

THE A.C.A.T. NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CENTER FOR

THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE, INC. SM

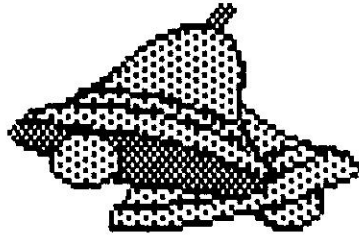
Ron Dennis, Editor

Autumn

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BARBARA KENT FUND ESTABLISHED

The Barbara Kent Fund, targeted for enrichment projects related directly to the Teacher Training Program, has been established at \$3,900. This amount represents public contributions to the Fund, plus a matching grant from A.C.A.T. authorized by the Board. Many will recall the gala of last June 13, held on the occasion of Barbara's stepping down from the directorship. The Fund has been invested in a Dreyfus Money Market Account, where it awaits its first use. Grant proposals may be directed to the Board, which will consider them in consultation with Barbara. Special thanks to Pamela Anderson, instigator of the fund.



RING OUT (IRRHIBIT) THE OLD!
RING IN (DIRECT) THE NEW!
HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

AUSTIN STUDY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Dr. John H. M. Austin, student of Pearl Ausubel, is still seeking volunteers for his study of the effects of Alexander lessons on the respiratory function of normal adults. Dr. Austin currently has about a dozen subjects, and would like at least 20 for solid statistical results. Subjects undergo standard spirometry (no needles, x-ray, etc.) and are paid \$20 per testing session at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, 168 St & Ft Washington Ave. They should not be singers, wind players, etc. nor smokers. Teachers, please encourage qualified new students to participate in this important study. Call Dr. Austin at 212/305-2981.

"BACK TROUBLE" IS BIG HIT

Deborah Caplan's book on the Alexander Technique, "Back Trouble: A New Approach to Prevention and Recovery" (Triad Publications, \$9.95) is now available at B. Dalton's at 52nd St & 5th Ave, and many other local stores. Debby just returned from a promotion trip to California where she appeared on seven radio and two TV programs discussing the A.T. and her book. As a result of an article in the "Globe," the Center has been inundated with requests for information on the book, which have been forwarded to her publisher. A few copies are still available at the Center for members and trainees.

CENTER OFFERS GRAD COURSE

During Winter and Spring Terms, the Center will be offering for the first time a course in Continuing Professional Education for recent graduates of the TTP. The course will meet on Mondays from 9 a.m.-12, and will consist of both Alexander work and a discussion section. Barbara Kent and one other Senior Faculty member will lead the hands-on portion, and psychotherapist Dr. Jacqueline Carleton will lead the discussion on topics of importance to practicing Alexander teachers. A mailing has been sent to recent grads, two of whom have already responded. Class size is set for 10; others may call the Center for more information.

A.C.A.T. OFFICE SCOREBOARD

Notwithstanding the advent of NASTATSM as a national source for information about the A.T., A.C.A.T. still receives and responds to much public inquiry. During the period September 1 through November 20, the following activity was logged: brochures sent, 50; member-teacher lists (Metro area), 76; literature lists, 39; direct referrals (members outside Metro area), 18; NASTAT referrals, 28; TTP applications, 25; CanSTAT referrals, 3. In mid-September, the Center also gained Federal Service Mark protection for the name "The American Center for the Alexander Technique, Inc." Member/public services thus continue.

MEET THE NEW TRAINING CLASS

KARLA BOOTH was born and raised in Missoula, Montana. After living in Hawaii for a few years, she returned to Montana and attended the University as a dance major. She has been living in NYC for four years--dancing, doing bodywork, and cleaning house. VINCENT FRASER studied psychology at SUNY Albany and Empire State College, has since worked on Wall St., in bars, owned a coffee shop and contracting business and worked as a gardener. KATHY MOELLER was born and raised in Charlotte, NC. She studied Mathematics, Clinical Psychology, and Movement Education in college and received her B.A. in Psychology. After graduating, she joined the business community at Equitable Life specializing in jobs that required logical analysis and/or creative communications. SAMUEL S. REISER was born in NYC on Jan. 30, 1918. He attended C.C.N.Y. for his B.S. degree and got a D.D.S. degree from N.Y.U. in 1943. Entered military service in the Air Corps as a dental officer. He earned a certificate in Orthodontics from Columbia in 1959, is married with two children, and is interested in Buddhism, psychology, an literature. JANE TOMKIEWICZ grew up in the Great Lakes Region and received her B.A. in French/Spanish at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She moved to New York in 1980, and has performed with a number of traditional and modern percussion/dance ensembles.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Upon once again taking up the editorship of an official A.C.A.T. publication, I was tempted to revive the old "Alexandrian" masthead, but decided that "The A.C.A.T. News" better fitted the less-formal nature of the newsletter. Thanks to Pamela Anderson and Bill Connington for articles, and to Debby Caplan for updating news on her book. I welcome any and all news, articles, announcements, etc. Articles in the range of 500-750 words would be especially welcome. Let me know what you'd like in "The A.C.A.T. News."

TTP NEWS BY PAMELA ANDERSON

At the end of this term, Fall 1987, we will graduate nine students from our training program. They are Michelle Arsenaull, Ruth Belding, Rebecca Flannery, Judith Grodowitz, Maria Parker, Cynthia Reynolds, Jennifer Scanlon, Lori Schiff, Annette Werhahn, and Andy Zavada. A party is to be given in their honor December 18th. Congratulations, graduates, and we heartily welcome you as colleagues in our profession.

This last term has seen us start our five-day-a-week, three-year program. This class consists of five trainees and a senior teacher. In most this term there has been a trainee assistant and a certified volunteer assistant, so what is technically a 5 to 1 ratio actually works out closer to a 3 to 1 ratio. There is a lot of hands-on work and trainees report liking the experience of working with teachers at different levels. In the winter term, five new trainees will start in our mixed level class, which we are finding is a very effective method of teaching. Generally, the way this works is that both the the first and second year students work together in classes of ten with two teachers, and then in their third year the group of five are by themselves again with a senior teacher as they develop their teaching skills and work with volunteer students.

In the near future we are planning a discussion seminar for the A.C.A.T. Faculty led by psychotherapist Dr. Jacqueline Carleton to cover training issues and private practice topics.

This is nearing the end of my first term as Director of the TTP. I am finding this job a challenging stimulus to develop a new skill in myself. And it brings to life (again!) all the phrases I have heard in the training, i.e., stay with the moment, inhibit, stay with the process, not the goal, and upon reflection a sense of humor. And I have an enormous respect for Judy and Barbara, who have gone through this process and have led this school to where it is today.

HOW TO GIVE A LECTURE-DEMONSTRATION (PART I)

By Bill Connington

Since my graduation, I have had the opportunity to present the Alexander Technique to groups on many occasions. In my view, there are three categories of lectures: one to inform, another to generate interest in studying privately, another to promote group classes. Your objective in giving the lecture will guide the form and shape of your talk. I will discuss each type of lecture briefly, then give some of my thoughts on lectures in general.

Informative Lectures

This is the most general kind of lecture. Its purpose is less specific than the others, though you can always have indirect results from any type of lecture. This is the kind of presentation I do when I travel. Generally it is given in a town that does not have a teacher. The purpose of the lecture is to inform the audience about the Alexander Technique, what it is, and what it can do. If you give a lecture out of town, your travel expenses will be deductible, or partially deductible, even if you are not paid. (Discuss this with your accountant.) The main problem with this kind of lecture is that people become interested in the technique and can be frustrated that there is no outlet for them to pursue their interest. At these lectures I recommend that the audience buy Debby Caplan's book Back Trouble, which discusses how to work on yourself. I may also recommend The Use of The Self by Alexander or Body Learning by Michael Gelb.

If you electrify the group with your teaching skills, they may be motivated to fly you in to teach. I have done this in different cities with varying degrees of success. A commuting practice is complicated. The main ingredient needed is a motivated contact person in the town. The contact makes arrangements for teaching space, keeps track of the schedule, and does the necessary advertising and public relations.

Lectures Given to Promote Group Classes

I have taught group classes at the West Side YMCA, the 92nd Street YMHA, and the Actors Movement Studio on an on-going basis. Before each ten-week session, I gave a free lecture-demonstration to promote the class. In addition to my Alexander presentation, I made sure that I clearly stated when the class began, how many weeks it ran, where it was held, how much it cost, and how to register.

Lectures Given to Promote Private Lessons

This is the most straightforward kind of lecture. At the other two types of lectures there is a part of me that is a little on edge. If I am out of town giving a lecture, I am sorry to be letting them know about the technique without their having an easy avenue for study. I am sorry that they won't have the same learning experience that I have had. Of course, it is better for them to know something rather than nothing, but this thought does not always comfort me.

A lecture given to promote a group class can produce a different kind of anxiety in me. Although I make sure to emphasize that the course I teach is called "An Introduction to the Alexander Technique" and that I will be covering only the most basic principles in the classes, there is a little part of me that wants to announce, "Of course what you all need is private lessons." I inhibit valiantly, because, as we all know, the indirect route is often necessary in helping people down the educational path. At my lectures I do always mention that the technique has traditionally always been taught privately and that it is the best way to learn the technique. I explain that I developed my group classes as a way of introducing the basic Alexander principles to the public and as a way for giving people a chance to be exposed to the technique before they decide if they would like to invest time and money in private lessons. (I am giving up teaching group classes for the moment--the subject of another article.) In the private-lesson-promotion lecture you can inform the audience about the technique, then suggest to those interested that they follow through by taking private lessons.

General Comments on Lectures

In my junior high school Speech class we were taught that there are three kinds of speeches: those that inform, those that educate, and those that entertain. I try to do a little of all three at my lectures. I choose to say less rather than more. I count on my demonstration to do a lot of the talking and to be the catalyst for the audience's questions. I try to get the audience wanting to find out more. As for entertainment, people don't learn unless they are interested. I use humor and pay attention to my voice when presenting. I am aware of changing the tone and pace of my speaking to fit what I am saying and how I would like to direct their attention.

I size up the audience as they come in to get a feeling for the group. If it is a group of tired business people coming from work, it may be necessary to rev the energy of the group up. I use techniques such as speaking more quickly and dynamically, using lots of humor, asking the audience members questions in order to get them involved. If the group is a group of actors coming from a rehearsal all keyed up, I may choose to be much more laid back, speaking more slowly and evenly in order to help bring them down and more into focus.

I always try to play to the audience rather than staying with a fixed idea of what the lecture should be like. People's eyes will blur if you recite a memorized speech. If you speak out of the moment and directly to them rather than at them, I find that people always pay attention. The Alexander Technique is an interesting topic that most people know nothing about, so most audiences are quite interested if you can show them that it applies directly to their lives. I usually begin by asking those people who experience neck or back pain to raise their hands. For the most part, everyone will raise their hands--that will get a little giggle and I then begin to explain how the technique can help them.

I use every method I can to involve them. I ask people direct questions. I walk amongst the audience (rather like a low-key Alexander Phil Donahue), I have them do experiments on themselves while sitting, standing, and walking, I point out things while I am demonstrating, I use the skeleton, I demonstrate on my own body, I will occasionally use a little game, and so on. I don't stay on any one thing too long. If I demonstrate on one or two people, I will then ask the whole group to try an experiment on themselves. At some point towards the end I sit down and let people ask questions, which may or may not lead into more demonstration.

(To Be Continued)

LIBRARY NOTES

The Center subscribes to two periodicals of particular interest, Somatics and Medical Problems of Performing Artists. We have subscribed to the latter since the first issue, and were presented with a full set of the former by the graduating class of March, 1986, so have complete sets of both, available for reference in the Center office. Of course, we also have The Alexander Review, and full sets of The Alexandrian (1981-85, 13 issues) may still be purchased for \$25.