

A Generous Donation of \$4000 from Larry King to the Deborah Caplan/Alma Frank Scholarship Fund

will sponsor two work-study positions for the 2003-04 training program and purchase some much-needed office equipment

Once again, all of ACAT owes great thanks to Larry King, widower of Debby Caplan, for his very generous donation towards funding work-study positions for the fall under the auspices of the Deborah Caplan/Alma Frank Scholarship Fund. The majority of his recent donation (\$3000) will allow ACAT to continue the funding of workstudy positions made possible by his donation the year before. He dedicated a portion of his donation (\$1000) toward office equipment after reading in a previous ACAT News an office wish list which included a new photocopy machine and a video camera.

His donation was announced at the annual meeting, which Larry attended again this year. Larry's announcement was warmly received by all at the well-attended meeting. He remarked that it was wonderful to be back at ACAT, as the date marked the 30 anniversary of his and Debby's meeting and that the best possible tribute to Debby was to train more teachers.

At this time the executive committee is reviewing the positions and the amounts to be disbursed. Depending on the administrative needs of the office, it is most probable that the positions for the 2003-2004 year will be the same as the work study positions of the 2001-2002 school year, that of Librarian and that of "Space Groomer". The committee plans to make a formal announcement to trainees and applicants by spring. The work-study positions will be available to trainees/applicants in need who demonstrate the ability to carry out the job.

ACAT Offers Post-Graduate Course, "The Carrington Way of Working" with John Nicholls

ACAT is very pleased to announce a post-graduate training program with John Nicholls presenting the fundamental elements of the Carrington approach to Alexander teaching.

This style of teaching/training is predominant in the UK and the Carringtons' course has graduated more teachers than any other worldwide. Walter Carrington's annual teacher refresher course has for decades been booked out months in advance by teachers wishing to return to the source. John Nicholls trained there in the early 70s, and was invited to stay on as an assistant teacher, working daily alongside Walter and Dilys Carrington for eleven years. He has subsequently directed trainings in this style for fifteen years.

The program will include:

- Defining our terms – the language of going up: non-doing/inhibition; directing/ordering; widening/strengthening the back; elastic connections
- Teaching strategies – from the first lesson to the fiftieth: balancing the awakening of conscious control with the re-education of kinaesthesia to refine subconscious processes; balancing verbal explanations with hands-on experience
- Widening – the essential foundation for hands-on skills: monkey and hands on the back of the chair
- Respiration – primary coordination: breathing and the whispered ah in relation to upright support and movement

Index

Report from the Chair	2
Member news	3
AGM Minutes	4
New Members	6
A TCP Assignment	7
Why do we Tense our Necks?	8
In Memoriam	9
On Vision	10
News from the Center	12

continued on page 6

continued on page 6

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

BY HOPE MARTIN

Looking back over this year it strikes me what tremendous heart, generosity and commitment comes from all those who contribute to the varied aspects of running ACAT, as well as those who receive its fruits. Believe me, no one's in it for the money.

Those who contribute are: the skilled and dedicated teachers who teach in the TCP, including the volunteers, the associate faculty and the senior faculty. Joan Frost who gives so much of her time to the organization of the TCP. Jane Tomkiewicz, our Executive Director, who is abreast of all the details of the organization, and keeps us afloat. Tara Sullivan who deals with rentals and the ACAT News. Jenna Zabala, a second semester trainee, who is also an invaluable addition to our office staff. And our board – Leland who, amongst his many other contributions, serves as our secretary, Loren, always willing to volunteer her time, Harvey, our legal counsel, Nick, a real help on the financial committee, Joan, our island of sanity, Jane, who challenges us to move forward, and myself, all donating our time and energy to ACAT. I also want to acknowledge our member volunteers, Clare Maxwell and Brooke Lieb, who volunteer their time on the lecture demonstration committee, organizing our free monthly lecture demonstrations. Naoko, our space groomer and Jenna, in the office, fulfill the work study positions so generously offered by Larry King, Debby Caplan's partner. And of course the trainees whose interest in learning the principles of F.M.'s work and developing the craft of teaching is the very reason why we're here.

Such heart and generosity of spirit comes from everyone who contributes to this place. It's very sweet to be part of it. Especially in these dark and uncertain times, the sense of community and continuity this place provides and the commitment towards consciousness and attending to the present moment are encouraging, indeed.

There have been some exciting developments this year. We've been thrilled to host Jessica's highly acclaimed Art of Breathing post graduate class. Although agreements are not completely finalized, we're

pleased to inform the membership that we're speaking to John Nichols about hosting his year long (Sept.-June) post graduate class, as well as another round of Jessica's, the Art of Breathing, next January. We'll inform the membership when all is finalized.

As you all probably know, moneys were disbursed from the Judy Liebowitz fund for a very exciting project that Kathy Miranda is in charge of: the Judy Liebowitz manuscript project. Kathy will complete a manuscript from tapes and written materials of Judy's teaching. We're very happy this is happening and that Kathy is inspired to work on this project.

This year Phillip Horvitz, a non-profit consultant, came to one of our meetings in exchange for a few lessons. He gave us suggestions about fund raising. Even if he doesn't come back to work directly with the board, I'm committed, as the Chair, to having a close dialogue with Phillip this year about board development and the long term health of our organization.

Concerning membership services, the office is working on a way that members can send announcements of classes and workshops to an e-mail list of people who have inquired about such things. The office will contact you when this service is available.

In a moment Jonathan Vall, Leland's brother, will offer information to our members about disability insurance that was once offered to us by Support Services Alliance, but no longer is.

To conclude, it's been a fruitful year at ACAT. If any of you have ideas or concerns, please share them with me or another Board member. One of the great aspects of this organization is that your ideas and willingness to bring them to fruition can make a big difference here. If you have a project or area of interest you want to pursue, your contributions are welcome.

New opportunity for members

ACAT will begin to send notices to those members of the public who have made inquiries via e-mail and who have given us permission to let them know about further offerings.

This list will not be given to members, however, ACAT will send out brief notices about upcoming group events once a month to this list.

The monthly deadline will be the first of the month. At that time we will send all the notices that have come in for that month. Please do not ask us to do special mailings just for your event outside of our scheduled mailings.

Send your brief notice to ACATUSA@aol.com. In the memo area indicate "Group Lesson Notice".

We would like to thank Jody and John Arnhold

for donating a beautiful IBM NetVista computer to ACAT. Jody became aware of ACAT's need for a computer through first year trainee Jenna Zabala, who is on Jody's staff. Jody is a dance educator, advocate for the arts and director of the Dance Education Laboratory at the 92nd St. Y. She taught dance for 25 years in the NYC public schools. In 1983 she was awarded an Impact II grant to begin to develop a methodology for training dance teachers. In 1995 she established the Dance Education Laboratory at the 92nd St. Y. Jody holds a B.A. in English from the University of Wisconsin, an M.A. in Dance Education from Columbia University, where she is presently a doctoral candidate, and is a Certified Movement Analyst (C.M.A. - Laban Institute). She is Chairman of the Board of Ballet Hispanico of New York and serves on the Boards of the 92nd St. Y and the Center for Arts Education.

Monthly hands-on exchanges have begun!

After the Blizzard of 2003 snowed out our first scheduled meeting in February, five teachers got together on March 18th to share ideas and hands-on. We hope even more teachers elect to come for future shares, which will be held the third Monday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 in the evening. This is a great way to explore areas of interest with your colleagues, and to foster a sense of ACAT as a community. The next meeting will be held on June 16th—please come!

Dart Procedure Weekend Workshop

Great Opportunity! Great Workshop!
with Joan & Alex Murray
October 17-19, 2003 at ACAT - \$275
For information call the center
(212) 633-2229, mailbox #5

Job Opportunity

If you have a passion for teaching a particular population, or applying the A.T. to a specialized context or activity, please contact Hope Martin with your proposal or ideas. Must be applied to group teaching. Any other ideas for workshops of interest to our profession are also welcome.

I am looking for workshops/classes/creative activity to take place in my new Studio for the Alexander Technique.

HopeMartin
(212)243-3867
hopenmartin@mindspring.com

The Newsletter of the American Center for the Alexander Technique is published three times yearly by

The American Center for the Alexander Technique®
39 W 14th Street Room 507, New York, NY 10011
(212) 633-2229

Editorial Director: Jane Tomkiewicz

Associate Editor: Tara R. Sullivan

Submissions should be sent to ACATUSA@aol.com. The articles in this newsletter are the opinions and explanations of the authors, and do not reflect a consensus of ACAT members or represent the official policy of the Center.

Minutes of the AGM - February 9, 2003

Meeting held at ACAT, 39 West 14 St. #507

Hope Martin called to order at 2:15pm.

Board members present: Hope Martin, Jane Tomkiewicz, Joan Frost, Leland Vall, Nick Gambino, Loren Shlaes, Harvey Rosen.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Hope proposed that the reading of the minutes of last year's Membership Meeting be waived as they were previously published in the ACAT News.

QUORUM

Jane Tomkiewicz announced that we have a quorum of members present and represented by proxies at this meeting for the transaction of business.

MEMBER SERVICES

Jonathan Vall (Leland Vall's brother), a broker of disability insurance, made a short presentation on disability insurance.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR - Hope Martin
(Reprinted in entirety on Page 2)

TREASURER'S REPORT - Jane Tomkiewicz

1) Recent good news: donations and income to the Center so far for this fiscal year lead to optimism for the whole year.

a) Larry King, widower of ACAT co-founder Debby Caplan, has made a donation to the center of \$4000: \$3000 to continue the work study program and an additional \$1000 for needed office equipment.

As Larry King was present, Jane thanked him publicly and asked his to speak briefly to membership. Larry said that it was wonderful to be back at ACAT, especially on this date and that he met Debby 30 years ago on February 2nd. He also said that when Debby died they were more in love than ever and the best possible tribute to Debby is to train more teachers.

b) Jody & John Arnhold of the Dance Education Laboratory on whose staff 1st year trainee Jenna Zabala serves donated a beautiful IBM computer to the center. The office now has two workstations that are networked together.

c) The finance committee secured a grant through the World Trade Center Business Recovery Program for

businesses in our area. The grant was for over \$2,000.

2) Finance committee (JT, Nick Gambino and Harvey Rosen) have been very active. They prepared the Annual Report of Directors for our last fiscal year ended August 31, 2002, which Harvey will present to the meeting later. Basically we ended \$8000 in the black and are very pleased with that as at this time last year, we had made a warning about possibly finishing the year in the red.

Harvey Rosen briefly presented the report, and said he'd be available for questions if members had any after they reviewed the report.

3) Although we are running fairly well to budget, until it is determined as to whether or not a new class will enter in the Spring, it is hard to make a firm forecast of this year's numbers. If no class enters there is a possibility we will end in a deficit this year.

4) The Post Grad course "The Art of Breathing" has very successfully ensued and we are currently discussing arrangements with Jessica Wolf for a second "Art of Breathing" course to be offered sometime next year.

5) We are in the phase of making the final arrangements for a Post Grad Course "The Carrington Way of Working" with today's presenter John Nicholls. All members should hopefully be receiving an announcement about this course soon.

TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Joan Frost

Regarding our student body, we graduated 6 candidates in June, admitted 6 candidates at the end of September, and graduated another 6 candidates in December. One candidate took a leave of absence in the Fall and plans to return next Fall. We did not admit a class in January, but a candidate who had trained one term and then took a year leave of absence returned in January to join the incoming Fall class, bringing our current student body count to 16. We are considering having an April admission this year and adding to that class in October.

We currently have 11 senior faculty, 6 associate faculty, and 14 volunteer faculty. One of our volunteer faculty members trained in Germany and wished to become a part of our ACAT community. Sarnie came in last fall to work 2 days with the 9s.

Our December graduating class gave a generous gift of \$550 to the Barbara Kent Fund and the then 6s, the 9's junior class, gave \$110 to the Barbara Kent Fund in honor of the graduating 9s.

We have invited Elizabeth and Lucia Walker in April to come into the TCP for 3 days, 3 hours each to work with our candidates. This was made possible in part by these donations. Members will be allowed to audit their classes.

In the Fall we had a session for our third year students on Emotions or Psychological Issues and teaching the Alexander Technique. Six of our faculty were present to share their personal experiences. It was a lively session and we will continue to do this for our third year candidates.

Four of our more recently hired senior teachers have been taking the required education courses sponsored by the State Bureau of Education. All four have completed the first 30-hour course required for the 3-year provisional license. Three are presently engaged with the second 30-hour course. A total of 3 30-hour courses are required to receive a full teaching license.

Joan is in the process of creating a new faculty handbook which will replace the one Pamela Anderson created many years ago under her directorship. With the help of ACAT's office staff - first Tara, and now Jenna, Joan is updating all forms, including placing them on current stationery. Next she will be creating a Director of Training manual.

ACAT was up this year for AmSAT's training course re-approval. Joan recently received a call from Frances Marsden, who heads the re-approval committee, that ACAT was indeed re-approved and that the committee was delighted with all our materials. We file a re-approval application with AmSAT every three years.

Last year we created an Adjunct Faculty of teachers who either had previously taught at ACAT or who had sent a significant number of their students to train at ACAT. Joan acknowledged and thanked Pamela Anderson, Jane Kosminsky, Jessica Wolf, Lori Schiff, Carolyn Serota, Joan Arnold, and Judy Grodowitz for agreeing to give lessons to our candidates at greatly reduced rates. These lessons are an option our candidates may choose for Approved Independent Study credit.

Joan thanked those who made contributions to the Barbara Kent Fund on behalf of the faculty and the candi-

dates. With these we will continue to be able to invite special teachers into the program on an occasional basis.

We finally bought (thank you to Leland and the Board) our long awaited video camera, seen in action this morning.

NEW MONTHLY EVENT

Michael Hanko announced monthly meetings for sharing work on the third Tuesday of every from 6:30 to 8:30 at the Center.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

Jane Tomkiewicz recognized Loren Shlaes, outgoing board member, having served her two year term, and presented her with a gift from ACAT. On behalf of the ex-officio board members, (Jane - Executive Director and Joan - Director of Training) Jane recognized the specific contributions of Leland Vall, Harvey Rosen and Nick Gambino (the Finance Committee) and Chair Hope Martin. Joan Frost recognized Jane's efforts.

BOARDELECTIONS

Nick Gambino was nominated and elected for a second term.

Michael Hanko was nominated and elected for a three-year term.

POSTGRADUATE CLASSES

Leland Vall spoke about the success of Jessica Wolf's course, *The Art of Breathing*, and also announced John Nicholl's new postgraduate course that will begin in the Fall. Both John and Jessica spoke about their courses and Jessica announced that she will run her course again at ACAT in the Fall. John also thanked Jessica for developing the format from which he is borrowing.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Leland Vall, Secretary
Hope Martin, Chair

Welcome New Members!

Continuing in last edition's vein of introducing readership to new members: please read about the recent graduating class #40, consisting of **Hee Sook Baek, Patty deLlosa, Michael Hanko, Naomi Josepher, Michelle Makarski and Lee Shapley**. At a very touching ceremony, the class contributed a gift of \$550 to the Barbara Kent Fund. An additional monetary gift of \$110 was added to by their junior class, consisting of **Bette Chamberlin, Ruth Diamond, Stephanie Kalka, Mark Josephsberg, and Naoko Matsumoto**. On behalf of all future trainees, ACAT thanks you very much.

Naomi Josepher was born and raised amongst the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado. She began her career as a modern dancer at age four. After graduating from the University of California Los Angeles with a B.A. in Dance, she moved to New York City where she performed and toured with a variety of choreographers and companies. In 1997 Naomi's career took a twist as she dealt with three severely herniated spinal discs. She found herself on a new journey restoring health. On this path she began an intensive study of the Alexander Technique with Bill Connington, which eventually lead to her teacher-training enrollment at ACAT. Currently Naomi maintains her certifications as a fitness consultant with the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Council on Exercise. She is expanding **Body associates**, a community of professionals dedicated towards helping others discover optimum health and well-being through a variety of services. She is teaching private Alexander Technique lessons on Manhattan's Upper East Side, and Brooklyn, as well as group and private lessons at Clay.

Patty de Llosa (Swarthmore College BA; La Sorbonne, U. Paris MA) is a professional journalist who started her career as a reporter at Time Magazine and then became managing editor of American Fabrics & Fashions. In between the two she lived in Peru for many years, where she ran a school and advised the Ministry of Education on the reform law of the 1970's. She has also taught Tai Chi Chuan for many years. Moving on to become a reporter at Fortune Magazine and then deputy chief of reporters, she decided to switch gears and train to be an Alexander teacher when she retired although she continues to write as she goes forward (and of course up!) into her new life.

Michael Hanko became a certified Alexander teacher through the program at ACAT, finishing in De-

ember of 2002. Before that, he graduated from Princeton University, where he studied Music and pre-Med Science. He has sung professionally in opera, oratorio, recital, cabaret, and musical theater in the US and Germany. Michael's Alexander journey began in Berlin in 1994, when he discovered Michael Gelb's Body Learning in the American library and started taking lessons from Frank Sheldon in the hope of alleviating chronic back pain that had not responded to other forms of treatment. Because the Technique enhanced his life in so many ways, he continued lessons with Judy Stern after returning to the US. Michael's special areas of interest include applying the Alexander Technique to the performing arts, to exercising, and to emotionally traumatic situations like bereavement. He has opened a practice in Midtown Manhattan.

...Donation, continued from page 1

The board is continuing to work on strategies to promote and raise additional funds for the Deborah Caplan/Alma Frank Scholarship fund. If you have any interest or background in fundraising or wish to help promote this fund, please call the center or any board member to discuss your ideas.

...Nicholls, continued from page 1

- Tools of the trade - table and chair work: why do we do them and how do we do them
- Directed Activities: including crawling, walking and running; saddle work
- The written word: comparative readings from FM, Walter, and other first generation teachers

The course will run from September, 2003 to June, 2004, comprising monthly weekend seminars and a series of individual and shared lessons, including supervision of work with private students. To aid out-of-town participants, these could be scheduled around the monthly weekends.

All ACAT members should have already received an announcement letter, course syllabus and application form. If you did not receive the mailing or need another copy please call the Center at (212) 633-2229.

A TCP Assignment

from Daniel Singer

As a class assignment, I asked the 1st and 4th term trainees to create a "procedure" of their own. Below are two of the resulting procedures.

"Hands on Legs" by Victoria Roth

Purpose: to help encourage ease in using the arms and hands.

1. Student is seated on a chair, both feet on the floor.
2. Hands rest, palms down, on the thighs, closer to the knees.
3. Student repeats the classical directions of neck free, head forward and up, torso lengthening and widening, knees moving away from torso. While keeping the directions ever present, the student experiments with the amounts of pressure directed onto the leg from the hand and arm.
4. Student observes any response in the back, upper arms, forearms, hands, abdominal muscles or elsewhere when differing amounts of pressure are directed through the hands onto the legs.

"Stability Ball" by Phyllis Kubey

My procedure actually grew out of resting. I'd been playing around with the stability ball with some other students and after a while just decided to sit on it and rest for a while. I noticed that the ball gave me a wonderful reminder of the movement that can occur in stillness and that it gave me a much better sense of poise than I have when I just sit in a chair or on a stool. I wanted to explore that further. Taking a moment to inhibit and give myself my basic directions and returning always to my head/neck relationship, I directed my knees to release forward and away from my torso. In doing so I became very interested and very aware of the freedom of movement in my ankle and hip joints. The buoyancy of the ball helped me reinforce my neck freeing, head letting forward and up, torso lengthening and widening while exploring the range of motion in the hips, knees, ankles and feet with a feeling of more tone (as opposed to tension) in my musculature. I also had more of a sense of dropping my tailbone and releasing through the lower back and sacrum. The gentle rocking motion and direction of knees forward and away eventually led to my transferring weight onto my feet and coming to standing.

Get Down, Get It Down!

Dancing, Choreographing & Teaching
with LMA and LOD

4 Week Intensive

July 7-August 1, 2003

The Dance Education Laboratory at the 92nd Street Y, The Dance Education Program of the NYU Steinhardt School of Education, and the Language of Dance Center have collaborated to present this essential summer intensive course for dance professionals in all facets of the field.

Faculty: Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest, Founder-LODC, Tina Curran, MFA, Faculty-LODC Jimmy Listenbee, MA, CMA, Faculty-LODC, Jody Gottfried Arnhold, MA, CMA, Founder-DEL, Barbara Bashaw, MA, CMA, Faculty-NYU

WEEK 1, JULY 7-11, 10AM-5:30PM

Foundations of Dance Education for Dance Professionals, Arnhold, Bashaw

WEEKS 2 & 3, JULY 14-27, 10-5:30PM

Language of Dance Fundamentals Certification Course, Hutchinson Guest, Curran, Listenbee

WEEK 4, JULY 28-AUGUST 1, 10-5:30PM

Practical Applications: Putting It All Together, Bashaw

To register:

Contact Joan Finkelstein, Director at the 92nd Street Y, 212-415-5555

All course held at the 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Avenue, NY, NY 10128

College credit available through New York University and SUNY Empire State College

Why Do We Tense Our Necks?

By Michael Protzel

F.M. said that he had "only scratched the surface of the egg" in his lifetime of work in this new field of investigation. It is up to us, and particularly now to new teachers, to scratch deeper. I would like to suggest that this further development — the real future of the Work — be sought first and foremost in the first person singular. Marjory Barlow (An Examined Life, p viii)

When first encountering the Alexander Technique, I knew instantly I had a partner for life. I was thirty years old, experiencing severe back pain. This was the latest in a long series of problems — a chronically swollen left knee at age nine, hospitalized at age seventeen for an inflamed right hip joint, recurring back spasms beginning at age fifteen. It was unthinkable that I allow the situation to just keep getting worse. I had to learn how to improve my use.

Following two years of frequent private lessons, four years training to teach, and five years as a teacher, I knew I still had much work to do. To learn to avoid regular re-injury, I absolutely needed to "scratch deeper" — to further probe my motor habits. In so doing, I came upon a root source of my misuse that I had never noticed before.

I have now completed a paper that reports on my explorations. In the near future, ACAT will be distributing it to members electronically. I look forward to your comments. The paper consists of seven sections.

Section 1. Cause or Symptom? summarizes core Alexander ideas concerning how we interfere with innate coordination — specifically with our head-neck-back relationship. A series of questions probe Alexander's characterizations of misuse. For instance, is "pulling the head back and down" an accurate way of describing what we do when we misuse ourselves?

Section 2. The Driving Force of Use identifies a fundamental influence upon our use and functioning not explicitly recognized by Alexander — the force created by the gravity-compelled fall of our own body weight. We determine how the force of our falling weights impacts our general coordination by how we commit (steer) this weight as it moves down to earth. There is a way to commit our weight so that its force activates innate mechanisms in the feet in standing and the pelvis in sitting, which provide an uplift that supports optimal use. Instead, when we commit our weight away from the

talus in standing or away from the sit bones in sitting, the force of our falling weight knocks us off our balance, creating a toppling that must be stopped. We stop it with muscle tensing that holds us in place so that we don't topple completely.

Section 3. The Distinguished Act introduces the idea that Alexander's search for a practical solution to his reciting problems led him to study activities that have a clearly defined beginning. A more fundamental 'act' that underlies virtually all human activity is sustaining uprightness. Since this is a continual act with no clearly defined beginning, I have found that the Alexander Technique strategy of inhibition cannot be applied to it. We cannot stop sustaining uprightness. There is no moment prior to acting. We are always in the midst of reacting to the stimulus to stay upright. What we can do is 'get inside' an act to observe the forces that shape us — to expose how we commit our weight and how we must continually brace to hold ourselves up.

Section 4. Childhood Origins of Misuse examines how we lose the capacity to commit our weight accurately, how compensatory patterns emerge, how faulty sensory appreciation keeps us unaware. I believe that it is through the repetitive act of sitting back into our school chair — minute-by-minute, year-after-year — that we create and nurture our habitual manner of use.

Section 5. Weight Commitment and AT Lessons examines the Alexander concepts of "head forward and up," "the critical moment," "end-gaining," "means-whereby," and the practice of hands-on teaching from a perspective that acknowledges the impact of committing body weight.

Section 6. Two Illustrations outlines two common weight commitment patterns, with practical instruction on how to gain greater kinesthetic awareness of weight commitment phenomena.

Section 7. Conclusion presents an overview of weight commitment theory.

In Memory of Saura Bartner

Saura Bartner, a renowned and widely loved teacher of the Alexander Technique, died quietly at her home on Union Grove Church Road in Hillsborough, North Carolina in her own bed on February 25, 2003. She was 55.

Saura was born in New Brunswick, NJ and grew up in the neighboring town of Piscataway. She later lived in New York, Missouri, Rhode Island and North Carolina.

The brain tumor that brought about Saura's death was held at bay for almost three years through the complementary systems of conventional medicine, chiropractic, acupuncture, nutritional and spirit work. She was as peaceful dying as she was graceful in life.

Those who wish to make contributions in memory of Saura's life are encouraged to pick a charity of their own liking and especially one dedicated to wild-life conservation, such as The World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy or The Sierra Club.

A donation of \$100 was made to the Judith Leibowitz Fund by Jessica Wolf to honor the memory of her dear friend and fellow training mate. Jessica and Saura both studied with Judy. Upon learning of this donation, Saura's parents, Thelma and Elliot Bartner, made a donation in Saura's name to the Judith Leibowitz Fund as well.

The Bartners encouraged us to view the website www.saurabartner.us.

In Memory of Carolyn Kitahata

Carolyn Kitahata, member of ACAT's 15th certifying class of '87, died on January 19, 2003. I met Carolyn when she and her husband, Luke, invited me into their beautiful home shortly after I moved to North Carolina. Carolyn and Luke cordially and generously showed me around their beloved town, Brevard, and encouraged me to bring the Alexander Technique to the Brevard community, to the local college, and the summer Music Center, a conservatory for classical and jazz musicians. This was the beginning of a friendship and camaraderie that I valued dearly over the 2 ½ years I knew Carolyn. Not only did her encouragement come to fruition, but I had the pleasure and honor of getting to know Carolyn and her husband, a loving and unique couple. Carolyn's courage in fighting her disease, her individuality and focused mind, her love of family, theology and politics, music and art, and anything "Alexander", were the topics of endless discussions on my frequent visits to her home. She was truly a woman of clear direction in every sense of the word! She was a woman of independent mind, striking in the breadth of her intelligence, wisdom, and generosity.

I will miss you, Carolyn.

Idelle Packer

The Deborah Caplan Archive Project

We are establishing a project to develop archives in the memory of Deborah Caplan and her contributions to the Alexander Technique, including the founding of ACAT. Her legacy is extraordinary and anyone taking up this project could gain as much as they might give.

If you feel you would like to participate in or contribute to this project, either as a committee member or as a project director or if you have something of value that should be included, please call the ACAT office at (212) 633-2229.

On Vision

by Tara Sullivan

*When I saw trainee Christopher Beckstrom at ACAT's AGM this year, he asked me to share my experience of attending Peter Grunwald's three-week workshop, *The Extraordinary Art of Seeing, Thinking and Moving*, in New Zealand. I felt overwhelmed at the prospect; such a profound experience is difficult to describe in a way that does it justice. I didn't know where to start. Chris suggested having an interview about the experience and about Peter's work, which sounded like a great idea. The following is the result of his wonderful questions and the resulting conversations we have had, in person and via email, on Peter Grunwald's work and the subject of vision.*

Our most recent conversation was specifically on the subject of vision, which I think needs to be the subject of this article. I have been diligently deleting the word "eyesight" and substituting "vision" on everything lately. Eyesight, aside from being mechanical, is the poor cousin of vision. We see not with our eyes, but with our brains. In fact, we see even without our eyes; dreams, waking visions, visualizations and the like all occur in the brain, just the same as eyesight. Our vision can be limited or enhanced by our eyesight, and our eyesight can, in fact, limit or enhance our vision. This is the experience that has been so eye-opening for me in the course of my work with Peter.

Of course, eyesight is what gets most people interested in Peter's work. He has synthesized natural vision improvement work (mainly the Bates Method – the grand-daddy of NVI) with the principles of the Alexander Technique. On the most basic level, he deals with the use of the visual system. If we can change the way we habitually react to stimulus to change the way we move and live, we can also change the way we see by inhibiting and directing our visual habits. By doing so, we can release the vision habits of a lifetime. Near-sightedness, farsightedness, presbyopia and the like are habitual misuses of the visual system and can be changed by the same means-whereby we use to change our habitual ways of moving through space.

Many, many people have improved their eyesight through study of various NVI techniques, and in that respect Peter's work is no different. How it differs is the presence of the Alexander principles; using conscious inhibition and direction in life, not outside of life, and not by learning a set of exercises or getting treatments. It is easy for me, as an Alexander teacher, to forget that

this is an enormous departure for most people. The very notion of changing something that one has come to believe is fixed is another departure from conventional thinking, and I have been surprised to find how fixed people's general ideas about their eyesight are. Even many AT teachers I have spoken to may believe that they can change their walk, their voice, their poise, or their pain, but don't believe that they could change their eyesight. After seeing so many people, my husband included, quit wearing glasses, I find this fixed belief perplexing. However life-altering getting rid of one's glasses may be, changing eyesight is only one facet of improving vision.

My eyesight is, and has always been, excellent. Better than 20/20. So what I have to share is not about eyesight, but about use and vision. After lessons with Peter in New York last year, I wrote the following:

"I realize that freeing my eyes and having this new use of my visual system makes it difficult for me to think or speak. My habitual way of everything, even thinking, is locked in to my tightening my vision – restricting my brain! Walking down 14th Street, I realized that somehow what I thought was inhibiting and directing was some freezing and phony cogitating. I haven't really been learning to have a new response to stimulus, I've just been faking it – and thinking faster and harder than ever."

Chris liked the phrase "being in one's brain rather than in one's head" as something many of us are looking for in our involvement with the AT. To paraphrase Judy Liebowitz, we want to get out of our own way. I'm learning that by freeing my visual system, I can think in a non-doing way. I don't have to generate thoughts with effort, my memory is better and my overall thinking is much clearer. The eye and other parts of the visual system are composed of matter very similar to white or grey matter – the eye is nearly a brain in itself in that sense. When we tighten, restrict, or bespectacle it, we are restricting our brains from the get-go.

It seemed a little freaky at first to inhibit and direct my retina, or my cornea, or other parts of my visual system. How is it possible to have that kind of kinesthetic awareness of things that are so seemingly different from, say, my neck or the top of my spine? I now am surprised that I've been successful in gaining a kinesthetic awareness of bone and muscle – such dense material. The visual system is fluid, nerve receptors, nerves - all deli-

cate tissue. It seems so easy to sense the qualities and the activity (or lack thereof) of such sensitive matter.

Part of our vision is how we see the world, which is perhaps why it can be so difficult to get people to take their glasses off. We become locked into our habitual way of seeing, and to change that can be a source of fear. From the obvious concern of not seeing where we're going to the deeper sense of allowing one's self to be seen without impediment, it takes a lot of trust to go from the known to the unknown. However, it is possible to gauge so many things more clearly without corrective lenses. Many of the participants in the New Zealand workshop reported a clearer sense of their habits once they took their glasses off, and also the release of previously unknown tensions and pains. About a month after we got home from the workshop, my husband put his glasses on and reported that he immediately felt how they disconnected him from his body and the world – although his eyesight was crystal clear with them on.

From my perspective, I've found my use transformed in a way that I never thought possible. On a purely physical level, the back pain that has plagued me most of my life (including nearly every day of my Alexander training) is no longer mysterious and elusive. But more interestingly, I find interactions with others to be totally changed – I can experience an openness now that I didn't know how to access before. The initial experience of needing to re-learn how to think was correct – my brain has seemingly been re-wired and I've now got a grasp of many things for the first time in my life; left and right, special relations, patterns and designs, and a sense of three-dimensionality that has always eluded me. I'm learning to understand how things are put together, and to see depth in things that previously I could only understand as flat.

One of the most interesting aspects of Peter's work is conscious depth perception. Have you ever looked at one of those 3-D Magic Eye pictures? Imagine seeing the world in that kind of depth – it's transformative. The experience of seeing in depth transcends the purely visual – it organizes the system in a way which creates an enormous sense of understanding, well-being and compassion. I find that communicating in depth adds a layer of comprehension which far exceeds anything I've experienced in terms of sheer presence – mine and that of others. The meaning leads and the words just follow, effortlessly.

I remember in my Alexander training being filled with a near-missionary zeal to convey what I was learning to everyone I met. Everyone needs Alexander les-

sons! I gave books to friends, to family, to strangers, referred them to teachers...and as anyone who has had that experience knows, the AT is not for everyone. Not everyone is interested in changing their use, their life, their being. So Peter Grunwald's work is perhaps the same in that respect, regardless of how zealous I find myself becoming as I experience my own being changing in ways I never could have anticipated. If nothing else, I hope that you, my community, might consider whether you have any fixed ideas about your own eyesight in order that we might all have a change in our individual and collective vision.

Peter Grunwald will be leading one more residential workshop this year, in Plainfield, MA, from June 23 – 29, 2003. Contact Tara Sullivan at 212-489-7849 for information. Check out his new website at www.eyebody.com.

Progress Report on the Judith Leibowitz Manuscript Project from Kathy Miranda

The project progresses, and here are a few quotes to show us what we can look forward to!

"It doesn't really matter whether things work or don't work, what matters is that one begins to know whether one's thoughts, directions, are working."

"The student doesn't have to get the experience right, he has to know what he's doing. If you know what you're doing, you have the means to change it. To know that change is possible. There's no virtue in having a great experience without knowing how you got it, because you'll never get it again."

"You really have to be with your student. There is a rhythm that you are listening for, as a teacher. You have to be with what's there, not with any expectations. You don't have any. You don't know what a student is going to give."

"We don't have any ultimate answers; we only have progressive answers."

"Your objective in the Alexander Technique is to maintain in movement the total lengthening of the spine by maintaining a poise of the head on the spine or preventing the head from pressing down and compressing the spine."

NEWS FROM THE CENTER

June Ekman, inventor of the Sit-A-Round ball chair, is offering the chair at a discount for Alexander teachers and trainees. This offer is available for a limited time only. Interested? Contact June at (212) 686-4316 or email juneekman@aol.com to find out more. Check out the chair at www.ballchair.com.

Inez Zeller will be teaching in New York. She tells us: "My first years of lessons were with Judith Liebowitz - who was my mentor and asked me to join the first training class in New York City. I have been teaching Alexander Technique for almost 38 years. I have a bachelors degree in psychology from Fordham University and will have my graduate degree in psychological counseling at the beginning of June from Southwestern College in Santa Fe, NM. I am an adjunct faculty member at the College of Santa Fe Performing Arts Department and give lessons in Alexander to faculty and students. I also have a private practice in Santa Fe. I will be giving lessons in New York from June 30 thru Aug. 15th." For Inez's contact information, call the Center at (212) 633-2229.

Connie Serchuk is offering a Qi Gong class at ACAT, Wednesdays 7/2-7/30, from 10am-11am. 5 classes/\$100. Call (212) 677-1663 for more information.

Teaching space available in Connecticut. Seeking a solid AmSAT certified teacher who would like to develop a practice in West Hartford, Connecticut. Join **Elizabeth Huebner** in a space that has wonderful light via three windows, a wooden floor and is well equipped for teaching. The teach-

ing space is about 14X14 feet there is also a bathroom, waiting room and kitchen. Connecticut has lots of room to grow the Alexander Technique. Affluent suburbs including West Hartford surround Hartford which is home to numerous large corporations, a symphony, several theater companies, colleges and art organizations, Connecticut's capitol city is one hour from Northampton, MA, two hours from Boston, MA and three hours from NYC. Please call or email if you would like to discuss the possibilities at 860-456-1529 or huebner1@earthlink.net.

Eleanor Rosenthal informs us, "I was recently included in a book about the 20 women in my Harvard Law School entering class of 560. As many people who know me know, I practiced law for nearly ten years before beginning my training at ACAT. While I don't get as much space as some others in the book (I transferred to Columbia) there's a picture of me teaching the Technique in 1977, two years after I graduated from ACAT. The name of the book is PINSTRIPES AND PEARLS, the author is Judith Hope, and the publisher is Scribners."

Hope Martin is seeking renters for a beautiful private teaching room on 14th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues. A larger room perfect for teaching groups and workshops is also available for rent during the day and on weekends, including Friday evenings. Elegant, uplifted space (good for teaching up!) (212) 243-3867, hopenmartin@mindspring.com

**American Center for the
Alexander Technique, Inc.®**
39 W 14th Street Room 507
New York, NY 10011