

Below are the notes from the 2013 AAGT Annual General Membership Meeting held on April 20th and April 21st at the *Gestalt International Study Center* in South Wellfleet, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Attendees

- Alan Schwartz
- Al Wong
- Ansel Woldt
- Bud Feder
- Burt Lazarin
- Cathy Gray
- Deborah Ullman
- Dina Miller
- Gail Feinstein
- Guadalupe Amescua
- Joe de Paula
- Joe Melnick
- Mark Reck
- Marlene Blumenthal
- Maryanne Nicholls
- Michael Sasiain
- Monique Mercado
- Nancy Woldt
- Patricia Tucker
- Philip Brownell
- Vincent Beja

Asilomar 2014 Conference Report (provided by Peter Cole and Daisy Reese, read by Mark Reck)

- **Milestones the CPC has reached**
 - We have a wonderful and experienced group of people on the CPC, all of whom are committed to the conference, and all of whom are committed to the work of their respective committees.
 - We have a signed contract with Asilomar and good relationships with the people at the conference center. Our contact person is Jackie Schafer, with whom we have worked closely.
 - Our treasurer, Janneke Van Beusekom has served as conference treasurer for our last two conferences, and is monitoring the conference finances closely.
 - We have made the first of a series of payments to Asilomar.
 - We have hired Jimmy Moss, a professor of graphic arts at Cal State L.A. to create our logo, which should be ready in the next few weeks.
 - We are meeting on a monthly basis, with each committee chair checking in with their respective challenges and accomplishments.
- **Looking Down the Road**
 - We are reaching out to GT institutes and journals for outreach and publicity.

- We are very close to consensus on a revised timeline for proposals and other deadlines.
 - We are putting together a system whereby people can sign up for workshops online when they register.
 - We are discussing support for first time presenters and mentoring for them.
 - We are reaching out to west coast Gestalt communities.
 - We are reaching out to potential invited presenters.
 - We have a very active process group committee, and will be working on making the process groups a priority in terms of space and resources.
 - We have a very active membership committee that is working toward an exciting opening event.
 - We have a newly formed outreach committee, who will be working with institutes within the US and internationally to promote the conference.
 - Our CE chair is working toward doing continuing education certification online.
 - Our entertainment chairs are working toward creating events that are fun and that promote connection and community.
- **Final Note**
- As conveners, our goal is to be part of the co-creation of a conference that makes use of the beautiful natural setting of the Asilomar conference center to promote an intimate atmosphere for the sharing of ideas, strengthening the AAGT community, learning and growing together. We are honored to be convening the 2014 conference, and wish we could be at the 2013 AGM. Although we cannot be there in person, we are with you in spirit, and are looking forward to working together over the next sixteen months to create a rich, rewarding and successful conference.

Scholarship Fund Report (provided by Bud Feder)

- Scholarship Fund starting off with \$15,000 this year.
- Have more possibilities for sponsoring members compared to past years.
- AAGT has donated \$5,000 into the scholarship fund.

Treasurer's Report (provided by Burt Lazarin)

- \$44,454 is currently in AAGT bank account
- \$13,959 is associated with the scholarship fund
- \$1,562 with the regional development fund
- \$245 with the research fund
- \$28,000 of our funds are unspoken for
- Additional \$21,000 for conferences.
- We have a special treasurer for conference: Janneke Van Bueskom.
- For the first time in AAGT history we will not need to “front money” for the initial down payment of the Asilomar 2014 conference given our surplus of money gained from previous conferences.
- The AAGT Paypal account will be closed in our transition to Member Clicks.
- A separate account for the scholarship fund has been created as well.
- A “misunderstanding with the IRS” has been resolved in which a \$40,000 balance was being asked for; IRS had the incorrect mailing address for several years. We filed for a change of

- address and resolved the IRS dispute and penalties by clarifying AAGT's status as a non-profit.
- A committee is likewise formulating a budget for the AAGT – also a first in AAGT's history – in which 20% of organizational expenses will be kept for the following year as self-insurance.

Regional Contact Person's Report (provided by Adam Kincel, read by Monique Mercado)

Since the last gathering in Puebla the group grew and currently we have 25 representatives on most of the continents. Reaching to new areas we discovered that many of us have difficulties in popularizing the AAGT in countries where our organization is not very well known. Initially we discussed support needs of new conferences' organizers and more experienced members met with less experienced for individual Skype sessions. In the same time we were reporting to the Regional Development Fund and some of us joined its committee. In cooperation with the board we started to consult regions on their needs regarding translations for the next conference in Asilomar; we aim to create a report of specific needs and abilities available amongst our members and communities.

For a few months we tried to incorporate a new schedule for our calls to increase participation of members from areas which are usually asleep during our Skype calls. Unfortunately, this did not bring us more members on the calls, but made some of us very sleepy.

- **Successes from various regions:**
 - Hannie Schoeman developed a successful fundraising campaign in South Africa supported by Bea Mackay who donated copies of her book
 - Kerry Shipman fundraised several thousand dollars over the past four years for the scholarship fund and the regional development fund through registration fees for AAGT Regional Gathering & Retreat in Australia
 - Helena Kallner started an institute in Stockholm promoting AAGT and inviting its members to cooperation
 - Ruth Nightingale & Jon Blend developed an AAGT forum under the United Kingdom Association for Gestalt Practitioners
- **Past local conferences:**
 - Noriyoshi Okada, Japan, 13th and 14th January, 2013
 - Anne Leibig, US Southeast, March 22-24, 2013, Warren Wilson College, Asheville, NC USA
 - Kerry Ivan Shipman, Regional Gathering & Retreat, Australia
- **Upcoming local conferences:**
 - Heather Anne Keyes, Mexico Northwest, July 18th -21st
 - Brad Larsen Pacific Northwest, October 26-27, 2013 in Seattle, WA

Regional Development Fund (provided by Deirdre Winter, read by Burt Lazarin)

In June 2012 the AAGT board requested that Deirdre Winter establish a committee to run the affairs of the Regional Development Fund (RDF) in accordance with the RDF task force proposal that was accepted by the 2011 AGM on 26/03/11. An enquiry was sent out to the AAGT members by mail and by post to find volunteers for the Committee. The RCPs were also asked directly at a meeting.

Dan Bloom (Organizational Member Representative for the New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy),

Kerry Shipman (RCP for Australia North), and Kailash Tuli (India) volunteered. The task force proposal also called for the AAGT Treasurer (currently Burt Lazarin) and the RCP Representative to the Board (currently Adam Kincel; Poland/U.K.) to serve on the committee. Deirdre Winter (RCP for Germany) has continued as coordinator and liaison with the Board.

The Task Force report called for the Regional Development Fund Committee to assume the task of preparing an RDF proposal form stating the aims and conditions of the grants and loans to be granted and to assure itself of “sufficient accountability for the funds disbursed”: It was to review applications for grants and loans and disburse the funds.

The Committee has since held three meetings via Skype, on December 16, 2012, February 3, 2013 and April 14, 2013.

At the meeting, agreement was reached on the content of the application form and Kerry Shipman designed a form which was adopted after minor changes. The form is now online on the AAGT website and accessible via a link under the Region’s tab. This leads to a page with a brief description of the Regional Development Fund and the names and e-mail addresses of the Committee members in case further information is required. This is followed by the online form.

There is also a link from here to the “Contributions” page, where there is a mask that can be used to make contributions online. The mask is also accessible via a link under the “Contributions” tab. This has been designed in such a way that not only AAGT members, who can log-in as members, but also non-members can access the mask.

A description of the Regional Development Fund including the web addresses of the application and contribution forms has been submitted to the next AAGT Newsletter.

The Committee has set January 31st, May 31st, and September 30th as regular deadlines for submission of applications. This information is included in the application form and the description in the Newsletter.

At its last meeting the Committee discussed possible ways of raising money for the fund. Recipients will be requested to repay loans and to contribute if they are able to raise money at their events. Other modes of fund-raising are under discussion.

As of 4/14/2013 the Fund contained somewhat more than U.S. \$1,500. Burt Lazarin informed the Committee that if the new AAGT budget is passed by the Board, the Regional Development Fund will receive an additional U.S. \$4,000 from the organization's general funds, bringing the total up to U.S. \$5,500.

The committee looks forward to reviewing the first applications after the first deadline on May 31st.

Continuing Education Credits (provided by Dina Miller)

- We have provided CE credits to participants of some regional conferences, trainings (e.g. Bud Feder's consultation group), and co-sponsored activities.
- We must submit a 5-year CE reapplication
- Dina Miller wishes to activate the CE advisory committee, welcoming new and previous

members.

- Proposed having this committee consist of representatives of various professionally licensed fields.
- AAGT also needs to determine cost guidelines for CE credits.
- Online technologies for CE process is being explored.

Membership Report (provided by Nancy Woldt and Maryanne Nicholls)

- We have 242 current members and 887 basic contacts (e.g. past members that have not renewed in the past year).
- AAGT has not traditionally focused on “selling ourselves.”
- Marlene Blumenthal proposed organizing a meeting of organizational representatives in order to explore what members would like from AAGT.
- Also a suggestion was made by Joe Melnick to analyze the nationality of membership in order to determine patterns of attrition.

Research Liason (update by Gail Feinstein)

- Mark Reck and Meghann Case are interested in volunteering for this position.
- Both are excited at the opportunity to advance research.
- The specific duties associated with this role are still being established and defined.

Election Process facilitated by Cathy Gray

- Maryanne Nicholls and Nancy Woldt are elected as Membership Chairpersons.
- Anna Bacik and Marlene Blumenthal are elected as Organizational Membership Representatives.
- Joe de Paula is stepping down from his position as Interest Group Coordinator.
- Dominique Chabre has been elected to position of Interest Group Coordinator.

Proposals (2) to Change Titles for Consistency (proposed by Ansel Woldt)

- The title of OM Representative(s) to be changed to *Organizational Members' [OM] Coordinator(s)*.
- The title of RCP Representative(s) to be changed to *Regional Contact Persons' [RCP] Coordinator(s)*.
- *Both proposals are accepted.*

Scholarship Fund: Purpose and Function

- Motion at AGM – Scholarship fund to be expanded to support attendance at all AAGT sponsored events including the Annual General Meeting, Conference, and regional gatherings.
- Scholarship Fund Chairpersons will serve a 3-year commitment.
- Burt Lazarin advised division of proposed allocated fund must be approved by the board.
- Funding criteria to be established for Scholarship Fund to allow for more transparency.
- Scholarship Fund to be used at Regional conferences, not necessarily for individuals but more seed funding for local scholarship funds enabling more local members to attend regional

gatherings.

MOTION #1 (initiated by Ansel Woldt; passed by majority; 1 participant abstained)

A motion (see below for details) was suggested for the expansion of the function of the scholarship fund. The motion passes, albeit with one abstained vote:

“Whereas, the role of Scholarship has been an organic and functional part of AAGT since its inception, with Scholarship Officers serving on the Board of Directors, “Scholarship” is therefore Constitutionally par and parcel of the broader organization and functioning of the Association. Therefore, both organically and functionally, this means that scholarships be expanded to finance participation at AAGT events: biennial, regional, and research conferences, and the annual general membership meeting. The allocation of funds among events and direct monies and seed monies is to be determined by the scholarship committee and with the approval of the AAGT board.”

Addendum to Covenant of Community (presented by Patricia Tucker)

- Discussion on the distinction between guidelines regulating comportment of AAGT members with each other and the comportment of members with people outside of AAGT.
- Discussion of AAGT as a social action group versus support of social justice ideals.
- Decision is made to not create a specific ethical code or set of ethical imperatives, as there is consensus that we did not wish to consider ourselves to be the arbiters of the behavior of our profession or of our members.

- Agreed on the following amendment to the Covenant of Community:
 - We will undertake in whatever way emerges through our experience with the larger social field to support the purpose and ethical values of our community, which include the human worth and dignity of every person. In this way we declare our commitment to social equality and justice among person within our community and in the wider, external community.*

- Ansel Woldt will compose a preface for the amendment in order to clarify that this a change to the Covenant of Community in terms of addressing our "mission" as including a focus on, or awareness of human rights/social justice issues.
- Formation of a committee (see below for names of members) to work on crafting a paragraph on ethics that may be added to the end of the Covenant of Community for the purpose of delineating a series of steps that members can take if they feel that the Covenant of Community has been "breached" and desire assistance with finding resolution.
- Committee Members for Crafting Ethical Breach Procedure: Marlene Blumenthal, Bud Feder, Cathy Gray, Burt Lazarin, Dina Miller, and Al Wong.

Shifting of Officers

- Saying thank you to Cathy who leaves the board but not AAGT.
- Appreciations for Cathy Gray are expressed.
- Motion by Ansel Woldt to re-instate Cathy Gray as Board Member at Large is proposed.
- Cathy Gray is nominated and accepted to be Board Member at Large.
- Patricia Tucker is welcomed as Vice-President.

Exploration of Our “International Community”

The theme of this AGM – which began on Saturday and ebbed into Sunday – centered on the meaning of our Internationality and the central question posed was, “What does it mean for AAGT to be ‘an international community?’”

Discussion followed which focused on many different aspects of this question which included:

- How our conception of AAGT as an International Association continues to grow and change as our membership changes and we all continue to think and talk about this together;
- Inclusiveness and the many aspects of field of which we need to maintain awareness: inclusiveness of ideas, of differences, of cultural preferences and cultural meanings, and of attempting to be ever inclusive of those aspects of 'field' that some of us might be likely to become unaware of at times such as differences in power, in privilege, in access and ability.
- International may refer to developing a more ‘sensitive listening’ and taking in other perspectives into our individual backgrounds
- How being “international” is also intrinsically linked with a basic attitude of openness- non-verbal behavior can demonstrate an attitude that other countries may fear that US trainers will “take over local culture.”
- Discussion on the usage of language in conferences; perhaps we should have English and the language of the host country in international conferences, that discussion of the importance of being able to provide an equivalent to the CE (continuing education) credits that we are qualified to provide in the US and possibly polling non-US members to identify their needs in accreditation and determine if AAGT can assist with CEUs.
- Everyone agreed that this is a conversation to be continued and ongoing.
- Inquired what our next steps are and how to keep dialogue going.
- Some suggestions are to form an interest group, discussion on listserv, opening event at next conference.
- Maryanne Nicholls and Michael Sasiain will co-chair a committee to provide the Conference Planning Committee with suggestions for future conferences with reference to heightening AAGT's integration of international considerations.
- **A first-draft of a statement regarding AAGT’s intentions regarding its internationality is drafted by Bud Feder:**
 - *AAGT as an international community values the important needs and differences among all members which derive from their national roots. Therefore, AAGT endeavors to reflect these needs and _____ in all aspects of the AAGT experience, such as in conference venues, languages, cuisine, currencies, licensure, etc., to the best of our ability in this difficult [actually impossible] effort.*
 - Maryanne Nicholls and Nancy Woldt will continue working on this draft and on completion present it to the Board.

Possibility of Co-Sponsoring a Conference with EAGT (Presented by Cathy Gray)

- Deirdre Winters is coordinating the possibility of a joint EAGT-AAGT conference.
- EAGT is convening in September, 2013 to arrive at an official decision regarding this possibility.

- Possibility will continue to be discussed.