

UPDATE: After AmSat-sponsored demo of AT, the Massage Board voted unanimously to recommend to State Ed. Department that AT is not MT!!

Critical Moment in Determining Government Regulation of Teachers of the Alexander Technique

AmSat Government Relations Committee moving in high gear to respond to this threat

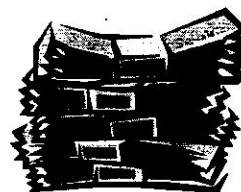
ACAT board votes to contribute funds from Judith Leibowitz Fund toward retaining Lobbyist for New York Battle

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Every ACAT member should have received a letter from the AmSat Government Relations Committee mid-February. Many of you attended the Annual Meeting and heard Cynthia Knapp's report on the status of New York State Board of Massage Therapy's considerations/ruling. (See Minutes from Annual Meeting for some details). Some of you have been volunteering, gathering letters, contacting representatives and sending donations. Thank you for your efforts. If you have not received the letter or need more information, please call Cynthia Knapp or Jane Kosminsky and get yourself in the know.

The ACAT board received a request for funding from the PIP committee, and voted to disburse, from the Judith Leibowitz fund, \$1500 toward the New York Lobbying efforts as well as \$1000 toward the national PIP program. Contributions for the New York Fund should be made out to AmSat (note to NYS Fund) and sent to Cynthia Knapp 306 West 93rd St. #47, New York, NY 10025. Any contributions to PIP should be made out to AmSAT and be sent to Marjean McKenna, AmSAT Treasurer.



Notes from the TCP by Joan Frost

We are now settled happily into our new home on W. 14th Street. The space is light, warm, and friendly, and we are glad to have our office and training program again in the same location. We have also been updating our equipment needs. We now have more floor mats, new table pads, a VCR, and a number of items donated by faculty members such as a TV monitor, a "saddle", a large ball, and a number of framed posters, to name a few. Thank you especially to Marta Curbelo and Diane Young for their generous contributions. The next major thing on our wish list is a video camera. If anyone has one they'd like to donate, we'd be so grateful.

In November, a former student of Kim Jessor's, world-renowned mind mapper, Jonathan Goldstein, came to instruct us in the art of mind-mapping. We had a lot of fun sitting at tables in a horseshoe around him with large pieces of paper and many colored pencils or markers at our disposal. Our task was to mind-map the Alexander Technique. We drew a personal representation of the Alexander Technique in the middle of the paper, then had branches and sub-branches expanding outward from it, letting our minds play with ideas. A highlight was walking around the room afterwards and seeing all the different interpretations of Jonathan's instructions.

ACAT candidate Gwen Roe presented her anatomy report on developmental reflexes for our Fall end-of-term assembly. As she took us through each reflex from birth to walking, candidate Clare Maxwell performed them on a blanket on the floor. Between Gwen's clear verbal descriptions, drawings she displayed on an easel, and Clare's movements, which truly caught the essence of each reflex, we really were able to grasp the stages of development an infant undergoes. In the second half of class Kim Jessor led us through our own explorations of these reflexes, based on her work with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen.

Recently, we had a second visitation by Mio Morales (the first was last May for our third year students), who trained initially with Frank Pierce Jones, and then extensively with Marjorie Barstow. Mio conducted our Winter end-of-term assembly, engaging us all in a group class. He conducted the class as an impromptu performance, drawing his material from our wishes and whatever arose in the moment, and masterfully got us all to think and observe movement in new ways. Here are a few quotes from the notes I took during the session:

"I want to know that the choices I make will not only satisfy me right now, but will not interfere with what I would want for myself in the future."

"There is no such thing as a tiny squish or a tiny improvement. Either I'm improving or I'm getting worse."

"It's not how much or how long you're getting better, but if you're getting better right now."

"If you change your thinking, your body changes. Your body is the last thing to know."

"When does the constructive thinking turn into not-so-constructive thinking?"

"I want to know as soon as my thinking changes to a non-constructive thinking."

We have an audio cassette of Mio's class in the ACAT library.

We admitted five new candidates in January: Hee Sook Baek, Naomi Josepher, Michael Hanko, Patty Llosa, and Michelle Makarski. They presently have the school to themselves in the afternoons, as we didn't have the space at ACAT to accommodate them in the mornings. Because we didn't want to continue running two separate programs and feel it is more constructive for training to have some intermingling of the various levels, we have reorganized our structure commencing this Fall to allow for some time every week when the entire school will be together. The present morning classes will be coming to ACAT from 8-10:30am Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and 8-11:45am on Tuesday and Thursday. The afternoon class as well as the new Fall 2000 class will attend classes from 10:30-1:30 Monday through Friday. On Tuesday, the overlapped time (10:30-11:45) will be covered by anatomy. On Thursday, the time may be used for video showing and discussion, for general assemblies on topics of interest, or whatever else the faculty on that day are inspired to do. We recently received approval from the State Board of Education for this new format. Graduation of our ninth term class will be Friday, June 23rd, so mark your calendars! We'd love to see you there. Invitations will be coming in the mail.

Have a wonderful Spring.

Joan

**BEAUTIFUL SPACE
AVAILABLE FOR
WEEKEND WORKSHOPS
AND EVENTS**

Please keep ACAT's new space in mind if you hear of anyone seeking a space in which to hold weekend workshops and events. There is a special preference for member, member-sponsored, or member introduced events. Please encourage your friends or colleagues to call or stop by if they need more info ACAT's weekend (or weekday) availability.

**POST-GRADUATE
TRAINING WITH
RIVKA COHEN**

Rivka Cohen is teaching post-graduate training courses in NYC. New classes will begin in September 2000. For information and registration call Rivka Cohen at (617) 566-4227 during weekends, or Penny Shaw at (212) 877-4443 during the week.

**ACAT POST-GRADUATE
REFRESHER CLASS
TO BE OFFERED THIS FALL**

Time: Wednesday afternoons, 2:30-4:30pm

Date: 6 weeks: September 20 thru October 25, 2000

Fee: \$250.

Location: ACAT, 39 W. 14th St., #507, NYC

This class will be taught by ACAT senior faculty, each taking two consecutive weeks (3 teachers each 6 week session). The class size will be limited to 6 participants to allow for ample hands-on time.

If there is sufficient interest, ACAT will offer another course with 3 different teachers November 1 thru December 13, taking off the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

To reserve a place in the course, please call the ACAT office at (212)633-2229 and leave a message for Joan Frost or email the office at ACATUSA@aol.com.

Teachers: If you have something you are interested in teaching to your colleagues in future ACAT sponsored post-graduate classes, please send a description of what you'd like to do to the ACAT office, attn: Joan Frost.

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The Alexander Technique and the Audition

by Christine Suhr

In my most recent audition for a feature film, I found that the Alexander technique helped me immensely with my ability to be present and available to the demands of the moment.

As most performers know, an audition situation can truly test one's sense of poise and ability to focus and be free under pressure. I found the technique really paralleled and compliment the acting process.

In the first audition I remember waiting in the hallway, having just been given a script. My habitual response would have been to grab it, and read it intensely - hovering over the page. Instead, I went back to the chair, made contact with the ground (found my feet), sitsbone, and top of my head - I began to concentrate on my breath and I began to look at the script, and found that I read it with an ease and openness. This affected my first impression - which inevitably is what I brought into the audition. The dynamics of the scene came alive to me, and I was less focused on "my part" and what I had to do.

Next I remember my second meeting with the director, upon walking in - I again made contact with the floor, brought my awareness to my feet and the top of my spine, and freed my neck. I then proceeded to introduce myself. I felt a real sense of presence, that I was really seeing him. My nervous energy that usually fed my sense of insecurity was being transformed into a directed energy - focused rather than dissipated. I felt my concentration was clear but not held. As I proceeded into the scene, I sensed more breathing space for the moment before I began. I was able to inhibit my habit of jumping right in when the director says go, and took a moment to redirect. This allowed me to bring my object/intention to the forefront of my mind. It was a different experience than just trying to desperately slow down time, as I have felt myself do in the past, and instead my sense of time opened up. I then began the scene when I was ready with the given circumstances and the needs of the character.

The last moment that was very significant for me was when the director had told me that he didn't think I had a strong enough presence for the role and that I was very young. He said that he needed someone with "more of an edge". Typically, had I heard that before studying the technique, I would have said, "Okay - I'm sorry" and gone away. This time, I found

I had a clear sense of my ability to increase my volume and stature - in length and width. I responded by saying, "I can give you that. It will not be a problem." He gave me another scene to read. This time I started to send my energy through my heels - feet into the floor. I imagined my head as tall as the empire state building (there is a view of the building from the A.C.A.T. building - and I had used it as imagery for my lengthening spine with a volunteer, Kiesha). Next I began to think of myself as three dimensional as the building itself, with a strong rooted base - out of which I could move. I could feel my breath dropping down and my breathing container expanding. I knew I could increase my resonance with the right balance of relaxation and support through my torso.

I imagined my facial mask and crown of my head up and forward of my actual body and thought about directing my energy out through my eyes. My legs felt strong.

Finally I had the memory of a fellow student, Gary, working in lunge with Kim Jessor. I remembered the simplicity with which he moved, and how powerful it was to see the spine move as a piece - a solid unit. So, Again, I redirected and started the scene. I am grateful for the work - and how it freed my concentration and focus. I had awareness working side-by-side with intention, which enabled me to have a sense of being present and grounded. As Joan Frost has said, "Being grounded is really the same as being present."

I agree. It also extends into being available to the needs of the moment, with our full dimensionality.

It has been so exciting to explore and continue exploring the technique as it related to the acting and filming process.

Christine Suhr is a first year trainee at A.C.A.T. and an actress. She holds an M.F.A. from U.N.C. Chapel Hill.

As a result of the audition Christine described in the preceding article, she got the lead role in a feature film "Behind Bars" due out this summer.
- Ed.

ACAT-AGM Minutes

February 6, 2000 2:00-3:30 pm
39 W. 14th St. #507, NYC 10011

28 members in attendance, 18 proxies

1. Chair Judith Lakin called the meeting to order. A quorum was met as 32 members were in attendance with an additional 18 proxy votes. The chair proposed dispensing with reading last year's minutes and there were no objections. The chair referred to F.P. Jones comments on F.M. and related that to the activity in and on the board in the last year.

2. Report from the Chair (given by Barbara Kent on behalf of Judith Lakin)

a) Welcomed attendees to new space; for many members it was their first visit. The selection, planning, and construction of, and the move to the new space was the major activity of the board this last year. Thanked the many people involved in the move for all of their efforts and especially thanked Jane Tomkiewicz for being the central organizing person.

b) Reported on board changes. Barbara McCrane stepped down. Alan Serchuk was appointed. The board is attempting to reach out to non-teachers to become board members. This coming year Hope Martin will serve as co-chair with a rotating co-chair partner

c) Now that the move was mostly completed, energies could again be applied to development of membership programming. Interested members should speak with Hope Martin or any board member.

d) The new newsletter editor, Tara Sullivan, had successfully produced her first newsletter

e) Leland Vall continues in his capacity as office assistant to assist in improving and streamlining activities. Thanks to Leland for his work.

f) Update on Jane Kosminsky's video, which was featured at last year's meeting. Winstar Television is now a backer of the project which not only facilitated the completion of the second video in the series (one by Debbie Caplan), but will also allow the price of the video to drop to \$19.98 per copy.

3. Report from the Treasurer/Executive Director (Jane Tomkiewicz)

a) Final financial figures for last year (Sept. 1, 1998-Aug. 31, 1999) are in, and in spite of two very large unanticipated expenses (employment taxes and move-related costs), ACAT still came in in the black by about \$1500.00.

b) Although ACAT is well within the "operating" budget for the current year, ACAT did have to go into savings in order to get the new space ready for occupancy. A transfer of about \$25,000 (as approved by the board in planning the move) will be applied to "Leasehold Improvement".

c) ACAT is in good shape for its operating budget this year, due to the ability to hold an afternoon class on site (eliminating need to rent an outside space) starting in January which had not been anticipated.

d) Further contributing to being in good shape is the income generated from renting out the space. ACAT is entering the rental arena cautiously as requirements and responsibilities of a rental program become apparent. More details during NEW BUSINESS/RENTALS part of meeting.

4. Report from the TCP Program (Joan Frost).

a) Reported certifications and new trainees of the last year.

b) Reported trainee total now at 25.

c) Applied to NY State for approval on a restructuring of the TCP which would create two tracks: TRACK A trainees would meet from 8-10:30am MW&F and from 8-11:45am on T&Th. TRACK B trainees would meet from 10:30-1:30 MTWThF. There would be an all student overlap twice a week in which trainees would meet all other trainees and take anatomy or other classes together.

d) Visiting teachers funded this year by the Barbara Kent Fund were Elisabeth and Lucia Walker. Mio Morales and Hope Martin gave

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classes on teaching lessons. Jonathan Goldstein on Mind-mapping. Debbie Caplan's return 2 day workshop visits to the TCP as well as substitute teaching have been very welcomed.

e) The Fall assembly was presented by Gwen Roe and Clare Maxwell. Kim Jessor took trainees through developemal movement a la MindBodyCentering.

f) Members donations have included: (from Marta Curbelo) an Alexander Horse, anatomical illustrations, and large anatomical "spine," posters of F.M. and the Dart procedures, physioballs and a pump, (from Diane Young) a television, (from Kathryn & John Miranda) shelving for storage space, and the loan (from Jane Tomkiewicz) of a VCR.

g) New floor mats have been purchased, soon ACAT will have yoga sticky mats as well.

h) Robert Cohen facilitated faculty on discussion leading at the annual retreat.

5. Appreciation of Service

a) Gifts of bonsai trees and fancy soaps were presented to Barbara Kent and Judith Lakin on behalf of membership as they stepped down from their respective positions.

6. Election of New Directors

a) The first position open was that of two years remaining in a a three year term, currently being filled by board appointed Alan Serchuk. Alan was nominated, the nomination seconded and he was unanimously voted into the position

b) The second opening was for a two-year position left vacant by Barbara Kent ,who finished her service. Arthur Tobias nominated Leland Vall. The nomination was seconded. Discussion was held as to the possible conflict of interests of Leland serving on the board as he was currently an employee, the Office Assistant. The executive director reported the board's previously discussed opinion that the situation was highly unusual. Leland, as an ACAT member had the right to run. With the proper amount of foresight and precaution, Leland might be able to serve on the board and the conflict of interests be avoided by having Leland absent himself

from discussion when necessary. During discussion Leland promised that if elected to the board, he would work to make it impossible for this kind of thing to happen in the future. Discussion ended, vote was taken, and Vall was voted in by a majority.

c) The third opening was for the remaining one year on a three-year term left vacant by Hope Martin as she moved into the Chair position vacated by Judith Lakin before the end of the term. Kathy Miranda nominated Karla Booth, the nomination was seconded. Karla accepted the nomination and was voted in unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

7. RENTAL POLICY/OPEN DAY

Jane Tomkiewicz reviewed rental policy. She reiterated that ACAT hoped to serve its own community first, but still needed to be fiscally responsible. Therefore if the Alexander Technique community did not avail itself of the space, ACAT had to open it up to a larger public. The Open Space on Wednesday afternoons was still a special event for members, but was hardly being used. She encouraged members to avail themselves of this opportunity. She reiterated that the rental procedures and policy were constantly being shaped.

8. AmSAT vs. NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF MASSAGE THERAPY (NYSBMT)

Cynthia Knapp reported on the most recent developments with regard to the NYSBMT's reviewing of the Alexander Technique to make a final determination as to whether or not the Alexander Technique teachers would come under its jurisdiction.

Knapp reported that this is a critical moment and that there is an immediate need for action from teachers and supporters of the Alexander Technique. Expedient action is crucial . We as teachers do not wish our livelihoods to be determined by these state agencies which lack understanding and the ability to distinguish teaching the Alexander Technique from massage and body work modalities.

She has been working on the issue for 5 years and the subcommittee with which she is working has finally determined that the most effective strategy will not be in coalition with other groups that

the subcommittee with which she is working has finally determined that the most effective strategy will not be in coalition with other groups that desire exclusion, but rather in retaining lobbyists to represent our interests alone. To that end a lobbyist had been hired for 16 months at a cost of \$1500 per month. To date, enough funds had been raised for the first few months. More funds were urgently needed.

She outlined more of the subcommittee's goals as well as other grass root strategies for teachers to follow. She informed the membership of a letter they would be receiving shortly. The letter will be filed with these minutes if anyone wishes to refer to it.

Barbara Kent, Acting Chair Person
Allison Foley, Secretary

About the New Board Members:

Karla Booth graduated from ACAT in 1990 and since then has had practices in NYC, London, and currently Westchester. She has taught workshops in Sweden, Germany, Australia and throughout the U.S. and presently is offers group classes at Phelps Memorial Hospital and Westchester Community College.

Alan Serchuk writes:

"I am a retired managing editor; I've spent the past 15 years or so managing the day-to-day operations and budgets of medium-sized trade publications. Currently, a friend and I are putting the finishing touches on a book about the way we relate to animals in our lives. My association with the Alexander Technique has been a once-removed relationship - my wife, Connie, is a long-time ACAT certified teacher and is an Associate Teacher in the Teacher Certification Program. You might, in fact, say that membership on the ACAT Board has become a family tradition: Connie held a seat on the board of directors for several years. On a more personal level, my daughter, Michele, is a professional photographer whose work has been published in a number of specialized magazines here and abroad. My son the doctor (just thought I'd throw that in for effect) is research director for the Renewable Energy Policy

Project in Washington D.C. I've just recently become a grandfather again, this time to Connie's daughter Lisa's son; his name is Christopher. My first grandson is Brian, son of Connie's other daughter, also named Connie, who is a successful wedding photographer. When I'm not busy being proud of them or finishing the book, I'm also trying to travel the world via amateur radio (I have an Advanced Class license) and am taking flying lessons."

(Ed. note - special thanks to Alan Serchuk for assistance in all kinds of technical matters moving into the space and getting going - including getting gates for the windows, constructing storage space, labeling lights and fans, various and sundry matters as well as the regular board concerns).

Leland Vall trained in Boston with Ruth Kilroy and was certified in 1996. In addition to teaching, Leland has been the ACAT office assistant since the fall of 1998 and the production editor for the AmSAT News since the fall of 1997.

New Materials in ACAT Library

The ACAT Library is pleased to announce the following new materials: [Art of Living](#), a new book by Walter Carrington; an article by Ron Dennis from *The Journals of Gerontology*, "Functional Reach Improvement After Alexander Technique Instruction; audio cassettes of interviews with Riki Alexander from both WTOP Radio and WRC Radio; a video of an interview with Sarnie Ogus; video highlights from the 6th International Congress of the Alexander Technique in Freiberg, Germany; an article by Barbara Cormie on the Alexander Technique from *The Parkinsons*; an article by Barbara Graham, "Stroke Me, Stretch Me, Knead Me, Heal Me" from *Self*; and an article by Amy Gross (with Jessica Wolf), "Breathing Lessons" from *Self*

Freeing the Performer Within

by Loren Shlaes

Most people in the Alexander Community who know me know that in addition to being an Alexander teacher, I am a pediatric occupational therapist. I work with children who have difficulties functioning in school. But what many people don't know about me is that I studied acting and classical singing all during grammar school and high school, performed with numerous vocal ensembles, and acted in a children's repertory company. As an undergraduate, when I probably should have been studying, I spent most of my time playing the guitar, autoharp, and dulcimer, jamming with friends, performing in guerrilla theatre, and singing at the various folk venues around town. I was active in my university's ethnomusicology department, and played in a Chinese orchestra, a Balinese gamelan, and an American string band.

But by the late 1970's, when I left my little college town in Western Illinois for California, I had abandoned my dream of being a folksinger. It wasn't my voice, which many people assured me was beautiful, or my chops, which were more than adequate. What held me back was stage fright. I adored everything about playing music except performing. At times, my hands would shake so much that I could barely play my guitar, and my breathing would become so shallow that I could not sustain a phrase. On one memorable occasion, I walked onstage, picked up my guitar, and couldn't remember which way to hold it. Shortly after that episode, I resigned myself to the truth: performing solo in front of an audience was just not something that I could do. No matter what I tried, my stage fright only continued to worsen over time. It never got any easier or even enjoyable to sing or play in front of others. Sadly, I put aside my guitar, sold my autoharp and dulcimer, and enrolled in the occupational therapy program at San Jose State University. Even after I began my career as a therapist, I avoided running groups and only treated clients one on one.

Occasionally, I sang for friends at weddings and parties, and although I didn't especially miss performing, I would feel a twinge of regret when people would comment that it was a pity that I didn't share my singing with a larger audience.

So when my friend and mentor, Jan Olsen, asked me if I would consider taking over some of the lecturing

that she does all over the United States, I had very mixed feelings about it. I was thrilled and flattered to be asked. I love Jan's work, and was excited at the prospect of sharing her ideas and methods with others. I wanted to do it very much, and I was terrified to even think about doing it. I decided to at least prepare myself, so that if I did decide to try it, I would be ready.

I began by attending Jan's lectures, taking note of her ease, polish and humor in front of an audience. I wondered if I could ever be as witty, think as fast, and command so much authority. I was concerned about my high-pitched, rather childlike speaking voice, and my tendency to become hoarse, despite my Alexander training. I needed an acting coach.

I consulted Gary Ramsey, who teaches voice production at the Neighborhood Playhouse in Manhattan. Gary, who has studied the Technique since 1981 and is currently enrolled in ACAT's teacher training program, felt that my diction needed work, and that the high pitch of my voice was due to habits of muscle tension in my tongue and throat.

We met once a week over the summer and fall, cleaning up the curious mix of regional accents I'd acquired from years spent living in Illinois, California, Texas, and New York. We rounded out my flattened Midwestern vowels, and softened up my California Valley Girl "r". I practiced exercises to reshape my tongue and reduce a too sibilant "s". We worked in sitting, standing, and semi-supine, breathing, speaking, and singing, developing support for the breath through freeing the throat, jaw, diaphragm, and ribs. Gary continually enlisted my ability to inhibit and direct in order to undo some longstanding bad habits. Soon, the right thing began to do itself. After several months of weekly lessons and daily practice at home, I had a new speaking voice: low-pitched, full, and resonant. Delighted to finally sound like a grown up, I changed all of my outgoing voice mail messages. Some friends did not even recognize my voice on the phone!

To test the waters, I gave a three-hour version of my all-day lecture at work. It went well, but, as I told Gary, even though I was speaking in front of only half a dozen people, when I began, I froze up and couldn't think of what to say. Gary had me practice the

continued on next page

Public Inquiries
Lecture Demonstration
Open Teaching Day
Underutilized Resources

Dear Members,

Now that we are settling in from the move and from the annual meeting/renewal, more attention can be focused on membership benefits and future programming. With regard to benefits I wish to remind all members of two of our resources that I personally know to be highly effective means of helping a teaching practice to grow - the public inquiries addresses and ACAT's lecture demonstration.

Public Inquiries

ACAT still receives a good number of inquiries every year. Thanks to Leland Vall, the databanks are kept in a more accurate and current manner than was ever possible before. I know it is not always easy to organize a mailing, however, in my experience, any mailing in which I included names from our public inquiries list always resulted in new pupils in either private or group lessons. Frankly, I am very surprised that we process so few requests for the labels or for the data.

You can ask for either labels, a hard print out all on one sheet or for the data on a disc

Lecture Demonstration

The Lecture/Demonstration program is still relatively new for ACAT (only 3-4 years old). For the first 3 years, it was managed by faculty members on a voluntary basis. Recently, Leland Vall has been the organizer. The service continues, however, membership enthusiasm and participation has lagged somewhat. When the program was new, members were both more active in advertising - getting the word out in their various circles - and also in offering to lead lecture/demonstrations of their own. We would like to encourage you once again to let people know about these events. Although we recognize the importance of cultivating leads and personal connections for your own practice, we know that frequently there are people interested that for one

reason or another are not potential students for you. Why not send them to the Center? If you offer no lecture/dem yourself, if you have no room in your schedule to accommodate inquirers, or if inquirers seek a teacher closer to home, please direct people to the Center's lecture/dem. It'll come back to you.

OPEN TEACHING DAY/ACAT SPACE RENTAL

Just a reminder that Wednesday afternoon from 2:00 p.m. on is OPEN TEACHING DAY at ACAT. That means for a fee of \$5.00, you and your student can show up with no reservation and conduct a lesson. You may not have privacy, as we allow up to 6 tables in the space, but it is an economical and collegial approach to teaching.

Furthermore we hope that the OPEN DAY, as well as other rental for teaching private and semi-private lessons will be a resource for new teachers starting out as well as an alternate space for teachers already established in a studio or a practice. Call the office for more info.

Upward and Onward,

(...Performer Within, continued from page 8)
opening few minutes of my speech several times, cueing me to slow down and maintain my directions. At last, I felt that I was as ready as I could be. I set a date, rented ACAT's beautiful new space, and advertised for students. When the morning of my class arrived, I realized how much my Alexander training was helping me. As I set up the room, instead of panicking, I calmly focussed my thoughts on my directions. As I headed to the front of the room to greet my students, I remembered what Glynn MacDonald told me: pause for a moment, direct, look at your audience and think of what you want to say. I looked at my assembled students and thought, "You are going to love this!!" and began.

I am pleased to report that I enjoyed myself tremendously, and did not become hoarse, although I spoke continuously for six and a half-hours. The written evaluations I received at the end of the day were all very positive, with high scores for maintaining my students' interest, explaining the material clearly, and answering questions. Thanks to my teachers and to F. M. Alexander, I found the means whereby to free the performer within!

Inhibition Shminibition

by Barbara McCrane

Like all Alexander trainees, I spent three years and a lot of cash learning to do nothing. And while we know that doing nothing, inhibition, is the key that separates the Alexander Technique from other modalities, there is a world beyond inhibition. I'm here to extol the virtues of the next step — making choices. Perhaps you, like me, have trouble in this department.

In the two and a half years since my graduation, I have had a child and moved to a foreign country. Both mothering and moving are very task-oriented. When Hannah was about 9 months old, immobile and HUGE, I started to doubt whether the Alexander Technique could help in such a physically demanding job. I inhibited and chose to go up whenever possible, and was brought back to the fold.

“...doing nothing, inhibition, is the key that separates the Alexander Technique from other modalities...”

Experiencing the isolation of life in a foreign country has also led me to wonder about the usefulness of the AT for coping with such an experience. I'm in England, the land of stiff upper lips, and I'm a pretty emotionally available American. To save embarrassment in the supermarket or toddler class, I've inhibited bursting into tears. It has been during some great Alexander lessons here that I've been able to “stop stopping”, choose to go up and just let the emotions run through.

During charged interactions with my nearly-two-year-old I've become convinced that, for me, inhibition is just the first, and often easier, step. An example: my adorable and willfull bundle of joy does not like to get into her car seat. After one or two occasions of turning into one of those mothers you might see at a mall

wrestling her child into the seat, I realized that there must be a better way. I know: DO NOTHING! Well, Hannah generally has nowhere particular to go, so we spent a great deal of time together in the driveway while I did nothing and she climbed everywhere but into her carseat. I finally came up with a solution: I now say to Hannah, “It's time to get into your car seat. Do you want to do it yourself or do you want Mommy to help?” “SELF.” And most of the time, she climbs into the carseat unaided and quite proud. SHE makes the choice, SHE feels empowered. The instructions are clear and straightforward. I'm decisive. I must say these simple instructions to her with tremendous commitment because, truly, my sanity depends on it. As a parent, I've got to go up and help her to go up, I suppose. The inhibition came in when I decided not to be a mall mom and find another way. But for me these days, creating clear and decisive instructions is the more demanding work.

So I boldly submit to you that there's more to life than doing nothing, no matter what those ACAT teachers say. While inhibition clears the deck for choice, we've got to make those choices. I find that in complicated situations, figuring out which way is “up” may be the toughest work of all.



MEMBER INITIATED EVENTS AT ACAT

So far, we are pleased to have hosted the following member-initiated events in the ACAT space:

Loren Shlaes held a workshop for occupational therapists (see article in this issue).

Jessica Wolf conducted her breathing workshop which includes much from her work with Carl Stough. She will most likely conduct future workshops at ACAT as well.

Brooke Lieb and her colleagues in "ACCESS" work presented a weekend workshop.

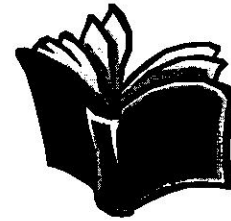
WORKSHOP AT THE AMERICAN CENTER FOR THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

The Moving to Learn Society, Inc. in cooperation with the Calhoun Lower School is pleased to announce the first of a series of teacher training workshops and practice in the principles and practices of MOVING to LEARN. Part One, Working in the Early Childhood Environment, is open to Alexander Technique teachers and trainees (observation only). Call Michelle Arsenault at (212) 874-2530 for more information.

STUDY OF THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE AND MANAGEMENT OF DISABILITY IN PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S

The board of directors received a request for funding from the Judith Leibowitz fund. The proposal came from Dr. Chloe Stallibrass who, under the auspices of The University of Westminster, was already conducting a study "Randomised controlled trial (RCT) to test the effect of a course of Alexander Technique lessons on the management of disability in people with Parkinson's". She was seeking funds to increase the sample size for the study. She provided the board with pages of very interesting reference material, a bit too technical to either reproduce or summarize in this blurb. Any ACAT member wishing to review these materials may call or write the ACAT office. Dr. Stallibrass carried out a preliminary study which was published in a refereed medical journal (Jan. 1997) and which had positive results. The study has received funding from three major medical charities, The Foundation for Integrated Medicine, The Parkinson's Disease

Society and Remedi (Rehabilitation and Disability) and therefore has received much publicity, including 3 discussions with HRH Prince Charles. Dr. Stallibrass also included an article on the Alexander Technique published in the quarterly membership newsletter of the Parkinson's Disease Society, Autumn 1999. The board of directors, through the Judith Leibowitz fund, made a contribution of \$400 toward the project.



New Book!

The Art of Effortless Living

Ingrid Bacci's first book, The Art of Effortless Living, reflects the profound impact made on her life and work of training in the Alexander Technique. Formerly a professor of philosophy, Ingrid had enrolled at ACAT in the 1980s after experiencing crippling illness from a collagen disease that left her bed-ridden for three years. The concept and practice of effortless living, which is so central to the Alexander Technique, was so healing to her, that it became the core principle of all her work, both personal and professional. Ingrid's book focuses on teaching people how to achieve physical vitality, emotional balance, maximum creative potential, and spiritual vision, through the commitment to an effortless way of life.

Today, Ingrid is radiantly healthy and combines a successful private practice that integrates teaching the Alexander Technique, practicing Craniosacral Therapy, and consulting as a medical intuitive. She also consults for hospitals, corporations and educational institutions, has written numerous articles, and produced a number of television shows on alternative health care.

Ingrid's book has been endorsed by: best-selling author Jean Houston; author of *The Gnostic Gospels* and winner of the National Book Award Elaine Pagels; and Peter J. D'Adamo, author of *Eat Right 4 Your Type*, a top-selling book on nutrition.

News from the Center

Ann Waxman is seeking to share a teaching space. She is willing to sign on to a lease, or if she finds a space, she may need someone else to sign on. Any leads or any information please call Ann at (212) 787-8198.

Do any members know anyone who might be willing to do some Pro Bono computer consultation for ACAT? Please contact the Jane Tomkiewicz at the office. Thank you.

Space available to rent on the Upper West Side 1-2 days per week. Sunny, close to trains. Call Gwynne Marshall at (212) 874-6216.

Hope Martin has been exploring the relationship of the Alexander Technique to meditation practice. Last summer at the AmSat AGM in June she presented a workshop on Meditation and the Alexander Technique where she gave meditation instruction and led a group inquiry into the compelling relationship between the Alexander Technique and meditation practice. This was part of a day dealing with Emotions and the Alexander Technique. Hope also taught a four week class on this theme at the New York Open Center in February focusing on applying the A.T. to sitting practice as well as on the A.T. as a contemplative practice. This is a class she has been teaching periodically and developing since 1993. She has also been teaching ongoing workshops at Karme Choling, a Tibetan buddhist meditation and study center in

Vermont, as well as hour long group "posture clinics" at large meditation programs helping people deal with the challenges of sitting for long periods of time on cushions without back support. Hope's teaching has been included in two separate trainings of meditation instructors in the last year and a half at Karme Choling. At these trainings, she was able to distill principles of the Alexander Technique to teach meditation instructors rudimentary skills in observing and helping both themselves and their meditation students find more balance on their cushions and thus more ease in their meditation practices. Hope has been invited to teach a day-long workshop on this theme in May at the Shambhala Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

Hope Martin also gave a lecture demonstration on the Alexander Technique in March to 35 people at Random House Publishers.

Teaching space available for rent: large beautiful Studio plus small room, suitable for private or group teaching. Available immediately, for full or partial rent by days (not by hours), every week from Wednesday afternoon till Monday at noon, week-end as well (excluding months of July and August). Location: 116 West 87th St., NYC. For details call week-ends Rivka Cohen at (617) 566-4227, or Penny Shaw Tel (212) 877-4443.

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