

If we sit together today remembering you, will there then be closure? Will we close that door in our memory and eventually forget to open it again? I am afraid of my own forgetting, how easy to go on, how thick my skin has become over the years, a strategy to not have to feel how raw it is to live on without your presence. This is about my loss. You, on the other hand, remain shining, like always. In your last days, your suffering still included your exquisite consciousness. You brought your skill in living even into the breaking down of the physical. I saw you willing to engage with the elegant ephemeral mystery, pulling it in effortlessly to assist the task you had in front of you, the arduous task of remaining alive, of eating and walking, and I was inspired by you! But that was no different from the many happy occasions I had to be in community with you; exchanging hands-on during faculty retreats, and especially listening to what you would say; your passion for using the Alexander Technique to live an examined, and embodied life. But then there is more, and this is what goes way beyond the ordinary. Even in your last days you still held, in your compassion, a place for community for both of us. I feel grateful to have sat with you when you ate, you having asked me not to speak for the moment, as you felt free to either eat, or to communicate, but not both. You knew your self that well, and honored both of us in asking. You spoke the words to set a sacred space for us to be together; in taking care of yourself, you brought me in with you. Even in your last days, you gave me the gift. I will not forget you Robert.

- from Diane Young

In a song I recently heard, the singer said he asked his friend what his friend did when he got the news he was dying and his friend replied:

'I went sky diving. I went Rocky Mountain climbing.
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named Blue Man Two.
And I loved deeper. And I spoke sweeter.
And I watched an eagle as it was flying.
Someday I hope you'll get the chance to live like you were
dying, like tomorrow was a gift.'

Robert might not have engaged in those specific activities. But he did live each day, courageously, fully engaged and committed to life. Of course he lived that way before he found out he was ill. He gave so much to us here at ACAT. He had a unique way of seeing things, getting to the core, and returning us to the real issue whenever we'd get off track. I always looked forward to what Robert would say at faculty meetings. As friends, we shared a love for music and singing. We went to concerts. I loved the funny lyrics he'd make up to standard songs for special occa-

sions.

When Robert became sick, he told me he was able to find the gift in his illness. He was open to alternative therapies. He came over to my studio and I did some healing work I've been studying. Robert was able to receive; so the work was a joy. One part of the work is to tune in and trust one's intuition to bring information through images, sounds and insights. I shared what I received with Robert. The one time that stands out was when I was at Robert's head, I heard that God was pleased with Robert in words similar to those spoken in the Bible at Jesus' baptism. And I believe it must be true.

Robert continues to give me gifts. The morning he died, I thought to go to Jacob Perlow. We'd said goodbye the day before, so I didn't know if I should go. When I woke I thought of Robert. I saw him at Jacob Perlow in my mind. He shook his head as if to say don't come. So I stayed home, prayed and dedicated my day to him. I had an unusually peaceful morning. When the news of his death came, I felt deep sorrow, but the peace remained. I felt Robert's special presence, love and peace all through the morning and afternoon. Now I continue to find peace, courage and happiness in life when I think on Robert and how courageously and fully he lived.

- from Pat McGinnis (as read at the memorial)

Robert's genius extended to every aspect of him: mind, body, and spirit. As a fellow language enthusiast, I appreciated the adroitness of thinking he brought to leading our reading classes when I was a trainee. Robert quietly impressed us with his thorough familiarity with the materials and boisterously impressed us with his wit. Of all of the physically remarkable traits Robert possessed, I can most vividly conjure up in my mind's eye his highly individual and oddly graceful way of using his hands to gesture when speaking. Robert's spirit included a boundless generosity, which he attempted to lavish on me when I was a brand new teacher. Robert generously offered to do exchanges with me, but I was too in awe of him to consider myself worthy of this reciprocity, and did not encourage our continued working together. Now I am sad that I wasted my chance to work more closely with this remarkable man, whose voice I still hear practically daily, admonishing me to "see the room."

- from Michael Hanko (in an email to ACAT)



Remembering Judith Lakin

Family, friends and colleagues of Judith Lakin gathered at ACAT the morning of Sunday, February 4, to commemorate her passing a few weeks earlier. Judy's sister, Marge, from Santa Barbara, Judy's husband, Richard David, her close friend, Harriet, and others from near and far joined our ACAT community to share stories about Judy and how she has touched each of our lives.

Joan Frost opened the memorial, relating tales of times she shared with Judith, then read the tribute sent by Judith's student, colleague and friend, Laurie Currie. Another friend of Judy's gave everyone our own copy of a photo of Judy, smiling widely as she held Augie, her and Richard's dog, in her arms. Joan had hung a photo of Judy in a lavender garden, taken at the Alexander Congress in Oxford, which still hangs in ACAT.

Though Judy and Richard did not have children of their own, Judy touched many children's lives. Judy taught art in the New York City Public Schools (Whoopie Goldberg was one of her students!) and had close relationships with the children of her friends. She was also like an aunt to the children of her neighbors at the weekend home she and Richard had in Saugerties. Many of these children, now young adults, were there to celebrate Judy with us.

After an hour or so of spontaneous sharing, Marge told us how she and Judy always had music in their lives, and she had memories of Judy singing to her. Harriet began singing "Over the Rainbow" and the group joined in. We sang our hearts out, our voices bringing us together in our celebration of this special person we had come to know, and love. - by Joan Frost and Brooke Lieb

I first got to know Judy when we drove together in December 1982 to Lincoln, Nebraska to one of Marj Barstow's Winter workshops. She and I went to many of Marj's workshops over the years. The last one was in Washington D.C. when Marj enlightened me about my gesturing my head with tension when speaking. Since Marj admonished me to do something about it, I didn't turn to look at Judy once during the whole 4 hour conversation on the drive home. It is a tribute to Judy that I felt comfortable enough in her presence to adhere to the unfamiliar.

Judy and I co-taught group classes at the West Side Y on 63rd Street, then when I gave birth to my daughter, she continued there on her own for many years. Through the practice of teaching group classes, Judy became very adept at clearly articulating the concepts of the technique. She had a gift for engaging people and getting them to think.

Every other week Judy and I did an exchange. I always had the feeling that Judy gave more to me than I did to her. Feeling uncomfortable, I eventually told her this. She said she felt the opposite to be true. I was amazed. One day she showed up at my house with a gorgeous, shiny, stainless steel compost container. What a gift, and what an improvement! I was so touched that when she found them in a catalog and bought herself one, she thought to buy me one too!

Judy was a wonderful companion. We felt at ease around each other. I loved her realness, her warmth and her sense of adventure. I usually picked up Judy at her home in New Jersey and brought her to and from faculty meetings. During one of these times within the last year, on the West Side Highway near 23rd street, my brakes suddenly stopped working. We crawled all the way to

On behalf of Judy's family and friends, I want to give deep thanks to the staff and students of ACAT for hosting such a magnificent and moving tribute to Judy. You enabled us to join together to celebrate, with joy and tears, who she was and all that she contributed as a master teacher and remarkable human being.

We are so grateful for her life, and the special meaning the Alexander Technique brought to it.

- Harriet Lyons

I just wanted to express my condolences towards two of many inspirational teachers I have had the gift of

ACAT and parked safely. At the end of the meeting later that evening, it was then a question of how to get home. Should we call Richard for help? Call the AAA and be towed? In the end I decided to risk driving. Judy was such a sport. She was right there with me. We drove home at 30 mph the whole way and we were both surprised at how enjoyable it was to go so slowly!

I remember thinking, as time went along and Judy's health seemed precarious, what a loss to ACAT if Judy didn't make it. She was so skilled at picking up what my body needed and at taking me to new places I couldn't have gone without her help. At the same time she was so positive and supportive. I really felt her belief in me.

I was reading in Judy's file at ACAT some of her statements about her work. She said "I am interested in taking the initial release into length and width that happens when one moves up into movement and carrying this into the activity."

In the past few months when I would go over to Judy's and work on her, she looked so beautiful. It seemed as if the vulnerable, child Judy was coming through. And the last time I saw her, she looked me in the eyes while sitting on her couch and raised her hands up and down. It seemed like a gesture both of helplessness and acceptance.

I treasured Judy's honesty and sincerity. I always knew I could trust Judy to tell it like it was. I know I meant a lot to her. With Judy, I felt loved and valued. She was a real friend.

- Joan Frost (as read at the memorial)

being exposed to at this institution. Robert and especially Judy are bricks in my bridge that allows me to extend this work to others. I most remember Judith's unique way of knowing. I love her and will miss her presence. I send this letter to ACAT like a silent prayer of gratitude to both Robert and Judith for maintaining this institution. My thanks for all this school does.

Warmest heart-felt condolences to both mentors and friends.

- Kecia Chin (in an email to ACAT)

In 1987 I attended a group class in the Alexander Technique at the West Side YMCA. Judith Lakin was the teacher. I knew next to nothing about the technique at the time, nor did I know Judith on that first day of class. I know now that it was one of those rare, life-changing days. Something truly deep and magical happened for me in that first class. For one thing, I received my first introduction to the Alexander Technique by a woman whose presentation of it was remarkably skillful and clear – she illuminated a whole new world! That in itself was huge, but it wasn't only that. It was just as much Judith's unique presence that was enchanting, and captured my fascination and especially my respect.

The image of Judith that day will never leave me. There she sat with a casual elegance that was striking, on the front edge of her chair, holding a little skeleton on her knee. With simplicity, clarity, and a sense of calm conviction, she spoke about Alexander's discovery, and showed us what happened when the skeleton's head (and our heads!) went back and down. She wore a soft green cotton knit dress – comfortable, practical and elegant all at once – with soft black comfy boots. She went around the circle putting those delicate, clear hands on each one of us. I watched an elderly woman spiral up out of a seemingly permanent downward twist, looking 10 years younger; a tough-looking, muscle-bound man seemed to melt into something much more pliable; a high-strung, job-stressed woman became mellow and calmly alert before my eyes. With barely a touch on my own neck and head, Judith made the ache in my lower back disappear on the spot, and my anxiety dissolve into thin air. It seemed almost surreal, those changes, but Judith had an air of assurance about her, and it was in her hands as well. It was an almost matter-of-fact quality – as if she *knew* that the magic would happen with that light touch of her hands, every time. I think of how many times since then I have heard her say "Trust the thinking". I see now that that's just what she did.

After the group class ended, I got to know Judy better while taking private lessons with her. What an interesting woman she was! Sophisticated and wise; an artist herself, and an art teacher in public schools for many years; an intelligent, open-minded and opinionated woman who would willingly and frankly discuss any idea you presented her with. She was strong, resilient, and independent, with a warm and loving way about her. For awhile she had one of her own drawings on a wall by her studio – long, slender tree branches with lots of delicate, bright pink blossoms on them. I loved this drawing – the delicacy of it reminds me of the delicacy of her hands, and she would often speak of delicacy, too – the delicate balance of the head on the spine. The way she chose to live her life was an example that I had not known existed

before. I was somewhat in awe of her because of all this, and thought she was just about the coolest woman I'd ever known.

Over time I learned that Judy really loved the quirks and idiosyncrasies she saw in her fellow human beings, and she seemed to love the many creative ways that people express themselves. I loved the fact that her dinner plates were one of a kind – each one was a piece of hand-made pottery, each one was interesting in its own way, and none of them matched. Her home was full of hand-made things she had acquired from the creative efforts of others – patchwork quilts, embroidered pillow cases, pottery, art work, all sorts of things. She valued individuality and creativity, and she valued the thoughtful, sensitive use (direction!) of personal energies. This carried into her teaching, and into her relationships with her colleagues.

Judy had enormous respect for all of us in spite of our character flaws. I admired the way she looked toward what was best in people. I have never known her to dwell on anyone's shortcomings – she had a way of seeing and supporting the positive qualities in others that was unwavering, no matter how I tried to test it (which I did every now and then to no avail). There was a time when I had "thrown in the towel" on trying to keep teaching the Alexander Technique, and she would continue to introduce me to people as an Alexander teacher. Every time she did that, it healed my sense of defeat a little bit more, until I actually started to believe it again myself. I know she gave many of us the personal support we needed during difficult times – it was one of her gifts.

There is so much about Judy to admire, to respect and to love. It is impossible to capture her character in a few words. She helped me to grow and to become a better person, through her personal example, through her teaching, and through her friendship. I feel extraordinarily fortunate to have known her, and I will be forever grateful for all she gave.

- written by Laurie Currie and read by Joan Frost at the memorial

One day in class, during my first year of training, Judy gave me my back. I've got only a vague recollection of how it happened, but it still remains one of the most memorable experiences of my Alexander life. It must have been around Thanksgiving, because that day I got picked up from training by my aunt and we drove the 6 hours to Rochester to visit my family. I remember sitting there in the car, just completely astounded by the presence of my back, and thinking, "WOW! How did Judy do that?"

Judy was my private teacher for a few terms and I always admired her humor, her laugh, her many beautiful rings and bracelets, and her bracing honesty. She told me one day that she often didn't understand what I was saying to her and reflected back to me that I often said that things seemed 'hard.' This rocked my world, because from

the beginning I had this feeling that Judy *got* me. Maybe that was why she said those things in such a direct way, I don't know, but that she was so very honest is something that stays with me still.

Putting together this newsletter with all the remembrances of Debby, Robert and Judy has been a very moving experience for me. While newsletter production is an intensely solitary activity, this issue has been filled with life and a strange sort of connection as I've been deeply touched by thoughts of my teachers. Although I am living in New Zealand, on the other side of the world from most of you, the fact that so many of us were touched by the same devoted friends and teachers makes me feel our closeness.

- Tara Sullivan, in an email to ACAT

My friend Judy passed away yesterday, finally succumbing to the damages of lung cancer. Such a beautiful and inspiring person. I'm so thankful to have heard her think and smile and kvetch and muse and worry and plow through the challenges of a conscious life. Consciousness oft precedes responsibility and there are so many things about this life, that we have knowledge of but little effect on. I so appreciated how she struggled with that unbalance. And I hope her conscious struggle will continue to fuel mine.

In loving memory of my friend, I send this remembrance to you, my dear loved ones.

- Kathy Miranda (in an email to ACAT)



Progress Not Perfection with Barbara Kent

Members/NonMembers Fee \$1650/\$1725

We are very pleased to be able to offer another section of *Progress not Perfection* with Barbara Kent. This intensive refresher course is especially designed for teachers who want to hone their skills under discerning supervision. The course will consist of three three-day weekends and five private lessons.

Participants will meet Fridays 3:30pm - 8:30pm, Saturdays and Sundays 10:00am - 4 pm. In addition, each participant will have 5 private lessons with Barbara at her apartment.

Module I: Nov. 9 -11, 2007 Principles and Procedures Working to principle as we explore common procedures in teaching: Monkey/lunge, hands-on-the-back-of-the-chair, chairwork.

Module II: Jan. 18-20, 2008, Listening Hands Focus on listening through our hands as we trust the energetic message to invite re-organization in chair and table work

Module III: Mar. 7-9, 2008, Breath and Sound Explore breath and sound in table work and in movement: through the whispered ah, speaking, sustaining sound(toning) and singing.

The course is open to a maximum of 12 people.

To register for any event on this page
Call (212) 633-2229 or email jane@acatnyc.org.

ACAT's Summer Intensive – Open to All

ACAT held its first Summer Intensive from July 23 - July 27. It was very enthusiastically received. We hope to repeat this programming regularly. Participants met from 9am-12pm every day and also had a private lesson. The program brought together students and teachers of all levels, to learn in a rich group setting. The classes were structured like the teacher training program so participants had to chance to see how we work with teachers and trainees. The intensive was co-taught by Joan Frost, Kim Jessor and Brooke Lieb.

Topics covered over the week included: a review of the Alexander principles of primary control, thinking/directing, inhibition and endgaining; an introduction to and exploration of Monkey; walking and breathing/vocalizing. Participants were also assigned homework nightly, being asked to write a paragraph on various themes.

Each student received an individual turn every day, learned a self-lesson sequence, and participated in exercises and activities to illustrate concepts including singing, writing, doing yoga, putting on and taking off a backpack, and using a mouse at a computer.

By the end of the week, our participants were tired, and deeply satisfied. One person shared "The intensive was an exhilarating learning experience. I can't say enough about how wonderful it was and how much I learned." The overall response made for a great success for our inaugural Summer Intensive. Look for more expanded offerings like this in the future.

Fall Member/Associate Event :

ACAT welcomes Diana Devitt Dawson

ACAT welcomes guest teacher Diana Devitt Dawson, Director of Training, The Alexander Institute, Sydney, Australia to present to trainees as well as to membership. She will teach at the TCP as well as the following:

"Alexander's INDIRECT means to Psychophysical Change and Freedom: Teaching students to self-work/ Stages students go through in order to self-work"

Friday Nov. 2, 6:30-9 pm, ACAT

No Fee Event for Members/Associates

Diana will discuss and demonstrate "working to principle" with Alexander's means-whereby process, recognizing the indirect nature of the lessons, and stages students go through in order to self-work. After her presentation and demonstration, she will lead attendees through work to explore her themes.

Talking Hands Workshop - Keeping it Simple

Sat. Nov. 3, 10am - 4 pm, \$150 fee

Diana Devitt Dawson

The quality of the Alexander teacher's *hands-on* work is vitally important for many reasons. It is after all, the experiential nature of lessons that allows pupils to understand more fully *how* to begin to self-work.

How can we engage our pupil's attention to come to the moment and leave habitual habits of thought? How can we teach our pupil to '*think differently?*' How do we teach our pupil, *not to 'do' or try* and "*feel out what is happening?*" And how can we keep it simple for both ourselves and our pupils? A clue is at hand... in his book *The Alexander Technique - As I See It*, Patrick Macdonald states that "*non-doing and direction-sending are the life's blood of the Alexander Technique.*" **Full day workshop**

Alexander and Lamaze by Harriet R. Barry

Many, although not enough, know that the Alexander Technique is a mind/body process. The aim is to improve physical coordination which subtly changes body function in a more efficient way.

I have been a student of the Alexander Technique since the 1960s. I trained at ACAT from 1975-78 and am currently addressing an outstanding matter with directors at ACAT that prevented me from certifying at that time. As a former professional singer I sensed I had more vocal range, but was unable to achieve it at that time. My choral conductor, Ilana Rubinfeld suggested I begin Alexander lessons. The results were profound with many body and movement changes, increased breath capacity and greater vocal range.

In 1968, with my first pregnancy, I continued my Alexander lessons and I clearly recall that at one of my pre-natal visits, the obstetrician called in the nurse to observe my physique. He said, "Take a look at her back. I have never seen such minimal lordosis in a pregnant woman." During pregnancy, back pain is common and is usually the result of a gradual increase in the lumbar curve, a negative adaptation of use to the increased weight of a growing baby in utero.

We possess ease of movement before, at and after birth. Environmental and emotional settings contribute to faulty posture and negative patterns of body use. This may begin with how care providers support us as we begin to turn over, stand, crawl and walk. When they project what "they" want or expect how we should perform, the imprinting of negative habits of body usage or movement become the norm. They become layered over with more negative use as we enter primary school and participate in physical activities without any direction to assist us. If there is direction, it is basic brute force to help us accomplish the act adding more bad usage/habits, which ultimately, makes movement less efficient, less comfortable and can create damage and pain.

A pregnant woman's body becomes more sensitive with a greater possibility to accept change. She is producing a hormone called Relaxin which softens pelvic connective tissue in readiness to push out a baby. With Alexander lessons, we become more aware of faulty body use and at this time, may even assist to make change.

Both Lamaze and Alexander are mind/body expe-

riences. The Lamaze Method is actually "Psycho-prophylaxis" – mind prevention to pain. The Alexander Technique is a psychophysical process – totally compatible with the Lamaze Method – a perfect match. The Alexander Technique is preparation for pregnancy (and life) and the Lamaze Method is preparation for labor and birth.

The Alexander Technique not only offers basic information as to how we move and coordinate our bodies, but combined with the Lamaze Method, it offers the possibility, in a supportive environment, of a shorter labor with diminished pain.

I approach most things, including pregnancy and birth with a Holistic philosophy. Before I implement any Alexander work with my pregnant couples, I explain that there are two models of birth: 1) home, birthing center, midwifery; and 2) medical model.

In #1, the care provider observes and supports without routine intervention. #2, labor and birth is managed and controlled with routine medical intervention applied.

If one is going through normal physical experience, and is not sick, but yet is in a hospital where people are "treated" or die (yes, some get well), it automatically creates a high degree of tension added to fear that already exists.

Eliminating negative thoughts was a primary concern of the English obstetrician Grantley Dick-Read who thoroughly understood the fear/tension/pain cycle leading to flight/fight leading to out of control, holding the breath and the complete inability to relax to any degree. Relaxation was primary for Dick-Read. Lamaze, on the other hand, because of how the birth experience was handled, felt there should be an approach that women had to learn different patterns of breathing as needed during labor. Occupying the cerebral cortex with different stimuli, breathing techniques, focusing and today, we add visualization, will allow women to relax much more, even if not totally.

There is a book titled *Body Mechanics* from which F.M. Alexander quotes: "referring to...gynaecological disability...can be explained on the basis that the compensation for long standing faulty body mechanics has been broken by the burden of pregnancy...a proper understanding of the correlation of faulty body mechanics would avoid much of this trouble..."

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Dancing Tango in Buenos Aires and the Alexander Technique by Sabine Heubusch

Author's note: Special thanks to Jane Tomkiewicz for inspiring me to write this article.

Next to New York City, Buenos Aires had the largest immigration boom in the late 18th and early 19th century. By 1920, Argentina grew from a small settlement to one of the richest nations in the world. Tango was an important expression of Argentine culture until 1950 when Argentina underwent a military regime and Tango was replaced by Rock and Roll. The fall of the military junta in 1983 saw Tango make a come back which has continued to the present time. Despite having undergone massive economical crises in 2001, Buenos Aires is still a functioning, elegant and charming cosmopolitan city with strong ties to both its tradition as well as modern influences.

The Origin of Tango is not well documented, because it was the poor and the working class people who created Tango in the mid 19th century. Dancing in the port and in prostitution places was a way to compensate for the misery of long labor. Tango has elements of European dances such as flamenco, polka, and waltz as well as Cuban and African rhythms. Tango was the 1st ballroom dance that was improvised. Argentina Tango consists of 3 dances: Tango, Waltz, and Milonga.

My experience with learning, practicing and teaching the Alexander Technique has been nourishing my desire to learn new things... so I began to dance Tango a year and a half ago, just before my 1st visit to Argentina. Realizing that it is best to learn Tango from the source, I returned for a 2nd visit in April 2007 for 2 weeks. I practiced inhibition by leaving out sight-seeing and other distractions and devoted my time exclusively to Tango. This was not an easy choice for someone like me who is interested in so many things, but gave me the advantage of being grounded and focused. I went to Milongas (dance halls) every night until early morning, slept late, did some yoga and meditation in my room, walked a bit in the beautiful late summer weather and took one or two classes in the evening before having a fancy dinner at

standard Argentine dinner time – 10:00PM!. What a life! Many tangerinos/tangerinas in Buenos Aires live this life style, with the difference of having to work a day job and recovering with naps and coffee.

I had no idea how complex Tango is, and how much it requires: walking technique, step combinations, embellishments, balance, strength, and, most importantly, the skill to improvise/to be able to respond to a partner and the music. The man decides how to put the steps together - which is the skill of improvisation - and the woman follows, but cannot anticipate the movement until he initiates. A good leader brings pauses into the dance, these are the moments of stillness. When I was a beginner, most men would tell me to wait, as I was eager to

figure out what to do next, making sure I would be a good follower. I noticed how I started to hold my breath and built up tension in my torso and elbows. By seeing what I did, I was later able to use the pauses as an opportunity to renew the flow of energy, breath, and connection. The difference of knowing and living with the Alexander Technique is that patterns of compensations come into my awareness more quickly and I can

use my kinesthetic intelligence to remember the patterns, using inhibition not to do them over and over again. One of my 1st teachers, of the older generation, taught me that I should never allow a man to squeeze my hand, and if he does so, that I should gently move my hand out of his grip. Mostly men seem to be open for the feed back, though a few minutes later, the grip comes back, which can be quite painful for the hand and wrist. And there is a choice a woman has, which I learned later, (believing that only the men can end the dance). After only one dance, she can smile and say "Thank you." In the beginning I was eager to learn embellishments, but no teacher would teach them to me. The answer was "As you get more relaxed they will come by themselves." Some other teachers taught me not to worry which steps to do, and encouraged me to make the floor my friend and just let my feet walk and glide along. Other corrections I received



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that Brooke is taking on more of the administrative duties, she can assume her role as elder stateswoman (not so much elder in years but in experience) and continue to grace us with her wisdom, leadership and unique perspective. In addition to running the Teacher Certification program, Joan is particularly committed to faculty development and review.

The other paid staff members at ACAT are Mark Josefsberg, the Studio Coordinator who arranges the studio schedule, Tara Sullivan who produces the ACAT news and is the Associate Editor, and our trainee work study positions. This year each position is being shared by two trainees. The librarians are Tom Weiser and Alejandra Martorell. The space groomers are Miho Nozawa and Masumi Kishimoto. **Thank you to all our staff!**

We also gave pay raises to the core staff at ACAT: the Director and Associate Director of the Teacher Certification Program (Joan and Brooke), the Executive Director (Jane) as well as adding a new salary for the office manager. Their pay rates are finally approaching the 21st Century. The faculty also received a nominal pay raise, approaching perhaps the 20th Century..... well, not everything happens at once!

Aside from the very successful events that we held for our members and the public – which will be reported on later in the meeting, **these are some of the highlights of ACAT's activities in the last year:**

- Search for, hiring of and training Office Manager Amira Glaser.
- Grant proposal to the NYS Health Foundation
- The completion of a project notifying all of Debbie Caplan's students about her passing and the scholarship fund that she founded.
- Larry King, widower of co-founder Debby Caplan and long-time friend and supporter of ACAT died in May. He bequeathed over \$100,000 to ACAT, the largest donation in ACAT's history, after years of supporting us in many many ways. (ED: Jane, who worked with Larry made comments at this point)
- "Dare to be Wrong: The Teaching of Judith Liebowitz", edited by Kathy Miranda, is scheduled for publication.

Other rights of passage:

The sad passing of our dear friends and colleagues Judith Lakin and Robert Cohen.

Pearl's departure and all the preparation for the Annual Meeting.

After defining ourselves in broad strokes last year by establishing our Goals and Values as an organization, this year the Board has been in the process of examining all aspects of ACAT's functioning with those goals and values in mind. If any of you have not had a chance to look at that impressive document, it is on our website. Really do check it out: it was a huge endeavor on our part

and is the working draft of a defining statement for our organization.

The Board has been clarifying and defining the job descriptions of the Executive Director, the office manager and the TCP Directors and establishing long-term objectives, and performance review for their jobs as well as the Board's activities. We're also revising the Board's internal infrastructure so that we can be more efficient and productive: we're structuring how we give reports, how committees are structured and supported, what our objectives and structures are for the annual retreat. We will be creating an on-line resource for discussion and project management so that when we come to our monthly Board meetings, we are fully versed on the agenda items and have had a lot of our discussion before the meeting. Structuring the forms that clarify and assist our process is particularly close to my heart and is one of the roles of the Chair as I see it.

We had an in-city Board retreat in early December. The main purpose was to formulate strategic objectives for the next 18 months, including bringing in enough revenue to bridge our current operating budget gap. Among other things, the Board determined three mission areas for development this year: 1) Education; 2) Public Outreach; and 3) Membership Services.

Without going into detail, other areas for development this year are: Documentation, Fundraising, and Infrastructure, as I outlined before. As you can see, the Board is developing long and short-term coordinated leadership for ACAT, and finding ways to streamline and support our process.

[After naming the standing committees and their members, Hope briefly described their work. Due to space constraints we simply **list the committees** now, should you have questions or need further information about the committees please call either Hope or Jane.]

- Finance Committee - Jane, Phyllis, Harvey
- Investment Committee - Joan, Phyllis, Harvey
- Audit Committee - Phyllis and Harvey
- Programming Committee - Hope, Jane, Joan, Brooke (Brooke spoke briefly)
- Office Infrastructure Committee - Louis, Michael, Jane
- Website Committee - Brooke, Louis, Ruth
- Corporate Charter and By-Law Committee - Harvey at the helm, assisted by Ruth
- Membership Committee, chaired by Phyllis with Michael, Ruth, and Jane
- Fundraising Committee, chaired by Louis, with Jane and Phyllis

All of our committees have made important progress this year. The next step is to solicit help from the membership for our committees and other endeavors. More on that to come.

ACAT is obviously in a time of great expansion. All the re-structuring I spoke about earlier takes money. Our revenues from the training program, other programming, and membership dues don't meet our current operating costs. This is not sustainable and presents an economic challenge that demands a response not only from us but from the membership as well. Yet the Board feels this is the only way to move our organization forward. And confirming, since we've begun this process, we've had more money flow our way in the form of donations than ever before. Maybe the intention to expand and grow has opened up that possibility in concrete ways. In the Alexander process, we are always noticing the efficacy of intention and thought. It's interesting to see it show up in our larger body, ACAT as an organization.

At this point I would like to acknowledge Jane for all the good work she's done to cultivate relationships with donors. Jane is really the reason why we have received such major, unprecedented gifts in the last year and a half. I want everyone to know what a profound difference she's made to our organization.

There are three ways you can help: 1) Contribute money directly; 2) Volunteer: serve on the Board, a committee or on a specific project; and 3) Examine your social network for individuals and organizations that can contribute. Think of friends, family, co-workers, colleagues, students, etc. For example, I have been doing house calls for two years to an enthusiastic student on Park Avenue and it just occurred to me yesterday that she might be a good candidate to contribute to ACAT. Here I am, the Chair of the Board of Directors – looking out for ACAT's best interests and it just dawned on me.... there might be some of those in your world just under your nose – you never know... Or, there might be someone you know who has never heard about the Technique but has resources or connections to institutions or individuals that could benefit from what we have to offer, and who could in turn, benefit us.

The Board will be sending out a questionnaire to all the members to determine skills and areas of expertise you might want to contribute to ACAT, along with an opportunity to provide direct feedback about how well ACAT is or is not meeting your needs.

On a personal note, I want to mention that giving to ACAT through service is something I have found to be highly nourishing. It has contributed to my own learning and growth in so many ways. It is a way to develop business, organizational, communication and leadership skills that might be lying dormant. In my case, I came from the artistic side of life. When I started as Chair, I barely knew what an agenda was. I also had always heard of the ACAT community, but it wasn't until I contributed to that community that I began to really feel its deep support and fraternity.

...Annual Meeting, continued from page 6

presence but he notices everything – nothing goes by him. He was our secretary from the minute he joined the Board 4 years ago, and only relinquished those duties last meeting. He did an excellent job."

Phyllis Kubey - "Phyllis is constant, willing and so so generous. She took over the secretary duties from Michael and has already joined many committees. She brings so many skills to the Board – including financial and fundraising acumen. She has a brightness and clarity and a mischievous spark in her eye."

Hope Martin was recognized by Joan Frost, Director of Training and ex officio board member. Joan said "Hope has thrown herself wholeheartedly into the position of Chair. She has wanted to be on practically every committee because she cares, has a lot of ideas, and wants to be an integral part of things. I am amazed by her tireless support and the time she has given.

Hope was responsible for hand-picking and bringing on the Board Louis, a student of hers, Ruth, and with the help of Ruth, our recent addition, Phyllis. Maybe Michael also? Thanks to Hope's thoughtfulness, consideration and ability to persuade, we have the best Board ever. I think you can see the results of this dynamic group.

We begin our meetings with a silent holding of hands around the circle as a way of coming together in mutual centeredness and respect. Hope invites us to take a pause and a couple of breaths between reports and agenda items so we have more of an ability to hear each other, and we close our meetings with another closing of eyes and holding of hands. At first Hope was a little shy at suggesting we do this, but we all love and appreciate it.

Hope initiated what is becoming our annual Board retreat – a time for intensive work and play and getting to know each other better. This human element is very important to Hope. I would say that generosity and heart most describe the qualities that Hope brings to the Chairmanship of the Board. Thank you, Hope!

9) Old Business. There was no old business carried forward from last year.

10) New Business/Announcements. There was no new business. There was an announcement: Judy Stern announced that teachers could go to www.atcongress.com to get information about the 8th International Congress in Switzerland. Currently there is a call for papers and workshop proposals. She encouraged all teachers to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00.

Respectfully Submitted,
Phyllis Kubey

Welcome new trainees!

Barbara Curialle Gerr (3rd term) is a native New Yorker and holds a bachelor of music degree from Manhattan School of Music, where she studied piano (undergraduate and graduate) with Zenon Fishbein. She has worked in publishing for twenty-five years, specializing in college textbooks in music and the humanities as well as professional books. She gratefully acknowledges her first Alexander teacher, Nina D'Abbracci, who inspired and encouraged her to pursue the Teacher Certification Program.

Alexis Martin (4th term) is a doctoral degree candidate in music at the City University of New York Graduate Center. A lyric coloratura soprano, she recently participated in the Seattle Opera Young Artist Program, performing the role of the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*. Alexis is a regional winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and won First Place in the Sun Valley Opera, Classical Productions and Five Towns Arts Competitions. She was first introduced to Alexander Technique while studying flute and piccolo in high school and began private lessons while pursuing her Master's in music from Brooklyn College. She also holds a B.A. in biological anthropology from Harvard University.

Victoria Moore (4th term) tells us, "I am married and a mom. I am a practicing attorney who started my own firm in 1987 (coinciding with the adoption of our son Daniel, followed in 16 months by the birth of our daughter Caitlin). In law, I work as a litigator doing trials and appeals. My main areas of concentration are ERISA/Tax and product liability, negligence, commercial litigation. My husband joined the firm in 1988 (coinciding with his "retirement") and does an exclusively criminal practice. In college, I studied philosophy. I have always had an interest in the metaphysical, spiritual, and the possible. My two big legal achievements are a Master's Law in Taxation (LL.M at NYU) and being appointed to the United States Department of Labor ERISA Advisory counsel (presidential appointment). I am blessed to be studying the Alexander Technique."

Naoko Saito (4th term) is a pianist who graduated from the Tokyo College of Music. She came to New York in 2004 as a diploma student to study music at Mannes College of Music because she wanted to continue to study music, to study English and to study the Alexander Technique. She was very moved by her first lesson with

Judith Lakin, who introduced her to trainee Yuki Komiyama. Yuki helped explain things to Naoko until her English improved enough for Naoko to enroll in the teacher training program.

Takako Shimizu (4th term) is a singer who graduated from Japanese Music College. She sang back-up vocals for the popular group "Mon Cherie". She then attended the London Royal Academy of Music to study classical music/bel canto for one year. She studied Alexander Technique with Judith Magidov after having a problem similar to F.M. Alexander's - losing her voice after intensive performing or testing. She then moved back to Japan and taught music in Japanese colleges. Marriage and raising her 2 children caused a break in her performing and teaching career. In 2005 she came to the US to participate in the Harmonia Company and met Satoko Kajita who was enrolled in the TCP at ACAT. Satoko introduced her to ACAT and Takako is now in her 4th term.

Karina Lombrozo (3rd term), a native of San Diego, is delighted to be in her third term at ACAT, NYC. She is a singer and actor who has been studying and using the Alexander Technique for many years and feels very lucky to be going through the journey and discovery of the teacher training program.

Luke Mess (3rd term) is an actor and director living in Brooklyn. He is a native of Columbus, Ohio and holds a B.A. in Theatre from the Ohio State University. He first encountered the technique at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. Luke is delighted and proud to be training and working toward his Teacher Certification at ACAT.

Diana Vaughn (2nd term) relocated to NY to enroll in the ACAT TCP. She received an MA in English and taught college before taking time off to raise her 3 - now adult - children. She first became aware of the AT through Debby Caplan's *Back Trouble* book and *An Introduction to the Alexander Technique with William Hurt and Jane Kosminsky*. She studied with Glenna Batson and Ethan Kinde (she is the 4th student he has sent on to train, yea Ethan!). Her daughter is currently getting her degree in Physical Therapy and looks forward to offering her mother a position in her clinic upon Diana's completion of AT training.

Tango, continued from page 19

were to be upright and let the shoulders be open, to move my back into the leaders hand, to keep my arms free... These are all concepts of the Alexander Technique, hearing them immediately gave me the ability to relate to the corrections, knowing what to do/knowing how to undo, and reminding myself that learning is about expanded awareness and trusting that the right thing will happen by itself.

All the subjects I teach help me to dance Tango: Eurhythmics and piano for the musicality, Pilates for the abdominal strength, dance for the embellishments, and yoga for the peace of mind. But it's the Alexander Technique that makes it all come together, and helps me continuously discover all these subjects in a new light. It gives me the freedom to choose and to experience being in the moment, connecting to all my different partners by staying at ease even if someone is tense, being willing not to know what's next and most of all being the dance.

The last few nights, dancing in Buenos Aires became such a pleasure. My brain relaxed as my legs did all the work and were surprising me with steps I had seen, but never done before. I had my eyes closed most of the time, feeling the unity of two dancing bodies while the music was resonating in my entire body.

Sabine Heubusch www.spinelight.com is certified to teach all the following: Alexander Technique, Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Yoga, and Pilates Mat.

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All of this has bearing on posture, breathing ability and ease of movement. When our being is in harmony, we become more balanced.

The uterus grows upward taking more space as it and the baby grows with the diaphragm pushed upwards as well. When pregnant, it is especially important to focus on what F.M Alexander called primary control. Unnecessary neck tension with our approximately 15 pound head poised on top of the neck allowing the spine to lengthen is of special importance at this time. When this occurs, the more space and freedom for the lungs there is, the heart pumps more efficiently, digestion and elimination for the pregnant woman is better. With less compression on the pelvic joints as well, she is more comfortable.

The Holding Environment: Creating a clear and effective teacher/student relationship with Elizabeth Buonomo, CTAT, MSW

On June 18, 2007 a group of teachers and trainees gathered for an informative introduction to the concept of the Holding Environment. The workshop was well attended and among the attendees were two former directors of training, the current associate director of training, teachers of many years experience as well as trainees. It was very well received. We are gauging interest in the subject for an series in either the fall or winter.

The focus of the evening was to explore the issues of transference and counter transference that can arise during an Alexander lesson; and the need to develop appropriate and safe boundaries that allow solid, professional work to be done.

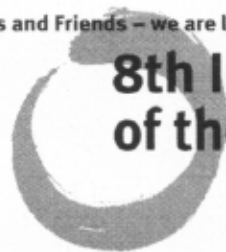
Alexander Technique teacher (ACAT '93) and clinical social worker Elizabeth Buonomo led a workshop in which teachers examined interpersonal dynamics within AT lessons not traditionally addressed in teacher training courses in psychological terms, giving teachers the opportunity to attend to yet another aspect of "use."

Elizabeth discussed the ideas of a secure "holding environment," transference and countertransference, and presented illustrative cases for the group to discuss. Participants were invited to share examples of challenging student/teacher interactions. Elizabeth's belief is that working with these issues will improve the effectiveness of lessons, increase the attendance rate of students and improve overall professionalism. For more information contact jane@acatnyc.org or (212) 633-2229.

I remember assisting one of my students in labor at home. At a particular time, we left for the hospital. When we arrived and she was settled in her labor room, she said she had incredible back pressure. After she worked through a contraction, I placed my hands under her on her lower back and I could feel the muscle tension. I journeyed with her as I gave her direction, she gave this huge sound of relief and then stated "I have to push!" That release allowed the baby to complete its trip into the birth canal ready to be pushed out. It was a profound experience with extraordinary comments from the Mom --"What did you do?" -- and the doctor. I remember saying "I didn't do anything -- you did."

Personal circumstances short-circuited my work for a while. That stage is now over and I am back "directing, releasing, supporting and birthing."

Alexander Colleagues, Teacher Trainees and Friends – we are looking forward to welcoming all of you to the



8th International Congress of the F.M. Alexander Technique

10-16 August 2008 in Lugano, Switzerland
www.atcongress.com

"FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION"

Please come and visit our website www.atcongress.com to find the latest congress information including details about registration, workshops, lectures and presenters.

The first call for papers, workshops and lectures is now open. If you would like to give a presentation and share your knowledge with the international Alexander community you can find the application form on the website. All applications will be received and processed through the website only and not by land mail. The deadline for completed application forms is 30 June 2007.

Our partner Amiconi Consulting (www.amiconiconsulting.ch) will be pleased to help you find your preferred congress accommodation - be it hotel, pension, holiday home or camping site. Please note that August is holiday season in Lugano, so early booking is highly recommended.

Amiconi Consulting can also assist you to arrange your transportation to and from the Swiss airports of Lugano and Zürich and Italian airports of Milan (Malpensa, Linate) and Bergamo (Orio al Serio) and help you with touring possibilities before, during, and after the Congress.

With best wishes from your Congress Team: Michael D. Frederick, Jule Gartzke, Rosa Luisa Rossi and Judy Stern

Board of Directors: Michael D. Frederick, Rivka Cohen, Doris Dietschy, Jean M.O. Fischer, Michael Fortwängler, Ora & Shmuel Nelken, Frank Ottiwell, Lucia Walker

Dare to be Wrong, continued from page 3

rived at that place. Weekly lessons were a revelation and I soon learned how the constant repetition of the basic directions permeated every layer of who Judy was and what she was doing.

She would talk about the fullness of the experience, of its many layers beyond mere body/mind—the conscious and the unconscious, the perceptual, the conceptual, the intellectual, the emotional, the physical, the philosophical, the metaphysical, the soul—one could go on and on. The Alexander Technique is all encompassing. She wanted to write a book that would explore all these aspects that were so much a part of her life and being.

Now, Mornum Time Press will publish *Dare To Be Wrong, The Teaching of Judith Leibowitz* edited by Kathryn Miranda. Thanks to Kathy's editing and summarizing a collection of transcripts, people will now have an authentic record of how Judy taught. Judy had a treasure trove of teaching skills, many of which came about just from her being in the moment while teaching. While we don't have the book Judy would have written, we have some of her thoughts and teaching experiences. I've been amazed at her vision each time I read them. I hope you will be too.