



AAGT

Gestalt therapy



**Association for the Advancement
of Gestalt Therapy**

FOR OUR TIME

**SOCIAL VISION
PERSONAL GROWTH**



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

GLOBALISM, POLARIZATION AND POLITICS. As I sat in the University of Wollongong sandwich shop I watched the lanky Eucalyptus trees swaying in evidence of the storm coming our way. Everything is just slightly, delightfully different in Australia: the smells, bird calls, accents, and the way water goes down the drain. Time even seems to pass differently. I was waiting for Michael Reed, Ph.D., the current Chairperson for Gestalt Australia, New Zealand (GANZ) for a potentially historic meeting. Brian O'Neill (AAGT and GANZ member) and Gail Feinstien (AAGT Vice –Treasurer) were present as well.

The Executive Committee of AAGT in its February meeting was very excited about the idea of developing some working relationships with other Gestalt organizations around the world. It so happened that I was presenting a workshop in Wollongong, Australia and took the opportunity to meet with Michael and convey the EC's vision of developing a relationship with GANZ.

While having the President of AAGT and the Chairperson of GANZ meeting officially seemed a small step, I was aware of the potential significance of our face to face contact. We have struggled with idea of AAGT being an "international" organization. We have a significant number of international members, yet practically we function primarily as a North American organization. In our Cleveland, Ohio Community meeting I remember one our international members suggesting the concept of AAGT being global in our scope. Rather than the traditional, boundary ridden concepts of international vs. national, being global in our scope suggests a wider view and, perhaps, a clearer sense of the possibilities and a better understanding of AAGT place within that community. For instance, within the idea of being global the concept of linking in various ways with other organizations such as EAGT (European Association of Gestalt Therapy) and GANZ (Gestalt Australia-New Zealand), and others, seems an exciting way to create a much greater sense of what is happening with Gestalt Therapy on a global basis. It also presents a much clearer sense to me of creating a wider community of Gestalt Therapy that would not be possible with one organization.

Michael and I talked at length about our respective organizational histories and processes. Since GANZ is only a few years old I was stuck with how their membership's excitement and interest are the central momentum of energy and how much cooperation occurs. It reminded me of AAGT's early years and, in light of our internal struggles, the need we have to find some sense of our mutual interest and excitement again. The polarizing energy of our recent political strife has sent us into a re-evaluation of each our particular interest in whether or not we are willing to see it through. While I am excited about AAGT's potential place with a global community, I am aware that the current transition and development of our organization process could consume our vision and energy. As I listened to Michael I was reminded that when our interest and excitement with the possibilities of something new are foreground, our individual differences become background. As we move further in the process differences arise and must be addressed or they threaten our continued movement forward. This, of course, is our greatest challenge in AAGT currently.

AAGT's 5th International Gestalt Therapy Conference

November 8 -12, 2000

Dallas/Ft Worth, Texas American Airlines Conference Center

Embraces four sub themes:

- Next Steps in Theory and Practice
- Contexts: Harmonies and Disturbances in the Field
- Applications to and beyond Mental Health
- Accommodations and Integrations for Growth



TO THE EDITOR

Elizabeth:

I picked up a copy at the "Common Roots" conference in NYC this weekend....it is first rate! Impressive! A pro job!! And I was very glad to have the article on CHW [Center for a Healthy World] there to refer to.... I spoke about CHW in the talk that I gave (on the DSM IV and the Awareness and Contact Cycle), and people were interested in learning more, so there it all was, and I got to promote AAGT a bit too....and mentioned you as well as the genius behind the newsletter!

**Hope you're doing well!
Dori [Dr. Dori Middleman]**

Michael expressed a great deal of excitement and willingness to develop a relationship with AAGT and several ideas were discussed. In the near future, we discussed working on an occasional mutual newsletter, the development of an associate membership fee for each of our organizations for people who want to receive the information from the other organization, but that do not want full-membership. For instance, an AAGT member could join GANZ for a reduced amount and receive their newsletter, journal and other mailings. For the distant future, we discussed the possibility of having joint conference. While we may be quite a way from being able to do something that large we were all very excited about the vision such a meeting creates.

Being global in our scope also can refocus our efforts towards our non-American members and establishing the unique place AAGT has within this global community. I believe this is a missing link for us. As we can better understand who we are within the wider global field, we can better utilize our unique contributions to its development. It also can create another broader figure that could provide us the opportunity to move some of our individual differences into the background or be motivated to resolve them successfully.

To summarize I have developed a statement of purpose that encompasses my thoughts. I hope this stimulates you and furthers the dialogue around this important issue that can also help us move beyond our parochial struggles and find a re-energizing our mutual energies.

AAGT is American in its origin, global in its scope and membership, and is working towards a greater understanding of its place in the Gestalt Global Community and developing its unique contribution to Gestalt Therapy wherever it is practiced and studied.

Warmly,
Bruce A. Robertson

Please send you comments and reactions to me at:
Bruce A. Robertson - 108 E. Oak - Denton, Texas 76201
Bruboo@aol.com - PH 940-566-3200 - Fax: 940-383-4300

FROM THE EDITOR

With this issue of the AAGT Newsletter the November conference in Dallas/Fort Worth has taken shape and is gathering momentum. This is a most exciting time, when this event that has existed in ideas and dreams now has actual workshops selected and registrations coming in. This issue of the newsletter is primarily geared toward letting all of you know what's happening and inviting you to be a part of the energy that is building every day.

While that is taking place I have a bit of excitement about the developing newsletter to share. Brian O'Neill, an active AAGT member (see the poetry section) and Director of the Gestalt Institute in Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, made a virtual introduction between me and Sharon Snir, editor of the newsletter for Gestalt Australia New Zealand. She and I began by sharing newsletters and then began sharing stories, such that I've been watching with interest as she moved into a home office and shared her worries about her aging parents. She's shared my excitement over presentations I've been able to give about the human/animal connection and over our summer plans. And, finally, we've been sharing articles. In particular, in this issue is a first-person account from a new father who happens to be a practicing Gestalt therapist in Australia, and she has picked up for her newsletter an article from our last issue on Dori Middleman's Center for a Healthy World.

One other bit of excitement in my life is that in this newsletter I'll be writing as Elizabeth Revell. Alvin Revell and I got married on July 22nd. We'll see you after the honeymoon!

Elizabeth S. Revell, Ph.D.



FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT/INCOMING PRESIDENT

In the swirl and rush of conference preparation, deep in the details and keeping track-phase of getting ready, I am aware of a combination of excitement and sadness—excitement about the possibilities of this coming conference and a sense of loss of companions on the last few conference journeys. When an organization encompasses as much passion, vision and longing as ours does, and is filled with so many brilliant and difficult individuals, struggle and hurt is inevitable. As Joe Melnick wisely advised at the last community meeting, I would encourage us all to hold our hurts lightly, and stay open to the possibilities in this community. I hope that those of us who are resting right now are open to re-entering with renewed vigor and purpose. I am confident that we will find room and rhythm for the agendas we hold in both living and promoting Gestalt Therapy. We'd better. The world needs us.

On another topic: We need to do some serious fund raising so that scholarship moneys will be available for both domestic and foreign participants, and special aspects of programming are possible. Contributions to the scholarship fund from individuals are most welcome. We suggested once, and I will again, that contributing the fee from a single session is a lovely possibility. We also need people who are willing to brainstorm other ways to fund raise and the elbow grease to do so: letters to potential contributors, items of value that might be available to raffle, money to sponsor specific events, ads for the program and the newsletter, and anything else you can think of. All actual donations and contributions get sent to:

Bud Feder
198 Lorraine Ave.
Montclair, NJ 07043
Phone: 973.783.0740
Fax: 810.314.2490
Email: beefeeder@home.com

If you are interested in helping with FUNDRAISING, contact:

Carol Brockmon
7861 Spring Ave.
Elkins Park, PA 19027
Phone: 215.782.1484
Fax: 215.635.2391
Email: cbrockmon@home.com

For fundraising for SCHOLARSHIPS, contact:

Sharona Halpern
90 Waban Park
Newton, MA 02458
Phone: 617.806.1255
Fax: 617.474.1137
Email: shalpern@fdnh.org

One last thing:
PLEASE REGISTER NOW!!!!
It's cheaper for you, and we must be clear about our commitments to the center.

See you in November.
Carol Brockmon



American Airlines Conference Center

WANTED

Email Addresses Wanted

We would like to ask those of you who have email addresses to send them to us so that they can be added to our membership database. We are hoping to make increasing use of electronic mail in our organizational business. This will have the benefit of saving us a great deal in printing costs and postage, money that will then be freed up for programmatic activities.

Please send your email address to Bruce Robertson
Bruboo@aol.com

ADVERTISERS!!!

The 5th Annual AAGT Conference program and the AAGT Newsletter offer opportunities for low-cost advertisements that will be seen by our entire community.

Ads in the 2000 Conference at Dallas/Fort Worth are priced as follows:

full page

(7.5"w x 9.5 h): \$200

half page

(7.5"w x 4.74" h): \$125

1/3 page

(3.24" w x 4.75" h): \$75

Copy requirements for these ads include the following:

- * Digital files preferred (email jrdesigns@home.com for details) Must have hard copy and fonts.
- * High quality (300dpi)
- * Ads are not accepted on fax

Deadline: Ads must be received by October 1st, 2000. Payment is also required by October 1st, 2000. Make checks payable to AAGT.

Mail checks, files and hard copy to:

Bruce Robertson,
(att'n Judy Robertson)
#4 Highview Court
Denton, Texas 76205
P: 940.566.3200
F: 940.382.3260
E: bruboo@aol.com

AAGT's 5th International Gestalt Therapy Conference



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY

- 11:00-5:30 Meetings will be scheduled for the Executive Council, Board of Directors, Hosts/Hostesses (for Presenters), ECB (Experiments In Community Building) Facilitators' Training, and Process Group Facilitators' Training
- 5:30-7:00 Dinner
- 7:30-8:00 WELCOME to "Gestalt Therapy for Our Time"
Bruce Robertson, President and Carol Brockmon, President Elect
- 8:00-10:00 Plenary/Community Session #1: "Social Vision and Personal Growth: A Facilitated Interactive Introduction to AAGT Community 2000"
Includes first meeting of process groups.
- 10:15-11:00 Reception

THURSDAY

- 6:30-8:30 Breakfast (7:00 Women's Interest Group Breakfast)
- 8:45-10:45 4 or 5 Presentations/Workshops and ECB Session #1
- 11:00-1:00 Lunch (1/3 of Interest Groups Meet over Lunch)
- 1:00-3:00 4 or 5 Presentations/Workshops and ECB Session #2
- 3:15-4:45 Plenary/Community Session #2:
"Gestalt Therapy for Our Time: Social Vision and Personal Growth"
- 5:30-7:30 Dinner
- 5:00-6:30 Process Groups Session #2 (1/2 meet at this time)
- 6:30-8:00 Process Groups Session #2 (1/2 meet at this time)
- 8:15-10:00 Plenary/Community Session #3: "Networking for Social Vision and Personal Growth" (Regional Networking and Creative Problem-Solving to Enhance Personal and Professional Contact)
- 10:00-? End of Day Gathering/Check In/Feedback

FRIDAY

- 6:30-8:30 Breakfast (7:00 Conference Planning Committee 2001/2, Other Interest Group Breakfast by request)
- 8:45-10:45 Plenary/Community Session #4: "Gestalt Therapy for Our Time: Social Vision and Personal Growth"
- 11:00-1:00 Lunch (1/3 of Interest Groups Meet over Lunch)
- 12:45-2:45 4 or 5 Presentations/Workshops and ECB Session #3
- 3:00-5:00 4 or 5 Presentations/Workshops and ECB Session #4
- 5:30-7:30 Dinner
- 5:00-6:30 Process Groups Session #3 (1/2 meet at this time)
- 6:30-8:00 Process Groups Session #3 (1/2 meet at this time)
- 8:15-10:00 Plenary/Community Session #4: "Interest Group Meetings for Social Vision and Personal Growth"
- 10:00-? End of Day Gathering/Check-In/Feedback

SATURDAY

- 6:30-8:30 Breakfast (7:00 Conference Planning Committee 2001/2)
8:45-10:45 4-5 Presentations/Workshops and ECB Session #5
11:00-12:00 AAGT Board of Directors Annual Meeting
11:00-1:00 Lunch (1/3 of Interest Groups Meet over Lunch)
1:00-2:30 Process Groups Session #4
2:30-3:30 Town Meeting for Social Vision & Personal Growth
3:45-7:00 AAGT's Annual Community & Business Meeting
7:15-8:30 A Good Old Down-Home Texas Bar-B-Q
8:30-10:00 Reception Honoring Ansel Woldt followed by Having Fun Together:
Associating, Singing and Dancing

SUNDAY

- 6:30-8:30 Breakfast (7:30 New Executive Council Meeting)
8:45-10:45 Closing Plenary Session:
"Gestalt Therapy for Our Time: Social Vision & Personal Growth"
11:00-1:00 Lunch: CPC 2000 Interfaces with CPC 2001 & 2002:
"Social Vision & Personal Growth for the Next AAGT Meetings & Conferences:
Philadelphia in 2001 and Portland in 2002"

HELP WANTED FOR NOVEMBER CONFERENCE

WE NEED PUBLICITY! You can help make this conference a success by spreading the word. Here are some ways:

- Distribute brochures at conferences or gatherings that you attend or that occur in your locale. If you can use any brochures, please request them from Bruce Robertson (att'n Nancy Roesch), 940.566.3200, fax: 940.382.3260, email: bruboo@aol.com
- Inform us of such events when you can't do it yourself but think it's fertile territory.
- Contact any Gestalt institutes or training programs in your area to: announce in their newsletters, hand out brochures and encourage attendance.
- Use any personal contacts in graduate schools in psychology, psychiatry, counseling, education, social work, human service, organization and systems development, drug and alcohol treatment, bodywork, the arts etc., and see if posters could be displayed, brochures distributed, student groups spoken with.
- Have notices printed or ads carried in local professional or organizational newsletters or other publications.
- Talk it up to friends and colleagues. Send the brochure to your mailing list.
Contact person for publicity: Carol Brockmon, cbrockmon@home.com, 717.782.1484.

PROCESS GROUP LEADERS: Facilitate daily groups to create a ground of support for people attending the conference. An opportunity to contribute and learn. Contact person: Charlie Bowman, aagt1@aol.com, 317.329.5574. (Editor's Note: Please see the Process Group Leader's Application, in this issue.)

EXPERIMENTS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING: This committee is responsible for monitoring topics that emerge in community sessions each day, determining the topics for the ECB sessions and posting them. We also need experienced group facilitators. Contact person: Cynthia Cook, Cynthea3@aol.com.

FUNDRAISING AND SCHOLARSHIPS: We need to raise money so that we can help people who would not otherwise be able to attend the conference. We need to sell advertising space in the program. If you have skills and interest in this area, contact Carol Brockmon, cbrockmon@home.com, 717.782.1484. (Editor's Note: See also the letter from Sharona Halpern, Scholarship Committee Chair, in this issue.)

ADVERTISERS

Ads in the
AAGT Newsletter
are priced as follows:

full page
(7.5" w x 10" h): \$150

half page
(7.5" w x 5" h or
3.5" w x 10" h): \$85

quarter page
(3.5" w x 5" h): \$50

To advertise in the
newsletter,
please contact:

Elizabeth S. Revell,
Ph.D.
1120 Range Road
York, PA 17402

Phone: 717.840.1356
Fax: 717.840.8792
Email:
Revell@blazenet.net

REGIONAL NEWS

AAGT Regional Contact
Persons (RCPs) 2000

(Editor's Note: I have received inquiries from a number of people on how to have things such as publications and workshops listed in the newsletter. The answer is to get this information to your regional contact person, whose name appears below.)

COORDINATOR:

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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

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

On behalf of all AAGT members, the Membership Co-Chairs would like to extend our sincere thanks for your membership renewal. The names listed below are our current members - the heart and soul of AAGT.

Alan Meara	Brisbane QLD	AUSTRALIA
Maria Vanden Eynde	Heverlee	BELGIUM
Dolores Bate	VancouverBC	CANADA
Ian Greenway	Nottingham	ENGLAND
Lynda Osborne	Farnham Surrey	ENGLAND
Malcolm Parlett Knighton	Powys	ENGLAND
Gonzague Masquelier	Beauvais	FRANCE
Stefan Berzel	Mainz	GERMANY
Rosemarie Wulf	Berlin	GERMANY
Hanan Gurel	Jerusalem	ISRAEL
Anne Maclean Riccarton	Christchurch	NEW ZEALAND
Judith Dieguez-Sabucedo	A Coruna	SPAIN
Ronald Alexander	Santa Monica CA	USA
Cynthia Burnside	Santa Barbara CA	USA
Todd Butler	San Diego CA	USA
Felicia Carroll	Santa Barbara CA	USA
Cara Garcia	Culver City CA	USA
Laura Gasparrini	Santa Barbara CA	USA
Alice Gerstman	Torrance CA	USA
Benjamin Hammett	Palo Alto CA	USA
Ruth Lampert	Los Angeles CA	USA
Erv Ruhl	Fresno CA	USA
John Soper	Big Sur CA	USA
Sandra Cardoso-Zinker	Wellfleet MA	USA
Gordon Wheeler	Cambridge MA	USA
Joseph Zinker	Wellfleet MA	USA
Edwin Harris	St Louis MO	USA
Jack Aylward	Watchung NJ	USA
Nancy Bristol	Westfield NJ	USA
Maria Kirchner	Warren NJ	USA
Helen Lindsay	Millington NJ	USA
Ken Hutchinson	Silver City NM	USA
Beth Prothro	Lamy NM	USA
Joan Benevento	New York NY	USA
Alan Cohen	Scarsdale NY	USA
Sandra Lucas	New York NY	USA
Joyce Magid	Melville NY	USA
Constance Newman Cohen	Scarsdale NY	USA
Amy Pitt	Rochester NY	USA
Kay Broughton	Cleveland OH	USA
Carol Brockmon	Elkins Pk PA	USA
Eileen Joseph	Glenside PA	USA
Elizabeth Revell	York PA	USA
Alvin Revell	York PA	USA
Anne Leibig	Dungannon VA	USA
Emil Jech	Bellingham WA	USA
David Gregory Smith	Seattle WA	USA

If you have sent in your renewal and your name does not appear here, please accept our apologies and contact Bud Feder at 198 Loraine Ave., Montclair, NJ 07043 or at befeeder@home.com. We would also appreciate your assistance in personally inviting previous members not listed here, to join us again.

With sincere appreciation and thanks, Todd Butler and Sarah Toman
Membership Co-Chairs

LIST OF WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

Cynthia Cook

As of press time, here is a list of the accepted workshops for the Dallas/Fort Worth conference, and their presenters.

- The Erotic Field: A Gestalt View of Sexuality—Gordon Wheeler
- Evolution and Intersubjectivity—Arthur Roberts
- Gestalt Group Therapy with Borderline Personality Disorder—Paul Schoenberg
- How to Write for Journal Publication—Joe Melnick
- Reaching: A Developmental Perspective—Ruella Frank
- Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence—Elizabeth Palazzi
- Exploring a Middle Ground for Experimentally Crossing Boundaries—Bud Feder
- The Experience of Shame: A Gestalt Theoretical Approach—Peter Phillipson
- Id, Ego, Personality: Differentiating Aspects of Self-functioning—Cynthia Cook
- The Developing Field: Toward a Gestalt Developmental Approach—Mark McConville
- A Gestalt Approach to Dealing with Anxiety—Norman Schub
- Writing on Gender: Gestalt Perspectives, Gestalt Methods—Carol Brockmon & Iris Fodor
- Here and Now Fatherhood for Us and Our Clients—
Alvin Revell, Bruce Robertson, Joseph Dreiss and Brian O'Neill
- The Therapeutic Change Process in Interactive Gestalt Group Therapy—Jay Earley
- The Gestalt Reflecting Team—Rachel Brier
- Breathing Into Contact—Susan Gregory
- A Balancing and Juggling Act Between Strategy and Intimacy—
Penny Backman & Joe Melnick
- A Dramatic Approach to Gestalt Group Work—Sylvia Crocker
- Troubleshooting for Gestalt Two-Chair Work—Bea McKay
- The "EXPERIMENT" in Gestalt Therapy—Ansel Woldt

WORK IN PROGRESS

Jay Earley is "happy to announce the publication of *Interactive Group Therapy*, the first complete book on group therapy from a Gestalt perspective. It describes in detail a method of leading Gestalt groups that focuses on the interpersonal interactions and relationships among the group members and the experiential explorations that emerge from them."



Richard Erskine, Janet Moursund, and Rebecca Trautmann have concluded ten years of work on the methods of a relational Gestalt therapy with their new book *Beyond Empathy: A Therapy of Contact-in-Relationship* (1999, Bruner/Mazel, ISBN 0-87630-963-5). Richard includes these as several questions addressed by his book: "What is the difference between emotional attunement and confluence? How involved can a therapist be? Is there a theory of methods in Gestalt therapy?"

REGIONAL NEWS

AAGT Regional Contact
Persons (RCPs) 2000

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REGIONAL NEWS

AAGT Regional Contact
Persons (RCPs) 2000

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UNITED STATES: NORTHEAST

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New York, NY 10023
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P: 212.233.2589 (H)
E: gestalsing@aol.com

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS NEEDED!

Sharona Halpern

Our scholarship drive for the November 2000 conference in Dallas/Fort Worth is underway and we need all of the help you can give. Many of you attended the conference in New York City last year and remember the stimulating diversity of attendees. The international presence at the conference added immeasurably to the richness of our time together. It is due to contributions to our scholarship fund that we are able to help people from around the world attend AAGT conferences. Some of our colleagues who are interested in presenting their work at the upcoming conference need our help getting to Texas. In addition, we are committed to providing support to graduate students and other professionals who need help to attend the conference.

Members have asked what they can do to help the Scholarship Committee and we are grateful for your inquiries. Here are your options:

1. When you register for the conference, you can add a generous donation to the Scholarship fund.
2. If you are affiliated with a group or, institute, you can request a donation to our Scholarship fund. The group/institute will be acknowledged in our conference program.
3. If there are members of your community who are not therapists but would like to support our scholarship efforts, speak to them personally about our conference and inform them about our commitment to providing aid to those who can only attend with financial support.
4. You can volunteer to serve on the Scholarship Committee by contacting me.
5. Tax deductible donations to the scholarship fund can be mailed separately from conference registration by mailing a check marked AAGT Scholarship Fund to Bud Feder, AAGT Treasurer, at 198 Lorraine Ave., Montclair, NJ 07043.

Donations of \$25 or more will receive an AAGT mouse pad as our thank you gift.

If you have any questions about the scholarship process, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your past and continued support!

Sharona Halpern, Scholarship Committee Chair
617.906.1255
Email: shalpern@fdnh.org

REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Cynthia Cook, Chair

The 2000 Conference Program Committee has designed an exciting and innovative interweaving of workshops and community plenary sessions for our November conference. Focusing on our theme of "Social Vision and Personal Growth," our activities over the four days are designed to support professional, personal and community development. In response to membership feedback we are including more orientation to AAGT and our process; scheduling daily hour and a half meetings of process groups; continuing the "Experiments in Community Building" track, as a structure for emerging issues; and still offering five sessions of quality workshops. There will be an evening focused on regional networking, and time for interest groups to meet. In the interplay of these various structures the work of the community will occur, weaving back into the community plenary sessions, culminating in the business meeting of the organization on Saturday afternoon. Saturday evening we will gather for an on-site Texas barbecue, followed by a reception honoring Ansel Woldt and then our traditional dance.

The comfortable and attractive setting includes a Mission-style lodge, with groupings of couches and chairs conducive to informal gatherings. Our large meeting room opens directly onto the grounds, which include a heated pool, tennis court, jogging path, etc. Tables with umbrellas are available for outdoor lunches. We also have use of the gym, and an on-site tavern. At the Conference Planning Committee meeting held at the site, we were all impressed with the quality of services (certainly comparable to any hotel we have met in) and the feeling

of the place, which one member described as "spa-like." The food was delicious and various, with a salad bar and vegetarian entrée as well as flavored coffee and half a dozen choices of dessert.

Another innovation this year is something we are calling the Community Networking Room—a room off of our large meeting room where we will have information about AAGT, including interest groups, the regions, conference planning, and other organizational activities. This will also be an area where people may put up poster presentations about work they are doing, a great book they have read or an issue they want to alert people to—whatever is of interest or concern. There will also be a board entitled "This Is My Life," for postings of a more personal nature, for connection, networking and support. (Thanks to Nancy Woldt for the great title). This is another way to support our community, and utilize our once-a-year gathering to build relationships that will support us throughout the year.

All these elements add up to an opportunity to deepen our grounding in Gestalt therapy and with one another; to balance our needs for intellectual stimulation and emotional connection, and to nourish our bodies and spirits with good food, good work and good play. Please join us for what promises to be a renewing experience for our community.

ON BEING A FATHER: REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST 10 WEEKS

Noel MacDonald

Ten weeks ago I had the intense privilege of becoming a first time father to our baby girl called Rose. I was encouraged to write about my experience after telling a close friend of mine about the crazy spectrum of both pleasurable and madness inducing feelings I was having about becoming, and being, a father. The last ten weeks have thrown me into the most meaningful, challenging and significant times of my 31 year old life on Earth. I feel like I have been on a stretching rack with my sense of self being pulled in opposite directions, while at the very same time being soothed by beautiful music. In the last ten weeks I have been confronted and blessed with experiences that I could only joke or intellectualize about before. For instance, never did I imagine how much capacity I had for love. When I look at Rose's shiny almond eyes and red smiling mouth, I often feel so filled with joy and melting love that my heart is about to burst. The opportunity to hold Rose in my arms while she is going to sleep is perhaps one of the most peaceful and special feelings I have ever felt. Her innocence and purity blows me away. Words often seem inadequate to describe these moments of sheer peace. Sometimes when I look into her eyes I feel like I'm looking into something far greater than me, Rose and the universe combined. Am I looking directly into the greatness and the mystery of life? These have been wonderful experiences for me. However, fatherhood hasn't all been a bed of roses.

The other day my Dad rang up and asked if I had been "seeing the world through Rose coloured glasses." I was amused by his comment and realized how true it was. If I'm a planet, then Rose is definitely one big gi-normous sun with a huge magnetic pull. Never did I know how much power a little baby has to suck your attention towards them, especially if they have colic. Rose has plenty of it, and as a result has for many evenings needed us to rock, cradle and jiggle her much of the night before she crashes out at around 11 PM. Many evenings she has cried and grizzled on and off for hours, not to mention during the early hours of the morning. Me and my Partner Meg have spent these nights in tag team Rose jiggling shifts, in between trying to cook dinner, do the dishes, water the garden, answer phone calls. Such nights have at times become for me a major test in patience, tolerance and surrender. Much to the dismay of my self-image, lately I have noticed myself thinking that my life is on a slippery slope towards a nightmare of boring routines and endless mundane tasks. Is the rest of my life outside of work destined towards such a fate? What ever happened to my needs, my freedom, going to Brunswick Street for café latte's, and my old happy-go-lucky, I-can-do-what-I-want-when-I-want-it-self?

Two weeks ago I discovered myself falling into a rather heavy mood of depression and emptiness. I recall feeling incredibly uninteresting, boring and grumpy. The meaning of life felt

REGIONAL NEWS

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AAGT WEB



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as if it had drained out of my feet. I didn't really know why I was feeling this way at the time, and eventually, after giving myself permission to be all this, the mood went. Upon reflection, I think that some of my recent depression has been about letting go of and grieving the old, once cherished parts of myself (especially the Peter pan part of me) and coming to grips with the responsibility of parenthood. I feel like the last 10 weeks has been a crash course in ego annihilation, growing up and in selflessness—and it's only 10 weeks!!!! Guess who is the teacher of the course? Let me explain.

Over the last number of weeks I have noticed how much my mind wanders off from the task of holding or jiggling Rose, especially in the evenings when she is sometimes unsettled. I notice myself fantasizing about what book I want to read next, or what I'm going to do after I put Rose down, or on the weekend. In fact, Rose has confronted me with how narcissistic I am, and how much time I spend planning and thinking about my own needs. However, like a Zen teacher that whacks their students with bamboo when they drift off, Rose constantly draws me back into the here and now, asking me to let go of my plans, my urgency and desires for something more or different. She is more effective in teaching me to be in the moment than any other meditation retreat I have ever experienced! Not only this, but it seems like she is slowly teaching me to become more self-less, patient, spontaneous and capable of surrendering. These are all skills that before fatherhood I was rather rusty at. I got it the wrong way around in terms of who's the teacher! I have noticed lately that I have been able to spend more time just enjoying being with Rose and Meg, or in other contexts, not expecting anything other than what I am being now. What a joy it is to not be thinking about the next moment. Meg has also been a great role model in showing me how to surrender to Rose's rhythm, and to see the beauty in the ordinary, in the simple pleasures in life.

As a son who is only just beginning to get to know his own father, I know how important it is to be available and present to both Rose and my partner Meg. To me Fatherhood is a privilege, and a special opportunity to partake in helping another human being grow up into a happy, healthy person. As I write about my own personal joys and struggles in learning to be a father, I imagine that some of what I write resonates with other fathers as well. A large part of what has supported me to become a father has been the opportunity to talk about all my fears, hopes and shadows, and in a sense have them normalized. Luckily, my partner Meg and other close friends have not judged me for freaking out, wanting to run away, or for feeling all the other human emotions that arise in the process of becoming and then being a father.

The other thing that has supported me in being a father has been my own search for meaning and purpose. I personally believe that Fatherhood and parenthood doesn't automatically provide us with a new sense of purpose or meaning, but rather urges us to create it, whether it be from a spiritual, transpersonal or philosophical perspective. It has also been a challenge to discover my own unique sense of fatherhood that includes and transcends the many contradictory social expectations about fatherhood that I have received. I don't think I could have survived so far without finding a greater purpose to the role of father, which on many levels is so fundamentally challenging to our more common pleasure seeking and individualistic ways of functioning.

During most moments, fatherhood (and parenthood) seems to me like a crucible to help cultivate my human potential and humble me enough to see and hopefully come to appreciate the many flavours and textures of my own, and other's, humanity. At other moments, it throws me into an empty void and I have to swim my way out, again with a new lesson to be learnt.

AAGT TERMS OF OFFICE

Ansel Woldt, Association Archivist

Some of our members have inquired recently about the terms of office on the Executive Council (EC) and on the Board of Directors. The EC recommended including them in this copy of the Newsletter and others on occasion so that you will know which offices and board positions are available this year and in the coming years. As stated in our Constitution & By-Laws,

"In order to maintain optimal levels of awareness, organizational interaction and vital contact, the terms of office on the Executive Council and Board of Directors shall be for varied terms (usually 1 to 3 years) with terms of office being as follows:"

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (Officers of the Association)

President - 2 year term of office

Elected to Vice-President/President-Elect in odd-numbered years and continues on as President in even-numbered year.

Vice-President/Past-President - 1 year term of office

Continues after Presidency as Vice-President throughout the even-numbered year.

Vice-President/President-Elect - 1 year term of office

Elected in odd-numbered years beginning 1993 -

Election due in 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, etc.

Secretary - 2 year term of office

Elected in even-numbered years beginning 1992 -

Election due in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, etc.

Treasurer - 2 year term of office

Elected in even-numbered years beginning in 1992 -

Election due in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, etc.

RCP (Regional Contact Persons) Coordinator - 2 year term of office

Elected in odd-numbered years beginning in 1997 -

Election due in 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, etc.

Coordinator of Interest Groups - 3 year term of office

Originally appointed in 1992 -

Appointment due in 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, etc.

Association Archivist - 3 year term of office

Originally appointed in 1994 -

Appointment due in 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, etc.

Membership Chairperson - 3 year term of office

Originally appointed in 1995 -

Appointment due in 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013, etc.

Publications Editor - 3 year term of office

Originally appointed in 1993 -

Appointment due in 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, etc.

Continuing Education Officer - 3 year term of office

Originally appointed in 1998 -

Appointment due in 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010, etc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regional Contact Persons - 1 year term on Board

Selected by Regional Members and may be re-appointed to the Board

Board Members at Large - 1 year term on Board

Selected or Volunteers approved at Annual Meeting and may be re-appointed to the Board

Interest Group Chairpersons - variable term on Board

Selected by each Interest Group and length of office is determined by Interest Group

Treasurer's Report

Gail Feinstein recently shifted the treasurer's mantle to me. Although this was a little earlier than planned, any correspondence with the treasurer is now to be sent my way. I thought it would be useful and of interest to members to have a brief update on our finances in the newsletter, so I will periodically provide such information.

A treasurer's report for 1999 has been completed, along with filing Form 1099 to IRS, as required. Any member wishing a copy of either, let me know. The most significant items of the '99 report are:

Starting balance (1/1/99)

\$40,181

Ending balance (12/31/99)

\$11,345

Income was \$81,480, mostly from the conference (\$52,941), the rest from dues. Expenses were \$110,782, again mostly for the conference (\$100,782).

At present our account stands at about \$13,000

Any comments are welcome.

Bud Feder, Treasurer

198 Lorraine Ave

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Regional News

CANADA

Bea Mackay
Regional Contact
Person

The trainer of the
Gestalt Training
Institute asked me to
let AAGT know of their
address change:

Gestalt Training
Institute,
2360 Waterloo Street
VANCOUVER, BC V6R
4M6

Phone: 604.737.7099
Fax: 604.733.9123

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE AND WRITERS' CONFERENCE

Dear Friends in the Southwest Region,

We are very pleased to announce that this year we will be having our first Writers' Conference, October 19 and 20, 2000 in connection with the Southwest Regional Conference, October 20-22, 2000 in San Diego, California. The Writers' Conference is designed to encourage and support writing and publication in the field of Gestalt therapy and other applied areas such as education, organizational development, intimate systems, etc. Other writers' conferences have been held primarily on the East Coast for a number of years. We hope that this conference will inspire many in our region to put their ideas to paper, video, and other media for consultation and support by others who are doing the same. The two days will be interesting and inspiring work followed by relaxing evenings discussing the ideas of the day with one another. This conference is open to anyone interested in the writing process.

Joe Melnick, Editor of the Gestalt Review, will facilitate the two-day conference, with the assistance of Felicia Carroll. Her enthusiasm for this process led her to volunteer to organize this first Southwest Writers' Conference. Joe Melnick will also discuss with attendees the stages of publication and the review/selection process for the Gestalt Review and other journals. Associate Editors and Editors of the Gestalt Review editorial board will also be in attendance.

Each person who attends is asked to prepare a summary proposal which will be distributed to other attendees for their preview prior to the conference. (You will be notified of those who have registered so that you can mail to your proposal to each person.) Each person will have an opportunity to present his/her project to the group for discussion and suggestions. The format is based on the value of positive, constructive feedback. Projects are to be submitted no later than September 11, 2000 along with your registration to:

Felicia Carroll
106 W. Mission Street
Santa Barbara, Ca 93101
Phone: 805.563.0076
Fax: 805.563.9045
Email: feliciac@gateway.net

Attendees of this initial conference are also asked to make a voluntary contribution of at least \$10.00 toward the food and travel expenses of Joe Melnick. He is volunteering his time and providing his own transportation. Todd Butler is providing him with lodging. Please include your contribution made payable to Felicia Carroll along with your submitted proposal.

The Southwest Regional Conference is a meeting comprised of lively discussion groups (on topics decided by the group), time to associate at meals arranged at local restaurants and at the home of the convener, Todd Butler, and time to explore the San Diego area and meet with new and old friends. Please come and join us for this warm and stimulating meeting.

Registration for the Southwest Regional Conference is a separate registration from the Writers' Conference. Please contact Todd Butler to register and for details of local hotels:

Todd Butler	Tel: (619) 523 6007
620 Albion St.	Fax: (619) 222 6137
San Diego, CA 92106	e-mail: Todd-Butler@email.msn.com
Phone: 619.523.6007	
Fax: 619.222.6137	
Email: Todd-Butler@email.msn.com	

Please note that you are welcome to join either or both conferences.

NEWS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

Judy Graham, Regional Contact Person

1. AAGT's Study Group is looking for new members (currently four). We meet monthly for two hours discussing books and articles and their application to our work. Alternating between member's homes we usually share a meal before or after the discussion. Stimulating and pleasant.

2. Dinner and gathering for AAGT and GAUK (Gestalt Association UK) at Le Mercury Restaurant (Corner Almeida St. and Upper St) Islington, North London on 21 June at 8 PM.

3. Judy Graham is the organiser of the Festival of Humanistic Psychology for AHPP. The influence of Gestalt is prominent. Judy is offering a Gestalt Bodywork workshop on 17 June.

Judy is promoting "soirees" throughout the country for practitioners to meet each other and discuss ideas and works in progress. The details of the London soiree MAKING A DIFFERENCE follow. We are experimenting with a model to use our therapeutic skills to make an impact in a wider social change context.

Judy Graham is hosting a London Soiree (part of the Festival of Humanistic Psychology) presenting a work in progress with another Gestaltist, Mark Thomas. Workshop title: Making a Difference: a process of working on issues that you know are wrong and you still hold back: a structure to assist "armchair radicals" move from CAN'T CAN; INACTIONACTION; INDIFFERENCE.....DIFFERENCE. We have been developing this process over the past year with the vision of using our therapeutic skills and experience to make an impact in a wider social change context. Bring along an issue that you find uneasy to ignore, something causing you discomfort which you are part of/and cannot separate from completely. Something that is unfair, unjust, stupid, ignorant, evil, in close proximity, matters to you. WORK FIRST, PLAY LATER. 2 July at Rosemary Branch pub, Shepperton Road, Islington. 4-6 PM workshop; 6-8 bring food to share; cash bar. 0207 354 2240."

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Women have always been curious
about sexual prowess,
about mate quality,
about the spermability of the male.

Now, courtesy of our British cousins,
no longer do we gather data
on the beach
sneaking glances
at men's bathing suits.
Nor do we rush to test tubes spurting sperm count.
The cat is out of the bag, so to speak--

Men with the greatest sperm mobility
can be measured
by a slight of hand.
Salacious British statistics in Lancet
report that men whose ring fingers
are longer than their index fingers
have elevated levels of testosterone.
Male sexability can be charted
with a minuscule 5% of error.

Boys who played shower games,
or squirt together in the snow,

need only raise their hands.
School teachers who grant bathroom privileges
measure the length of fingers
and grasp more than they ever imagined.

Think of the commercial implications.
The glove industry will sell
see-through gloves for men
charge for that little extra.
Psychometrics that used to deal with intelligence
or more recently, emotional intelligence,
will take second place on talk shows
to dozens of books on finger food.
Men who spent thousands of dollars,
learning how to express feelings
need only raise a hand.

This is new age sex.
No more personal ads
No more computer dating
No more psychic advice.
To pick a sexy fellow
look above the belt---
We are all in the hands of history.

Jan Ruckert

MOMENTS

By Brian O'Neill

Little effort
to move through time
in the old dusty building
with sunlight everywhere
even in the little corners
while outside
the breeze smells of the ocean
confirming the summer

The sunlight is forever
as he watches the crumbled brickwork
The dusty floor boards warm with pure light
The quiet buzz of a fly which moves away

Here in this silent sunlit building
there is an eternity of being
sunlight and decay
warm wooden floor
dusty light from footsteps now settling
as he stands still
he hears
and feels
this eternity

The people and noise and life have gone
Yet the echoes remain
he stands still and listens
to the faint hint of past life echoes
still settling
like the dust from his footsteps.

The light is strong here
with full midday intensity
not the cold shadows of the afternoon
which will come eventually with chill and damp
Here is heat and light and power
so that the building and dust and memories
Are fully alive.

He sense this aliveness and is afraid
to move
In case he loses the intensity
of life
in this empty building.

The heat is strong and still
Little paint flakes on the window sill
move and expand
now free from the wood
ready for a breeze
to lift them away
All is here
Every moment in time

He hears the drone of an aeroplane
And senses that day
During the war years
Hot like today
When this ward was silent with the midday heat
As the white paint glistens new on the window sills
and a tiny gust of air gently moves
the white lace curtains
People are resting in their beds
the nurses are elsewhere.
Here in this room
life is stilled in the heat
emphasising our eternity

The plane noise fades
and all he can hear is the heat
and sunlight
a vibrant shimmering intensity
which opens to him
the experience of a purer life
without reference to space and time.

A car comes
over gravel
and he is back
to movement
and time
and reality.
He seems to breathe again
and think again
and live the normal life
of worry and talk and people

As the car door closes
he prepares to meet and greet
talk talk talk
and lose the moment
An unusual grief.

The foot steps on wooden boards
are female
intruding on his private world
of sunbeams and dust and paint flakes
Midday life captured in light.

She enters with a pause
that allows for the stillness
of dust shifting in sunlight
a beam of whiteness
warms her face
as she closes her eyes
for a moment
and hears the eternity
in this sacred experience.

In the moment of first glance
the demand for normality
is to talk through this moment
the eyes seem too strong
the other life is too much
to be here together.
The life of the other is reflected
in unbearable self conscious awareness
Where can we go next
lips must not touch
eyes must not glance
life must not meet life
in such a moment of light and heat
where small beads of sweat
moisten humanity
and lips part
with a smell of perfume.

The moment survives
life is expanding
a mysterious energy
of life, light and moment
hurting each heart
in a union
that was never apart.
Here in this eternity
the truth permeates
as a single being
in loving wisdom
looks at each other.

APPLICATION FOR PROCESS GROUP LEADER

(Please type or print)

■ Name:

■ Address:

■ Telephone:

■ Fax:

■ E-mail:

■ Institute Affiliation (if any):

■ Previous training in Gestalt Therapy, including when, how long with whom:

■ Previous training and experience with groups:

■ I have a preference to work as a co-leader with:

■ I am applying for:

___ Position as a New or Less Experienced group leader to co-lead a Process Group with an experienced group leader

___ Position as an Experienced group leader to take primary responsibility for a Process Group and co-lead with a new or less experienced group leader.

■ Any additional information you believe is relevant to this position:

Please send your application by email, fax, or regular mail to:

Charlie Bowman
9292 N Meridian #311
Indianapolis, IN 46260
Phone: 317.329.5574
Fax: 317.896.2299
Email: aagt1@aol.com



Gestalt! (<http://www.g-g.org/gej>)
is an electronic journal
with full-text articles.

It provides theoretical statements
about Gestalt therapy, profiles of
the people applying Gestalt principles,
news items, book reviews, and
various announcements regarding
events in the field.

Gestalt! transcends regional associations, literary traditions and publishing customs. In the process, it seeks to make new friends for Gestalt therapy and to show its relevance for a new generation in a technologically sophisticated world. Issues examine Gestalt in Australia, South America, the AAGT, the EAGT, Ethics and Training Practices, Dialogue, Gestalt Therapy in Groups, and Family Therapy.

Contributors include Les Greenberg, Gordon Wheeler, Gary Yontef, Lynne Jacobs, Bud Feder, Serge Ginger, Maya Brand, Sylvia Crocker, Jon Frew, Brian O'Neill, Jay Levine, Morgan Goodlander, Selma Ciornai, Lars Berg, Yaro Starak, Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb, Anne MacClean, Sylvia Korotky, Rudolf Jarosewitsch, Lilian Meyer Frazao, Marcela Miguens, Alejandro Spangenberg.

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Association for the Advancement
of Gestalt Therapy

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GESTALT THERAPY

AAGT

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