

On Working with Children

By Michele Arsenault

On October 19 I had the privilege of expanding my practice as an Alexander teacher to include 80 new students all under the age of 10! These children and their teachers are participating in a pilot project, MOVING TO LEARN, which I am developing and implementing as a consultant for the Institute for Schools of the Future. The Institute, a non-profit educational corporation specializing in innovative math and science programs for the NYC public school system, is hoping to expand this project in the fall of 1990 with funding from a major national science organization, significantly increasing the number of children and teachers involved.

I meet weekly at P.S. 110 on the Lower East Side with three classes--a kindergarten, a fourth, and a fifth grade--exploring human movement potential through the eyes of the Alexander Technique. Children are wonderful "teachers" and their probing questions and eager participation are an unexpected source of inspiration. My initial observations: five-year-olds already exhibit mis-use and a significant decrease in flexibility in their hip and ankle joints which reconfirms Alma Frank's observations of 50 years ago; nine-year-olds complain of backaches and neck problems and move and collapse much like their adult counterparts; children have the same misconceptions about their bodies as their teachers; hands-on is a pleasure, response is immediate. They are easily engaged and challenged by a subject that has such personal relevance in their lives. They have provoked me into rethinking my approach to the Technique.* I am grateful for the opportunity of working with them.

Ann Mathews has proven to be a valuable resource

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*[Subject of a future article, right, Michele?--Ed.]

The Alexander Technique and the Medical Community

By Marta Friedland

Last winter I participated in a lecture-demonstration at Phelps Memorial Hospital in Westchester. The demonstration was arranged for physical therapists who worked at the hospital, but was also attended by PT's from the area. Among those who were there was Bert Galotti who is the director of Mount Kisco Sports Medicine Services, a facility which employs a staff of physical therapists and other health care professionals.

Mr. Galotti attended the lecture-demonstration because he had heard of the Alexander Technique but wanted to learn more; in particular, he wanted to know how the Technique might be added to Mount Kisco Sports Medicine Services. As a result of that lecture-demo, I was hired to work at Mount Kisco.

Patients are referred to Mount Kisco by their physicians and first are evaluated by a physical therapist who designs a treatment plan for the patient. That treatment plan might include such modalities as exercise, massage, hydrotherapy, and the use of various hardware such as Eagle exercise equipment, Nordic Trac, and treadmill.

Most of the patients are in chronic pain. Some have already undergone surgery. Many of them are now being seen by me as a part of their treatment plans. In order to educate the Mount Kisco staff in the Alexander Technique, I gave a lesson to each of them. This was important in that it allowed the staff to experience the Technique first hand and therefore to have a frame of reference by which to refer patients appropriately.

What was most interesting to me was that the staff

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for me and has very generously offered her expertise and support. I recommend her thesis, completed in partial fulfillment of a Master of Science in Education from Bank Street College, which documents her work with children. It is available for \$10 through IRDEAT, 74 MacDougal St., NY 10012. Ann and I would like to meet with anyone interested in discussing the issues of working with children and invite the Alexander community to get in touch with us. A preliminary meeting was held at IRDEAT on December 11. For further information, please contact me at 212-874-2530.

Insurance Update

From the *Bulletin of Support Services Alliance*.
GREAT NEWS FOR METROPOLITAN NEW YORK CITY AND LONG ISLAND MEMBERS! After nearly a year of investigating several alternatives, we are pleased to announce that we are now offering an exciting plan for members in the New York City and Long Island region. The plan underwritten by Oxford Health plan, allows for the choice between an HMO part and a traditional part all within one plan. It is generally competitively priced and we anticipate wide acceptance and participation by our members. Further detail may be obtained by calling either 1-800-322-3920 or 1-800-843-8406. The ACAT association membership number for SSA is 2872.

Regarding liability insurance, this year's ACAT membership packet again includes the brochure for Associated Professional Massage Therapists & Bodyworkers (APMT). Since New York ACAT is an approved school of APMT, graduates of the certification program may apply for Level I (Professional) Membership at the lowest rate of \$195 annually.

Further Rules and Hints for Students and Teachers by John Cage

Rule 5: Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and there's no fail . . . there's only make.

Rule 8: Be happy whenever you can manage it.
(Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think . . .)

Courtesy of Annette Werhahn-Cantor

(Friedland, continued from p. 1)

members experienced the Technique in different ways, and that these different experiences led to different bases for referral. For example, some said the Technique was "relaxing" and those people referred patients who were very tense and had muscle tension. One of the staff said that the lesson he took allowed him to notice his walk and how more easeful it became during a lesson. He referred a person with a knee problem to work on her gait. Another found that the lesson afforded her a more comfortable way of sitting, and she referred a patient whose back problems make sitting almost impossible.

When a patient is referred to me, I meet with the physical therapist who made the referral before seeing the patient. At that meeting, we discuss how the physical therapist plans to work with the patient and how lessons in the Alexander Technique are to be incorporated into the treatment plan. I then meet with the patient for approximately six half-hour sessions at which time I prepare a progress report which is sent to the referring physician. Since many of the physicians who refer their patients to Mount Kisco are unaware of the Alexander Technique, my report to them includes information about what the Technique is and how it might be beneficial to their patients.

The response which Mount Kisco has received both from the patients and from the referring physicians has been extremely favorable; as a result, Mount Kisco is actively promoting the availability of the Alexander Technique and the presence of a certified teacher on staff. They have also asked me to take on some new group classes, one of which is for pregnant women and another for patients with back pain. In each of these classes I would be working in conjunction with a particular physical therapist who specializes in these areas.

This has been an exciting opportunity for me. I believe that it is important for Alexander teachers to take every opportunity to expose the medical community to the Technique. Even in the short time that I have been at Mount Kisco, my experience has been that they are becoming more open to and aware of the importance of use and its role in prevention and rehabilitation.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ACAT!

TCP News

By Pamela Anderson, Director

This school year ACAT accepted 12 candidates, Fernando Eschiletti, MaryJane Findley, Deborah Gladstein, Elizabeth Lee, Jean Rashkind, and Charles Stein, who began their work this past Fall Term, and Susan Arthur, Victoria Hyatt, Lauren Jones, Frances Robertson, Lynn Shapiro, and Laura Emily Smith, who will begin their work this January.

Five candidates will be completing their training this December: Elizabeth Anne Gaw, Debby Jay, N. Brooke Lieb, Constance L. Serchuk, and Charles Turyn. We on the faculty welcome those who have begun training, and congratulate those who are graduating and welcome them as colleagues.

With this newsletter Ron and I have completed two years as Executive and Teacher Certification Program Directors, respectively. To reflect back over our tenure thus far, I feel that we as a faculty and its administrative representatives have accomplished a lot. We have instituted and completed our first year of grading candidates as well as a more substantial faculty evaluation process. We have revised and enriched our reading list as well as continued to develop procedures to conduct the reading class. The Independent Study Committee has developed its requirements and now seems to be operating smoothly. Finally the faculty as a whole has grown and developed as we address our mixed-level program.

On the administrative side, candidates are now eligible and applying for student loans, and we are in the process of applying to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to grant visa status to foreign applicants. Our school has evolved from a training program to an accredited graduate continuing education institution with all the bumps and rough spots that are normally encountered in a process of change and growth. We on the faculty are all excited by the changes happening in our program.

The farther I progressed in my search for a way to free myself from the slavery to habitual reaction in "doing" (which I had created for myself by trusting to the guidance of my unreliable sense of feeling), the more clearly I was forced to see that my only chance of freeing myself was, as a primary step, to refuse to give consent to my ordinary "doing" in carrying out any procedure.

F. M. Alexander

Executive Director's Report

By Ron Dennis

Fiscal 1988-89, having ended this past August 31, was a challenging one financially for ACAT. In technical language, the year-end "excess of revenues and public support over expenses" stood at negative \$9,000, approximately. This means that the Center spent that much more than it took in, which is, of course, a less-than-desirable result. Accounting for this situation was the loss of about \$12,000 in tuition revenues due to unexpected drop-outs from the TCP during the year.

An additional factor in our financial picture is that the previous year also generated negative income of about \$14,000. Unlike the present year's figure, however, this result was anticipated because of the restructuring of the TCP to mixed-level classes, which required our overall enrollment to drop for several terms in order to establish the necessary schedule of classes under the new arrangement. Anticipated or no, these losses have had to be made up from reserves, resulting in a fund balance (net worth) of about \$32,000 as of August 31, 1989.

About \$9,600 of this amount is contained in our two "name" funds (Judith Leibowitz and Barbara Kent), which were restricted under the conditions of their establishment as to use, and therefore not available as operating reserves under normal conditions. This leaves about \$22,400 in current operating reserve.

Although substantial, this is not really adequate for an operation of our size and importance. Also, in terms of federal approval for student financial aid, we cannot continue to show negative income from operations. Thus, even though we restore as of Winter Term 1990 an optimal enrollment level of about 30, our budgetary policy must continue to be to exercise restraint in spending and where possible to increase revenues, as well as to prevent losses. This will enable us promptly to regain positive income from operations and gradually to increase reserves to a more appropriate level.

There was a breathing man from Sydney
Who pondered the use of self head to knee.
To prevent the sniffling and gasping,
Which leads to voices rasping,
Wrote he the Alexander litaney.

Kathy Moeller

Around ACAT . . .

Deborah Caplan lectured on the Alexander Technique at a physical therapy conference which took place in New Orleans in September 1989. The title of the conference was *Alternative Somatic Therapies*. As well as the Alexander Technique, it included presentations on Feldenkrais, Trager, Rolfing, Aston Patterning, Myofascial Release, and Cranio-Sacral Therapy.

Several members have made the news in recent magazine and newspaper articles. The September issue of *Mademoiselle* carried a piece called "The Case for Grace" in which Posie Green of White Plains, NY, was the Alexander teacher of record. Kim Jessor of NYC was quoted extensively in "New Health Therapies for Pain Relief," *The West Side Spirit*, October 15, 1989. And guess who the featured teacher was in an article entitled "Peter Schuette and the Alexander Technique," *Conscious Search* (no date or place of publication)? Peter works out of Claverack in Columbia County, NY, and has been a loyal member of ACAT since his arrival in these parts from San Francisco several years ago.

Here are some figures on Center outreach activities (mailings or phone response) during the past fiscal year: lists of Certified Member-Teachers, 288; TCP Catalogs, 147; direct referrals to ACAT members or graduates not in the NYC area, 73; referrals to NASTAT, 102.

Center brochures are once again in stock; higher printing costs mandate a raise in price to \$.30 each. We still have a large number of brochures in which the printing is just a little less than first-quality but which are still quite usable for \$.10 each.

Editorial

Many thanks to all those who contributed material for this issue of *The ACAT News*--articles, news items, creative work, and "fills." I want to encourage anyone having the slightest inclination to write and/or submit an item to do so. This applies to candidates as well as to members and faculty. Perhaps writing for publication here could be a useful focus for the final paper required of candidates. Your personal news items are also welcome and important in developing our sense of community. I would like to put out a call for someone to volunteer as a "reporter" for the *News*--surely there's a fledgling Diane Sawyer or Sam Donaldson out there among you!

Special thanks to Michele Arsenault and Marta Friedland for spending the time and energy to write their pieces. It is great to read about these exciting developments, both for them personally and also for the Technique.

I want strongly to second Michele's recommendation of Ann Mathews' thesis "Implications for Education in the Work of F. M. Alexander: An Experimental Project in a Public School Classroom" (Bank Street College of Education, 1984). This work was reviewed in the Winter 1985 issue of *The Alexandrian* by Walter Carrington, who said, "her conclusions invite close study and consideration" as well as "we are all very much in her debt." It was also substantially excerpted in the following issue, Spring/Summer 1985. Thus, while I certainly encourage those interested (and everybody else, for that matter) to read the entire thesis, the above-mentioned back issues are still available at \$2 per copy.

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