

September 23, 2007 Board Meeting

AAGT Board Meeting

Present: Ann Bowman, Dan Bloom, Silvie Falschlunger, Sarah Fallon, Tine van Wijk, Peter Cole, Bud Feder, Morgan Goodlander, Phil Brownell, and Linda Brownell.

Absent: Jack Aylward, Marilyn Myles, Ansel Woldt, Marcy Stern, Peter Philippon, Brian O'Neill, and Robert DeVos.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Manchester Conference (Sarah) including discussion about numbers
- B. RCP (Tine)
- C. Treasurer's Report (Peter C)
- D. Committee on our Process – Task Force on Decision Making (Dan)
- E. Annual Meeting October 2007
- F. Conference issues 2010
- G. E-newsletter (Phil and Marcy)

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING TIME – November 4, 2007 –Note – daylight savings time will end by then so the meeting time will be adjusted. Please check your email closer to the meeting for how this affects you.

Welcome

Manchester Conference

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

Conference Planning Report – September 2007:

Things are now coming to life again on all the planning committees – after the recent quieter period due to Summer and the EAGT conference.

PPC Report:

The PPC have worked with Susan Gregory to create a Peer Review process and evaluation form to use in order to evaluate the proposals for the conference.

Note: in an email sent prior to the call, Phil Brownell offered this correction:

CORRECTION: THE DEADLINE FOR PRESENTATION PROPOSALS IS NOVEMBER 15TH. THAT IS THE DATE ON ALL FORMS, AT THE WEB SITE, AND IN THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS THAT HAS GONE OUT.

There have been discussions around whether or not to accept all the pre-conference workshop/marathon proposals or to eliminate some. The decision has been to accept them all - ten workshop and five

marathon proposals, with two days and seven rooms in which to fit them. One is a two-day marathon that will likely use the facilities at the Manchester Gestalt Centre.

There was some concern as to whether or not we would make registration too thin for the pre-conference if we offered so many, and some people just felt fifteen was too many, but nobody could come up with good reasons to eliminate any of them. Phil has indicated that the market will take care of all this if we set a minimum number enrolment, a maximum number, and a firm cut off date. The PPC had previously discussed that if the minimum were not met by the cut off date, then the presenter could "negotiate" with the conference convenor, and what this means is that the presenter could decide to go ahead with the hopes of picking up some more registrations "at the door," but then the presenter would be liable for the room rent.

Now that all this has been decided, Phil has put up the pre-conference schedule at the web site, and the next thing will be to handle the conference presentations themselves.

Publicity Committee:

Hard copy publicity was sent to the EAGT conference. Dan negotiated our sharing a table with Margherita.

Peter P also gave an announcement – as some of you heard about on the list :

“I was invited to speak about AAGT at the opening welcomes of the EAGT conference, and introduced as the 'President of the American Association for Gestalt Therapy'. I put them right. I was then told by an EAGT committee member that I was being 'abusive' because I talked about the Manchester conference. I told him I'd been invited to do so. Anyway, there is a LOT of interest among the 550 attenders here.”

Peter later reported there was a specific interest in AAGT as a conference in which time was given towards processing.

I did a Saturday night performance at the Conference of the British Association of Dramatherapists and distributed hard-copy advertising there.

Calls for pre-conference proposals have been sent out – to the Members' List and Gstalt-L, also to the

GPTI list and Tali's own list.

Tali requests that the board brainstorm ideas for publicity for the next year. The publicity committee would welcome such ideas and greet them with enthusiasm.

Tali would like to gear a publicity drive that coincides with the publishing of registration fees on the website.

Tali wishes to voice her deep concern over the delay in our negotiations with The Thistle. She is concerned about this in itself, but especially in how this impacts upon a delay in the registration facility. She fears we may have lost some potential interest due to this.

The committee is currently looking into placing an advert with the next GANZ Journal.

Peer Review Summary:

Susan is concerned not to have received any submissions for main-conference workshops to date. The deadline for these is November 25th. The Publicity committee has sought to address this by sending out Calls for Proposals this week, through various lists and via their own database.

CPC Report:

Ceilidh – Danny is continuing to research the Ceilidh to allay the fears expressed by some when it was first mentioned. He has attended a gig by a small ceilidh band called the Peak Folk. He said they were “OK and cheapish but maybe not good enough for our requirements”. He has contacted some other

Ceilidh bands in order to make a thorough comparison. He has been given further recommendations of The Maerlock.

Danny has confirmed that we are interested in booking them and they are still available on the date. He is going to their ceilidh next week with a group of friends to give them a thorough road testing – in terms of how they do the “calling”. He will also meet the band members again and talk about the contract.

Jenny Edwards – After an extended period of trying to communicate with Jenny, and of being open to her continuing to take part in the planning (but with no response) the CPC decided to remove Jenny from the email planning list. Jenny is no longer a member of the CPC.

Peter P has been communicating with her re her giving us access to the aagt08 account. Most of you will have read about this on the leaders' list. As we agreed at the last board meeting, Peter has emailed the members' list, Gstalt-L and the GPTI list so that people are now aware that they may need to resend any mails to me at the manchester08 account instead.

We have received a request from Phil - “Linda has recommended that she be a "go to" person during the conference for any problems working with the hotel staff, etc. If people want this, then that would put Linda on the Logistics Committee for the conference (or working with whoever is attending to such things). If that is what the board/CPC want, that's fine, but I think she would need to be part of a working group - under the wings of our organization rather than working by herself in tandem to our other organizational structures.”

Peter P suggested this be brought to the board and also be discussed by the CPC. The CPC are discussing this at the moment and, following the response from the board tonight, I will write to Linda to share our response.

Registration - Peter C has confirmed that a Paypal account has been set up to support the registration process. (Using PayPal means that he can simultaneously keep a pound and dollar balance without the need to convert currency and lose money. People will be able to pay by credit card, and Peter C and Silvie are working out how to link to PayPal on the website.)

To avoid the problems we had over Jenny's e-mail, Peter C has passed the login password to Peter P, so he can also access the account if he is unable to.

(As an aside – and also to avoid the problems we had over Jenny's mail – Peter P has been holding the password to my aagt08 account.)

AV recording - (Item carried from last month.)

Peter C requested that we discuss audio visual recording on August's call. The quote from the company the Thistle use formed part of July's report. There was initially a suggestion that we try to find 3 different people (that we know personally) to see if they could separately record the invited presenters. I have made contact with one such person. My own view is that, in view of the fact that we would want to

pay any such people a fair fee anyway, it makes more sense to go through one (professional) company. Doing this also makes it possible to have the DVDs available to purchase AT the conference (where energy for them may be higher) and we would recuperate costs immediately. Should we agree to this, then I would be willing to get two more quotes from Manchester companies so that we can make a comparison with the one The Thistle recommend.

UK Treasury Report - Sharon is working on costing up the non-venue expenses, so that this work will be done before we close negotiations with The Thistle. This will reduce any further delay in setting registration costs (through us then having to work this out later).

Scholarship Committee:

Bud reports that several other people have told him that they are considering holding special events to raise money for the Fund.

The Venue:

Linda has been continuing her recommendations re venue. She initially looked at other facilities around Manchester but couldn't find a viable alternative. At that time she wrote to us that: "Most cannot accommodate the group we have.....and the few that (might) be able to....are (way)over our budget or are not available. I recc. you take a final consideration for the Thistle. The advantage of my time spent on this is that I am convinced I could not find you a better facility that could accommodate us for the price. Because I'm a perfectionist :) and very budget conscious, I have some concerns about them due to their slow response time and seeming (in-house) confusion about pricing....but it still seems they are the best match. I will do one last negotiating attempt with them to get the price down."

The situation seems the same now as it was then– in that Linda reports the conference staff are slow to respond to her requests for clarification of/re-negotiation around the contract.

She is requesting that she fly over to Manchester to finalise the contract in a face to face meeting with The Thistle. This has been mentioned on the Leaders' list and proposed as an agenda item at the board meeting.

Appreciations were expressed to Sarah for the report above.

Sarah – Linda was invited into the meeting today to discuss her negotiations with the Thistle. Linda has reported that they are slow about getting things back to her re: the contract. She would like to visit the Thistle and speak with their management in person to speed up the process.

Linda – the financial manager has been responsive to her. She put out a 14 point email to them last week and was alarmed about some of the loose ends that were presented – he was agreeable to change schedules, put room rate in – there are daily function sheets that were to be signed which were potentially difficult for AAGT. The financial manager has given her written consent he will change the contract and she is expecting to hear back in a week re: the final contract. She has also been talking with them about meeting rooms and thinks that perhaps there may be more of a demand for rooms than what they can offer.

Phil – manager has given verbal ok that changes will be made to the contract and promised to change the contract and send it to her tomorrow. Also there is an issue of rooms and whether we can accommodate people if we get more than is expected? Probably need to put together a contingency plan if we get more attendees. There is also an issue of if there would be a cap on the number of attendees.

Bud – let's get Linda to Manchester as soon as possible.

Sarah – asked Linda if she would you wait to see if they send a new contract tomorrow.

Dan – need to have all the “oral agreements” written.

Ann – do you think that if you go there they will print the contract out while you are there?

Linda – she thinks that she could do this by letting them know when she will be there and what her expectations for her visit are. What she would hope to get is a contract that is agreeable for AAGT and with a signature from the Thistle.

Phil – the person she needs to meet with is not available this week. If Peter is back, he could possibly meet her there next week and sign the contract on behalf of AAGT if appropriate.

Ann – Asked Linda what her expected expenses would be for the trip.

Linda – Her tentative plan at this time would be to leave next Saturday, 9/29/07. She anticipates her air fare would be around \$900 and she would be willing to stay with someone locally if possible when she is there.

Sarah – Thinks that staying with someone locally would be easy to arrange.

Bud – asked Linda if a \$2000 ear mark would work for the trip?

Linda – Agreed that it should cover her expenses.

The board expressed appreciation for Linda willing to do this and supported financing her trip.

Bud – Peter P will be leaving on the 4th of October and returning on the 8th of October for the annual meeting.

Linda – will meet with Chris when he returns which should be the week of October 1. She will check with his office people and arrange this.

Bud – doesn't feel that we need to worry about added rooms at this point.

The board agreed to move on to the next agenda item.

Email and Newsletter

Phil – Marcy has the blog working at this time.

Treasurer's Report

Peter C will get report out next week. Bud has about \$6000 in scholarship funds.

Silvie – the directory will go into print next week. We currently have the most number of paid members in our membership for any non-conference year.

Committee on our Process – Task Force on Decision Making (Dan)

Dan – There are two items on the agenda for the annual conference meeting in Berkley. One is to bring all the documents in conformity re: AAGT an “international” community. The other is to give 90 day notice to the membership for agenda items for all annual meetings.

There are more controversial issues which the Task Force has discussed and which the membership needs to discuss further. These will be discussed between now and Manchester on the member's list and via the mail. There is a need to raise the level of interest in these items among the members so that discussions will occur as the issues are important and impact the organization.

RCP (Tine)

Tine - Have a new member in Phillipines who was on the last call. No active Autralian RCP and Tine will talk with Brian about this so we don't lose the area and connections we have made or will potentially make there. There is a very small group who participates on the calls and Tine would like for others who have signed up to participate. The people who are on the calls are very active. The RCP group as a whole is not very coherent as Tine sees it and she would like to make this a group again. She is hoping to reconnect and revitalize the group in Manchester. In past conferences, RCP have had workshops and meetings for inviting RCPs to sign up and to form a group.

Dan – would like to help with that as this is such an important part of keeping our connection and energy and publicity going in-between conferences.

Tine and Dan discussed the differences and complimentary of AAGT and EAGT.

Phil – Regarding the RCP's and AAGT committee's in general, people should know what they are signing up for and have enthusiasm for the experience.

Ann – Expressed the need for publicity for the RCP committee so people would know what it is and the importance of their work, what they do and set some time aside in the Manchester conference to promote this.

Tine – would love to have time set aside for RCP in Manchester. Her experience was that setting aside time during a lunch period at the conference last time was not enough time for interest and for the group to develop.

Phil – suggested having a table at Manchester for RCP's.

Dan – also we could mention the RCP at the plenary and acknowledge them publicly.

Tine – could we combine this with the membership? She noted there was a discussion about this at one time.

Annual Meeting October 7, 2007

See note above under Task force on Decision Making.

2010 Conference

Dan - Cathy Grey wants to have the conference 2010 in Philadelphia.

There was a discussion that followed about picking a date for the conference at the annual meeting. There is also an ongoing discussion about this on the members list currently. Some on the call today noted that September 2010 is EAGT's conference and they would not want to have a conference at the same time. Dan also noted that Cathy has opinions about when is the best time to be in Philadelphia which needs to be considered.

There was a discussion about having the conferences always in the same month every 2 years. Bud noted that there has been a misconception that the conferences have been held mostly in November

when actually we had 2 conferences (Florida) in Nov and 2 or 3 in June and in other months as well. June of 2010 was noted as possibly a good time for the 2010 conference but more discussion from the members and board needs to happen around this.

Phil was also wondering about the ideas that have been expressed regarding having a Template (model or structure or procedure for next meeting in 2010) be in place as well as identifying a Liaison who is a person who would work with the next planning committee who has also worked on the previous conference (in this case, Manchester).

Bud – the liaison would logically be the last convener which for this conference would be Sarah.

Phil – if the liaison was put in place, it would be important for the convener to understand that this would also be the part of the convener's job – to be a liaison after the conference is over and the next begins.

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