

ACAT Welcomes Hope Martin to Board

by Jane Tomkiewicz

Hope Martin joined the board for the December board meeting, replacing Judy Stern who announced her resignation the month before. After many years of service, Judy had to step down due to her other professional commitments. We thank Judy for her many years of service. We look forward to Hope's participation and contribution to the board.

Hope Martin certified at ACAT in 1987. She continued to teach as Volunteer faculty off and on until 1994. She maintains a lively private practice in Manhattan which includes teaching group lessons at the *New York Open Center*. In addition to teaching group classes to the general public at the *Turtle Bay Music School*, she gives private lessons to the faculty there. At the *New York Open Center* Hope has taught "Meditation and the Alexander Technique" exploring the relationship between the 2 approaches and has collaborated with a Feldenkrais practitioner to copresent a class (on an on-going basis) "Feldenkrais and The Alexander Technique". She has taught at the *92nd St. Y, the Learning Alliance*, and the *Rasa Yoga Center*.

Hope has made various radio appearances including the nationally broadcast Gary Null Show and has contributed to various publications including *The Art of Practicing* by Madeline Bruser. She received a grant from the dancers' union in Barcelona to present the work to dancers there in 1992. Last summer she taught at an Interna-

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The Alexander Technique and Spirit

Compiled for NASTAT/AGM 1997 Roundtable by
 Daniel Singer and Hope Martin, introduction by Jane Tomkiewicz

Although various Alexander Technique publications and conferences often feature articles or discussions on the relationship between the Technique and physiology, psychology or even sexuality, articles on spirituality and the Alexander Technique have been far less frequent. Hope Martin and Daniel Singer were asked to lead a roundtable discussion at the NASTAT AGM last year. The roundtable was entitled "The Alexander Technique and Spirit." The roundtable was well attended (30-40 participants), and people seemed eager to discuss the subject. According to Hope, the discussion moved evenly and one of the most striking aspects was how respectful the exchange was. No one had to raise their hands; people waited and participated in a very responsive and responsible manner.

*In preparation for the roundtable Hope and Daniel 1) created their own definitions of Spirituality 2) created a few questions to guide discussion 3) tried to find aspects common to the seminal teachings of all or various spiritual traditions and then found from Alexander what they felt were in accord with those teachings. They used the chapter "Notes of Instruction" from *The Essential Writings of F.M. Alexander* edited by Maisel as their source. The following notes were handed out to participants, and are reprinted in their entirety.*

(continued on page 4)

Notes From the TCP

by Joan Frost

Recently, I was told by a colleague of mine that one of her students, a potential ACAT applicant from a few years back, was awaiting the restructuring of the ACAT TCP before applying. I don't know how many others are in this position, but after a detailed consideration of the whole picture, we have decided to retain our present structure: classes meeting 5 days a week from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on a 10 week trimester basis over a three year period.

We are continuing to review our internal structure, particularly regarding the reading class, and to accommodate a wish to work together as a whole school on a periodic basis. The latter, or perhaps both, will depend upon the space we end up inhabiting next year. We strongly hope we will have a new home by next fall. Our space committee continues to be actively searching the Manhattan rental market and we continue to put out a call for any space leads (contact Tom Vasiliades or Daniel Singer).

Since our Fall 1997 ACAT News printing, we have added two new candidates to our incoming Fall 1997 class: Katherine Constable, with a background in dance and science and Clare Maxwell, a dancer and choreographer. This brings our present "2s" to 6 candidates, which represents a full class. Our next admission will be Fall 1998.

On December 20th, we were pleased to welcome Jeremy Chance, an Alexander teacher from Australia and producer and editor of *Direction* magazine. He gave our candidates a 3 hour lecture/demonstration on the Enneagram as a symbol representing the process F.M. Alexander underwent in the evolution of his discoveries, and also representative of the process, we as disciples of the Technique, go through on our journey from preparation to transformation. In the course of the 3 hours, we played several games, including "red light/green light"

tional Dance Festival in Vienna - The Tanswochen Wien - and will be back there in February to teach at their Winter Festival.

Hope began to practice meditation and study Tibetan Buddhism around the time she was certified at ACAT. She has continued her involvement and is now a meditation instructor. The study and practice of Buddhism and Meditation is an important part of her life. She anticipates a lifetime of exploring the relationship between the aspects of mindfulness of body and mind inherent in both the Alexander Technique and Meditation Practice.

She gave a workshop in the Alexander Technique at "The Contemplative Healing Arts Day" at the New York Shambala center in

(continued from preceding column)

which challenged our abilities to be non-end-gainers. The morning was fun and thought provoking.

This term we are delighted to have Pearl Ausubel and Anne Waxman return to the faculty after leaves of absence.

Here's wishing you an ever-deepening and freeing 1998!

Notes From the Chair

by Thomas Vasiliades

The 1998 ACAT AGM will be held on March 22 - time and location will be announced. I invite all of the membership to attend. As I wrote in the last newsletter this is a critical time in the growth of ACAT. Your participation is valuable, and I look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Judy Stern has left the board. Hope Martin, who was the special agent to the board, has taken over for her. Thank you Judy for all of your hard work. Welcome to Hope.

Judy Stern has donated \$500.00 in the memory of her father, Alan Cohen. The money will be split between the *Judith Leibowitz Fund* and the *Barbara Kent Fund*.

Brooke Lieb has agreed to take over the coordination of the Speakers Bureau. Thanks to Diane Young for her time and energy for developing the bureau thus far.

Finally, the search for a rental space continues. A gentle reminder to the membership for support in this endeavor. If you have any leads or contacts in the real estate market, please let me know. Our goal is to move into a new space for the Fall term of 1998. §

(ACAT Welcomes Hope Martin, continued from page 1)

1996. In the summer of this year, she was asked by the NASTAT AGM coordinator to participate in leading a roundtable discussion about the Alexander Technique and other awareness practices such as mindfulness or meditation. In collaboration with ACAT Senior Faculty and board member Daniel Singer (author of "*The Sacred Portable Now*") the roundtable discussion eventually opened up to include other forms of spirituality. The notes from that roundtable "The Alexander Technique and Spirit" can be found in this issue.

Once again, we hope the membership will help us in welcoming Hope to the Board and look forward to the special perspective she brings to her service. §

"We are continuing to review our internal structure..."

Published three times yearly by the American Center for the Alexander Technique, Inc.®
129 West 67th Street
New York, NY 10023
Tel. (212) 799-0468

The articles in this newsletter are the opinions and explorations of the authors, and do not reflect a consensus of ACAT members or represent the official policy of the Center.

Closing dates: April 1, August 1, December 1

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Dr. Weil and Alexander Technique On-line

by Jane Tomkiewicz

Many of you will already be familiar with Dr. Andrew Weil and his "Self Healing" newsletter. Dr. Weil's latest book "Spontaneous Healing" was on the New York Times best-seller list for more than six months. He lectures world-wide and is regularly called on by newspapers, magazines, and broadcast networks to comment on holistic medicine. He is a graduate of Harvard medical school and an esteemed member of the faculty at the University of Arizona. The October issue of Self-Healing featured an article called Banishing Back Pain, in which he mentions the Alexander Technique. If you wish to get copies of the newsletter, subscriptions are available for \$29/12 months: issues from (800) 523-3296. Copyright 1997 by Thorne Communications.

Dr. Weil also has a web page with plenty of information. The address is DrWeil.Com. Under Archives, Low Back Pain, the following entry for Jan. 7, 1998 was found:

Help for Lower Back Pain?

Q. What do you think about the Alexander Technique for a lower back problem? I am a young woman with lower back problems and every time I try to do light stretches to strengthen it, I end up hurting myself. Would the Alexander Technique be a good alternative approach for me to try? - Julie Wheeler

A. Don't you just hate when you do something that you think is going to help, and instead it makes the condition worse? Years of improper stretching, sitting, standing, walking, carrying groceries, talking on the telephone, working at the computer — any or all of the above — may not only contribute to back pain but cause it. I'm glad you asked about the Alexander Technique because it specifically aims to increase people's awareness of poor habits of body posture and helps them unlearn them and replace them with proper patterns of movement. Stop slumping! Sit up straight!

The technique dates from over a hundred years ago, when F. Matthias Alexander, an Australian actor, lost his voice. For a mime this is OK, but for an actor... Unable to get help from medical doctors, Alexander set out to cure himself. By studying his movements in a three-way mirror — while reciting Shakespeare — he discovered that the loss of his voice was related to certain head and neck gestures that were right for the role but wrong for his voice muscles. With his discovery, Alexander retrained his muscles, worked out a new way of breathing and speaking, and as a result regained control of his voice. That was the origin of his now-famous technique, which uses teacher-guided movement training to increase conscious control of body and mind.

I refer patients to Certified Alexander Teachers for a wide range of musculoskeletal problems. Just be aware that it's not a quick fix. After all, it took years for your posture to start causing problems, so it may take time to undo the damage. Each session is about 45 to 50 minutes, and prices range from \$45 to \$75 per session depending on the practitioner and where you live. Incidentally, check with your health insurance company to see if they will cover the cost. One or two companies may do so.

The American Center for the Alexander Technique, Inc. at 129 West 67th St. NY, NY 10023 (212 799-0468) has information and a list of Certified Alexander Teachers throughout the country and in Japan and Italy. If you want to read about the technique in detail, it seems as though anyone who's ever been helped by it has written a book. Ask them for one or two titles. The center has a comprehensive bibliography. §

"...it seems as through anyone who's ever been helped by it has written a book."

Study on Alternative Providers

A recent study of health providers by C.L. Reid entitled Characteristics of Providers and Consumers of Alternative Medicine: A Delphi Study included four teachers of the Alexander Technique, Ruth Kilroy, Kathy Miranda, Jessica Wolf and Beth Stein. A total of nineteen providers participated in this study. Other disciplines represented were Massage Therapy, Feldenkreis, Reflexology and Chiropractic.

With the kind permission of Cynthia Reid, Occupational Therapist and Principal Investigator of the study, we reprint the summary of the study and its results. The full abstract detailing the characteristics of effective providers and satisfied consumers is available from the ACAT library. - Ed.

The rising interest in alternative medicine has been described primarily in recent literature by surveys reporting consumer perspectives. In this study pro-

viders of alternative medicine were asked to describe characteristics of effective providers and characteristics of consumers who seek alternative health care and tend to be satisfied with outcomes related to their health. A panel of 19 providers representing 5 disciplines of manual healing methods participated in a 3 round Delphi process. Group consensus among this panel of experts was sought through a series of 3 questionnaires utilizing both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Following the initial open-ended questions and response, levels of consensus were established through Likert scales and ranking. A list of 18 highly favored characteristics was produced. These results highlight a partnership between providers and consumers of alternative medicine which focuses on a pro-active stance regarding self-care. Satisfied consumers are those who actively participate in the therapeutic process, and it is the effective provider who ensures this opportunity through education and empowerment. §

(Alexander Technique and Spirit, from page 1)

Quotes from "Notes of Instruction" (teaching aphorisms and statements of F.M. Alexander) are from *Resurrection of the Body*. After each group of quotations by F.M., there are brief comments, preceded by asterisks. These asterisked phrases are meant to very roughly encapsulate a corresponding principle found in traditional spiritual methods, beliefs and practices. They humbly are presented as a stimulus for discussion at the NASTAT AGM Roundtable discussion on Spirit

1. I see at last that if I don't breathe, I breathe...

These things can take care of themselves.

All I want you to do is to give certain directions for me and then to inhibit the tremendous effort you are making to be right.

Specific prevention is permissible only under conditions of non-doing, not in doing.

Prevent the things you have been doing and you are half way home.

Doing in your case is so "overdoing" that you are practically paralyzing the parts you want to work.

**surrender*
**right effort vs. unproductive striving*
**spiritual attainment is not about acquisition*

2. They may have an intellectual conception of what they want, and they may write down what they want to bring about, but how are they going to do it?

They are not doing *the thing* that alters the rest.

You can't tell a person what to do, because the thing you have to do is a sensation.

We are forced in our teaching at every point to translate theories into concrete processes.

As a matter of fact, feeling is much more use than what they call "mind" when it's right.

**knowledge vs. understanding*
**"The finger pointing at the moon is not the moon"*
**"walking the talk"*
**wisdom is experiential*

3. Change involves carrying out an activity against the habit of life.

**the necessary friction of spiritual work*
**mechanicality as chief obstacle to evolving consciousness*

4. The things that don't exist are the most difficult to get rid of.

**paradox in spiritual practice*

5. The experience you want is in the process of getting it. If you have something, give it up. Getting it, not having it is what you want.

No one could be satisfied to go on everyday getting no result unless he saw the way.

Don't you see that if you "get" perfection today you will be farther away from perfection than you have ever been?

**process vs. goal*
**being in the present, not the future*
**no expectations*
**"now-ness"*

6. Everyone is always teaching one what to do, leaving us still doing the things we shouldn't do.

Trying is only emphasizing the thing we know already.

**the "dropping away" of the old to reveal the new*
**the indirect way of inhibiting the old vs. the direct way of acquiring something new*
**innate wisdom*

7.Individuality is a habit.

**what is the nature of "self"?*
**"who am I"?*

8. They won't try and get out of the chair unless they feel they have something that will get them out of the chair: that something is their habit.

**the security of the familiar or known;*
**the insecurity of the unfamiliar or unknown*

9. There's no such thing as a right position, but there is such a thing as a right direction.

(continued in next column)

**"Trying
is only
emphasizing
the thing
we know
already."**

(from preceding column)

It's not getting in and out of chairs even under the best conditions that is of any value; that is simply physical culture- it is what you have been doing in preparation that counts when it comes to making movements.

- *form vs. essence
- *"religion" vs. spirituality
- *exoteric vs. esoteric

10. The essence of the religious outlook is that religion should not be kept in a compartment by itself, but that it should be the ever-present guiding principal underlying the "daily round", the "common task". So also it is possible to apply this principle of life in the daily round of one's activities without involving a loss of attention in these activities.

- *merging consciousness and action
- *the study of living in the moment, "mindfulness"
- *cultivating a balance between an inner and outer focus

11. When people are wrong, the thing which is right is bound to be wrong to them.

You can't know a thing by an instrument that is wrong.

- *what's subjective and what's truth?
- *personal reality is not necessarily truth?

12. Don't come to me unless, when I tell you "you are wrong," you make up your mind to smile and be pleased.

I have no hesitation in stating that the pupil's fixed ideas and conceptions are the cause of the major part of his difficulties.

You want to feel out whether you are right or not. I am giving you a conception to eradicate that. I don't want you to care a damn if you are right or not. Directly you don't care if you're right or not, the impeding obstacle is gone.

As soon as people come with the ideas of unlearning instead of learning, you have them in the frame of mind you want.

- *traditional teacher student model
- *how to be a student?
- *how to be a teacher?

*(continued in next column)**(from preceding column)*

Additional questions to ponder:

- *Is there a difference between spiritual practice and self-improvement?
- *Is there a relationship between "improved use" and human goodness?
- *Is Alexander Technique a complete spiritual discipline?
- *Are we teaching a spiritual discipline when we give an Alexander lesson?

Two possible definitions of "spirituality":

1. *The ground of spirituality is ourselves as we are;*

the path of spirituality is cutting through our confusion;

the fruition of spirituality is uncovering the awakened state.

2. *Spirituality is the conscious movement of ourselves toward the unification of everything. That which is "spiritual" is demonstrating an active responsibility toward this unification. §*

Up and Out of Africa

by Jane Tomkiewicz

I want to share with the membership the delightful letter I received a few months after having sent literature (including a copy of Bill and Judy's book) to a man in Ghana who was seeking a teacher of the Alexander Technique. (P.S. - In case any members wish to contact the writer regarding arranging workshops in Ghana contact me at the office to get his address.)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thanks very very much for the materials you sent to me on the Alexander Technique. In fact, you cannot quantify my joy. There is no unit to measure it.

From the bit of idea about the Alexander Technique, I have practiced the semi-supine technique for less than ten days now and my neck doesn't bother me as before. I am now preparing for my accountancy examination in two weeks and also look forward to resume football and sports. I feel like going to stand at the market square and shouting it out. I will surely shout it out across west and central Africa. With your help I can organise those chronic back pain "addicts" to get a teacher of the Alexander Technique for a seminar. I am praying for that to happen.

God richly bless you,
Fonehe Ndifor John

"I feel like going to stand at the market square and shouting it out."

News from the Center

Judith Grodowitz led a 6 day workshop on the Greek island of Folenandros in August of last year. The workshop was entitled "*Inspiration in the Aegean: The Alexander Technique. A Tool for Change with Judith Grodowitz*". It is the second year she has run the course. Students attended a three hour class each day.

Barbara Kent, Judy Stern and Anne Waxman all participated in teaching at the Summer Residential Course at Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar, Virginia this year. The aim of organizers is to create an intensive learning experience in the Alexander Technique open to all levels of experience. Large and small group sessions as well as individual lessons, optional classes such as T'ai Chi, Yoga, Improvisation etc. and plenty of free time to process make up the schedule of activities.

This past summer, **Linda De Leon** taught Alexander Technique to young musicians at CAM Camp, a two week summer program in chamber music sponsored by the *Connecticut Alliance for Music*. The children, aged 8-18, were surprised and impressed with the difference in their general ease and playing after having even a brief experience of the Technique. Evangeline Benedetti gave Linda helpful tips on working with young musicians as did ACAT classmates Eddie Malave and Henry Lee, both violists from Juilliard. Maria Caruso, an Alexander teacher and pianist Linda met at the AGM, also gave her helpful suggestions on working with young music students. In August the director told Linda that the feedback was very positive: the children want more Alexander Technique next summer in smaller classes! Linda taught three classes of 12 children with each group receiving two one-hour sessions which was not optimal, but this was the first CAM Camp and attendance turned out to be larger than planned. Linda sums up her experience as a "... a challenging but rewarding experience. As a new teacher, it was a great opportunity for me to put all I've learned into practice. It was a little scary to tackle this project only two weeks after graduating but I'm looking forward to next summer and some music students to work with this fall."

Judy Stern is very busy with the development and design of an out-patient center for alternative and complementary medicine at *United Hospital* in Rye, NY.

In order to help teachers who are making proposals to businesses/corporations, ACAT would like to have a list of any businesses that have had an AT teacher on site to work with their employees. If you have done this and would be willing to allow us to add this information to our list - it would be greatly appreciated. Contact the office.

On October 18, 1997 **Evangeline Benedetti**, certified Alexander Teacher, ACAT member and cellist with the New York Philharmonic, gave a presentation on the Alexander Technique at Barnes & Noble located on Broadway and 66th street. The event was under the auspices of the Philharmonic's "*Mentors and Proteges*" program. Approximately 80 people attended. Evangeline worked with three cello students as part of her presentation. The students came from *Juilliard*, the *Manhattan School of Music*, and *S.U.N.Y. at Stony Brook*. Evangeline had the cellists play before working with them, and then play again after receiving hands-on work. The audience noticed major improvements in sound and overall performance quality. The presentation was very well received.

Giora Pinkas in New York this Spring

Between April 6-11th, Giora will offer lessons and workshops, mostly for teachers. He's been teaching for 31 years and training teachers for 24 years in California and Europe, and is familiar with the multifaceted Alexander scene. In this, his first working visit to the East Coast, Giora is looking forward to meeting teachers and to articulating his current perspective of our work. Contact information:

Locations: IRDEAT 74 MacDougal St.

Cost: Private: (40 min.) \$70

Workshops: (to be determined)

Contact: Inbal Zohar (212) 780-9549

Giora Pinkas (510) 937-5746 (tel/fax)

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Guest: Buzz Gummere, Jr.

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