

ACAT Celebrates Pearl Ausubel's 30 years of teaching

by Jane Tomkiewicz
*\$10,000 gift stimulates establishment
of the Pearl Ausubel Fund*

After ACAT's annual membership meeting on Feb. 4, family, friends and students of Pearl Ausubel joined ACAT members to celebrate Pearl Ausubel's 30 years of teaching at ACAT and to wish her a fond farewell for her upcoming move with her family to Northhampton, MA.

The final segment of ACAT's annual membership meeting had Pearl leading a workshop on "Flying" in the Hope Martin studio next door to ACAT. While she was leading the workshop, the crew orchestrated a major scene change which included setting up tables/chairs, bal-

continued on page 5

Photo: Pearl Ausubel (2nd from left) stands with her daughter Laura Beck, Phyllis Kubey, Louis Songster from the ACAT Fundraising committee. Presenting the check to Pearl are Elyse Echegaray (daughter of ACAT Exec. Dir. Jane Tomkiewicz) and Melanie Beck, Pearl's granddaughter.



Expanded programming!

ACAT's 1st Summer Intensive

Open to the public, new and experienced students, trainees and active or returning teachers

(Fall Membership/Associate Membership Event)

"Alexander's Indirect Means to Change/Teaching students to Self-work" with Diana Devitt Dawson

(2007-08 post-certification course)

"Progress not Perfection" with Barbara Kent in 2007-08

The programming committee is thrilled to announce expanded programming at ACAT. ACAT's first Summer Intensive is open to anyone who wants to deepen her or his exploration of the Alexander Technique with ACAT's highly skilled faculty.

see page 17 for more information

Index

Dare to be Wrong	3
Report from The Chair	3
TCP Report	4
Annual Meeting Minutes	6
Scholarship Fund	7
Remembering Robert Cohen	8
Remembering Judith Lakin	13
Alexander and Lamaze	18
Dancing Tango	19
New Trainees	22

Remembering Robert Cohen Remembering Judith Lakin

see inserts, pages 9-16

DARE TO BE WRONG: The teaching of Judith Leibowitz,
edited by Kathy Miranda, now available!

Thanks to Jerry Sontag of Mornum Time Press

In 2003 former ACAT Executive Director Kathryn Miranda approached the board to create a manual of the pedagogy of Judith Leibowitz for teachers. She also proposed to create a Judith Leibowitz Self-Lesson CD/tape for teachers and students. She foresaw a multi-textured patchwork of text that included Judy's words verbatim, her writings, description of Judy's teaching, anecdotes, Judy's way of presenting AT to students and trainees and collections of material organized around themes like talking hands or head balance. Source materials include the work Judy originated at Julliard recorded by Amy Kitahata Sporn and curriculum from classes, demonstrations she gave to ACAT's TCP and to the public. Over the years trainees and members transcribed video and audio tapes. Special thanks to Jerry Sontag/Mornum Time Press for his support of this project. *Dare to be Wrong* will be available through Mornum Time Press at www.mtpress.com or (510) 486-1317 as well as AmSAT Books at www.amsat.ws or (800) 473-0620.

**Remember ACAT
in Your Estate Planning**

**Why not plan now
to make a gift to ACAT
in the future?**

Contact former ACAT Board member
Harvey Rosen for a free consultation
at (212) 873-7098

**About *Dare to be Wrong*
by Pearl Ausubel**

When Judy was writing her book with Bill Connington, she said that eventually she really would like to write a book for teachers. She wanted to write about the complexities, the paradoxes, the wonders of the Alexander Technique for people who knew and understood it. She wanted a book that didn't simplify the Technique for the layman. However, she died before she could get started.

I am not a writer. I couldn't begin to write the book Judy would have written, but I really wanted some way of getting her thoughts and concepts out to that wide audience who never had a chance to know and experience her in person. It was like a miracle for me when Kathy Miranda created a plan to write a book from those available transcripts of Judy's classes, workshops, articles and interviews.

Judy was my twin sister. Even before I returned to New York City and started having weekly lessons with Judy, she would give me some experiences at the times when we were together. From those rare happenings, I found I was sitting more erectly, though I had no inkling how I had ar-

continued on page 24

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Executive Director and Editor: Jane Tomkiewicz

Associate Editor: Tara R. Sullivan

Submissions should be directed to acatnyc.org. The articles in this newsletter are the opinions and work product of the authors and do not reflect a consensus of ACAT members or represent the official policy of the Center.

Dear Member: Thank you for your annual renewal!

And thanks to Member Supporters:

Barbara Kent Fund		Deborah Caplan/Alma Frank Scholarship Fund	Judith Leibowitz Fund	General Reserve Fund
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Thanks to Member Underwriters: (\$25 to each of the three funds above)

Pearl Ausubel, Allison Courtney, Joanne Howell, Lauren Jones, Barbara Kent, Carolyn Serota, Valerie van Hoven

Thanks to Supporters of the General Reserve Fund at the Donor Level

Susan Martin Cohen	Ilse Geisbich	Hope Martin	Jean McClelland	Nancy Wanich Romita
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Peter Doobinin	Brooke Lieb			

Thanks to Supporters of the Barbara Kent Fund at the Advocate Level: Victoria Roth

Thanks to Helping Hand: Phyllis Kubey

Thanks to Supporters of the General Reserve Fund at the Gold Level: The Robins Family Foundation

Report from the Chair

by Hope Martin

(As delivered at the ACAT Annual Meeting,
February 4, 2007)

This has been a whirlwind year for ACAT. The winds of growth and change are blowing through our organization. The Board has been active in strategizing and developing structures that support this process. There's a lot happening and at the same time it is a continuation of what we've been working on for some time now. Even though huge changes are happening, it's obvious that this is an organic process: ACAT has wanted to morph and grow up (no pun intended). Taking the role of steward, the Board has been listening and responding to the needs of our organization.

In order to do that, the Board has taken some bold measures. We have implemented a major office re-structuring in order to manifest our missions. We expanded Jane's hours and duties so that she can pursue programming and development. We also hired an office manager,

Amira Glaser who, by the way, is a real pro, to run the office and free Jane up for her new duties. At this time I would like to officially welcome Amira Glaser as Office Manager to the staff at ACAT. We are lucky to have her. I would also like to welcome Jane to her new role as Executive Director. Even though we have been calling her that for as long as she's been here, her wings have been clipped by the limitations of her job description: too few hours and all the responsibilities of running the office. Now she can pursue areas of endeavor and vision befitting an Executive Director. I would also like to welcome Brooke Lieb who, as the Associate Director of the TCP, began her duties last Fall. She has already contributed so much by tracking and putting into form our many ideas for TCP development coming from such a rich and diverse faculty. One thing about Brooke I can say unequivocally, she is not a procrastinator! She has also been instrumental in further developing creative post graduate programming, which she will talk about later.

Joan Frost has agreed to continue her TCP Directorship until August 31, 2008. She has been working in various capacities in ACAT's administration since 1991. Now

continued on page 20

Report from the TCP - by Joan Frost

Currently we have 21 candidates. Our full capacity as presently structured is 24. We admitted 2 candidates last April, certified 2 in June, admitted 5 in the Fall and another 2 this Winter. So, you see, there is a lot of movement and both the 8 am class and the 10:30 am class are now multi-mixed level classes.

It has been going splendidly with Brooke as Associate Director. Her clarity of thinking, excellent computer skills, and generosity of spirit are serving me and ACAT well! It will be another year of the two of us running the Training Program, as the faculty voted us in for another year last Sunday, subject to Board approval. In 2004, I was licensed by New York State as Director of the Training Program for four years, so my state licensure is good until September 2008. One change will be that beginning in September, Brooke will be taking my place as ACAT Board representative.

Incidentally, Brooke completed the Training Director's Manual as part of her training to take on the many functions the position requires. We are now in a good position to pass on Training Director duties as needed.

It has been my mission this year, in addition to the day-to-day running of the Training Program with Brooke, to clarify, codify and refine our faculty review and development process. To that end, I visited all classes last year and met with faculty afterwards to give feedback.

Secondly, this Fall, instead of having our candidates fill out our annual faculty feedback forms in class, we asked them to take them home. Brooke coached them on filling them out using observations not mixed with evaluation and the trainees returned them to my box anonymously. Every level of our faculty received these forms — senior, associate, and volunteer. This was a lot for the trainees to think and write about. Our faculty found them to be very helpful and it seemed as if the anonymity helped elicit some feedback we might not oth-

erwise have received. I have met with some faculty members to go over the feedback and I intend to at least touch base with every faculty and volunteer faculty member in the next month.

Thirdly, we have instituted gratis half hour private lessons which the senior teacher of a class gives once a term to her or his volunteer teachers. The lesson is partially an expression of gratitude and partly an opportunity for the teacher to give the volunteer more in-depth feedback regarding his or her hands-on work. We have also expanded our volunteer faculty meetings to include subject matter requested by them and attending these meetings is now mandatory to being on the volunteer faculty.

Lastly, this term we are commencing what I am calling peer review. I have asked our teacher pairings (senior and associate) to meet for 45 minutes to an hour once per term to give each other feedback about the class and their teaching of it and to do a more in-depth hands-on exchange than is possible in the meeting time before class.

With all of the above, I hope to clarify and hone our teacher training skills and to have the level of our teacher training be the highest it can be.

Another change is the institution of our Curriculum Development Committee. During our September faculty retreat, all our faculty members chose a year they either felt particularly drawn to or would like to explore in more depth. We had break out groups of first year, second year, and third year with the wish of clarifying the particular needs and aspects of that year. Since we are now operating classes which contain 5 or 6 levels simultaneously, we felt it would serve us to start to identify the work in terms of first, second, and third years in addition to the way we presently do which is by term. Our wish is to update and refine our syllabus, which we have been working off of for the last 20 or so years, to reflect our present needs.



Joan Frost (5th from right) leads the ACAT Board (pictured) and membership in a Self-Care Break during the AGM

...30 years of teaching, continued from page 1
loons, decorations, and champagne and cake stations. Non-teaching guests arrived while the workshop was still in progress. Eventually Pearl entered the filled-to-capacity room to clapping and cheers.

Guests eventually found their seats, were served champagne and cake and sat back. The program of official comments began with Director of Training Joan Frost, former Director of Training Barbara Kent, and Nanette Walsh. Nanette has been interviewing Pearl and their work was featured in the recent AmSAT News headline article "Pearl Ausubel in her own Words". Following that were comments and tributes from family and friends, teachers, current and former students. Among the special guests were Pearl's son and daughter-in-law Frederick Ausubel and Stephanie Byrd, her daughter and granddaughter Laura and Melanie Beck and Dr. John Austin, who together with Pearl was responsible for getting the Alexander Technique on the research map by publishing "Enhanced Respiratory Muscular Function in Normal Adults after Lessons in Proprioceptive Musculoskeletal Education without Exercises".

In accordance with Pearl's wishes, the Pearl

Ausubel Fund will be a fund to support ACAT as it strives to establish and endowment. Pearl fervently hopes that down the line, as a result of our efforts now, ACAT will have an endowment which will support it to continue to fulfill mission goals unhampered by fluctuations in times of change.

ACAT faculty member Diane Young presented Pearl with the gifts from the faculty – an autographed chair and silver picture frame. Jane Tomkiewicz presented Pearl with a matching picture frame from the ACAT membership. A contribution from an anonymous donor launched the Pearl Ausubel Fund. A "check" was presented to Pearl by Elyse Echegaray and Melanie Beck. Contributions and pledges that day amounted to \$18,730.

Special thanks to the fundraising committee, Louis Songster and Phyllis Kubey, to faculty members Kim Jessor, Diane Young and Pat McGinnis for help with gifts, cake and catering. Thanks to Gwynne Marshall for catering tips. Thanks to Jenna Zabala, Victoria Moore, Alan Bowers, Amira Glaser and Donna Reid for general help and support. Thanks to Chris Beckstrom for close-up help.



Pearl is greeted as she enters ACAT after her workshop

Thank you for your Gifts & Pledges to the Pearl Ausubel Fund ACAT Trainees, Grads, Members, and Pearl's Guests

Marcia Amsterdam	Patty de Llosa	Yuki Komiyama	Hope Martin	Mollie Schnoll
Harriet Barry	Linda DeLeon	Phyllis Kubey	Victoria Moore	Carolyn Serota
Phyllis Bass	Sofia Engle	Timothy Lewis	Mariah Jackson Parker	Jessica Wolf
Bill Connington	Joan Frost	Julia MacKenzie	*Babette Marcus	Beryl Weinstein
			*in honor of the memory of Judith Lakin	

Special Thanks:

to Frederick Ausubel and Stephanie Bird for their gift of \$2,000
to John Austin for fulfilling his pledge of \$500 and for his pledges of \$500 for 2008 and 2009
to Charles Boxenbaum and family for gift of \$500
to Alan and Susan Bowers for fulfilling their pledge of \$1000 and applying for matching gift program
to Ken Browne for the gift made in the memory of Dr. Allen E. Grokoest of \$1000
to Michael Flack and Abigail Sloane for the gift of \$750

Minutes of the ACAT Annual Membership Meeting Held February 4, 2007

1) Chair Hope Martin called the meeting to order at approximately 1:15 pm and asked for proxies. With approximately 30 people in attendance and 20 proxies, a quorum was present.

2) **Approval of Minutes.** As the minutes from last year's meeting were emailed to membership, the Chair made a motion that the reading of the minutes be dispensed with and they be accepted as emailed. The motion was seconded and passed.

3) **Report from the Chair** (Chair Hope Martin's report is included in entirety beginning on page 3.) Hope's report was followed by a Self-Care Break.

4) **Treasurer/Executive Director's Report** The Executive Director reported in her capacity of Treasurer and turned the floor over to Board Member Harvey Rosen of the Finance Committee who presented the Annual Report of Directors for the last fiscal year (year ended Aug. 31 '06). Working with ACAT's independent accountant, we were able to present the final figures as submitted to the IRS and the Attorney General's Office. Due to the major gift from Larry King, net assets were increased \$86,000. The Treasurer then reported on this year's (ending Aug. 31 '07) budget. Year-to-date shows us right on track with our projected budget (except for the category of contributions, which is about \$15,000 better than the projections). However, our projection is for a final budget deficit of about \$70,000 due to the new staffing structure. It is hoped the new staffing will open up or increase selected revenue lines so the projected deficit will be decreased.

5) **TCP Report** (TCP Director Joan Frost's report is included in entirety on page 4.) Joan's report was followed by a Self-Care Break.

6) **By-law Amendment** The board asked members to approve a by-law amendment passed at a regular Board meeting on Sept. 21, 2006, increasing the number of Directors from seven to eight, with three members serving two year terms. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

7) **Election and Introduction of Directors** The chair announced the opening of a two-year term and a three-year term. She announced that both Michael Hanko and Harvey Rosen, who were currently serving those terms, were both willing to serve up to six months of the term in order that replacement Directors could be found. There were no other nominations from the floor. The Chair invited any members considering running to call her to

discuss service. Michael and Harvey's nominations were seconded. Both were unanimously approved.

8) Recognition of Service

Hope recognized Rebecca Tuffey. Rebecca chairs the Hands-on Demonstration Committee, formerly known as the Lecture Demonstration committee. Rebecca willingly took over the role of Chair when Brooke stepped down and has consistently volunteered her time as presenter and host. Thank you Rebecca.

Hope recognized Jenna Zabala "for being the consummate party planner and for all the help you offer to ACAT."

Hope recognized each of the volunteer members of the Board:

Harvey Rosen - "Harvey is thorough, tenacious, pays attention to details, has a great sense of ethics, and considers all the nuances. Harvey has scrutinized all aspects of the organization with his "eagle eye". He is fair minded, practical, very loyal to the organization, good hearted, sweet, and has great staying power and a great sense of humor. Harvey has given so much of himself. He is always on call to help and he has never said no. He is very generous of spirit. His expertise as a lawyer has been invaluable to our present growth spurt."

Louis Songster - "Louis is a great listener, level headed, and brings a whole set of skills never before seen at ACAT. He led us through the branding/identity project and, in fact, is leading us through the entire infrastructure shift. Louis brings business acumen and savvy previously, shall I say, wanting at ACAT. He has given a huge amount of his time and professional services to the organization."

Louis and Harvey are examples of Board members who are not Alexander teachers and who bring tremendous riches to our organization.

Ruth Diamond - "Ruth is the earth of our Board. Very grounded, she exhibits great maturity and experience. She has been in the work world and brings a lot of that experience to ACAT. As a recent grad, she brings a much needed perspective to the Board. Ruth is trustworthy and reliable. She's a seeker of truth. She doesn't let anything go by that doesn't feel right."

Michael Hanko - "When Michael speaks there's clarity and thoughtfulness. He isn't verbose, his words have meaning and weight. That is so valuable in packed meetings when emotions can run high. He has a quiet

continued on page 21

The Deborah Caplan/Alma Frank Scholarship Fund Special Mailing Raises \$2350 by Jane Tomkiewicz

One of the last projects that I worked on with H. Larry King was to notify Debby's many students of the Deborah Caplan/Alma Frank Scholarship Fund and invite them to share their memories or recollections for future publication. Following are some of the letters received. It was our hope to arrange a gathering honoring Debby, her work, the fund, etc. and we will inform members of such a gathering either through the ACATNews or ENews.

The letter below was received, along with a generous donation, from Associate Member Jane Meryll. I'd first heard of Jane Meryll while viewing a videotape of an ACAT-sponsored panel in 1994 entitled, "The Alexander Technique and Back Pain" that featured Debby Caplan, Judy Stern, and her husband, neurologist and neurosurgeon Jack Stern. In Judy's presentation, she mentioned how she was referred to Debby by her cousin Jane who let her know about the AT and her wonderful teacher/physical therapist Debby Caplan. Jane's lessons with Debby not only benefited her, but also resulted in Judy's meeting Debby, her taking lessons and eventually training and joining the ACAT faculty. Jane became an associate member of ACAT. When she received the mailing to Debby's past students, she responded with a generous donation and the following tribute.

Floating: Homage to Debby Caplan by Jane Meryll

It is said we don't die until the last person on earth who knew us dies. This must be true for Debby Caplan because so many of us continue to experience her healing hands and caring heart; the way she floated around her workroom. My medical issues when I met her - as now - were sciatica and lumbar spine disc degeneration at L4/5. My career as a performing artist - pianist/singer and composer - was curtailed at a crucial rising moment. My thoughts of not being able to sit at the piano without pain frightened me.

Every morning, the first thing I do is my 'Debby' routine. It's a series of breaths, well intentioned sitting stretches and bending poses. Her calm, firm gentle hands and vocal nasality still envelop me some 30 years after she literally worked her 'magic' on me one spring day in the mid-70s on West 76th Street. My musculoskeletal challenges have escalated since that first encounter. On really achy days, I feel blessed by her presence, in absentia.

My path to Debby goes like this. A good friend,

saxophonist Eddie Daniels, a devotee of homeopathy and alternative medicine, recommended something called Alexander Technique with a lady teaching at Juilliard: Judy Leibowitz. Overbooked, she referred me to Debby. I was skeptical, most likely from the ordeal I'd just been through. I weighed 105 lb., had stayed in traction for 2 weeks in a Hackensack hospital, and to avoid surgery popped percodan. She agreed to see me immediately. But first, I needed to consult with (and still do on anatomical and unclear medical matters) my cousin Judy, a physical therapist in Florida at that time. I called asking if she'd heard of the Alexander Technique. "No, but it certainly sounds like it can't hurt." We agreed that Debby's physical therapy medical background was a crucial piece for me. The Alexander Technique piqued cousin Judy's curiosity because she dealt with a lot of back pain in her own PT practice.

The apartment at 365 West End Ave, on the 13th floor, is etched in my memory: the piano at which we had many a lesson, the drum set, boyfriend (at that time) Larry padding around, her children Leah and Aaron, the roster of interesting, sometimes famous people before and after, the view, parking challenges waiting for me after driving down from Westchester three times each week at first. Our first lesson totally transformed me. If Alexander works - Debby made no guarantee - the first time can be miraculous. It was totally true for me. Not only did I respond immediately - to both the visual and kinesthetic nature of the work - it felt like divine intervention. I literally floated out her door, down the hall, out of the building and to my car. Without pain! Really. It was gone. I remember saying a prayer of thanks.

To this day, the power of this extraordinary experience gets me where I need to be when I have the sciatic pain, stress notwithstanding. I learned how to get rid of the sciatic pain in 10 minutes or less. Really.

Debby and I went on a journey that lasted more than 25 years. Her apartment became a haven for musculoskeletal peace. We became friends. She and Larry came to see me perform, which I soon returned to. With her guidance I changed my relationship with my first instrument: my body. Recently I realized that I had never considered becoming an Alexander teacher. The technique would have been a good match for me. But now, as an educator teaching piano, voice, and performance health, Alexander unquestionably informs my work. A skeleton dangles in my studio.

The part of this story I love is the 'cousin Judy' part. After hearing about my "float," she eventually flew

continued on page 8

...special mailing, continued from page 7

to NY to meet Debby. Ultimately she left Florida, trained with Debby as well as Judy Leibowitz (six degrees indeed!) and became Judy Stern, Certified Teacher of the Alexander Technique (CTAT), a devoted advocate of F.M., a highly accomplished Alexander teacher, and my dear constant reminder to widen and lengthen as Debby had taught me. We can endlessly share body stories and she generously keeps me up and wide. It is she who lovingly helps me reconnect, with shared Debby memories too, as I face the difficult challenges of my aging spine. She gifted me that skeleton I joyfully use in my teaching.

It's not always apparent how we impact the lives of those we work with, teaching, guiding, and mentoring. Debby clearly lives in me in a myriad of ways. She probably never thought of herself as having this kind of power. Her humility is only a small part of what was, to me, so lovely about her. In the end, it does seem unfair that she suffered pain herself. That beautiful day she was buried, I put roses on her grave and spoke to her reminding her how she will be in my bones and muscles as long as I am alive. I am grateful for her highly skilled craft, professionalism, and dedication to her family and those of us she cared for. When I recall her petite, stately dancer's body, I can still find that remarkable float.

Jane Meryll is a pianist, singer, arranger, and producer. She has performed on 100's of jingles, records and soundtracks. She runs the Jane Meryll Studio in Mamaroneck, is a co-founder of Stage FrightSolutions, and has been a great supporter of the Alexander Technique.

Thank You for Your Gifts to the Deborah Caplan/ Alma Frank Scholarship Fund

Harriet Barry
Janet Bertman
Louis Bertman
John Devol
Alan Finkel
Stephanie Jacquency
Carolyn Meadow
Coara Rosevear
Jane Meryll
Carolyn Monka Serota
Anne Rorimer
Holly Ruff
Clare Wesselman

In honor of Deborah Caplan by Holly Ruff

I first met Debby in the early 80's on the recommendation of my internist. My neck was bothering me, and he suggested that I see what she could do. At that time, I had never heard of the Alexander Technique, but what a difference it was to make in the way I moved and felt.

In our initial lessons, Debby taught me much about the principles of the Technique, and she educated my body to be lighter, longer and freer. The effects did not require conscious effort on my part, after she worked with me, my body just seemed to know what to do. The poor posture that I had had since childhood was greatly improved. The persistence of the effects was very impressive, and I got to a point where weekly lessons were not necessary. Over the years, until a few months before her death, I could come to her for two or three sessions to remind my body to move freely and in good alignment.

Debby was a wonder at diagnosing the effects of particular exercises on my specific body. In our initial sessions, we went over my current exercise program. She not only told me what exercises to avoid, but also explained why they were a problem for my back and neck. Sure enough, by avoiding those exercises, the discomfort in my neck disappeared. Later, when I was learning Tai Chi, she would watch carefully while I went through the form and corrected me when necessary, a great boon to my practice.

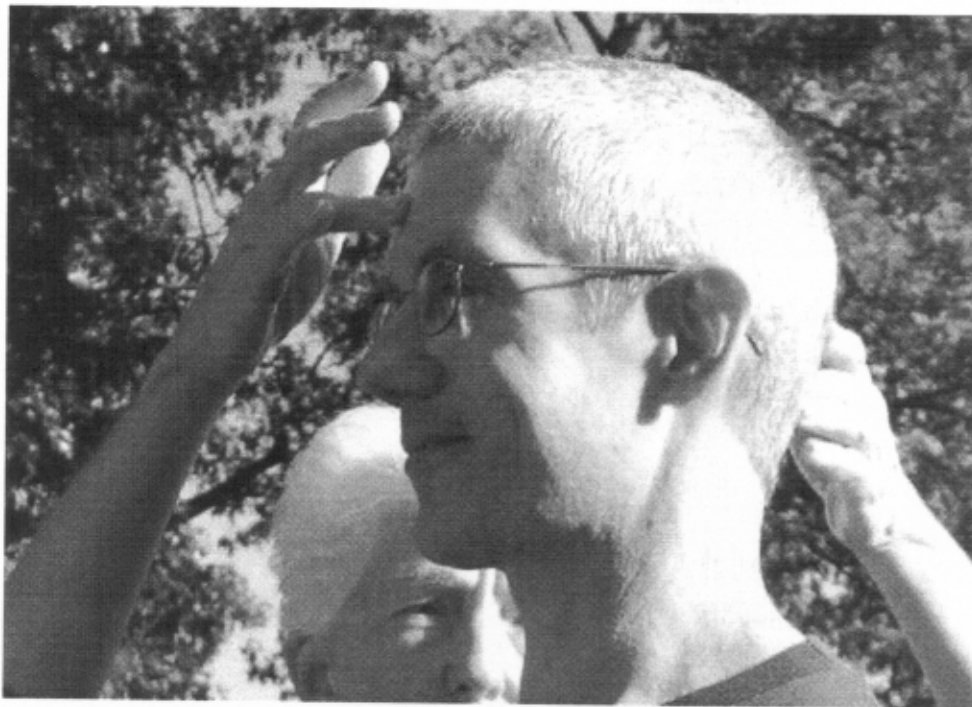
Debby and I always had a lot to talk about in our session together. Once, when she apologized for having to raise her fee, I assured her that coming for an Alexander lesson with her was a good as seeing a therapist. At the time that she was working on the video, she shared her anxiety about it beforehand and her pleasure afterwards at the way it turned out. Thank goodness we have the video!

I miss Debby as a friend and a teacher. But even now, whenever I feel myself slumping, I hear her saying: "Head leading up, torso following."

• • • • •

And finally, in addition to the letters above from those who worked with Debby over the years, came the following note accompanying a generous donation of \$100.00, "Please note: I only met her once, but I was very impressed!"

Remembering Robert Cohen



On January 28, 2007, Robert's family, friends, colleagues and students gathered at ACAT to celebrate his life. Brooke Lieb welcomed the large group that filled the studio. Nanette Walsh began the program by speaking of Robert and introducing the video of "The Use of the Valkyries", a spoof on Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries". Robert produced and directed the videod skit for the graduating class of 1995. Robert also starred in the video doing a fabulous send up of Alistair Cooke. Robert's humor was enjoyed by all as the group laughed at the cast playing their roles under Robert's terrific direction.

After the video was shown, Joan Frost spoke as friend, colleague, and director of ACAT. Then I spoke (my comments can be found below – on page 12). I also invited all to share their thoughts and feelings for Robert. The Quaker-style sharing had an ease and grace to it as, with deep feeling and poise, one after another remembered Robert's courage, brilliance, warmth, friendship, consideration, humor, insight, talent, honesty and the unique way he embodied the Alexander Technique. We all felt grateful for having known Robert and many of us felt that the example of his life was a wonderful lesson in how to live.

Colleagues at ACAT expressed appreciation for Robert's courage and integrity in focusing the faculty's attention on how their communication could be more skillful, which led to the faculty's involvement with Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication. Students at

ACAT spoke of his friendliness and mentoring support. His physical attributes were also praised, including his voice, the size of his hands and the use of his hands for expression as well as for teaching. Robert's unusual manner and attention to detail when self-directing were also mentioned. Some spoke of how smart and knowledgeable Robert was in so many fields including music, especially vocal music, singers, and language. Indeed, Robert's appetite for life was large as was his appetite for food and many mentioned the enjoyable times they had with him at concerts and over meals. Even during his illness, Robert's enjoyment of food continued.

Robert's nephew David and niece Devon spoke movingly of how much their uncle meant to them, how he encouraged them to make their way in the world and taught them how friends could become their family. Many long-time friends came including his childhood best friend Michael Wolk, and his colleagues and friends from the law firm where Robert worked. Even new friends he'd just met were moved to come and speak.

After the sharing, another video featuring Robert was presented showing Robert full of joy, life and humor at his birthday party last November. The birthday video also included excerpts of Robert reading several of his own short stories, and again, his joie de vive and humor were enjoyed by all.

To bring the Memorial to a close, I led the group in a short meditation and then sang "Simply Beautiful." The words and lyrics, both by Kathryn Cokkinoa, are included here as they seemed to express our feelings for Robert.

Simply Beautiful

From our hearts, we send you roses
And a garland of sweetest love.
We will remember that you are with us
And that you'll always be our friend.
Simply beautiful, you are beautiful;
And we thank you for everything you gave.

I was going through Robert's file at ACAT, wondering when he was certified and when he began teaching and I came across this statement by him: "I love ACAT as my home in the Alexander Technique."

I very much felt Robert's dedication to ACAT. He volunteered his time for many years as a teacher in the training program. Eventually a position opened and he became a member of our Associate Faculty. However, in terms when I had no space for him in the schedule, he continued to come in as a volunteer and continued to attend every faculty meeting he could whether he was on the schedule or not.

Robert valued the Alexander Technique so highly, it was so precious to him, he wanted to keep teaching a part-time occupation and not be solely reliant on it for income. I greatly respected his integrity in that.

Robert had some insights and capacities unique to him which he offered as gifts to ACAT. One was his interest in how we handle the in-class reading discussions of Alexander's books and other related works. Robert had a particularly keen passion for this process and had a talent for engaging the trainees' thinking. He developed a format he found to be successful and led a workshop for our faculty in using it at one of our faculty retreats a number of years ago. Many of our faculty continue to use it.

Robert cared deeply about our faculty meetings. Not long ago (maybe a year or so), he offered me a suggestion toward using our time more efficiently in our discussion of the trainees. More significantly, 5 or 6 years ago he let me know of his discomfort in how we were speaking about our candidates. He came up with a suggestion as to how to verbalize what we wished to

Simply beautiful, you are beautiful;
And we know you'll always be our friend.
From my heart, I send you music
To celebrate, celebrate your soul.
May the one Light ever be with you
And bless your journey home.
You were tireless, in your caring,
Such a brother to every living thing.
Simply beautiful, you are beautiful;
And I know you always be my friend.
And I will always be your friend.

- by Pat McGinnis

communicate that separated out observation from evaluation and had us owning our feelings. This in turn led to our in-depth work with Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication and has greatly transformed our meetings. As a result, we have become much clearer in our communications and much closer as a group.

In our world today where there is so much stimulus and so little time, Robert always took the time and care to offer his appreciation and thanks. In my position as Director, I felt this very particularly from him.

The last time I saw Robert was at St. Vincent's Hospital. I dropped by to say hello and give him some hands-on. He was very thin and frail. He seemed to be drifting in and out of wakefulness but all the while he had a smile on his face. At one point, I was kneeling on the hospital bed behind his head, giving him direction. He opened his eyes, smiled, and said 'God is good.' I felt like an angel. Another gift from Robert.

- from Joan Frost (as read at the memorial)

Training is a fog to me now, but I have clear memories of turns with Robert sometime in my first year. What I remember most vividly is that I felt safe around Robert; safe to be myself, safe to be uncomfortable, safe not to know what was going on. I was singing professionally at that time and I remember sharing with him about music, German Leader in particular. Of course I continued to see Robert over the years but those first turns really stick strongly in my mind. I am sad that I never got around to letting Robert know that he really made an impact on me with his very presence during a very confused and vulnerable time in my life; I never conveyed my gratitude to him for that.

- from Tara Sullivan (in an email to ACAT)

I'd like to personally welcome Devon and David Cohen, Robert's niece and nephew, whom he loved as if they were his own children. I would also like to welcome Robert's lifelong friend Michael Wolk, his constant advocate, along with Robert's dear friend Laura Hembree.

Robert once told me that as a young man when all his contemporaries were listening to the Beatles he could be found in the music library with head phones on listening to opera -- sobbing. He'd said that opera saved his life. He became keenly interested in the psyche and all its dramatic and varied expressions but above all as it was revealed in the art of song.

At the time of my training, Robert, recently graduated, was fascinated by the psychological dynamics that inevitably arose amongst trainees. For some time he had longed to use Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" as a kind of mock, psycho-drama to highlight, and make light of the tensions that would so predictably arise.

Sure enough, in my final term the tension between my classmates was at an all-time peak. Robert saw this as the perfect opportunity to bring to life his Alexandrian send-up of Wagner, which he entitled: "The Use of the Valkyries." We rehearsed nearly every day during our last term; however, upon viewing, this might be hard to imagine -- as you'll soon see -- the performance itself went entirely awry when during the chorus we lost track of the music -- well, it certainly was never about getting it right. Nonetheless (and true to Alexander's principles) it was the means whereby this performance came to being that mattered. I don't know how we would have gotten through that final term without those rehearsals. Robert had come to our rescue with song and laughter and removed the fabled thorn from our paw, I was eternally grateful and our friendship was sealed.

The theme of our graduation was "Come As You Aren't" we thought the camp quality of the evening would be perfect for Robert's little send up. Roberto Mainetti arrived resplendent in drag as an opera diva. I cut off my long (then brown) hair and dressed in a tux and tails, and Claudia Peyton donned red lipstick and wore a little black dress. She was not the "little black dress" type. (As I recall someone else came in a little black dress that night...) Robert, perfectly appointed, arrived as Alistair Cooke. With deadpan aplomb he introduced our Wagnerian debacle.

[At this point Michael Wolk's neorealist post modern cinema-verite, docudrama -- also known as home video production of Robert Lee Cohen's operatic spoof "The Use of the Valkyries" was shown.]

In the recent words from an email of Madame Roberto Mainetti, "it is nice to remember how good it can get!"

Robert's friendship was a consistent reminder of just that. Whether he was introducing me to the magnificently pure voice of Lorraine Hunt Lieberson (here is a picture of her that he used as his screen saver) or just having a casual conversation, there was a crystalline brilliance in nearly every exchange. I think it came from his deep commitment to intentionality.

I recently read a book about Love as a cultivated discipline in Wisdom traditions. It said that intentionality in speaking and the ability to listen are requirements for any relationship (human or transcendent) which has the right to use the word Love. I marveled at Robert's facility for language and will stand forever awed by the intentionality with which he used it. I believe it is what made a friendship with him so exciting and what gave it such a depth of intimacy.

This kind of friendship is in itself an art, one which Robert honed to its absolute essentials in the final months of his life. One evening, a couple of weeks before he died, while I was visiting with him he seemed unusually distant. When I asked if everything was ok between us, he thought for a bit and said that he was having a hard time: he wasn't sure if the increased pain in his gut was indigestion or a signal of his final decline, so he said he was feeling sheepish because I had brought dinner and come there to visit with him and he didn't know where he was and he didn't know how to relate to me from that unknown place. I blathered on for a while about him not needing to worry about me. When I was done, he looked at me and said, "That's bullshit."

It would have been the final indignity to take away from Robert his right to care for me as I cared for him. And bless his heart and brilliant mind right up to the last days of his life he did not let me do it.

- from Nanette Walsh (as read at the memorial)