

March 9, 2008 Board Meeting

AAGT Board Meeting

Present: Ann Bowman, Dan Bloom, Peter Philippon, Peter Cole, Marcy Stern, Sarah Fallon, Robert DeVos.

Apologies: Ansel Woldt, Silvie Falschlunger, Bud Feder, Phil Brownell, Tine van Wijk, and Brian O'Neill

Absent: Jack Aylward, Marilyn Myles, and Morgan Goodlander.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Manchester Conference (Sarah) including discussion about booking on website**
- B. RCP**
- C. Treasurer's Report (Peter C)**
- D. E-newsletter (Marcy)**
- E. Communications (Phil)**

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING TIME – April 20, 2008 – ** Europeans will be in daylight savings and Australia will be going out of daylight savings. PLEASE CHECK TIME FOR THIS MEETING WHEN POSTED.

Welcome – all checked in.

Manchester Conference

In an email sent prior to the conference call, Silvie wrote:

Dear All: Here is a short update on the conference registration. As off today we have 58 registrations, 5 of them are presenters; 45 registrations are from the UK the rest is 6 US 2 Australia 2 NL 1 Japan 1 Norway 1 Sweden. In case you are interested in any further breakdowns, please let me know. The pre-conference workshops are accepted well.

Note: in an email sent 3/8/08 Silvie reported we now have 71 registrations for the conference.

In an email sent prior to the conference call, Sarah Fallon wrote:

This month has been very busy planning-wise. We've been pushed into emergency mode over a couple of issues and this has made for a lot of extra work. Aside from all that, this week I've also had a couple of personal emergencies - my car exploding on the motorway the other night (apart from the shock of having to run for my life out of it, I now have a dead car and need to find another one by Monday), and I've also had some tricky training issues to deal with.

I'll be honest and tell you that when I checked my mails this morning and realised the board call was tonight, I was a tad low on any faith that I'd get a report done at all. So I'm going to bullet-point the significant issues here, as this weekend is being taken up with trying to sort out these other things.

I don't think I'll miss anything out, but will just list the end results in planning matters, instead of the full sagas of how we got there.

Programme Planning:

- *The committee selected 42 presentations. Unfortunately, after the selection, it was realised that a couple of presentations/a presenter had been overlooked. Efforts have been made to put these through the same peer review process as the others. In preparation for the possibility that they score highly, I liaised with Peter C to see if we could pay for an extra room at The Thistle to accommodate this - we would need to as we had chosen 42 because that's how many room-slots we had. We have agreed to rent an extra room for the minimum time (The Thistle have been very accommodating here) and we will need to confirm amendments to the contract about this.*
- *Unfortunately, once this had situation had settled down, it was discovered that another presentation had been overlooked too. This was discovered just yesterday. I will include this extra issue in the further, and related, discussions I need to have about accommodation and contract with Peter C (see below).*

Publicity:

- *An advert was placed in Studies in Gestalt. Unfortunately the advert listed Jenny as a convenor (along with her email address). Dan was quick to offer to damage-limit the situation and the journal sent out an email to its subscribers list giving the correction, put together by Tali.*
- *An advert has been placed in Gestalt Review. Tali worked with Judy Robertson to produce a very nice full-page advert.*
- *An announcement alerting people to look at the programme (which is now up on the website) was sent out this week, by Ronnie, to all the usual discussion lists and the database we have compiled.*
- *The committee is also planning to send out another announcement later this month, alerting people to the looming early bird deadline.*

Peer Review:

- *All have been completed (but see above item). Thanks to Susan and all peer reviewers for their input. It is a great programme.*

Recording Company:

- *Contracts have been agreed, and signed by Peter P.*
- *A credit account has been set up with the company (endorsed by Peter C) for ease of payment.*

Hotel:

- *I was in the middle of negotiating mealtimes arrangements/other issues, that will determine the conference capacity, when the PPC emergency happened. I would like to be able to return to those negotiations next week. The Thistle are aware that my attention needed to go suddenly elsewhere and that I will be in touch with them again as soon as planning permits.*
- *In looking at capacity issues last week, I went over the accommodation that had been negotiated in the contracts. I was surprised by some of the arrangements we have and would like to share the financial implications of these with you, Peter C. With the room configurations we have, it seems to me that we are paying extra for rooms that we do not need. I have been renegotiating*

mealtimes/other configurations with The Thistle to check the feasibility of other configurations, with a view to saving us money. I have figured out a way to do that, but (of course) the next step is seeing if The Thistle will let us go back on what we agreed last time. I am willing to try - but first I want to double-check all the configurations/information with Peter C. Peter - I will contact you next week about this and will try to summarise the situation so far. I would like to do all this by email if possible, as Skyping takes up a fixed time-slot that I just don't have at the moment. However, if it proves to be necessary, maybe we could Skype at a future point?

Scholarship Fund:

Bud sent out his report to the board earlier this week. I won't repeat it here.

Logistics:

- *Earlier this month Linda wrote to the CPC telling us she would have to leave due to other commitments. Linda was taking responsibility for the conference tables and some other logistical matters. We will need to reorganise to accommodate this. If any boardmembers who are on the CPC (or anyone, for that matter) would like to have some responsibility for a conference task (and, in particular, the tables) please could you let me know?*

Registrations:

- *Silvie has agreed to set to one side the same amount of conference places as presenters who haven't yet booked. This will prevent a situation where there are no places left for them.*
- *As Silvie told us this morning we have 71 registrations, which is 50% higher than we had at this time of year for Vancouver.*

Sarah – This month has felt like a very frantic month.

Peter P – Gave support for Sarah “you have held it marvelously!” There is not a huge amount of support for Sarah so she has done a lot on her own. Is there anything we can do to help you, Sarah, have a usable CPC?

Sarah – No, not really.

Peter P – CPC should not be something only one person has to handle.

Sarah – has tried very different things to get CPC members involved but she has been doing a lot on her own. Maybe some people can't understand what is happening.

Dan – not sure what is going on. He would be interested and able to consult or to do whatever to broaden support for Sarah and the CPC.

Sarah – appreciative of Peter's and Dan's support.

Peter P – at this stage the CPC will have more to do and the PPC will have less to do (it has been different up until now with the process). Need to either activate those on the CPC or open up to new volunteers to help with CPC.

Dan – some persons have distanced themselves because of the arguing.

Sarah – this has been more for the PPC not the CPC. Those issues are also a while ago. Don't know what to say about that.

Dan – Could we do new nominations for the CPC? Is that possible?

Peter P – Yes but he would rather get the current CPC members active.

Dan - That would be better than asking for nominations, which might lead people to imagine deeper problems than there are. Perhaps Sarah you could reach out to those who are open and you have alliance with to help?

Peter P – Suggested asking the CPC members “what can you do or are willing to do?” This is the day to day running of the conference and this is the time to step forward. Could you call them Sarah with help from others?

Sarah – Named the full members of the committee as: Sarah, Tali (publicity), Dan, Sharon Warwick (treasurer), Danny Porter, Janice Cousins, and Ansel Woldt. Veronica Lac is involved with publicity. Peter P is copied with all correspondence.

Peter P – Veronica may be willing to do more if asked. How about you (Sarah), me and Dan divide people up to call?

Both Dan and Sarah are willing. The three of them will email and divide the contacts up.

Peter P – The other issue he wanted to address is the capacity limit for the conference. He explained about how they determined the number – 150 with the hotel is a break even point. With the numbers of registrations, we could have more persons wanting to attend than we can accommodate. Also there is really no other venues which would accommodate more people. This is like Dallas – we knew there would be a smaller number of folks attending the conference given where AAGT was at the time. They decided to go to a smaller venue because of this. This is the same issue for Manchester since this is the first European conference for AAGT. So the Thistle was booked with this in mind and if we have more than 150 folks, we will have to turn people away. What I would really like is the board to support the CPC to have the conference in the venue we agreed on.

Sarah - The maximum we could accommodate at the conference is 245 people. Part of the reason for this is because the 3 invited presenters are being divided up so they speak concurrently and that takes up more rooms in the conference center.

Peter P - Break even is 150. So we may be able to make a profit if we really have more than that attend. If the Americans wait to register due to the economy they may not have a spot.

Dan – if we are blessed by that problem that would be good.

Peter P – The biggest conference we AAGT has had was 300 in NYC.

Sarah – I hope that if we have 245 that will be celebrated!

Peter P – Looks good from Europeans that have said they are coming but we don't know yet.

Peter C – all of us Americans are a bit skittish about the economy. Many have not registered yet. Break even would be great.

Ann – the emails that have gone out recently are really great – up beat and exciting. Presume that more folks will register soon.

Sarah – Thanks. She will pass that on to those that did the emails.

Board – all in agreement that we will keep the venue as it is.

Treasurer's Report

Peter C will send a report to the board regarding AAGT's current finances. This will be available to the members on request.

Peter C – nothing unusual will be on the financial report.

Peter P - AAGT was able to get credit for audio/visual which is great. We have the potential of doing better financially after the conference!

RCP Report

Peter P - Tine has retired from this. There is a call this week. He has tried to get a hold of Marilyn but no response yet. He could be on the call but doesn't have the telephone numbers. Worried about what will happen.

Ann – saw where Brian had volunteered to do this in the interim.

Peter P – will contact Brian. Really wants to keep the RCP energy going.

Communications Committee (Dan) and E- Newsletter and (Marcy)

Dan - Charlie, Phil, Marcy and Tine have volunteered to be on the Communications Committee. They have agreed that we need to restore the newsletter. Suggestions have been to have PDF version of newsletter and a shorter version too. Charlie has had a lot of energy for helping with the Newsletter. Other suggestions have been to have the website more active with perhaps people posting the news from their regions. Phil will expand the website to have regions be able to post news to the website. Phil will help with this by teaching someone how to do this.

Marcy – will use publisher to do a Newsletter that is about 3 pages (not 27 as has been in the past). To cut down on the number of pages, the Newsletter will have links to the website when that information is already posted there.

Dan – communication has not been the hottest thing in AAGT, use of members list is down. We have energy for this and will help Marcy to not be the sole provider of this.

Peter P – will also be more available to help after he is done with presidency. Thank you Dan and Marcy for your energy and please thank the members of your group.

Other issues

Peter P – concerned that there is a waning of energy – even with more absenteeism on these calls. Concerned with the RCP and Membership committees but also sees this throughout AAGT. There seems to be a lack of innovative ideas and energy.

Peter C – thanked Peter P for naming this as a group experience. Not sure what all is happening on PPC and CPC, and he hasn't really responded on list.

Peter P - Stated he (and others) don't have to know the in's and out's of the committees. He is wanting folks to reach out to Sarah and others with "how can I help?" Not really wanting to get people involved in conflicts, more about support for those who are working hard and may need some help.

Ann – expressed appreciation for Dan and Peter P who tend to be the consistent board members who respond to the difficult issues very readily and with clarity. Asked if they needed support from the other board members in these responses or in some other way?

Peter P - Reinvigorating the CPC – to help Sarah get more people around her - would be very needed and would be helpful to Peter as well as he cannot take this on at this time.

A discussion continued about the lack of energy and enthusiasm from the members, committee members and the board. Members talked about what they are aware of with themselves and with their particular countries. Many of the Americans concurred that the issues of their economy and politics are definitely taking up much energy and focus.

Dan – Shared he has noticed that there is not a lot of enthusiasm in his community about the conference at this time since the conference is in Manchester.

Peter P – talked about the time and money for Europeans and others out of the US to go to the US all these years.

Peter P – If anyone is feeling really tired, please ask for support. In particular it is vital that the Membership and RCP committees as well as the Newsletter have energetic and active participants. These are such important committees and functions for our organization.

Dan – Identified the need to get Phil help with website – someone that is computer savvy and wanting to learn.

Marcy – how about Mae? She has had a lot of information about the blog and has a grip on electronic stuff.

Peter P – great! Asked Marcy to contact her and ask if she is interested.

Marcy – talked about her experience with help being offered but the person not really following through.

Dan – Stated that AAGT is really going to make these issues, team issues – helping folks not be bogged down with having to be the sole person responsible for tasks. Develop team approach.

There was a discussion about needing to have a broader range of persons available who can work with the technical issues of AAGT's functioning and communications.

Robert – thank you this discussion gives me energy too. Asked Sarah to let him know how/if he could help with CPC.

Peter P –Let's make these tasks fun too. Shared experience he recently had after a week long aikido workshop. Though folks were tired at the end of the week, they pulled together and worked in harmony to clean up the space in a remarkably short period of time. Would love to see AAGT engage in the process as well.

Dan – Shared that Cathy Grey is moving along with Philadelphia conference and the information for the conference will be ready at Manchester.

Peter P – need publicity, dates, etc. Does she have folks helping her?

Dan – yes to both.

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