

AAGT

an international community

aagt.org

Conference Issue

2008 MAY



Borders and Bridges: Differentiation in Contact
Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy
An International Community (AAGT-AIC)
9th International Conference for Gestalt Therapy
Manchester, England * July 23-27, 2008



General Information
<http://www.aagt-manchester08.org/info.html>

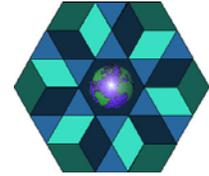
What else to do in Manchester ?

<http://www.aagt-manchester08.org/venue.html>

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Presidential Message

by *Peter Philippon*

It seems strange for me to realise that I am coming towards the end of my time as AAGT President, but, looking back as well as forward, what an interesting and fruitful time it is for me and for our community. We are making new contacts in many different parts of the world, with new Regional Contact People (RCPs) in the Philippines (hello, Emmanuel Hernani), Australia (hello, Yaro Starak) and Germany (hello, Stephan Hahn and Isabel Bommer).

We are having our first full conference in Europe this summer in my home city of Manchester UK, and there has been wide interest from many countries, and from new people and long-term friends. I told people about AAGT and the conference at the European Association for Gestalt Therapy conference in Athens last year, and many people have told me they intend to come. THE CONFERENCE IS BOOKING UP FAST, AND PLACES ARE LIMITED! So get booking, and don't forget to renew your membership (which gives you a cheaper conference fee) and donate to our Scholarship Fund. I want to thank Sarah Fallon, the conference convenor, and Philip Brownell and Mae Tang the Program Planning Committee co-chairs for all your work.

As we spread to new regions, we are having to look at several things as an organisation and a community. First of all, how do we communicate with each other and keep a sense of the whole? We have this Newsletter that Marcy Stern is once again producing for us. Please support this, and send information about what you are doing where you are. Secondly we have the Members e-mail list. Again, please use this as a quick and easy way to talk to the community. Thirdly, we have a working party on communications and decision making in AAGT, chaired by our President-Elect (and soon to be President!) Dan Bloom. They have already produced some proposals which were accepted at our 2007 Annual Meeting in Berkeley, California, and there will be more to consider in Manchester. Fourthly, we have the possibility of using more multi-media links: podcasts, blogs etc. to bring together interesting voices who do not often dialogue with each other as they live a long way from each other.

There will be positions up for election at the Annual Meeting in Manchester, most notably for a new President-Elect who will take over from Dan as President at the 2010 conference in Philadelphia (information will be available in Manchester). Please consider standing for positions. I think it would be great to actually have enough people standing to have elections and debate how we develop in the elections. If you want to ask me anything about these positions, I would be happy to talk to you.

I want to thank Tine van Wijk and Marilyn Miles who have been chair and deputy for the RCP group for a long time and are standing down. The RCP committee has become, with their backing, an important part of the development of AAGT, and indeed of our communications. I want to acknowledge all their hard work. It is this quiet 'backroom' organising that keeps us functioning. I want to thank our ex-President Brian O'Neill for agreeing to take over the chairing of this committee.

And finally I want to thank the AAGT Board which has supported me and the organisation all along the way. You are a great group of people!

The President-Elect Looks Forward

by *Dan Bloom*

In July I will become the ninth president of AAGT, an international community. I follow Peter Philippon, whose column in this Newsletter describes AAGT now. I want to think about our future.

Our achievements are something all of us experience. Our organization is soundly grounded as a mature, truly multi-national association, with a richly diverse membership that develops gestalt therapy together in harmony. Continuing with one successful conference after another, *Manchester 08, Borders and Bridges*-- perhaps the most cosmopolitan of all of our gatherings-- will hold this moment of our achievement.

Nearly 250 of us will be gathering in Manchester, filling our venue to its capacity. We will be coming together in one event achieving our name's purposes --to "associate" with one another as a community to "advance" gestalt therapy. From the energy I can feel as we build up to this event, and from the excitement I can feel when I read the program details, now on our web site, I know this will be a wonderful conference.

July 2008 will come, and it will go. Conference registrants will have their group contact and will disperse to the four corners of the globe, each person taking home different experiences.

Let us imagine what might come after Manchester.

Our organization is not just those of us attending our conferences. Our associating is not limited to the face-to-face meetings at these large biennial conferences, or even at the smaller regional conferences or annual meetings.

And we are not just our officers, discussing AAGT business at our monthly board conference calls. AAGT is not whoever is active at the "top" of the organization -- the named, visible leaders. It is you --all of us.

We are you, the membership. We are working in communities, in local settings, practicing versions of gestalt therapy in settings everywhere-- teaching, training, learning, doing--in schools, clinics, institutes, hospitals, organizations, agencies--public and private-- or in private practices.

The challenge immediately before us is how to tap into this, our community's vitality-- right now and continuously. That is, for us to draw all this into the on going associating of AAGT.

One answer is simple, but maybe not easy. You are reading it right now. It is to enhance our communication. Communication can be the way individual members become visible. When each of you speaks up and is heard, you emerge and join the active world of AAGT--no matter what you say, no matter how you say it. So long as you are heard. Through communication, individual members emerge into and enable our community; and give a chance for our community to reflect back its support so that each of us can develop. And when each of us develops, we all advance gestalt therapy.

This Newsletter is a medium for communication. It is a forum for your voices. Glance through it and consider how you might add to it. We have reserved whole sections for news from our regions. Our regions are where AAGT functions. It is where we are alive. It is where members can talk to one another. Some of our regions have successful regional conferences; the organization supports this. This is a powerful way for communication and community within AAGT to develop further.

We are planning to broaden the functioning of our Internet presence. For many of us with access to computers, the Internet offers a simple, immediate way to exchange ideas and participate in a virtual community. We are exploring creative ways to develop our web site, for example with multi-media functions, live-chats, and so on. And we are thinking of ways to make our Members Discussion List more inviting to all of you.

These are only beginning ideas. Let us know what you think, and add your own.

I hope I've given you some sense of my vision. It is a vision that will always be changing as it joins yours through the new styles of communication we will create together.

Letter from the Editor

by *Marcy Stern*

Pinch me! It's so good to be back. Yes, after a long absence, the AAGT newsletter is happening again. This time, we have a committee of more than one! I am revitalized and I'm in good company. My fingertips come with excitement and with delight—oh it's fun dancing on the keyboard! We have not been able to communicate with each other very well (and here we are, a bunch of AAGTers!) without the newsletter. We've tried blogging and we've spent hours talking. I bet most of you didn't even know about all of that. And in the end, the newsletter just seems to work. If you are new to AAGT, please know that we are excited that you are here and we invite you to be in contact and to share your experiences with each other through the lifeblood that we call AAGT, through our newsletter.

Much of AAGT's information is available on our website, so the newsletter is reserved for information-sharing and for personal sharings. Please send me your contributions— I will do my best to get your inspired work into all of our hands. As the conference approaches, I can't remind you enough to keep the newsletter in mind for your sharings. Write things down, send them to me, share, share, share.

Marcy Stern

~ Marcy ~

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Borders and Bridges: Manchester Here We Come!

by *Charlie Bowman*

The excitement is building as AAGT bridges the pond to the UK! What better place than Manchester to launch our first full conference in Europe! Inviting, original, edgy, happening, different: spend any time in Manchester and you'll soon see it's a place like no other. This free-spirited city demands your attention with a warm, no-nonsense welcome and a liberating open-mindedness that challenges you to take part. Bring us your ideas, your energy and your attitude and you'll fit right in – in AAGT and in the unique city of Manchester.

Manchester is a dramatic mix of old and new. The futuristic design and innovative shapes of its contemporary architecture sit side by side with the spires and grinning gargoyles of its proud past. Manchester was the trail-blazing spirit behind the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, which led the world into the modern industrial era. Transport yourself back in time with the fascinating legacy of a period that changed the way we live.

Manchester is one of the world's most innovative, original and exciting places for both making music and going out to listen to it. Here you can have it all: follow in the footsteps of Morrissey, look out for the next Happy Mondays or Oasis, enjoy world-class classical performances, or club it like there's no tomorrow. Don't miss the Manchester Jazz Festival July 18-26 – during our conference! Over 50 bands will perform cutting-edge music over 9 days!

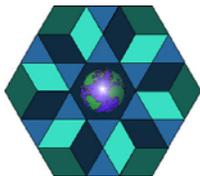
The people of Manchester have an attitude to life and a way of doing things all their own, an easy fit for AAGT! Check out these web links for more information on Manchester, travel, the Thistle Hotel and the Jazz Festival...

<http://www.manchester.gov.uk/visitorcentre>

<http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/web.nsf>

<http://manchesterjazz.com>

<http://www.thistlehotels.com>



SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

THE AAGT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

For the Manchester conference, the fund has so far made 12 grants totaling about \$12,000 US (about 6052 GBP; about 7662 EUR). Happily, we have so far raised about that amount of money, so those grants are covered. However, we still need another \$2500 USD (etc...you make the calculations) to provide grants to an additional four applicants whom we have not yet been able to respond favorably to. If you haven't yet donated, please do so, either directly to our administrator Silvie (60 Waller Ave, White Plains, NY 10605 USA) or online via the conference registration form (just leave all the other payment lines blank).

Grants this year have so far been made to persons from the following countries: The USA, The UK, The Philippines, N. Ireland, Slovenia and Australia. This is the most money we have ever raised and granted...a new record in that regard. This has been made possible by donations made during the registration process; through special extra donations by very generous persons; and mainly though funds raised by members who have run events (workshops, etc.) and donated all or part of the proceeds to the fund. We thank all who have participated in this process and at the conference will acknowledge and thank all contributors in several ways, and later in a subsequent newsletter we will publish the names of all who have made this possible.

For now, a general thanks from The AAGT Scholarship Fund Committee which is so pleased because we know that this fund has contributed greatly to the experience and spirit of AAGT.

The Committee:

Jon Blend
 Jenny Edwards, Co-chair
 Bud Feder, Co-chair
 Razi Ghaemmagham-Farahani
 Marilyn Myles

Scholarship Fund Auction

Manchester Scholarship Fund Auction Sure To Be A Hit

-from the offices of the AAGT Scholarship Fund

Bring your article, artifact and ardor to Manchester and be a part of the AAGT Scholarship Fund Auction. Yes, back by popular demand, the Auction will be held immediately following Dinner on Saturday night. Charlie Bowman will continue as the completely inept but occasionally humorous auctioneer for yet another conference. According to Bowman, "This year's auction promises to be the most professional thus far. I have even surfed the net and read a page about how to be an auctioneer!" This year's program includes a guest auctioneer and several hawkers that will be sure to get the crowd juiced-up and ready to outbid their Gestalt comrades in pure fits of here-and-now purchasing compulsivity.

His enthusiasm was apparent during the interview, but he readily acknowledged needing interesting donations for the scholarship fund to make for a lively, entertaining evening. "Items related to the Gestalt founding Fathers and Mothers are always good, as are art and craft items created by the membership," said Bowman. He continued, "Books can be tedious unless there's something special about them, but we're not picky - everything that's donated is auctioned, the donor is recognized, and 100% of the proceeds goes directly into the scholarship fund. Don't forget that services and discounts can also be considered!"

Please bring your donations on Saturday night and join the fun!

Thank-you for donating to the AAGT Scholarship Fund!



Process Group Facilitators

by *Jack Aylward and Bud Feder*

One of the most memorable aspects of AAGT conferences for many participants is the process group experience. This year we will need about 30 process group facilitators (PGF's). Before volunteering, know that the commitment includes a 2-hour training and orienting session* on Wednesday afternoon July 23rd, as well as two check-in meetings during the conference.

To apply, contact Jack Aylward (JackatPCC@aol.com) as soon as possible. Persons who have done this before are welcome back and newcomers are invited. Those a little uncertain about handling the task will be paired with experienced facilitators. Persons wishing to co-lead with a particular other person, please let us know so we can plan accordingly. Ditto, those wishing to facilitate alone. The pay isn't great, yet the other rewards are enormous.

Thank you,

Jack Aylward & Bud Feder—Process Group Coordinators

* some exceptions may be made

Running AAGT: Who's On the Board, and How to Follow What They Are Doing: After All, It's Everyone's Business

Executive Council

President: Peter Philippson: president@aagt.org

Vice President: Daniel Bloom: dan@djbloom.com

Secretary: Ann Bowman: bowmanca@aol.com

Treasurer: Peter Cole: peterhayscole@hotmail.com

Continuing Education Officer: Ansel Woldt: nanselw@aol.com

Membership & Publicity Chairs: Robert de Vos: r.devos@vivium.nl

Brian O'Neill: boneill@uow.edu.au

Organizational Representatives: Bud Feder: bfeder@comcast.net

Morgan Goodlander: Morgan@Gestaltinstitute.com

Interest Group Coordinator: Jack Aylward: JackatPCC@aol.com

e-Newsletter editor: Marcy Stern: imawareru@comcast.net

Information Technology Officer (IT): Phil Brownell: philbrownell@logic.bm

RCP at Large: Susan Gregory: GestaltSing@aol.com

RCP Representatives: Marilyn Myles: mylestherapy@comcast.net

Tine van Wijk: dewalvis@xs4all.nl

AAGT Board Minutes Now Online

The AAGT Board Minutes can now be viewed online on our web site: www.aagt.org. From the home page, click on the "About AAGT" link, then go to the AAGT Executive Council and the link for the minutes is located near the top of that page. The minutes from each meeting will be added monthly. If you do not have Internet access and would like to receive a "hard copy" of the notes, please notify Ann Bowman, AAGT Board Secretary at 317-843-0717 opt. 2.

Contribution from a Member.....

Elderpower in the AAGT by *Tine van Wijk*

Life is Difficult

Is it? Is life difficult? For me or also for you? Once I accept that life is difficult, it will become easier, I read in an email message I received today. Once I surrender and accept that for example connecting with the AAGT is not simple (for me ?), I can relax. I dream of connecting with other members by writing and the only thing I can do, is write and wait for responses. I dream of creating within the AAGT a place and a space, where we can communicate beyond doing. There are so many members busy with organizing in the AAGT. As I was one of them I know how important and how inspiring it is to belong to this group of committed people who take care of the ongoing AAGT process, day in and day out. I know as so many of us know what it means to open your email and receive ninety or more AAGT messages spread over three or more lists concerning conferences or other happenings. The number always increases when there is a human crisis, as of course is bound to happen several times in a process like this. I have never ever in any community seen so much patience from and for people who are anxious, angry, hurt, sad. It warmed my heart. Really beautiful. Of course it was also quite painful often.

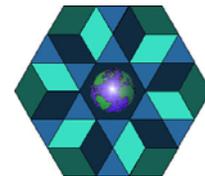
From human doing to human being

But in the end the message was and is: the AAGT show must go on. True! And I decided that for me personally it would be good to step out of the big show, step out of the limelight and into a more intimate place where not the goal is number 1, but I am and you are. My dream is that members who also give and gave so much Do power to the AAGT and are also longing to use there Be power more connect and form a group (in Manchester?). In this group it will be about what I call Elderpower, although you don't have to be old in years to join. Some thoughts I have might inspire you to write about your own experiences and wisdom:

Elderpower is

Elderpower is to continue even when things are difficult
 Elderpower is more modest than the power of youth
 Elderpower knows about loss, humiliations, betrayals and mistrust
 Elderpower knows how relative fame, glamour and stardom can be
 Elderpower knows because it has grown of adverse wind
 that forces you to pedal harder to go forward (Dutch image)
 Elderpower knows about willing
 Elderpower is Be power that does not fade away like muscular strength
 but on the contrary becomes stronger and stronger by the years.
 Elderpower is creative and has the strength of a tree
 Elderpower is Masculine and Feminine
 Elderpower is taking money seriously Elderpower is practicing patience
 Elderpower is taking responsibility
 Elderpower is to do your work day in and day out
 Elderpower is not afraid of losing
 Elderpower is knowing the world is bigger than right or wrong
 Elderpower is to be open for whatever is new
 Elderpower is to accept competition
 Elderpower is paying the rent or the mortgage
 Elderpower is spontaneity and humour
 Elderpower is modest and subtle

Tine van Wijk
 Amsterdam, April 21, 2008



REGIONAL NEWS

We WELCOME news from members in each region! Contact your regional contact person, or send your information directly to this Newsletter: imawareru@comcast.net

- Donna Cotzen, Northeast USA: DJCotzen@aol.com
- Isabel Frederickson, Southwest USA: FREDDY9282@aol.com
- Irwin (Irv) Gadol, Southwest USA: irwingad@airmail.net
- Judith Graham United Kingdom juqrfrog@dircon.co.uk
- Bea Mackay, Canada: bea@drbeamackay.com
- Anne Teachworth, Southeast USA: ateach@aol.com
- Marilyn Myles, Midwest USA: mylestherapy@comcast.net
- Carol Swanson, Northwest USA: DakotaSue@earthlink.net
- Tine van Wijk, Holland: dewalvis@xs4all.nl
- Jon Blend, United Kingdom: JWEBIwend@aol.com
- Remi Marents, Norway: remi.marents@existenz.no
- Jenny O'Neill, Australia/New Zealand: Jenadelaide@bigpond.com
- Margaret Brodie: mgardenia360@yahoo.com
- Razi Ghaemmaghham Farahani, Eastern Canada: gestalt@gestaltottawa.com
- Bruce Aaron Membership Chair: dovbear@earthlink.net
- Allan Singer Membership Chair: asingerlicsw@aol.com

Here's the space that needs to be filled with your news for our next newsletter!:

two views

Why did you say that?
That's not how it was...
I remember
Damn lies !
You damn liar.

we can never be the same
after THIS

How hurt you must be...
That's how it was for you?
i remember you
i remember me
i didn't see You.

WE can work through
this, too

- Charlie Bowman

~~~~~

Burned Out

I am at the beginning and the end  
In a world not different than where Gestalt started  
Robotic woman and man  
Afraid of loss  
So middle class

A therapist shot his client  
another day of neurotic complaining  
He just couldn't take it

Helping is a trap  
Caring is not

- Charlie Bowman

## A Sad Goodbye

Ruth Ronall, a longtime member of the NY institute and of AAGT, died on Sunday Apr 6th. She would have been 94 in July.

Ruth was born in Vienna and lived there until driven out by Nazi-ism. She lived in Israel and England before settling at 333 CPW in a wonderful penthouse apt, the scene of many meetings, workshops, musicales and parties, as well as private tete-a-tete's and therapy sessions. She was a wonderful creative hostess.

After arriving in the US, Ruth earned a master's degree in social work at Columbia University and in her private practice blended her interests in Adlerian psychology, theme-centered interaction and of course gestalt therapy. During her training with Laura Perls she met Bud Feder and the two became close friends and professional collaborators. Together they provided training , made conference presentations, wrote articles and edited books, most notably Beyond the Hot Seat in 1980. Ruth fully supported the revision of the latter (due to be released in July) although her failing health prevented active participation. Ruth retired in 1995 and in 2002 entered an anthroposophic nursing home in Chestnut Ridge, NY where she received exceptional and loving holistic care—including providing her with the opportunity to play and study the piano daily and improve her Bach interpretations. This was her favorite pastime until the ravages of disease prevented it. According to her son Michael, she died a peaceful death.