

AAGT Community Meeting #1 August 10, 2006 in Vancouver

This Community Meeting #1 was a part of the 8th AAGT Conference – Dreaming the Future. The theme was how AAGT could respond to the troubles facing the world, and we divided into small groups, who then reported back. Various ideas for action were put forward, as well as the perspective that we could not assume that our members would agree, that the conflict was within the association, not just outside it, and what we had to show was our capacity to differ and stay in contact.

AAGT Community Meeting #2 August 12, 2006 in Vancouver

This Community Meeting #2 was a part of the 8th AAGT Conference – Dreaming the Future. It took place just before the AAGT Annual Meeting.

The Community Meeting began with some business agenda items which included a call for conference evaluations as well as questions about CEU's and Attendance Certificates. There was also discussion about post conference distribution of pictures and email addresses from the conference attendees.

There was also an announcement of a new interest group of gestalt practitioners interested in organizational development. There was a notice placed on the board in the meeting room for the conference for interested persons to sign up. The main organizers of this group are Sean Gaffney, Burt Lazarin and Joe Depaulo.

Brian O'Neill, AAGT President then presented an experiential exercise designed to facilitate the attendees in a discussion about the possibility of changing AAGT's name to include the word "international." He asked persons with strong feelings about changing the name to go to one side of the room. Those with moderate or mild interest were asked to form a group on the other side of the room. He then invited those who identified themselves as moderately or mildly interested in the name change to pick someone from the "strongly" interested group and dialogue with them about the issue.

After this exercise was completed, the participants shared with the larger group what they heard, what interested or changed for them as a result of the dialogue.

Themes that were discussed included the issue of decision making – respecting each other as well as owning and exploring biases. There was also a discussion of the consensus process and consensus building followed by a general discussion of HOW we reach consensus. From this discussion, the community agreed that it is important to inform the members of AAGT about AAGT issues in between the annual meetings.

Some long time members stated that when AAGT first started, there was a conference every year which coincided with the annual meetings. Decisions were made at these meetings and advanced notice of issues was not a part of the process.

Then the conferences were changed to every two years with a business meeting in the off year. The purpose of the business meeting was to address issues that have emerged and then inform the community about these issues.

There was a general agreement that AAGT needs to address the process of decision making more formally to be in line with the changes in the organization.

There was a discussion of language. Some people expressed that we as a community need to speak to each other respectfully. English is the common language of the community but the meanings of English words sometimes vary depending upon the people's nationality.

Some members discussed the Covenant of Community which was written several years ago and is part of ARTICLE IV: Meetings, Conferences and Conveyances in AAGT's by laws. This covenant addresses how differences are addressed as a dialogical process and is available on the AAGR website for review.

There was also a discussion of the by-laws. These are posted on the AAGT website and some members expressed how important it is for every AAGT member to read them and to understand them. The community members were encouraged to seek clarification when needed.

There was also a discussion of the last annual meeting's decision to rename the organization. IAGT (International Association of Gestalt Therapy) as well as other names were considered. There were 9 different countries represented at this particular meeting.