

Community Meeting 3, Philadelphia 2010

The conference planners were applauded by the community, to a standing ovation.

Cathy thanked all retiring board members for their service.

Sarah was thanked for her term of office as secretary.

Adam was thanked for the work he has done in relation to both conference and organisational matters.

Cathy announced that the community had raised \$4000 for the scholarship fund at the dinner dance last night.

Cathy acknowledged that the 2012 conference would be in Mexico, and that the 2011 AGM would be held in Edinburgh.

Phil spoke to the meeting about the research task committee that he is co-chairing with Christine Stevens. He made four proposals:

- 1) that AAGT develop a research fund
- 2) that the AAGT actually conduct research
- 3) that AAGT host a research conference
- 4) that the conference venue be GISC.

Claire asked for more detail about the research being conducted.

Phil gave more details about the nature of the studies such a project might support.

Marlene asked about the scope of responsibility of the task force.

Phil replied the task committee would monitor all aspects.

Peter P said he supported research by gestalt psychotherapists. However, he expressed his caution about the use of funds in the organisation, given the international diversity of the membership and the implications for the scholarship fund.

Claire requested more details of the studies.

David asked for clarification on whether Phil was proposing single case-studies as the only alternative to random control trials.

Phil said that he was not.

Regional Development Fund:

Dan spoke to the work being done in the regions and the financial implications of the same.

He spoke to the thinking behind the development of a fund that would help the regions develop in their local communities and also to host regional conferences.

He asked if the community would support the development of such a fund.

He clarified that this would be a fund that would support all regions, not a particular one.

Bud additionally proposed that a portion of the scholarship fund be allocated to scholarships to enable financially-challenged persons to attend the regional conferences.

It was clarified that the conferences referred to were *AAGT* regional conferences.

Anne spoke in her role as RCP joint coordinator. She spoke of her experiences of hosting regional conferences and how this has helped increased *AAGT* membership.

Susan asked if we were going to use scholarship funds to fund the regions. She asked if that would be in line with scholarship fund allocation policy. Bud replied that this would not be in line with the way the scholarship fund is used; using some of it for scholarships to the regional conferences would be consistent with the purpose of the fund, in his opinion; using it to fund the regional conferences would not be consistent with the purpose of the fund.

Dan proposed that the board be given the trust by the community to go ahead and develop this idea.

Gail gave her support to the regional development fund, as she felt it was organic to *AAGT*. She said she was less certain about the research fund at this time, as it felt different in nature.

Toni asked if we could go back to the discussion about the development fund that had begun yesterday. Bud said he felt the issue was dealt with sufficiently yesterday. Charlie spoke to the difficulty of dealing with complex and detailed issues on only one day every two years. He spoke to the ongoing discussion that had already taken place in various community fora, such as the newsletter and the members list. He said that this will continue, including at board level, and the progress of this work will continue to be communicated to the membership.

In response to a request from the floor, Adam again summarised the issues as he saw them.

In response to a question from the floor, Bud clarified the decision-making process in the scholarship committee.

Debra spoke of her previous experiences of decision-making processes when she was a member of the scholarship committee. She added that she felt impressed by the range of attendees at this conference and thanked the committee for the role she imagined it had played in this.

Lynne expressed her hope that people would discuss the development fund issue in the space of time.

Clementine shared her experience as a recipient of the scholarship fund and wanted to express her heartfelt thanks for the hard work, and financial contributions, that members had given in order to bring her here.

Nancy appealed to those present to pay their membership dues in order to further develop our funds.

Bronagh said she had experienced AAGT's welcome and generosity and expressed her thanks for benefiting from the scholarship fund. She said that she had volunteered to be Ireland RCP, and hoped to be able to host a conference in Ireland one day.

Judy spoke to how, although she supported supporting new members, she wanted us to also commit to support older members who had shown a commitment to AAGT.

Jack suggested that we have a new category of a "sustaining membership" - whereby the membership dues would be taken automatically from a member's bank account. This would work in the same way as a standing order.

Ansel suggested a new interest group - a "new members" interest group.

Ginny and Jo spoke as new Interest Group Coordinators.

Peter Cole and Joe said they have come up with a new Interest group for those interested in Gestalt Group Process. They gave details of this to the meeting, and invited those interested to make contact.

Urtzi volunteered to translate the AAGT constitution into Spanish and encouraged anyone else who speaks another language to do the same.

Adam said he had started to translate the constitution into Polish.

Toni said she was enjoying the "celebratory-ness" of the current process but also said she had some unfinished business. She had missed what she generally valued in community meetings at this conference. She clarified that, because they had been scheduled so late in the programme, the meetings had inevitably had a task focus and not a community process. She made a strong plea for the community meetings to be scheduled at the start of the conference in 2012.

Phil made an announcement about the book of the conference that is being edited by Christine Stevens and Dan Bloom. He invited all present to contribute to this project if they had an interest to do so, and to email Christine and Dan with any ideas.

Susanna thanked Phil for his idea. She went on to share a way she had cut conference costs - by staying with local hosts. She thanked the hosts and the planning committee for setting up this local hospitality.

Claire spoke about all the different funds being developed. She said she would find it easier financially to contribute in small amounts at regular points throughout the year - perhaps through a voluntary contribution attached to the membership, in addition to the membership fees.

Jon thanked Charlie and Marcy for the Newsletter as it made him feel very connected.

Karen spoke of her regret that she could not attend everything on offer at the conference. She wondered if there could be an online resource where presenters could post any presentations etc from which we could all benefit.

Bud expressed his regret at the scheduling of the final committee meeting - as many people had to leave beforehand due to travel arrangements.

Bruce spoke of how well he felt received by the AAGT community.

Laurie shared her positive feelings for the conference. Although her first time, she has felt very included throughout the conference. She thanked the scholarship committee for the support that enabled her to attend pre-conference.

Charlie requested that if anyone didn't want him to post their photos on the website, then to please let him know.

Burt shared that he had a very preliminary discussion of the Puebla committee. A question arising from this was a possible option of paying the conference fees in installments. He didn't know if we could manage this logistically, but he wanted to look into this.

Joe offered to give a tour of the Italian market in south Philly for anyone staying after the conference.

Sean, a first time attendee, wanted to particularly thank those attendees who had crossed a national border to be here. He had felt re-inspired about gestalt by all those present.

David expressed his thanks to AAGT for supporting his attendance with the scholarship fund.

Gail spoke of her appreciation of the conference and the community.

Ginny extended her thanks to Jo, a member of the conference committee, who had been absent during the earlier thanks.

Natasha thanked AAGT for the scholarship fund contribution that enabled her and her colleague to attend. She spoke of what had excited her about the conference, and thanked the community for what the conference had offered her professionally.

Victor thanked members of the band for their contribution to the conference entertainment.

Allen encouraged musical members to bring their instruments to the next conference if they wished to contribute too.

Paul wanted to welcome those who could not attend conferences regularly, and wanted to encourage them not to feel any period of absence should inhibit them attending when they could.

Sylvia spoke of her personal memories of how the organisation was founded. She has been to all the conferences since then and expressed her feeling that this one was the best so far. She particularly appreciated the inclusivity of the organisation and the way in which the organisation has grown.

Jean-Marie expressed his view of the importance of clinical practice circulating between cultures. He spoke of the role that language and translation might play in this. He proposed that members contact each other to obtain resources from different cultures that might influence their own.

Toni said she would prefer that we do not have to stand at the front and be applauded when speaking. She felt this inhibited any negative or difficult issues that members might wish to share. She pointed out that this would be easier to say from one's own seat when supported by neighbours.

Jennifer shared her regret that there weren't more people of colour at the conference.

Kirial appreciated being able to meet people about whom he had only previously read.

Marcy experienced being supported when something difficult happened. She wanted to honour that experience alongside the positive.

Cathy expressed her pleasure at what we had co-created at the conference. She thanked each of us for helping to create it, and wished everyone a safe trip home.

Sarah Fallon
AAGT Secretary