

June 22, 2008 Board Meeting

AAGT Board Meeting

Present: Ann Bowman, Dan Bloom, Marcy Stern, Ansel Woldt, Bud Feder, Sarah Fallon, Peter Philippon, Phil Brownell, Peter Cole, and Brian O'Neill.

Apologies: Silvie Falschlunger.

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

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

A. Manchester Conference (Sarah)

B. RCP (Brian)

C. Treasurer's Report (Peter C)

D. E-newsletter (Marcy)

E. Communication/Decision Making (Dan)

F. 2008 Annual Meeting

G. Ken Evans' proposal: reciprocal arrangement between AAGT and EAGT for free or reduced conference registration fees for each organization's Presidents to attend each other's conferences.

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING TIME – At the Manchester Conference, Thursday July 24, 2008, 7PM- 8:30PM. Please check location at the conference site.

Welcome – all checked in. This was the last teleconference that Peter P will oversee.

Manchester Conference

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

Conference Report for June 2008:

Mastercard/Visa payments during the conference:

We cannot have the facility to set these up from our UK account due to banking regulations. So Peter C is now working on this. He says the worst case scenario is that we can simply write down the credit card numbers and process them when I get back to the US. And he may, of course, come back with a way to take payment while people are actually there too.

Delegates' Emailing List:

The work of the publicity committee is, apart from odd bits, over. However, Ronnie has agreed to make the delegates list we discussed at the last board meeting (thanks, Silvie for sending us all the information for that). So, things like the request for auction items could be resent so that they reach everyone, avoiding some people having to feel excluded for coming without anything.

The Thistle Hotel have also said they would like to send a letter of welcome to all delegates - introducing themselves and saying hello. I thought this was a lovely idea from them and have accepted this offer. Other items will need to be sent to Tali/myself so that we can keep some sort of wider eye on communications. (Bud - things like your requests for PGFs would be effective going through this route.)

Paid helpers:

We have now employed two people for these roles. We have employed Angie Smith (a UK accredited gestalt therapist) for 60 hours and Tom Cousins (a Psychology undergraduate) for 40 hours. Angie will take the more senior post and her hourly rate will reflect that. Both Angie and Tom have local knowledge of Manchester.

Keynotes:

Malcolm Parlett wrote to say he had to step down from giving the keynote due to a health condition. He hopes still to attend the conference as a delegate. We have replaced Malcolm in the keynote dialogue with (our very own) Dan Bloom. Thank you for stepping in, Dan. Gaie, Dan and myself have been engaging in some dialogue about the form, and so that Dan and Gaie can warm up to each other beforehand. This has felt nice.

EAGT/AAGT Panel:

Likewise, myself and the panel members have made some contact, and have made arrangements to meet up beforehand during the conferece week.

Pre-conference workshops:

An announcement has been sent out about places remaining on these workshops. One pair of presenters has decided to cancel due to low numbers. Others in a similar situation are thinking about this.

Conference bags:

These, and their contents, have now arrived and are being looked after by Janice (thanks for letting them take up the space in your home, Janice). The cost of these came to £4 per delegate. It includes an ethically made tote bag, a street map of Manchester, a pen, a notepad and a copy of the conference programme. Don't forget that delegates will also receive a set of DVDs of the invited presenters as a conference gift too.

Auction:

Charlie has confirmed there will be no problem in him working the auction into the arrangements with the ceilidh band on the Saturday night. It will take place during the break in between two musical sets.

Opening Plenary:

Peter and I have had some brief contact with Seán and Charlie around the opening plenary. Again, we have arranged to meet beforehand to share more.

Sponsorship:

Ansel has written to sage Publications asking if they'd be interested in some form of sponsorship of the conference.

Process Groups:

Jack and Bud have met and discussed the process groups and have contingency plans if too few people volunteer for being PGFs. Bud, I remember agreeing to try to identify 20 spaces suitable for process groups. I will put this on my list for things to discuss when I next speak to The Thistle. Please give me a nudge, though, if you don't hear from me.

Scheduling:

The PPC has scheduled the workshops into the most suitable rooms. From Mae and Phil, "We'd like to thank Talia Levine Bar-Yoseph, Dan Bloom, Charlie Bowman, Victor Daniels, Robert de Vos, Sarah Fallon, Susan Gregory, Seishi Harada, Peter Philippon and Ansel Woldt for their contributions, energy and their dedication to seeing the job through." As with the Publicity committee, apart from odd bits, the work of the PPC is over now. I would like to add my own thanks to the committe for all their work on the programme.

Equipment:

Tali has been liaising with Phil and Mae about what equipment presenters need so she can then liaise both with the hotel and the equipment hiring company in Manchester. Phil and Mae have suggested that the CPC do this instead now, so I have asked either Ansel or Dan to consider taking it on. Thanks to you both for thinking about it.

Recent hotel negotiations:

1) Signs. They will provide 4 types of signs. i) They will place a "reader board" in the foyer which will be updated daily by the hotel. This will give details of the daily programme. ii) They will also put signs on all the doors. iii) They will place directional signs (signs with arrows) around the venue. iv) Chris will design a floor map of the venue and give us 245 copies so that we can place these inside the conference packs.

2) Lecture room settings, and the provision and replacement of flip-charts, water, markers, chairs. There will be a team of "Meetings and Events Porters" (3 of them during the week) who are employed by the hotel solely to give support to our conference in this way. There will always be at least one porter on shift at a time. They are to help us with our needs and their roles are dedicated to our functioning. They each have a walkie-talkie and there is a telephone in every lecture room, so that presenters can ring down to reception to contact the porters if needed.

3) Evening Meals. Proof of payment for evening meal will be taken care of by the hotel. They will employ someone solely to stay at the front desk and take room numbers when delegates check in to the restaurant. These numbers will be checked and entered into the computer system and bills at the end of the stay amended accordingly. Obviously, those who have paid already for the evening meal special rate will not be charged at all. Day delegates without a room number will have to pay by debit or credit card.

4) Screen changes. The dedicated porters will make all screen changes to the Lakeland Suite (subdividing it into 3 rooms and back again) in line with our schedule. I will go through these changes with Chris nearer the time.

5) Menus. Chris will scan the proposed menus and email them to me so the CPC can check them. He'll need to ask the chef for them first, and is open to hearing any concerns we may have.

6) How many have paid to eat in the evening. He will let me have numbers for that. Next time we speak we will discuss further the arrangements for the evening meal based around those figures.

7) Book tables and registration tables. The hotel will set up book tables in the foyer and the registration tables in the main hall. The tables will be covered in blue velvet so that we can store things underneath.

8) Seating arrangements have been confirmed for the Saturday night - including factoring the band's get-in requirements. The hotel staff will move some tables after dining and put the dance floor down in the centre of the room. This will be done quickly.

Chris confirmed all the arrangements that had been made so far with Jennifer. Once again, I found him to be very friendly and helpful. I feel pleased with these arrangements and with what the hotel has agreed to.

Dan – will be the Keynote speaker and feels honored about being asked. Gaie will also be working with him and Peter P is in support.

Peter P – looks like things are really coming together. He has seen the bags which will be given out at the conference to the participants and they look really good.

Sarah - will see the bags this weekend. Now we have the delegate (conference attendees) email list so that information will be much easier to be disseminated.

Brian – to Bud, Jack sent him a form for process group leaders but Brian was unable to open it. Hasn't heard from Jack about this but wants him to know that the RCPs are all willing to be process group leaders. Asked Bud to send the form to the RCP's individually as perhaps they could open it and respond.

Ansel – could not open the attachment either and suggests that the form be put directly in the email to the potential leaders.

Ansel – evaluation forms sent out to the program planning committee members requesting feedback re: what needs to be evaluated (eg. Presentations, presenters, overall conference, etc) and how to do the evaluations. Evaluation of the conference is not only for CEU requirements but also AAGT can use the information to review for the next conference.

Peter P – after blind review process, when the leaders are known then the program planning committee may also look at the past evaluations of persons who have led presentations at previous conferences which can help with decision making if needed.

Sarah – the past evaluations were not utilized during the conference planning for the Manchester conference due to the feedback forms from Vancouver not being available (they were in storage). Sarah suggested that we use an overall evaluation on hard copy which would be distributed immediately after the conference but use email evaluation forms for presentation feedback.

Note: In an email sent after the board call, Ansel offered the following correction and clarification: The correction being that the Workshop Evaluations from Vancouver were distributed to the PPC for consideration along with summaries of evaluations from a couple other conferences that I have on computer. I also noted at the time I sent that information that there were other evaluation summaries that were in storage since our house fire and not able to access readily. I agree with Sarah that these seemed to be of little or no interest to the PPC as most of the energy was to keep the evaluation process as "blind" as possible and the selection process was pretty much completed before we ever learned the identities of the proposers.

Ansel also sent the summary evaluations to the board list for the presentations at Vancouver (prepared by Gail Feinstein). These are available upon request.

Phil – we could also create electronic feedback form at the conference and have the attendees fill them out there.

Phil and Sarah discussed possible ways to do this via the net.

Peter P – does anyone object to creating an overall evaluation form to be distributed at the conference then creating a feedback form via the net for other types of evaluation information?

There was a discussion about this and overall the board members agreed. Bud and Ansel spoke about the difficulties of getting people to fill these out post conference. Most board members agreed that filling the forms out after the workshop would yield a better response but since we no longer have anyone that correlates these (which is a big job) this type of information may not be utilized. Having the information via an internet form may be much easier to correlate and utilize in the future. Regarding CEU's, the overall feedback form will suffice. Being mindful of resources (eg. Not using paper needlessly) was also a major underpinning for this discussion.

Ansel – will reform the overall eval form, run this by the CPC and include plenary and process groups. Will do a short form for the individual presentations and also look at the how this may work as internet options.

Ansel and Sarah can discuss this more on the CPC.

Treasurer's Report

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

Peter C - We are within budget to cover AAGT costs for Manchester. Silvie is not going to continue to be the administrative person for AAGT. A colleague of his, Melia, is going to help with administrative duties after Silvie leaves in the meantime.

Peter P – can she be a replacement for Silvie?

Peter C – she is organized and will be able to deal with the membership rosters and admin duties. She is willing to do this for a while unless someone else steps into the role.

Peter P – wanted to know if we should keep looking for a replacement for Silvie or if Peter C would recommend Melia for this position.

Peter C – thinks we should give Melia a chance, she has been helping a lot with the AAGT scholarship fund.

Bud – added that Melia has done a great job with the scholarship fund and the fact that she will be working closely with Peter C is an asset.

Peter C – fine with giving her a chance and ok with whatever decisions are made about her in the future.

Peter P – since Melia is not a therapist, she may need to pass along inquiries that are pertaining to gestalt or other clinical issues to Dan or Peter C or other board members.

RCP Report

Brian – since so many RCP persons wanted to also be process group leaders, they decided not to have their own process group at the conference. Brian will organize a meeting with them at the conference. Cathy Grey has been involved in the RCP meetings and is getting connected for the next conference. Bea has also been involved by taking minutes. Brian feels they have a great group of people on the RCP calls.

Communications Committee (Dan)

In an email sent after the board call, Dan wrote:

*Report (Brief) of the Task Force on Decision Making
by Dan Bloom*

The Task Force on Decision Making was formed after the Vancouver Conference in order to address the nature and qualities of decision making in the organization. We members of the Task Force have been having a vigorous discussion on decision making at AAGT, an international community, and the discussion is by no means completed.

We believe that this discussion has been allowing us to revisit the core ideas that hold us together and support us as we proceed with one another. We are urging everyone to join this discussion on the Members List and in the Newsletter.

We items are on the agenda of the annual meeting in Manchester. We expect a hearty discussion. It is the nature of our organization to regularly till the soil of our foundation, to maintain the richness of our values of dialogue and community.

These are the same items which are energizing our discussion, and are offered to you, and at the annual meeting, for that purpose.

1. On Consensus: In our discussion, many of us were clear that the consensus process is an inclusive one in which all voices are heard and listened to so that the final decision incorporates all perspectives, although this decision is not one of unanimous agreement. It is not a simple majority-vote process, either.

Proposal: The by-law defining consensus be amended to state that a decision reached by consensus is neither a unanimous nor a simple majority decision and the decision shall include a statement of the dissenting opinions. The function of such a consensus is the continuation of a process, and not the silencing of any of its voices, even though those voices may be in disagreement with the decision made.

2. On the necessity of decision within a certain time: The by-laws now are vague about who decides when matters require immediate decision. It specifies that when time is of the essence, a majority vote replaces consensus.

Proposal: The by-law be amended to state that the urgency of matters on the agenda be indicated at the time they are proposed, or decided by the president at the time of the meeting.

3. President's power as facilitator: Many of us thought that the president, as facilitator of the meeting, holds the sense of the group, and as such, can sum up the process of discussion so as to conclude the meeting has reached a consensus.

Proposal: The by-law be amended to state that the president, as facilitator of the meeting, holds the sense of the group, and as such, can summarize the discussion so as to decide that the meeting has reached a consensus.

Dan Bloom, chair on behalf of Task Force members: Claire Bertram, Charlie Bowman, Phil Brownell, Seán Gaffney, Judy Graham, Cathy Gray, Burt Lazarin, Tali Levine Bar-Yoseph, Brian O'Neil, Peter Philippson, Sharon Warwick, Ansel Woldt.

Dan – there are three proposals on the agenda – consensus, president's powers as a facilitator and necessity for quick decisions. (see above report).

Peter P – please board members pull back on the members list for the discussions re: the agenda so that more people are encouraged to join in. (These proposals were sent out to the member's list with requests for feedback from the AAGT members).

E- Newsletter and (Marcy)

Marcy will have the newsletter done by tonight (Sarah is looking at this now to proof it).

Peter P – asked what else Marcy might need for the newsletter.

Marcy – there have been various ideas about what will be happening with the newsletter. Is there still a committee for newsletter?

Dan – yes and please send out information, emails to them.

Peter P – Dan, Phil and Charlie will be in Manchester. Need to include Marcy’s input regarding the future and functioning of the e-newsletter.

Scholarship Fund (Bud)

Bud – best amount we have had for the Scholarship fund (approx \$12,000). Bud would like to acknowledge folks who have contributed to it financially and otherwise.

Membership Committee

Peter P – part of the function of this committee is to organize membership issues, like phoning people to pay their dues.

Brian – co-chaired this with Robert and found that Silvie did a lot of this “reminding” to pay dues rather than needing Brian or Robert to do more with this. Wonders if new person can do this (Melia). The role is more about developing new members and feels the RCP committee could do this. Thinks that this should be combined with the RCP leadership.

Bud – could combine with RCP but this is not necessarily an RCP function. It is a function that someone needs to take on.

Phil – we have a bunch of new people coming in via new conference and need someone to tend to them.

Bud – is willing to take this on for the next year.

Peter P – great.

Phil – keep the membership committee separate from RCP for now so that there is not a gap.

Peter P – someone who is an RCP chair may also want to take this on but not really wanting to do this at this time.

Brian – is willing to continue to be acting RCP chair and is considering being the official RCP chair once we meet at Manchester.

Peter P – will talk with Robert about his role on the membership committee.

Other Issues:

Sarah and Phil had a discussion about communications between the two of them in the context of an email Phil sent to the members list which mentioned something which Sarah experienced as criticizing in the context of meeting rooms at the conference. Peter P was also involved in this discussion and offered his opinion and that both Sarah and Phil hear each other. Bud, Brian, Ann and Dan also commented on the issue in the service of supporting Phil and Sarah to hear each other. Peter C and the rest of the board also supported them both for all their work.

Brian – thanked Peter P for his leadership and dedication.

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING WILL BE AT THE MANCHESTER CONFERENCE, THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2008. – 7PM- 8:30PM. PLEASE CHECK PLACE FOR THIS MEETING WHEN POSTED AT THE CONFERENCE.