

# EXCHANGE

Volume 8 No. 1

January 3, 2000 \$8.75

## Alexander Technique and Aging Well

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*“Most of us, including members of the medical and educational professions, tend to look on pain and illness as natural concomitants of the stresses of living and old age. But such stresses are caused by uncoordinated movements which accelerate the process of ageing.”<sup>1</sup>*

This simple but seemingly radical idea is at the heart of what the Alexander Technique offers. In our culture, we are constantly told that age and gravity work against us, grinding us inevitably down into decrepitude and immobility. This scenario is based on a misreading of how we are constructed to process gravity. Rather than compressing ourselves by our own weight into the earth like a column, we are actually ingeniously built to process gravity by means of reflexes that in fact suspend us lightly off the planet. Rather than gravity pulling us down, gravity serves to project us up into life and activity.

Despite these widespread and hampering ideas about age and gravity, older persons are seeking the means to improve their quality of life, to cope with concerns that seem to limit their activities more each day, and to retain their independence and mobility. By means of a few simple principles, thoughtful and non-strenuous movement, and the development in students of their ability to self-observe and gradually take responsibility for how they choose to move, the Alexander Technique provides a powerful answer.

A great strength of the Technique is its ability to address the whole student as an organic system, avoiding the trap of an unending series of specific “fixes”. By starting with the reflexive system of the head and neck that F. M. Alexander (who developed the Technique a century ago) termed the “Primary Control,” the Technique addresses indirectly a host of related issues in well-

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### ATI Vision and Mission

To establish an open means of global communication for people to discuss, apply, research, and experiment with the discoveries of F. M. Alexander.

To foster the use of the F. M. Alexander Technique in social and environmental interrelationships.

To create a vital organization whose structure and means of operation are consistent with the principles of the F. M. Alexander Technique.

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## Editor's Page

*by Dan Arsenault, editor*

Welcome to the first Exchange of the new century. It looks like we made it past Y2K after all.

You may have noticed the higher price on the cover of this issue. Postal rates and printing prices have forced the higher rate. Subscriptions are now \$35.00 per year. This does not, however, affect the price of your membership in Alexander Technique International.

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This issue is a little like a bride. Something old, something new, something borrowed, something...OK, no blue—yet. Thanks to our great contributors. Keep 'em coming. We're happy to consider submissions of poetry, articles, features, profiles, artwork, what-have-you from all sources. Electronic sub-

missions are preferred.

Special thanks to Andrea Matthews for her proof reading of this and the previous issue. Andrea has the kind of eagle eyes for grammar and syntax that make me envious! ☹

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# EXCHANGE

Exchange is published quarterly by Alexander Technique International (ATI), the purpose of which is to promote and advance the F. Mathias Alexander Technique. Exchange is designed to disseminate information regarding the technique to ATI members and the public.

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## From the Chair



*Dan Arsenault photo*

*by Jamee Culbertson, Chair of Alexander Technique International*

**Y**ear 2000 means more exposure for the Alexander Technique. There will be more ATI certified teachers around the globe and continued lessons for students old and new. A variety of venues continue to open for Alexander teachers in many areas including colleges, businesses, sports arenas, and medical communities throughout the world. Our Alexander Technique International community is growing with the strength of ATI's sponsorship program, the continued improvement of outreach through our many communication systems; our publications, the Internet, and our new and varied telephone system.

More members have stepped forward to volunteer for various roles within the ATI organization. We have three more Regional Coordinators: Jay Hovenesian from Massachusetts USA, Margaret Bradshaw for the North of England-Scotland area, and Toni Poll-Sorenson for Wisconsin, USA. The purpose of the Regional Coordinator is to inform area members of any local Alexander related events such as workshops, teacher gatherings, etc...

Year 2000 has us traveling to Ireland for the Annual General Meeting and Conference for ATI in October. I look forward to meeting our international members face to face who have not been able to attend previous AGMs held

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## Alexander Technique International

For membership information please contact Raewyn Haywood at the address below.  
ATI membership \$55.00 per year.

Teaching membership \$120.00 per year.

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## Alexander Technique and Aging Well

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being and movement. His empirical discovery that this primary control (a certain dynamic relationship—rather than a fixed position—of the head and neck) controls the balance and coordination of the entire organism was later confirmed by scientific studies of vertebrate movement.

Alexander discovered that from a very young age and continuing through life, most of us learn unwittingly to interfere with our mechanisms of balance, starting by contracting the muscles in the area where our heads rest on our necks.<sup>2</sup> Because natural balance and coordination are immediately impaired by this interference, a series of “compensations” arises, further distorting coordination. Instead of being a poised and available system “tuned” by a balanced distribution of tonus and compression throughout, we learn to feel “normal” as a discontinuous collection of some slack and other excessively tensed parts that we must heave around like so many bricks. It never seems to strike us as peculiar that we even find it harder and harder to get out of a chair!

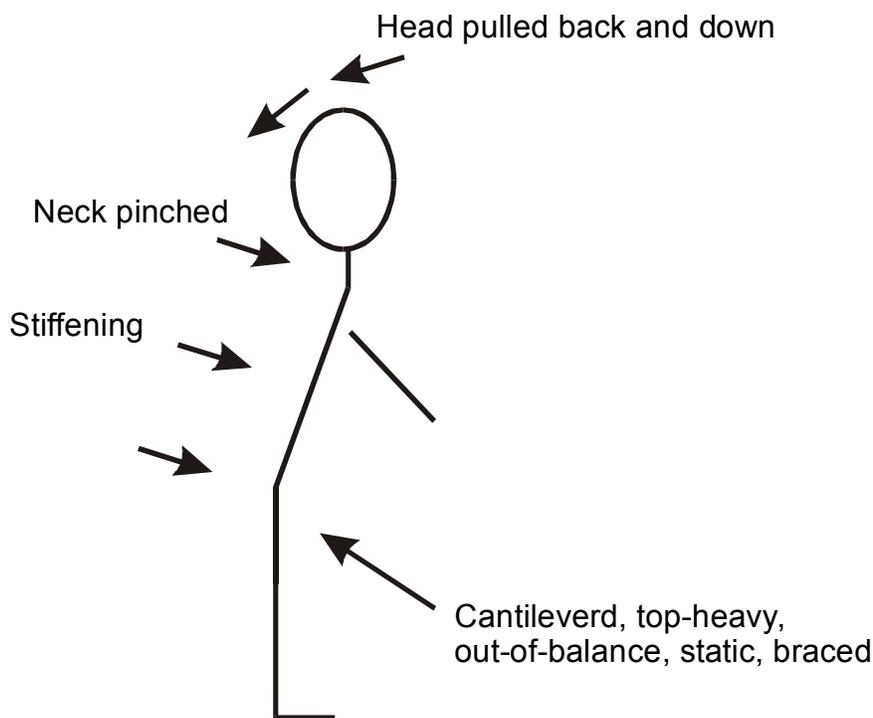
As time goes by, the imbalance becomes ever more pronounced, and is fed by the very fear of falling that it engenders. Moving our joints against the forces tending to immobilize them generates tremendous wear and tear, leading to pain and injury. We realize, without knowing how or why, that we have somehow become stiff, top-heavy, unstable and less able to respond flexibly. Fear of being injured in a fall ironically makes us tense up more, increasing those qualities that make us unstable. Balance and falling become major concerns—and often, major limitations.

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### Restoring Balance

Fortunately, Alexander also discovered that it is possible to interrupt and reverse this unhappy process.<sup>3</sup> The delicate balance of the head and neck can be consciously restored, imparting balance and flexibility to our movements. With a slight change in how we think about what we’re doing, we stop contracting our necks and pulling our heads back, the interference with the reflexes of balance ceases, the dynamic relationship of our head and neck restores itself, and our balance and confidence return.

In theory, this simple principle, that we should cease our interfering contractions, hardly seems revolutionary. It doesn’t seem like it should be very hard to put into practice, either. Nor would it be in practice, were it not for this paradoxical obstacle: Habit. The very thing we are trying to prevent is what



*Figure 1. This person's head is pulled back and down, interfering with reflexes of balance and coordination, forcing the rest of body to compensate with bracing and stiffness, in order to prevent falling forward. This is only one example of the forms that distorted balance can take, but they all begin with a disruption of the balance of the head on the neck. Such a posture as this can only work in that position and offers no responsiveness to change of any kind, let alone an unexpected one. Such vulnerability leads to fear and even more interfering tension.*

feels “right,” and has become an ingrained habit. It is often only when we attempt to change such a habit that we realize how shockingly resistant it can be to alteration, because we are constantly seduced by its feeling of rightness. It seems so natural to strive to be “right.” And so unnatural not to!

For this reason, the benefits of the Alexander Technique are much more easily attained through the help of a teacher who can objectively observe how the student actually moves and uses himself. Gradually the student also learns to catch how he “gets set” to move and learns to inhibit (to interrupt, not repress) that impulse, allowing the movement to be carried out with natural, unimpeded grace. The philosopher John Dewey, himself an enthusiastic student and supporter of Alexander, called this skill of using conscious awareness to cooperate rather than interfere with reflex coordination, “Thinking in Activity.”

### **A Rising Tide**

Because Alexander Technique resists the temptation of chasing down and fixing particular “symptoms” such as stiffness, pain, and fear of falling, in favor of addressing the fundamental interference that generates those symptoms, it sets off a wave of indirect benefits of value to all students, and in particular to older students. Young people tend to have a greater latitude for error and misuse than older persons, and thus can “afford” more excess tension and interference. Those who are older or suffer from illness have a decreased margin for error and thus need to regain every degree of flexibility possible. The rising tide of balance and flexibility set off by use of the Technique lifts many “boats.” The relief of pressure and redistribution of tonus at the head and neck is transmitted throughout the body,

- restoring poise and balance, helping to prevent falls
- increasing flexibility at joints and reducing excessive pull on bones, lessen-

## Alexander Technique and Aging Well

ing damage when falls do occur

- helping to regain and maintain mobility
- increasing economy of movement by reenlisting normal antigravity reflexes of the body, improving stamina and lightness
- promoting ease in activities from the simple and routine, such as rising out of a chair, to the more complex, such as lifting, reaching, golfing, gardening, etc.

As movement becomes less effortful and pressure is taken off joints and organs, the student's general well-being is enhanced. She will often experience:

- improved breathing
- improved organ function
- improved digestion and absorption
- lowered blood pressure

It is important to note that in addition to heart problems, high blood pressure is now found to be associated, along with lack of activity, with bone loss. By reducing blood pressure and making physical activity more pleasurable and manageable, Alexander Technique may also contribute to retention of bone mass.

- improved ability to cope with chronic illness and/or pain

For example, arthritis sufferers benefit from the Technique also because it reduces pressure on joints and promotes activity. Studies are also being conducted on patients with Parkinson's disease that indicate improvement in movement and outlook.<sup>4</sup>

The human organism being indivisible in its physical and psychological aspects (its "psychophysical unity," in Alexander's words), such apparently bodily improvements immediately manifest as emotional benefits to the person as well. Improved physical function and balance

- lessen anxiety
- improve mood and sense of well-being
- restore independence and a sense of self-determination
- restore natural coordination, control<sup>5</sup> and choice
- reconnect the individual with a feeling of support both from within and from the environment

### A Means for All Seasons

Walter Carrington, a teacher of the Technique who trained with F. M. Alexander, stressed the value of the work for older students in a talk recorded in the book, *Thinking Aloud*.<sup>6</sup>

I remember what was probably Alexander's last lesson...an old lady who had

been a pupil of his for some years. She must have had quite a number of lessons, off and on, and she was quite old. Of course, so was he by then—he being nearly 87. The relevance of age is that people find that life becomes more difficult in all sorts of small, unexpected respects when they get older. They never thought or hesitated about climbing stairs and carrying things, or even lifting their hands up to a high shelf. The physical demands that you have taken for granted do become more difficult as you get older, and that is where you really need all the help you can get. Alexander help is particularly appreciated here. In fact, old age really is the testing time from

“Now, my dear, see that you don’t stiffen your neck, and see that you’ve always got something to look forward to.” And that was the summary of the whole thing.

the point of view of the Technique.

So here was this old lady and when F. M. finished the lesson, he patted her on the shoulder and said, “Now, my dear, see that you don’t stiffen your neck, and see that you’ve always got something to look forward to.” And that was the summary of the whole thing.

The Alexander Technique is not just for young professional athletes or performing artists, though they are often thought of as its primary beneficiaries and historically have been the first to recognize its enormous value. Ease of movement, confidence in balance, and enthusiasm for life’s activities are our birthright as human beings at any age and it’s never too late to start to reclaim them. ☺

1 Richard Brennan, *The Alexander Technique: Natural Poise for Health*, Element Books, 1991, p. 49

2 The reasons for this are too numerous to go into in the space of this article, but have been discussed widely in other writings on the Alexander Technique. For more information, I recommend particularly Michael Gelb’s book, *Body Learning* (Owl Books, Henry Holt & Co., 2nd ed., 1994). You can also find numerous informative articles and books listed at the website of Alexander Technique International at [www.ati-net.com](http://www.ati-net.com) or call ATI at 1-888-321-0856.

3 One preliminary study that confirms these results in older students is: Dennis RJ; Functional reach improvement in normal older women after Alexander Technique instruction. (J. Gerontol. A. Biol. Sci. Med. Sci., 1999 Jan, Abstract available) The outcome of the study was significantly improved balance and a reduction in falls.

4 Stallibrass C; An evaluation of the Alexander Technique for the management of disability in Parkinson’s disease—a preliminary study. (Clin. Rehabil., 1997 Feb, Abstract available)

5 And in particular with the knowledge—through experience—that real control stems not from clamping down and grasping at results, but rather from balance, clarity of intention, expansion of the organism, and trust of the ability of one’s own reflex mechanism to respond appropriately to the demands of life.

6 Walter Carrington (Jerry Sontag, ed.), *Thinking Aloud*, Mornum Time Press, 1994, p. 136

## The Weaker Sex?

*The following is from the keynote address at the 1999 Annual General Meeting of Alexander Technique International by Richard Gummere, Copyright © 1999, Richard Gummere. Ed.*

I lifted my title from an article I read about fifty years ago in the *New York Times Magazine* by the anthropologist Ashley Montague. He wrote that women are superior to men in everything but muscle. I perked up again in the exuberant 1960s, when women anthropologists turned out manifestos arguing that their prehistoric ancestresses took the lead in technology - they made baskets, and in science, they patiently observed the stars. The men were too exhausted from hunting.

Having been close to three very strong women, one of them here tonight, I'll say my own piece and then end with a sketch of my mighty Quaker grandmother.

Though a mathematical analphabetic, I do like to count things, the way Isaac Newton could always tell you the number of steps he'd just gone up or down. After Peg and I got home from the 6th International Congress of Alexander Teachers in Freiburg, Germany, this past summer, I got out the registration list and counted the attendance. Total 482, 24 nations, with Germany sending 169, Switzerland 121, United Kingdom 91, USA 40, Holland 28, and so on all the way down to one each from Norway, Sweden, Italy, Argentina, and, last but not least, three guesses, don't look ahead...wrong!...wrong!...wrong!

OK, and Turkey.

Then something prompted me to count up the numbers by gender. Women outnumbered men more than three to one. We recalled an even larger proportion at other Alexander Technique gatherings. I've been asking around: Why? How come? Or, as they say in Pogo, Whuffo?

One woman responded quickly and confidently. "Well, men avoid a career that's still obscure and precarious." A man mused. "You see, since Plato, too many men have ignored, if not scorned the human body, so we've designated women, since they choose to live more in their bodies, for occupations like nursing and Alexander Technique teaching."

Now let's hear from Oscar Wilde: "Women represent the triumph of matter over mind." (Resentful stir from part of the audience.) "Men represent the triumph of



*Buzz Gummere addresses the seventh Annual General Meeting of Alexander Technique International. Marie Favorito photo.*

mind over morals.” (Ditto from another part.) I’ve eventually learned to take Wilde’s apparent paradoxes as genuine wisdom. Here he refers, I think, to women’s thoroughly justified rebellion against men’s ancient tyranny. The other day, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* I read of an even more powerful feminist statement by the women’s rugby team at Ohio State. The university censured them and the Midwest Rugby Football Union canceled the rest of their season because in Washington, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, they posed for photographs—topless.

I believe women could deepen the philosophy of the Alexander world. I understand that the human brain is usually somewhat lateralized: you know, left hemisphere for thought, right for feeling, with men living more out of the left, women the right. But I gather also that a man’s brain itself is likely to be more heavily lateralized, a woman’s less so. She can change roles, between the affective and the cognitive, more readily. She has the brain of the future.

A little boy asks his mother what makes the grass green.

Mother: “You’d better wait till your father comes home.”

Little boy: “No thanks, I don’t want to know that much.”

Man’s bent: logic, politics, power, end-gaining, the number of triple plays since Abner Doubleday. Woman’s bent: empathy, nurturance, relationships (oh man, relationships!), style above substance, tolerance of ambiguity (tolerance my Aunt Fanny — love of ambiguity!). What I envy most on your list is pluck. One day, when women couldn’t yet vote, I asked where my mother was.

“In Washington.”

“What’s she doing there?”

“Burning President Wilson in effigy.”

Compared to us men, then, with your more even cerebral balance, you women have a special talent needed in Alexander work. Couldn’t it enable you, with that remarkable design, to understand—better than we—F. Matthias Alexander’s cardinal principle: human wholeness? And you could also be more comfortable with a grand irony he bequeathed to us. When his pesky larynx knocked this restless young Australian out of his theatrical career, he only wanted to get back on the stage—nothing else. He did. But the gods did have something else in mind to reward him for his extraordinary daring. They gave him the deep satisfaction of realizing he had discovered the teachability of Uncertainty. In one of his books he signified his sense of the scope of this accomplishment by having the printer put one word all in capital letters: the UNKNOWN.

I heard a student in an unforgettable exchange with Marjorie Barstow.

## The Weaker Sex?

Student: “Marj, would you kindly tell us what on earth this is you’re teaching us?”

Marjorie: “Nothing.”

Student: “Marj, did you say, nothing?”

Marjorie: “I said — nothing.”

That minimalism was a part of Marjorie’s thought and art and action. She’d insist that one of the greatest difficulties most of us disciples of Alexander face is the simplicity of his discovery. “It’s just too darn simple for you.” Then she didn’t shout *this* from the housetops, but she’d rattle us with another stunner. She’d look around as though a bit nervous and say, in her dry Nebraska accent, “I don’t think *anybody* knows how to teach Mr. Alexander’s principles.”

Marjorie would also shake us up by declaring that she was not teaching the Alexander Technique anyway. Her awe for F. M.’s discovery matched anybody’s. But she considered his pedagogy an improvisation. This must have been his meaning, too, in his insistence that he had found only a signpost. She believed that F. Matthias Alexander’s great mission was fulfilled in his discovery of inhibition, not what he did with it. Marjorie told me a little about her background.

I recall that while selling candied apples in the Cornhuskers’ stadium with a friend, they’d loft them to the outstretched hands of distant customers.

But finally, let’s sashay to another great woman, my grandmother. Right after college, I spent a year with her, the two of us, alone. She told me how, when away at a Quaker boarding school, she was sent home in disgrace. She’d been found down behind the barn twanging her Jew’s harp as her classmates danced. She told me how, in the 1890s, with two small children she accompanied my grandfather on his sabbatical year at the University of Berlin. There she got him to lean on a bureaucrat so she could attend lectures, the first woman ever, sitting behind a screen (she was pretty).

Home again, with another child, she ran a big Queen Anne house like a battleship. In a third floor sanctum, wearing a burgundy smoking jacket, sporting a quill pen, and chain-smoking Wheeling stogies, Grandpa hatched a major philosophical heresy. Meanwhile, Granny published three books of Quaker history and edited what’s still the definitive version of the Journal of the Quaker mystic, John Woolman.

Amelia Mott Gummere showed me what a woman can do. ☺

## The Alexander Technique and Dressage

### Getting Better at What You Are Already Good At



*Awareness leads to choice. Can you inhibit your old, familiar way of using yourself to allow the possibility of a better, more integrated use of all of you? Here Tommy Thompson teaches Cary Staples.*

*The 1999 Alexander Technique International Annual General Meeting featured an equine interlude on Sunday, with about half of the attendees participating. Working with horse and rider is nothing new to practitioners and teachers of the Technique, however. The following article first appeared in Salute, the official publication of the 1990 New England Dressage Association. It is reprinted here with the permission of both the author and the publication. It is the first in a series of two articles dealing with horse, rider, and the Alexander Technique. Look for Poise upon Poise in the next issue. Ed.*

*Story and Photos Copyright 1990, Melanie Tenney*

In the evolution of riding, two clear principles of learning have emerged: “mechanical skills”—how to sit, how to use the aids..., and “feel”—that illusive inner knowledge of balance, connection, and power that enables us to judge the quality and correctness of the horse’s performance.

The relationship between mechanics and feel develops with the skill of the rider. Memorable rides reflect the near perfect blending of both into an artistic performance. Regardless of level or talent, the common goal for all of us is to achieve that unity of technique and art.

At the turn of the century, a young Australian orator developed the Alexander Technique. F. M. Alexander suggested that the manner in which we use ourselves in any physical endeavor influences the quality of the outcome. In riding terms, we apply the aids for shoulder in—unaware that our subtle but habitual thought process related to “shoulder in” stimulates a slight muscular contraction in the head, neck, and torso. This shortens and narrows the back and limits the elasticity of the seat. The outcome *is* a shoulder in, but with shortened steps caused by the tension the rider has induced in the horse’s back. The judge at C says “5—some resistance in shoulder in.”

Alexander kept losing his voice as a result of performing. After several visits to the local physician which didn’t solve his problem, he wondered if he could be using himself in such a way as to create or aggravate the problem. Encouraged by his physician, he ultimately devoted the rest of his life to the study that became a body of work called the Alexander Technique.

Alexander discovered that all of us have habitual patterns of over-contractive muscle use. These patterns are a response to the stimulus of our thoughts and perceptions of ourselves and our world. We often have little accurate awareness of these patterns, and over time with repetition, we strengthen and deepen them. Many patterns effect the relationship of the head and neck to the torso. Alexander taught the concept of “non-doing” or “inhibition” of our familiar neuromuscular-skeletal habits as a means of allowing a more innate and natural use of the body.

To the horse, your body is a very strong stimulus. It gives constant direction from the moment you mount—actually sooner. Awareness of how one uses oneself to ride brings about a deeper understanding of the horse's perception of the aids—and his response which is the basis of performance.

When a rider's response to life and to riding is to subtly but regularly fix the head and neck in a rigid way, the result will be to teach a process of contraction and adaptation to the muscles of the neck. Contraction results in lessened range of motion, less efficiency, less strength, and a state of imbalance in the entire body. The loss of balance in the parts effects the whole, and the contractive pattern of use in a rider's neck is felt by the horse in all places where his and the rider's bodies interact.

Studying the Alexander Technique and incorporating it into your riding is a slow and mindful process. Lessons with an Alexander teacher enable the student to experience a "way of being" lost to most of us since early childhood. In essence we experience the absence of our usual contractive selves. From the first lesson an awareness of choice begins. As riders, trainers, and instructors, the Alexander Technique enables us to choose whether or not commit ourselves to a particular way of using ourselves in order to accomplish our goals both on and off the horse. ☺

*Melanie Tenney owns Woodcock Hill in Willington, Connecticut, a training facility specializing in dressage and offering a British Horse Society affiliated assistant instructor's course. A long time dressage student of Volker Brommann and Shelly Francis, she is studying the Alexander Technique with Tommy Thompson of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Elizabeth Huebner of Windham, Connecticut.*

## From the Chair

*continued from page 3*

in America.

We brought part of ATI's vision to life at the AGM in Virginia last year as we gathered to "...discuss, apply, research, and experiment with the discoveries of F. M. Alexander".

It was around seven thirty in the evening when I arrived at SevenOaks in Madison Virginia, home of the 1999 Annual General Meeting. Accompanying me were Bill Walsh, Tommy Thompson, Roberta Hamilton and Janis Cummings. We got out of our cars stretching and took a look skyward marveling at the countless stars up above us. What a beautiful environment for our AGM! Jan Baty really hit the jackpot suggesting this location for us. We stood in a circular driveway near the main building. I could see a few of the cottages where we'd be staying for the weekend, just up the hill. In front of the main building was an open field leading down to the woods. I thought I



*An Alexander teacher helps his students develop an awareness of their habitual way of using themselves. Tommy Thompson works with Paul Rampal.*

saw some movement in the darkness of the field. Yes I did! Five deer were walking by, as if to greet us, five deer and the five of us standing together in the driveway. I knew then, with such a gentle welcoming that we were in good hands for an auspicious weekend of networking in the spirit of prosperity and gratitude.

We offered eleven workshops (see the vol. 7 no. 3 issue of Exchange for a description of workshops and presenters) throughout the weekend attended by teachers and students, members and guests. The workshop "Moving to Learn" presented by special guest Michelle Arsenault was very well attended with Michelle selling every book she brought along with her. "The Power of Intention" workshop presented by Roberta Hamilton offered us powerful ideas for creating prosperity in our lives and in Alexander teaching practices. Jano Cohen led a roundtable discussion where people could simply talk about what they are doing with the work, in their teaching practice and

# The Bones of Wealth

*The following is excerpted from Is Money the Matter? Copyright © 1999, Toni Stone. Reprinted with permission. It was used in the prosperity workshop given at the 1999 ATI Annual General Meeting by Roberta Hamilton. Ed.*

## Part A, Principles of Prospering

### 1. Life is Generated With Exchange. Exchange is Going On Everywhere.

All of life is exchange. Everything gives with and to everything else. When finances seem to be a problem...communication has slowed down. Speedy exchange is not going on, in areas that create motion and money. Desired outcomes do not happen when the exchange and movement that mixes it comes to a standstill.

Everywhere life is happening, mutual giving and taking are happening. When not participating in conversation, interrelation, and reciprocation, traffic slows. It's like draining a glass with a straw, not pouring anything back into it. There is a responsibility to keep a mix of giving and taking going. Life is a collaboration. Interdependence is the law.

Money is not the matter. It is a symbol for exchange. What is the matter is that someone has withdrawn. Someone has stopped giving. Someone has stopped playing. When interchange has slowed to a snail's pace, the result is seeming lack. Nothing appears to be coming in, to fill what got taken out. We can source what could happen. It takes pointing forward, and being engaged in the exchange.

All around breezes blow the trees. Leaves fall to Earth and make rich soil, trees give oxygen, bees take pollen and make honey, birds drop seeds in gardens, flowers grow and spawn seed, exchange is going on, life is produced, brought about, and propagated by exchange. Eagerness to be involved in life is distinct from sitting back passively. It is up to us to be a part in the dialogue of dealing commerce, the talk of transactions. When money seems to be a problem, the position adopted is not generative. It is small, self-concerned, too wrapped tight and insular to allow the free giving and taking required to generate flows of income. A posture of *need* must surrender to a posture of *have*. A prosperous person is a generative, in motion for a future.

If you want to play a song, put money in the jukebox. If you want to hear from people get on the phone. If you want to enroll, start talking. Exchange is always happening. It's up to you to join in...participate. ☺

I can remember not having very much money. My prosperity teacher told me to go to expensive stores that I knew I couldn't afford yet. The ones that, to walk in the door, scared me. I was so uptight that the process made me gasp.

She told me to decide which stores I wanted to be able to go in and not gasp, then go in there every week looking at prices tags without remarking to myself or to others how high or unfair it was. My job was to praise and acknowledge the good value, excellent workmanship and exquisite design of all the merchandise.

She wanted me to become acquainted with the place...to be doing the level of exchange I was currently capable for...it worked. Soon I was a regular customer. The store I selected had many markdowns.

## Coming Events

**Naas, County Kildare, Ireland**, January 22 and 23, 2000. Weekend non-residential introductory Workshop for those new to the technique as well as those with previous experience. The course runs from 10:30 a. m. until 5:00 p. m. each day. Cost £85. To book or for further information please contact: Richard Brennan on 091 - 555800.

**Chrysalis, County Wicklow, Ireland**, April 7 to 9, 2000. A weekend residential course in a quiet retreat centre near Dublin which is an opportunity to relax and be looked after. The course starts on Friday evening and finishes on 4 p. m. on Sunday. Cost £145. To book a place please contact: Chrysalis, Donard, Co., Wicklow Ireland. Tel: 045 - 404713.

The Professional Association of Alexander Teachers (PAAT)

**Birmingham, U.K.** January 6, 2000 to April 6, 2000, Thursday evenings from 7:00 p. m. to 9:00 p. m., Recreational Course in the Alexander Technique

PAAT has a well-established Recreational Course in the Alexander Technique for individuals who are already having private lessons and who would like to deepen their understanding of the Technique by studying it in a broader context than private lessons allow. The course is offered on a term-by-term basis, with each term consisting of 12 weekly sessions which take place in Birmingham (UK) on Thursday evenings between 7.00-9.00 p.m.

Sessions focus on the practical application of the Technique to the solution of life's problems and take both a general and participant-generated approach. Talks are given based on the writings of F. M. Alexander and related subjects. Cost is currently £192.00 per term. Open to all. Contact: Fred Oldfield, e-mail: FOldfi1426@aol.com, Tel: +44 (0)121-248-1133.

The 27th Annual Barstow/Alexander Technique Institute, Doane College, **Crete, Nebraska, USA** (near Omaha, Kansas City, and Lincoln). June 17 to June 24, 2000.

The Institute is open to new and experienced students and emphasizes the unique approach to teaching the Technique pioneered by the late Marjorie Barstow. For more information, please contact: Robert Rickover, 2434 Ryons, St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68502, USA Telephone (402) 475-4433, e-mail: robert@alexandertechnique.com or visit our web site at [www.alexandertechnique.com/barstow](http://www.alexandertechnique.com/barstow). ☺

## From the Chair

within their own personal evolution in learning. Marie Favorito kept us energized with Chi Kung movements and stretches and was on hand as a photographer to document the weekend for us. We are grateful to all of the ATI presenters who came and gave of their time and talents, who enriched the entire experience of our AGM.

Our business meetings were productive and creative. All of the members present reached an agreement to pass Part 1 of an Ethics proposal presented by Holly Sweeney. At present we are making all of the information on this proposal available to ATI members for their approval. It was suggested that members buy a subscription of the Exchange at the new subscription price of \$35 for one of their students, friends or colleagues. If say, 300 of our members each buy just one subscription to Exchange it would bring in over ten thousand dollars to help with operating costs for ATI!

We had the good fortune of meeting a few of the AmSat Board members who were in the area attending a meeting of their own. I'm grateful that they could stop by to meet and socialize with us for a while. I look forward to future opportunities where we can get to know each other better.

On Friday night we gathered for dinner at candlelit tables adorned with local wildflowers, designed by Jan Baty, for the awards dinner and keynote address given by Buzz

## Alexander Technique on the Internet

Gummere (see page 8, Ed.). Afterwards we told stories of Alexander learning experiences, many of which were reminiscent of Marjorie Barstow. After dessert we settled into smaller groups consisting of those of us who chose to exchange some hands-on Alexander work or to join Catherine Kettrick while she interviewed Buzz for an upcoming article in *Direction* magazine.

About half of us attended the trip to the horse farm driving through the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Robin Eastham had fresh goat's milk and cake for people upon arrival! Robin was incredibly well organized offering riders with horses for people to do Alexander work. Members enjoyed a picnic lunch outdoors provided by SevenOaks. We are grateful to Robin for her generosity in opening her home and beautiful lands to us.

The next day before I left to return home I stopped to say good-bye to one of the students I had met. She told me how much she enjoyed the weekend, how inspired she was by the way we held our meetings, that she wants to start her own organization one day, and wow, Alexander teachers are a lot of fun! Maybe that says it all. Happy New Year everyone!



Alexander Technique International uses the Internet in a number of interesting ways. Log into the ATI World Wide Web site at [www.ati-net.com](http://www.ati-net.com). You can also log in to Alexander On-line at [www.alexandertechnique.com/online](http://www.alexandertechnique.com/online). This site provides links to the rapidly growing number of Alexander Technique resources on the Internet. Alexander Teacher listings can be found both the ATI web site and on the Ask Dr. Weil web site at [www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com).

ATI maintains an Internet forum of members called Interchange. You can send e-mail to all listed members by addressing your e-mail to [interchange@ati-net.com](mailto:interchange@ati-net.com). You can send mail to the ATI board as a group at [board@ati-net.com](mailto:board@ati-net.com), or to individual board members at: [chair@ati-net.com](mailto:chair@ati-net.com), [assistantchair@ati-net.com](mailto:assistantchair@ati-net.com), [treasurer@ati-net.com](mailto:treasurer@ati-net.com), [execsec@ati-net.com](mailto:execsec@ati-net.com), [correspondsec@ati-net.com](mailto:correspondsec@ati-net.com)

We have news this issue of two new web sites. Martin Finnegan, of Alexander Technique Associates in Sydney, Australia, has a site at [www.atand.com.au](http://www.atand.com.au), and the Cardiff Consultancy for the Alexander Technique is online at [www.alexandertec.u-net.com](http://www.alexandertec.u-net.com). ☺



*Taking a break from their auditions for the role of Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer at the most recent Annual General Meeting, some of the officers of Alexander Technique International pose for a snapshot. From left to right, Jan Baty, Corresponding Secretary, Marcia Paludan, Executive Secretary, Jamee Culbertson, Chair, Tommy Thompson, Ex Officio, and Lucy Venable, Treasurer. Marie Favorito photo.*

Alexander Technique International (ATI) is a worldwide organization of teachers, students, and friends of the Alexander Technique created to promote and advance the work begun by F. Mathias Alexander.

ATI embraces the diversity of the international Alexander community and works to promote international dialogue.

### About the Alexander Technique

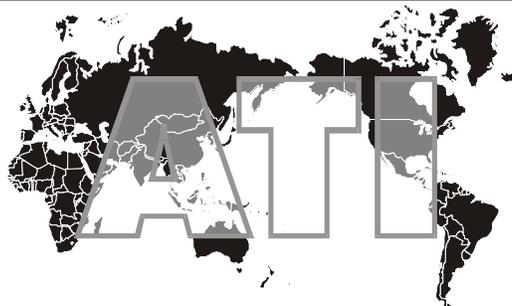
Experience of the Technique has led to praise from George Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley, Prof. John Dewey, Sir Charles Sherrington, Julian Bream, John Cleese, Robertson Davies, and many others. It is taught at the Juilliard School of Performing Arts in New York, and the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, the Stratford Shakespearean Festival and the Shaw Festivals in Canada, Boston University, Brandeis University, and many other centers.

Olympic-level athletes have similarly used the Technique to improve their performance, as have leading golfers and business people. Medical studies have shown the Technique to be as effective in lowering blood pressure as the normally prescribed beta blocking drugs. Other studies have shown significant improvement in respiratory function.

The common factor in all of these aspects of life is that how we are using ourselves—the way we do things—affects the result we get. The Alexander Technique is a means of improving that use. It has been called a “pre-technique” which people can apply to furthering their own special skills and activities. It is also essentially a preventative technique with which we can learn to improve and maintain our health.

The individual is the focus of the Alexander Technique. We are all unique, with different bodies, different experiences, and different problems. We go about the process of change in different ways and at different rates. For these reasons, what happens in an Alexander Technique lesson depends very much on the needs of the student at the time. In the basic sense, though, you will learn an attitude of not trying to gain your ends at any cost, and, at the same time, how to prevent your harmful habits that cause unnecessary stress and restrict your capabilities. Obviously, since what you are changing are patterns built up over many years, a permanent change will not be brought about overnight. However, the person who learns to stop and take time, to think constructively about how he uses himself in everyday life, will find that this simple procedure can have far-reaching results.

Further information about the Alexander Technique can perhaps best be gained from a teacher near you (see list at right for teacher listings through the nearest ATI office), as your changing experiences through lessons are the only real way to understand the nature of the work and what change is possible.



## Worldwide Offices of Alexander Technique International

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