnick
Southwest Regional
Contact Persons

required significant amounts of time, effort, and personal finances on the part of our membership and resources of the organization. The cost of this has been individual burnout from the amount of work we ask from people and the sense that the conference requires the majority of the organization's energy and resources throughout the year. Are there other parts of the organization that we can develop with some of these resources? Can we somehow continue the successes of our previous conferences while becoming more efficient and somehow less complicated? Can we do it without a paid Conference Coordinator?

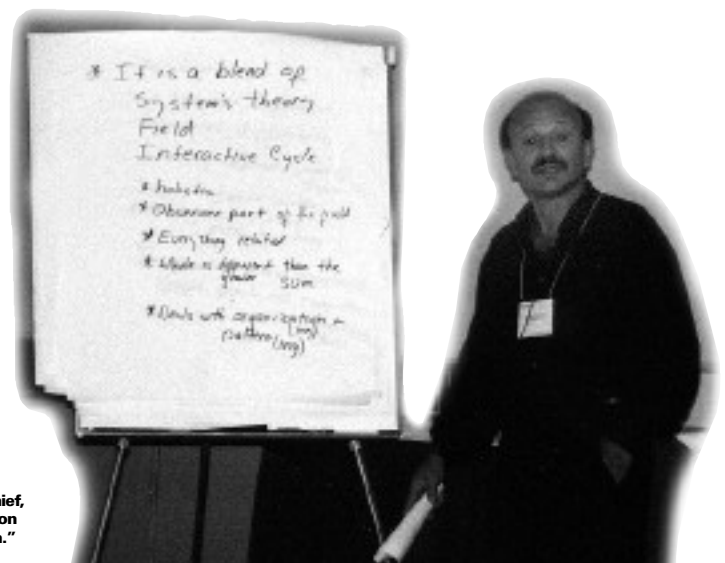
2) However you interpret what happened in our community meeting it is clear that we have need of somehow finding away to resolve some very difficult, fixed issues within our community. There are clearly some foundational philosophical differences and personal biases with our community that need to be addressed. The energy of these differences continues to surface in various ways and while some attempt was made in the community meeting to have these differences addressed overtly, we were unable to find a satisfying framework of dialogue. It is an incredibly challenging thing we do when we ask ourselves as a community to be as intimate as our conflicts imply with so relatively minimal personal contact. My hope is that in our reshaping our meeting together we will put a great deal of our creative energy at integrating and designing our community building process to help us move beyond the current conflicts. For instance, I keep wondering about what effect moving the business aspects of our community to end our conference rather than at the beginning could have. Would the time to be together and connect more fully help us through the difficulties? Perhaps it would. We have some of the most creative people in the world in Gestalt therapy. I would like to see us open ourselves to experimenting with something new. Is there a way of being a community that is beyond our current ideas that stem from our history or are we destined to stay fixed and stultified?

3) It is clear that each of us have a bias about what it is we prefer in our conferencing. Some prefer the formal presentations, others want more open process. Some prefer focusing internally on the community, and others are excited about reaching out and expanding Gestalt Therapy's presence in the world. Our conferences have included all of these in various mixes and while we may be experimenting with different forms I think we need to continue holding each of these preferences into the whole of what we do together. Can each of us planning our next meeting hold, not only our own bias, but also support what interests others?

My sincere hope is that the experiment of AAGT continues in the context seeing all of this in some developmental perspective. Is it really possible for us to create an organization that does not simply die under our tendency to become divisive in our conflicts? Can we find a way that works? I think that will require an extraordinary tolerance for the tensions of change and the willingness to not simply withdraw in our fear, anger, or dissatisfaction.

I look forward to the possibilities that lay before us.

Bruce A. Robertson, M.S.
President



Joseph Melnick, Editor-in-Chief, Gestalt Review, giving his presentation "How to Write for Journal Publication."



FROM THE EDITOR

In the latest issue of the Gestalt Review Joseph Melnick referred to the Gestalt culture as “inclusive, revolutionary, and optimistic.” These adjectives certainly apply to my experience of AAGT’s 1999 conference in New York City. In this post-conference edition of the AAGT Newsletter, we want to capture some of our experiences in New York and look forward to our future.

One of the changes that emerged from the community meeting is that I am writing as your new editor. The vision I bring is one of opening the newsletter to more and different features. Jan Ruckert’s poem, in this issue, is reflective of that vision, and I hope that others of you will be inspired to share your creations for publication. We have also introduced a segment called “Work in Progress” in which members of our community describe current projects, in the hope of hearing from other members with similar interests.

In this issue we also have messages from our President and President-Elect, a description of the community building track that was so well-received at the New York conference, the results of our members’ needs assessment that was conducted in New York, the results of participant evaluations of the conference, and news from our colleagues in Turkey. I hope that you enjoy this issue.

Let us hear from you. Please write or email:

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Wonderful Photos by
Ansel Woldt

Newsletter Design and Produced by
Judy Robertson



REGIONAL NEWS

NORTHEAST REGION NEWS

The New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy welcomes visitors to their meetings, the first Wednesday night of each month. Meetings include the presentation of a paper, general discussion, and experiential activities around the topic. Fall/winter topics are:

**October 6 –
Race, Diversity, and Community
Carl Hodges**

**November 3 –
Id Functioning
Cynthia Cook**

**January –
Colloquium on Bodywork
Gail Feinstein, Susan Gregory,
Frank Bosco, M’Lou Caring.**

**We hope that the next
newsletter will also include
news of Institutes in
Philadelphia, Massachusetts,
New Jersey, Maine and others
in New York.**

**Susan Gregory
Northeast Regional
Contact Person**

REGIONAL NEWS

NORTHEAST REGION NEWS

Gestalt Institute of the Berkshires has organized three Saturday workshops with guest presenters:

**December 18 –
Body Movement and Gestalt
Ruella Frank**

**January 22 –
Breath as a Support in the
Gestalt Process
Gail Feinstein**

**April 15 –
The Intersubjective Approach
to Transference
Ken Meyer**

**Susan Gregory
Northeast Regional
Contact Person**

AAGT COLLEAGUES AFFECTED BY EARTHQUAKE IN TURKEY

As you are aware, there was a terrible earthquake in Turkey several months ago. One of the presenters at the Cleveland and New York Conferences, Ceylan Tugrul, is a Turkish national, and a colleague of hers, Nilhan Sezgin, attended the New York conference as a participant. Ceylan founded a Gestalt Training Program in Turkey, and Nilhan is one of her trainees. After the earthquake, Ceylan sent the following email message to Liv Estrup:

Dear Liv,

Thank you very much for your message, it feels so good to receive it. My family and I were okay. We had an earthquake in Ankara also, but it was not as powerful as the ones in different parts of Turkey where a lot of people died.

I am very sad to say that Nilhan (the other Turkish lady from Turkey in New York) was not as lucky as I was and she lost her mother, father and some of her relatives who were living at a place where the earthquake was so powerful.

We were in a deep grief as a country of course, but it is a little bit relieving to see that people from different parts of Turkey as well as people from all around the world are doing their best to support the people who are in deep pain.

I hope and pray for no more earthquakes in any part of the world.

Ceylan

Ceylan has since informed us that the trauma still continues today, since the country is continuing to receive aftershocks from the great earthquake.

Liv also informed us that relief efforts have been organized by the International Red Cross, UNESCO, and several other organizations in case you would like to contribute. She also listed the following organizations, who are also involved in relief:

- **Brother's Brother Foundation/Turkey**
www.brothersbrother.com
- **Food for the Hungry International-Turkey Fund**
www.fh.org
- **Mercy Corps International-Turkey Relief Fund**
www.mercycorps.org
- **World Relief**
www.wr.org

Finally, a list of relief organizations approved by the federal government is available by calling (800) 872-4373 or the website www.info.usaid.gov

If you would like to contact either of our colleagues, you can reach them as follows:

Ceylan Tugrul

Turgutlu sok. 48/11 G.O.P.
Ankara, Turkey
email: Pdtem@ada.net.tr

Nilhan Sezgin

Mahatma Gandhi sok.
62/5 G.O.P.
Ankara Turkey



AAGT Archivist Ansel Woldt enjoying the friendship of Turkish psychologists Ceylan Tugrul and Nilhan Sergin.

AAGT COMMUNITY ELECTS NEW OFFICERS, CHANGES BY-LAWS

During the AAGT Community Meeting in New York City, the membership made the following decisions:

I. Amendments to Organizational By-Laws. Ansel Woldt identified some proposed changes to the by-laws. First, Standing Committees would be changed in nomenclature to Advisory Committees, which would allow them to form or disband as desired by the membership. Second, a new position was proposed for a continuing education officer who would serve on the Executive Council. A third proposal was for the creation of the position of Treasurer-Elect to learn under the existing treasurer for one year before taking on the position. After brief discussion, the three proposals all passed unanimously.

II. Review of Board Appointed Positions. Elizabeth Palazzi was identified as appointee as the new Publications Editor. David Alexander was acknowledged as a new appointee to a Board member at-large.

III. Board Elections. Our President-Elect nomination was Carol Brockmon. No other nominations came from the floor. Carol gave a brief speech on her qualifications to serve. Her nomination was passed by the membership unanimously. Gail Feinstein identified that she has decided to continue as Treasurer which then precluded the need to elect an interim treasurer. Bud Feder was nominated for Treasurer-Elect. No other nominations came from the floor. His nomination passed unanimously. Cynthia Cook was nominated as Interest Group Co-Chair to replace the departing Bud Feder. No other nominations came from the floor. Her nomination was approved unanimously. Carl Hodges was nominated for continuing as Regional Coordinator. No other nominations came from the floor. His nomination was approved by the membership unanimously.

Editor's Note: In addition to the above new officer elections and board appointments, the following members are continuing to serve on the Executive Committee: Bruce Robertson, President, Paul Schoenberg, Secretary, Todd Butler and Sarah Toman, Membership Co-chairs, and Ansel Woldt, Archivist, Continuing Education Officer. Also, with the election of Carol Brockmon as President-Elect, Charlie Bowman stepped down from the Executive Committee, with the greatest thanks and expressions of appreciation from the membership.

IV. Conference Planning. At the regularly scheduled planning meeting for the following year's conference (May 29), those members interested in designing and implementing a plan for next year met. The group thanked Liv Estrup for her leadership within the first four conferences and acknowledged that we would miss her leadership as we prepared for our next experience, no matter what emerged. President Robertson presented a brief model as a starting point to integrate the various suggestions from the community meeting into next year's planning. The following members agreed to serve on a committee to first design a plan that incorporated feedback from this year's meeting and conference for next year's meeting/conference, and also to implement that plan. Members included: Bruce Robertson, Charlie Bowman, Phil Brownell, Carl Hodges, Ansel Woldt, Susie Lanir, Sylvia Crocker, Rachel Brier, Susan Jurkowski, Perry Klepner, Cynthia Cook, Gail Feinstein, Emil Jech, Zelda Friedman, Elizabeth Palazzi, Paul Schoenberg, Valeria Zakharova, and Carol Brockmon. Carol Brockmon agreed to serve as secretary for this committee. Other AAGT members are invited to join as desired. Please contact Carol if interested.

Paul Schoenberg g
Secretary, AAGT

REGIONAL NEWS

NORTHEAST REGION NEWS

Gestalt Seminars NY hosted Lynn Jacobs in a weekend workshop in September. Future educational and community-building events will include a conference on

**March 24-25
Common Roots,
Many Blossoms
with pre-conference
workshops by:**

**Mary Lou Schack—
Shame, Blame and Forgiveness
in Couples Work**

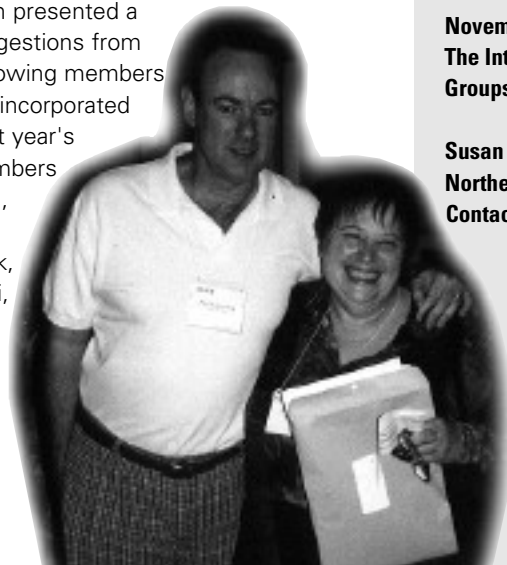
**Peter Philippon
Self in Relation: A New
Paradigm of Group Process.**

**Other events on the
calendar include:**

**October 23 –
The Relational Approach to
Gestalt
Ken Meyer**

**November 7 –
The Interactive Approach to
Groups Jay Earley**

**Susan Gregory
Northeast Regional
Contact Person**



AAGT Secretary Paul Schoenberg with Conference Co-Chair and AAGT President-Elect Carol Brockmon.

EXPERIMENTS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

By Cynthia Cook

REGIONAL NEWS

GESTALT LIFE IN RUSSIA, UKRAINE, AND BELORUSSIA

In the summer the Moscow Gestalt Institute had regional intensive training programs in Karpati (Ukraine), Minsk (Belorussia), Tuapse and St. Petersburg (Russia). Each program had nine days of work, 120 participants. Today we have Gestalt Institutes and Gestalt Centers in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Voronezh, Minsk, Odessa, Nizhniy Novgorod, Kharkov, Krasnodar, Stavropol and educational programs in many other cities. New programs are starting in Toliatty, Vitebsk, Perm, Dnepropetrovsk, and Magnitogorsk. The Moscow Gestalt Institute had a retreat. There are three departments now, specializing in theory and practice of Gestalt therapy, GT in clinical practice, and GT in work with children and families. Gestalt therapy is included in many courses in universities and institutes, so students are much better informed about GT.

**30 September - 4 October
Conference in Dnepropetrovsk
(Ukraine)
Gestalt and Creativity**

**10-13 December
Conference in Minsk
Gestalt and Therapy of Addiction**

**10-13 February 2000
9th Annual Russian Gestalt
Conference in Moscow**

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The ECB track was presented at the 1999 Conference in response to the interest in innovative programming expressed at the 1998 Community Meeting. Five sessions were held, one during each workshop time slot, with topics decided during the community meeting and derived from a sense of community need and interest. The topics were: 1) Spiritual Responses to Violence, 2) The Status of Gestalt Therapy Throughout the World, 3) How Do We See Gestalt Therapy Contributing to the Major Questions Facing Humanity, 4) The War In Yugoslavia: Maintaining Contact in a Time of Conflict, and 5) Gestalt Perspectives on Community Development: What Have We Learned? Attendance at all five sessions totaled almost 50 people. The satisfaction level, as expressed on the evaluation forms, was very high. It was many people's experience that the ECB provided an opportunity to address ongoing background conflicts in the AAGT community. The opportunity to come together around the war in Kosovo was a significant affirmation of AAGT as a truly international community. The final session focused on evaluating the experiment and identifying what we learned over the course of the conference. It was important to that group that their conclusions be reported back to the membership in some way, so what follows is my attempt to fulfill this charge.

Eight people attended this session, and six of us had attended at least one other ECB session. The desire for the positive experience of the ECB to feed back into the organization and influence the planning of future conferences was expressed at the outset. We identified the value of small groups in allowing and supporting interactions that then affect the process of the larger community. This was illustrated by the experience of one member who had attended the entire track. She described a sequence in which, at the first session, she was able to own her role in the conflict that was happening at the community meeting. At the second session, she reaffirmed her ground as a Gestalt therapist and a member of this community. In the third session she was able to return to the conflict within AAGT, which led to working out issues in a troubled relationship. In the fourth, she was able to just be with her feelings with others, and described that now she could now go back to the larger community feeling more grounded and loving to the people she has been struggling with, and more aware of her own behavior. There was a general sense of reaffirming the function of small groups in being able to address issues differently or more easily than in the large group, and also to then provide ground for what can happen in the larger meetings.

We addressed the issue of the tremendous amount of unfinished business in the background of the community meeting, and came up with a way of framing the historical conflict on the conference planning committee that felt fresh and meaningful. One group member observed that people fear disappearing – personally, as Gestalt therapists, etc. Looked at from this perspective, the conflict regarding conference planning becomes a polarity of fears. On the one hand, we fear that if we don't



**Conference Coordinator
Liv Estrup with AAGT
President Bruce Robertson
during our final gathering at
the Hilton.**



Honorees Erving and Miriam Polster enjoying a moment with Joel Latner

organize our conference around reaching out to bring in new people, we (Gestalt therapists) will disappear, and there won't be a place for us in the world. On the other hand, we fear that creating the conference for people outside of Gestalt will mean it is no longer the place where we can exist fully as ourselves and as Gestalt therapists, and we fear we will disappear if there is no place for us here.

The role of loyalties in our conflicts, something talked about in other sessions, was again discussed. We also identified that the work that most changed how people experienced conflict was the "painstaking unpicking" of projections, in Malcom Parlett's words. We wondered if this can happen in the large group setting, and concluded that the work of owning projections needs to be seen and modeled in the large group, and we need structures available to be flexibly used for this work. We felt it important not to get locked into thinking that this work can only happen in small groups (or in therapy sessions, etc.), and not in large group settings. There needs to be a dialectic, where the experience in the small group becomes learning that can be applied in the large group. For example, a design can better be worked out in the small group, which then comes in with structure and leadership to support the large group process. A suggestion that the large meetings always have designated process observers generated great excitement. In addition, leadership functions need to be named and supported. We questioned whether the organization supports leadership, and talked about the recursive nature of field functioning. If there's no support for leadership function, how do you learn to support leadership? A suggestion was made that our community meetings have two chairs and a process observer, so that one person is not attempting to fill all the needed functions.

Finally, we came up with a summary to present at the closing plenary of the conference. I was asked to say that people came away from the ECB track with great excitement, because what they experienced gave them hope. What was missing in the large group were the personal meetings and owning of history, projections, and loyalties – as well as the owning of our leadership and power, and the ability to use our wisdom. In the small groups we were able to do this work, and so affect the larger field by making small adjustments in sub-parts of the field. We remembered what we know. In the ECB meetings we looked out – focusing on these great human issues in the world around us – and looked within, for what we could address was here amongst us. By addressing both the content and our process, we created shifts in conflicts that had left many of us feeling hopeless and stuck – and the ripples of this work will now reach out around the world.

REGIONAL NEWS

GESTALT LIFE IN RUSSIA, UKRAINE, AND BELORUSSIA

22-25 June 2000
Summer Gestalt Conference in
St. Petersburg

About the political situation
in Gestalt therapy and
psychotherapy in Russia:

At the beginning of the year we found very strong pressure from European Association of Psychotherapy. They tried to control the whole situation in psychotherapy in Russia by means of one of associations in psychotherapy (PPL). For Russian therapists it can lead to reducing the level of education and growth in GT. During many past years we have tried to build a high professional level of GT, based on theory and practical investigation, to connect the Gestalt approach to Russian academic psychology. But EAP seems to be ready to support beginners only. This situation is not very clear yet, but most Gestalt therapists have doubts about Russian partners of EAP.

Moscow Gestalt Institute has prepared a Gestalt site on the Internet. You are welcome to visit it soon, though it is in Russian.

Daniel Khlomov

CONFERENCE EVALUATION

**AAGT'S FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE - NEW YORK, NEW YORK
MAY 27 THROUGH MAY 30, 1999**

By Elizabeth S. Palazzi, Ph.D.

REGIONAL NEWS

NEWS FROM TURKEY

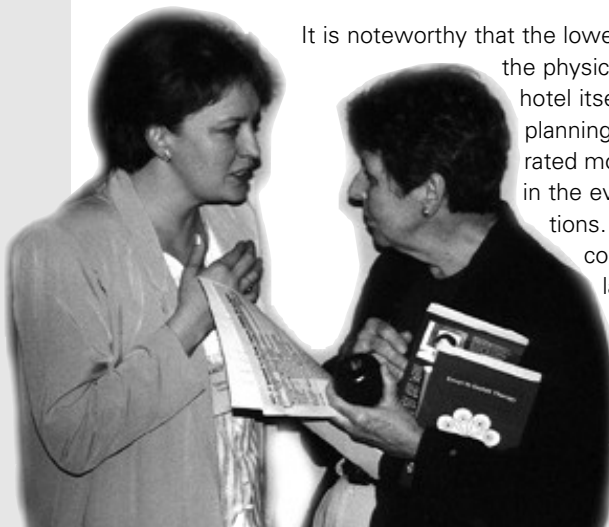
Tragedies come in all sizes, and as a community we are affected by them. Our AAGT Regional Contact Persons in Turkey (Ceylan Tugrul and Nilhan Sezgin) have lost friends, relatives and neighbors in the earthquake there. Ceylan writes:

"As the other psychologists, I am trying to help the people who are affected by the earthquake. We have been trying to do our best, but I am afraid we don't have enough therapists who are specialized on PTSD. I would be grateful if you can send us some material on PTSD if possible. Sincerely yours, Ceylan Tugrul"

**Please contact Ceylan at:
Telephone: +(90) 312 447 7473
(work) +(90) 312 436 9822
(home)
Fax: +(90) 312 447 7423
Email: pdtem@ada.net.tr**

Editor's Note: Please see the article on Ceylan and Nilhan "AAGT COLLEAGUES AFFECTED BY EARTHQUAKE IN TURKEY."

Valeria Zalkharova, Director of the Ural Institute for Gestalt Technology, Russia, talking with Sylvia Fleming Crocker about her new book: A Well-Lived Life: Essays on Gestalt Therapy



AAGT's fourth annual conference in New York City from May 27th through May 30th was a hugely successful event. The feedback forms from participants on the individual presentations, plenary sessions, and the conference as a whole suggest that conference was of great value to the participants.

One statistic of which we are very proud is that 31% of the participants attending were from countries other than the USA. The conference was successful in sustaining the interest, full participation, and support of all participants, and this was subjective evidence to conference organizers of the success of the conference theme, "Bridging Our Diversity, Expanding Our Vision."

We also have statistical evidence of how well received the conference was. Evaluations were conducted for each workshop, each plenary session, and for the conference as a whole. In this document, we will examine each aspect of our evaluation model and report on the data gathered.

First we would like to consider the feedback on the conference as a whole. Participants were asked to consider each of the following aspects of the conference, and to rate these aspects on a scale from 1 to 5 where 5 was for Excellent, 4 for Good, 3 Satisfactory, 2 Fair, 1 Poor, and 0 Not Applicable. The number to the left of each aspect shows the mean for each of these aspects, with 44 participants responding. (Zeroes were not used in computing the mean.)

- 4.33 Topics covered were interesting
- 4.13 Topics were of practical value
- 3.88 Professional expectations were fulfilled
- 3.96 Format of Conference
- 4.48 Registration procedures & administration
- 3.96 Continuing education procedures
- 3.49 Exhibits (books & brochures)
- 4.00 Corporate Travel Services
- 2.66 Meeting room comfort (room size, temperature, etc.)
- 3.73 Ease of getting to meeting rooms
- 3.03 Physical environment (aesthetics)
- 3.68 Hotel guest room accommodations

It is noteworthy that the lowest scores were those accorded to aspects of the physical environment and meeting rooms and the hotel itself. More substantive issues of organizational planning and workshop content were consistently rated more highly. This same phenomenon is reflected in the evaluations of the individual workshop presentations. While this is leading us as an organization to consider settings for our workshops other than large urban hotels, it also is a vote of confidence for the essence of AAGT and its workshops.

Next we would like to consider the major plenary events on Thursday evening and Saturday morning. Each plenary, and the participant evaluations which were submitted, will be considered individually.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON OPENING PLENARY SESSION

THURSDAY MAY 27, 1999

On this form participants were asked to look at the following statements and decide whether they agreed strongly, agreed somewhat, were neutral, disagreed somewhat, or disagreed strongly. "Agree strongly" was assigned a point value of 5; "Agree somewhat," applied value of 4; "Neutral," a point value of 3; "Disagree somewhat" was assigned 2 points, and "Disagree strongly" was assigned 1 point. In the table below, the mean point value is displayed next to each statement. A total of 81 participants completed these evaluation forms.

- 3.37 The presenters were able to highlight the historic ground of Gestalt therapy
- 3.07 The presenters were able to describe developments in Gestalt theory at various levels of system from individual through organizational
- 4.23 The presenters made effective use of themselves in demonstrating cultural and theoretical diversity
- 3.14 I learned something that I can apply to my own practice of Gestalt

Participants were also invited to make any additional comments they wished on this plenary experience.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON SATURDAY PLENARY SESSION

**SATURDAY
MAY 29, 1999**

On this form participants were also asked to look at the following statements and decide whether they agreed strongly, agreed somewhat, were neutral, disagreed somewhat, or disagreed strongly. "Agree strongly" was assigned a point value of 5; "Agree somewhat," received a value of 4; "Neutral," a point value of 3; "Disagree Somewhat" was assigned 2 points, and "Disagree strongly" was assigned 1 point. In the table below, the mean point value is displayed next to each statement. A total of 74 participants completed these evaluation forms.

- 3.70 This plenary session clearly continued the theme set by the opening plenary
- 4.04 The questions presented and process pursued in this plenary session broadened to my understanding of how diversity can be expressed, appreciated and included in a welcoming environment
- 4.27 Time spent in today's process groups was intellectually stimulating and emotionally satisfying Overall this plenary session fulfilled my expectations
- 3.76 Participants were also invited to make any additional comments they wished on this plenary.



Past President Charlie Bowman during his presentation "100 Years of Gestalt Therapy: Yours, Mine, and Ours."

REGIONAL NEWS

GESTALT COLLEAGUES IN IVORY COAST

Our AAGT Regional Contact Person in Ivory Coast (Jacques Djete Beugre, M.D.) writes that his home village has been without water for almost a year because of a broken reservoir tank. He is trying to help his village at an organic level, but the money resources are not there within the village to rebuild the tank, so he is turning to his larger community for help with his helping. Please contact him at:

**Telephone: +225 215 619 (work)
+225 403 295(home)
Email: beugred@ci.refer.org**

Note from our Regional Coordinator: For our AAGT World Community, "the Regions" provide a way to reach in and reach out, with contact, information, support, resources, and concern. Sometimes just a little help can touch, connect, change.

***CARL HODGES, RCP
Coordinator***

FEEDBACK

■
This was my first AAGT Conference. I felt welcomed – I liked how well organized everything was – that frees me up to focus without distraction. Thank you all.”

■
Fantastic. Want more like it that have such a great balance of experiential, didactic, and personal – as well as building the community as a whole.”

■
I felt very well attended to and touched by the personal contact. It was well organized overseas.

■
Let's keep this thing going. It's the greatest! A pared down version would be fine and less expensive accommodations would help.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON SPECIAL EVENTS

The overall conference evaluation also included a segment in which participants were asked to evaluate conference special events. In evaluating these events participants were asked to use a scale from 0 to 5, where 5 represented an evaluation of excellent, 4 for good, 3 for satisfactory, 2 fair, and 1 for poor. A zero was used to indicate “not applicable,” and the zeros were not used in calculating the means. The table below has the mean value for each of the special events.

- 3.76 Thursday Night Welcome Social Hour
4.00 Friday Interest Group Lunch
Groups attended included International Roundtable, Theory Development, Somatics, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transsexual, Political, Child and Adolescent, Dreamwork, and Spirituality
cancelled Friday Night Interest Group Meeting
4.57 Saturday Interest Group Lunch
Groups attended included Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transsexual Gestalt South London, and Women's Issues in Gestalt Therapy
4.73 Saturday Night Cruise
cancelled Yoga
4.46 Sunday Closing Plenary – Bridging

Finally, before we move on to evaluations of individual workshops, we would like to cite several narrative comments participants added to their conference evaluations.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON INDIVIDUAL WORKSHOPS

On the whole, the individual workshops were very well received. At each workshop participants received a form asking them to identify the three most meaningful items of learning they acquired, and then they evaluated the workshop on the dimensions listed below. Here again they were asked to decide whether they agreed strongly, agreed somewhat, were neutral, disagreed somewhat, or disagreed strongly. “Agree strongly” was assigned a point value of 5; “Agree somewhat,” received a value of 4; “Neutral,” a point value of 3; “Disagree somewhat” was assigned 2 points, and “Disagree strongly” was assigned 1 point. In the table below, the mean point value is displayed next to each statement. Finally participants were asked to identify what was least useful about the presentation, and they were invited to give comments.

The following chart shows the mean scores on the evaluation questionnaire for all the presentations:

- 4.44 The stated educational objectives for this event were largely fulfilled
4.39 In this session and I gain new knowledge and/or organized existing knowledge better
4.44 The presenter(s) discussed the material in a clear and orderly fashion
4.38 The presenter(s) rear geared the level of the material introduced to that of the participants
4.57 The presenter(s) responded to the needs and questions of the participants
3.72 The physical facilities were appropriate
4.44 I would recommend this presentation to my professional colleagues

Note here again that by far the lowest mean score referred to the physical facilities rather than to the presenters or the content.

The following chart lists each of the presentations that were given during this conference and shows the mean score for each of the above questionnaire items for that presentation, as well as the number of respondents.

WORKSHOP TITLE AND PRESENTER

	No. Resp.	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7
Optimistic Approach to Couple & Family Therapy — Melnick	18	4.22	4.06	4.11	4.22	4.22	4.0	4.33
Exploring Intimacy: A Gestalt Approach — Klepner	15	3.53	3.33	3.67	3.4	3.21	3.8	3.13
Everything the Novice Wants to Know — Estrup & Resnick	9	4.67	4.89	5.0	4.78	4.89	4.11	4.89
Clinical Issues and Hermeneutics — Lobb	14	4.21	4.21	3.93	4.64	4.71	3.29	4.36
Gestalt Model for Addiction — Matzko	12	3.92	3.58	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.58	3.67
Gestalt Approach to Adolescents & Adults with ADHD — Root	9	4.5	4.67	4.56	.44	4.56	4.11	4.11
Bereavement, Mourning, and Gestalt — Sabar	12	4.25	4.08	4.33	4.08	4.0	3.17	4.27
Cross-Cultural Communication: Impasse — Sparks	12	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.83	4.45	4.18	3.75
Gestalt Narration/ Narrative Gestalt — Wheeler & Roberts	40	4.36	4.56	4.45	4.51	4.74	4.03	4.56
I Choose, You Choose (Man-Woman Relations) — Zakharova	7	4.71	4.57	4.29	4.43	4.57	4.29	4.71
Child Development & Gestalt: Perls & Piaget — Benevento	6	4.5	4.83	4.17	3.83	3.67	4.5	4.33
Therapy with Diverse Lesbian Couples — Brockmon	11	4.73	4.64	4.82	4.91	4.82	3.0	4.91
Awakening Sensual Wisdom Through Breathing — Feinstein	26	4.8	4.76	4.75	4.88	4.88	4.48	4.88
Mothers & Daughters — Fodor & Kishinevsky	12	3.91	3.92	4.08	4.08	4.18	4.08	3.75
Voices at Work — Meredith	19	4.25	4.22	4.56	4.37	4.44	2.79	4.29
Working Intersubjectively: Mutuality in the work — Meyer	21	3.81	3.62	4.2	3.48	3.95	3.57	4.0
Gestalt as Dynamic: Coping for Foster Families — Mullner	4	4.75	4.75	4.5	5.0	5.0	4.5	4.75
Training Adults to Do Child Therapy — Oaklander	16	3.88	4.06	4.25	4.47	4.38	2.29	4.13
Gestalt Hologram: O'Neill	1	4	2	3	4	4	4	3
Scapegoating: Casting the First Stone — Schack	20	3.9	4.03	4.35	4.1	4.3	3.05	3.95
Character — Burley & Freier	34	4.35	4.36	4.38	4.38	4.28	3.72	4.24
Crisis as Flourishing — Dolgoplov & Dolgoplova	6	4.88	4.88	4.75	4.71	5.0	4.5	4.88

FEEDBACK

■
I've had a great time here. Thanks.

■
I appreciated all the hard work. The workshops I attended were excellent. I loved that they prepared so well for us.

■
I really am thrilled that I attended. I definitely will return, depending on cost and location.

■
I appreciate the way Continuing Education was organized this year.

■
This conference was outstanding in every respect.

FEEDBACK

■
I appreciate the form how the conference was organized they create the groups what made possible real meetings with people.

■
I thoroughly enjoyed this conference (my 3rd) and would strongly recommend it to others. I don't need a Hilton Hotel next time. It's way beyond my means and it'll take me 18 months to pay off my credit card. I don't want to camp in a field next time, but simple accommodation would suit me. The quality of workshop presentation was excellent and I learned a lot."

Group Supervision — Estrup & Resnick	16	4.56	4.44	4.75	4.38	4.56	3.81	4.5
Creating Virtual Work Teams in Healthcare — Janoff & Brownell	2	4.5	5.0	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
How to Write for Journal Publication — Melnick	16	4.75	4.81	4.81	4.81	4.81	4.33	4.81
Expanding our Vision: It Takes Two to Create One — Mulgrew	10	4.89	5.0	4.67	5.0	5.0	4.78	5.0
Gestalt Approach to Holistic Health — Munoz	19	4.68	4.74	4.74	4.58	4.74	3.95	4.58
Family Therapy in Poland — Tanalska-Duleba	No data							
Shame, Guilt, and Sexual Problems — Tugrul	16	4.44	4.31	4.31	3.94	4.69	4.0	4.31
Creating a Memorial Day Shrine — Verrinder & Charles	4	4.75	4.75	4.67	5.0	5.0	3.5	4.75
Gestalt in the Hospital — Brownell	No data							
Photo-Gestalt — Self Portraits — Dorothy Charles	21	4.47	4.25	4.4	4.53	4.45	3.35	4.6
Coming to Our Senses: Body-based Gestalt — Cook	18	4.47	4.59	4.59	4.47	4.59	4.88	4.71
Pathways of Song: Sensing Self Through Singing — Gregory	16	4.44	4.44	4.69	4.4	4.69	4.13	4.5
Working the Imaginal: Gestalt, Phenomenology, & Jung — Heider	18	4.33	4.33	4.5	4.5	4.44	4.0	4.11
Bridging Diversity: The Gestalt Contribution — LevineBar-Yoseph	9	4.44	4.22	4.44	4.44	4.67	2.44	4.44
Super Vision: Focusing on Detail — Kennedy & Rookwood	13	4.23	4.46	4.54	4.69	4.55	3.15	4.46
Introduction to Two Chair Work — Mackay	11	4.91	4.73	4.82	4.55	4.91	4.27	4.73
The Contacting Process: The Heart of Gestalt — Philipsson	21	4.19	3.81	3.81	4.29	4.7	3.53	4.3
Human Nature as the Bridge to Diversity — Wymore	5	4.6	5.0	4.8	4.6	5.0	4.0	5.0
100 Years of Gestalt: Yours, Mine, and Ours — Bowman	13	4.77	4.69	4.69	4.77	4.85	4.08	4.77
Mentorship and the Establishment of Theme — Doak	10	4.4	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.1	4.6
Contact and Intimacy in Gestalt Group Therapy — Earley	14	4.07	3.79	4.14	4.07	4.36	3.85	3.93
Wilderness Therapy — Dutton & Freeman	7	4.86	4.86	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.14	4.86
Academic Anxiety Strategies for Gestaltists — Garcia & Baker	7	4.43	4.29	4.5	4.71	4.86	1.14	4.29
A Gestalt Approach to Meditation — Gerard	17	4.76	4.59	4.76	4.76	4.81	3.88	4.69
Process Groups: a Forum for Review & Evaluation — Klepner	4	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	1.0	5.0
A Gestalt Approach to Self-Esteem — Shub	No data							

Exploring Counter-transference in Child/Family Supervision — Verrinder	8	5.0	5.0	4.88	5.0	5.0	3.5	5.0
Therapist Self-Disclosure in the Practice of Gestalt — Zahm	25	4.56	4.6	4.64	4.44	4.64	3.76	4.68

Editor's Note: In the interest of brevity, narrative comments about the plenaries, the individual workshops, and the overall conference, were omitted. The full report was submitted to our accrediting agencies, and as a result we have been granted full approval, including five-year approval from the American Psychological Association.

A HOWL IN THE FIELD

By Jan Rucker t

Outside my window, rain gathers
shooting pellets into the pool.
My dogs hear a siren and start to howl.
I warm my hands around a cup of coffee
and read about the accidents of war.

On a grassy border next to train tracks,
in a plowed field turning green,
nine charred bodies are heaped by a young tree.
No one yet knows the names of the dead.

Men wearing transparent plastic gloves
pick up torso bits
strewn amid flowering fruit trees.
The smell of damp spring is overtaken
by the smell of burning oil,
laced with the smell of burned flesh.

This is not the usual April weather.
This is not the usual April news.

In a remote village, the remains of collapsed houses;
A broken mirror, family pictures still pasted around it.
A dead cow with its wounded calf.
The youngster is hungry but refuses to leave its mother.
In the quiet morning, neighbors try to salvage
a ripped couch, a television set, a fractured cradle.
They carry them past road signs full of shrapnel holes.

Back here on my hillside,
the siren carols down.
My own dogs howl
a last single note
rising sharply
as their throats stretch for volume.
I have heard they do this to assemble the pack.
They harmonize like wolves,
to wail an alarm at the den site
spanning great distances
where there are others in the storm.

FEEDBACK

■
**Really terrific balance
of didactic and
experiential choices
in workshops. Process
groups are a must to
provide a
homebase/homeroom
and to connect with
new colleagues. I
especially liked the
plenary on diversity!**

■
**Personally
phenomenal!!!
I felt the Plenary
Session 2
format of getting
support from others
around issues of
differences, which is
often isolating, was a
great idea. I feel very
appreciative to
met me and helped
me on my journey.**

■
**I need a slower pace
but keep the high
quality of presentations.**



RESULTS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR FUTURE AAGT CONFERENCES

Ansel L. Woldt, Ed.D., Continuing Education Officer

FEEDBACK

- **We need more theory presentations.**
- **More Gestalt theory at a deeper level.**
- **Let's try a conference the moves at a slower pace.**
- **I loved having Interest Groups and Workshops during the lunch hour.**
- **This is the most fantastic conference I have ever attended. Keep it going.**
- **I go to about 3 - 4 professional conferences a year and AAGT's is always the one I go home from feeling best – tired but at some level, refreshed and eager to go on. After the others, I'm just tired.**

AAGT's Conference Planning and Continuing Education (CE) Committees requested information about professional affiliations, degrees, employment settings and the kinds of workshops and presentations desired in future AAGT conferences. Every one who registered for CE credit was required to complete the Needs Assessment Inventory prior to obtaining their Continuing Education Certificate. In addition to the 41 CE participants, 46 others completed the survey. Following is the summary of the results of this survey from 87 of the people attending our 1999 Conference.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS, DEGREES AND EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS

I. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION	TOTAL = 87
Social Work	22
Psychology	20
Counseling	13
Pastoral Ministry	10
Marriage and Family Therapy	5
Psychotherapy	3
Nursing	3
Medicine	2
Rehabilitation	2
Chemical Dependency	2
Organizational Development	2
Body Therapy	1
Music Therapy	1
Art Therapy	1
II. HIGHEST DEGREE ATTAINED	
Doctorate (M.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., Psy.D., D.S.W.)	25
Educational Specialist (Ed.S., CAGS)	2
Masters (M.A., M.S., M.S.W., M.Ed.)	55
Bachelors (B.A., B.S., B.F.A.)	3
Other (Divinity, Pastoral Ministry)	2
III. PRIMARY EMPLOYMENT SETTING	(some identified more than one setting)
Private Practice	49
College, University or Medical School	16
Training Institute	8
CMHC	7
Hospital	3
Other (none specified)	8

TOPICS OF MOST INTEREST FOR FUTURE CONFERENCES

Participants were asked to mark all topics of interest to them for future AAGT meetings and conferences. Most identified several topics and some added special requests. They have been rank-ordered according to the number of votes received (in right-hand column)

Gestalt Couples Therapy	45
Depression and Gestalt	32
Gestalt Group Therapy	29
Gestalt Family Therapy	28
Gestalt Therapy for the Timid or Scared	27
Adolescent Psychology and Gestalt Therapy	26
Diagnosis from Gestalt Perspective	25
Gestalt Therapy for "Old Timers"	25

Advanced Practice of Gestalt Therapy	24
Psychology of Women and Gestalt	24
Gestalt Treatment of Trauma and PTSD	24
Child Psychology and Gestalt Play Therapy	23
Psychopathology - Gestalt Views	23
Gestalt Assessment and Diagnosis	23
Clinical Supervision and Gestalt	22
Gestalt Therapy: Advanced Theory	21
Gestalt and Spiritual Development	21
Gestalt and Transpersonal Psychology	20
Sexual Dysfunction and Gestalt Approach	19
Divorce Counseling: The Gestalt Approach	19
Alcoholism Treatment and Gestalt Therapy	18
Professional Ethics in Gestalt Work	18
Cross-Cultural/Multi-Cultural Issues and Gestalt	17
Psychological Assessment and Gestalt	17
School Counseling: Gestalt Applications in Schools	16
Schizophrenia: Gestalt Approaches	16
Gestalt Therapy for Beginners	16
Death and Dying - Gestalt Approach	15
Neuropsychology and Gestalt	15
Medical Disorders and Gestalt Therapy	15
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Issues	14
Gestalt Applications in Organizations	14
Geriatric Psychology and Gestalt Therapy	13
Drug Abuse/Chemical Dependency and Gestalt Therapy	12
Crisis Intervention: Gestalt Approach	11
Psychology of Men and Gestalt	11
Leadership Issues in the Gestalt Community	10
Borderline Personality Disorder: Gestalt Approach	9
Behavioral Assessment: Gestalt Approach	9
Research Methods in Gestalt Therapy	8
School Psychology and Gestalt	7
Career Assessment and Gestalt Counseling	7
Health Psychology Issues and Gestalt	6
Body Processes and Gestalt (a write-in topic)	6
Beginning Counseling/Psychotherapy Skills	6
Organizational Consulting and Gestalt	5
Rehabilitation Psychology and Gestalt Therapy	5
Gestalt Therapy in Religious Life	4
Use of Computers in Professional Work	4
Industrial/Organizational Psychology and Gestalt	3
Hypnosis and Gestalt	3
Evaluation and Measurement	3
Forensic Psychology and Gestalt	2
Biofeedback and Gestalt	0

Others: As with Body Processes (6 votes above) these were written in.

- Music and Gestalt Therapy
- Peace Processes: Gestalt Applications
- Gestalt in Politics
- Disability Issues and Gestalt Therapy, including Physical Degeneration
- Gender and Power Issues: Gestalt Views on "Whiteness," "White Privilege," and "White Ethnic Identity"
- Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Gestalt Therapy:
A Meeting of Robert Stolorow with Gestalt Therapists

FEEDBACK

■

We need to do more to get more graduate students involved in AAGT – those in attendance had so much vigor and excitement, it's contagious. They are also the life-blood for the future of Gestalt Therapy.

■

I appreciate your willingness to create an Attendance Certificate for those of us from other countries who don't have your continuing education requirement but need something to show besides our VISA charges when we get home. Thank You Very Much!

Gestalt Associates Training Los Angeles

New In New York

"A Bird May Love a Fish But Where Would They Live?" A Couples Therapy Training Workshop Series for Therapists

Rita Resnick, Ph.D.

Robert W. Resnick, Ph.D.

Three, two-day workshops in Soho

Feb. 4 (eve), 5-6, March 11-12, May 5-6, 2000

Fee: \$795 prior to Dec. 1, 1999, \$825 after Dec. 1, 25% Student Discounts

New In Greek Islands

First Annual

Couples Therapy Residential Training Workshop for Therapists

Rita F. Resnick, Ph.D. & Robert W. Resnick, Ph.D.

July 16 - 21, 2000

(Immediately preceding the 29th annual Gestalt Therapy Residential Training Workshop)

A four-day Residential Couples Therapy Training Workshop for Therapists and allied professionals who work with couples and those interested in learning to work with couples.

- Live & Video Demonstrations (real couples)
- All Clinical work related to theory
- Hands on supervision
- International participants and couples

Fee: \$1095 includes tuition, room and board

29th Annual (Greek Islands)

European Residential Gestalt Therapy Training Program

July 23 - August 4, 2000

(Following the Couples Therapy Workshop above)

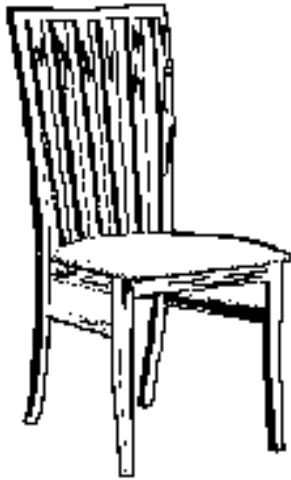
Core Faculty: Todd Burley, Ph.D. Rita Resnick, Ph.D., Robert W. Resnick, Ph.D.

Faculty: Liv Estrup, M.A. + guest faculty.

Renowned international training program with participants from 25 different countries to be held at a beautiful beachfront hotel in the Greek Islands. Five levels of training, individual and group work, theory lectures and practicum, trios, supervision and optional evening programs. 80% return rate.

Fee: \$2500.00 - \$2800.00 depending upon group placement

Contact: E-mail: SweetRita@aol.com Tel: (310) 395-6844 Fax: (310) 319-1663



*What's
Behind
the
Empty
Chair?*

*Visual Images of
Gestalt Therapy
Theory & Concepts*

Available in video February 2000

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NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GESTALT THERAPY

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