

EXCHANGE

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Auntie Bea's Recipe for Happiness

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trainee at the Alexander Technique Center at Cambridge, MA

In my personal recipe for happiness, the main ingredient is love. Why? Because when you share a cake you made with people you love, you actually give them much more than a cake. The cake is a reflection of your love for them. It doesn't matter if you use the freshest eggs or the best flour, if you don't "care" about making a cake for someone, it will show. It will show in the way that you make the cake, present it, and share it. So, I believe that love is the most important ingredient to a happy life.

For my personal recipe to work, I use something called the Alexander Technique. It is a little like baking powder: You can make a cake without it but it will be heavy. So, might as well use it, right?

When I discovered the Alexander Technique, I was actually looking for a voice teacher. One day, I found an ad on a bulletin board and called that person who worked with the Alexander Technique and claimed it helped one move, play better, and so on. When I asked him if that method was applicable to singing (in my kitchen), he said "Absolutely!" So, I made an appointment, thinking that he would help me sing better while I was baking and found myself sitting and standing for an hour. Of course, I quickly realized that he was not a voice teacher but still I knew that I had found exactly what I was looking for.

Every week, we worked on a specific topic I had chosen: My cakes were always burnt and I was sad and frustrated, or my mother would always tell me how to make my cakes and it made me very angry, etc., etc...

I was an Alexander student for about a year and a half and it slowly became part of my life and then my way of life. Once I saw that it could really be

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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

Andrea Matthews, editor

This issue is definitely a case of all the news that's print to fit, thanks to the energy of our contributors! I find I have only this itty, bitty space left, so I'll spare you my profound thoughts this time and simply pass on some news.

Because of the cost of mailing each issue, the Board has decided that putting out three issues a year (January, May, and September) rather than four will be more cost effective, allowing us to put quite a sum directly back into *ExchangE* rather than into the US Post Office's coffers. Also, the time-dependent Events listings will move to the Communiqué (they continue to appear on ATI's website, of course), which will still appear four times per year, freeing still more pages for articles.

This issue's opening article is by a trainee of Tommy Thompson, and I'd like to encourage all trainees and students of the Technique, as well as ATI teaching members, to share their experiences in *ExchangE*, in submissions of any length (for example, any AGM impressions?). Also, please note that Fred Oldfield has sent important news from PAAT that is relevant to ATI as well, regarding the suitability (or not) of the Complementary Medicine label for the Technique (see page 19). I hope you'll take the time to explore further!

EXCHANGE

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From the Chair

Jamee Culbertson, Chair of Alexander Technique International

A Shared Field of Attention

F.M. Alexander wrote in one of his books "...that man's supreme inheritance of conscious guidance and control is within the grasp of anyone who will take the trouble to cultivate it...."

Over eighty members of ATI met for our Annual Meeting in October 2000 on the windy shores of Spanish Point in County Clare, Ireland, because we take the time and trouble to cultivate that which is within our grasp, a natural birthright for each and every human being: the right to make conscious our thoughts and actions, the right thusly to choose a quality of response and therefore a state of responsibility that has the potential to empower, enrich, and evoke creatively the essential link between one another.

This act of cultivation is what members of ATI did together in Ireland. We came together to seek the acquaintance and goodwill of those who wish to take the time to form and refine, through shared education, the meaning and the practice of the Alexander Technique in our lives.

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Alexander Technique International

For membership information, please contact Raewyn Haywood at the address below or by email at membership@ati-net.com.

ATI membership: \$55 per year.

Teaching membership: \$120 per year.

Membership includes a subscription to Exchange. Subscription to Exchange alone, \$35 per year. Please send check or money order in US funds to:

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used in all the dishes I was making, I realized that I had to take it to another level and become a full-time Alexander baker. That's why I joined the Alexander Baking Training.

First, it fulfills my need in baking, especially with other people. I have always been interested in knowing other cooks and what makes them who they are, how their history influences their cooking styles, how some of them rely solely on family recipes without ever creating their own, or, on the contrary, reject their cooking heritage and go to the other extreme. Personally, I had chosen to find my own style. I quickly understood that in order to be the best (chef) I could be, I needed as much as possible to make peace with my past. As you know, we all had a grandmother who would tell us that in order to be a good chef, one has to break the eggs her way, to mix in the eggs whites just like she did, and so forth. If you didn't do it her way, she would claim that that you were ungrateful for what she was teaching you and you would break her heart, etc. Then, you had the father cook. He always criticized your every move in the kitchen, would call you a good for nothing when you dared try anything. In other words, he paralyzed you. Personally, I saw my salvation in taking the best of what my family had passed on to me and giving them back what belonged to them.

At the beginning, I had no idea how to achieve that high goal. I didn't even know whether I wanted to cook, bake, or barbecue. I remember looking for answers, asking for help and not necessarily getting it. That was rather painful and as a reaction, I closed down quite a lot. However, the more I was looking and asking questions, the more I started to find answers. Eventually, it became clear that my path was baking. So, I tried different things to fulfill my needs: The Freudian diet, but it was not quite adapted to what I had in mind. The Gestalt feast.... That one appealed to me a lot, but I felt that an ingredient was missing...without quite knowing which one. So I put my search aside and focused on other interests of mine. Singing was one of them. That's how it all started.

All that said, how does the Alexander Cooking Technique fit into my recipe for happiness?

If you remember, the main ingredient of my recipe is love. In the Alexander Technique, love is called support. What does it mean? Well, every student experiences it in their own way as they learn the Technique. Personally, I didn't quite understand what "support" meant at the beginning. I had a feeling however that it was more than the floor I was standing on or the table I was lying on. And I remember the day when it all became clear. I had talked to the teacher about all the recipes I wanted to do in the future and he said: "That sounds delicious, but there is one ingredient you didn't mention...." Then, after some "table work," it struck me. Everything was related to sup-

port: Me, everyone, and everything that was ever created and ever would be. That's the ingredient I had always been missing! But of course!

That sense of a greater reality that we are part of is growing stronger and stronger. Being in support gives me the sense of being part of a Whole, where I am a minuscule element but have a unique place at the same time. It's a strong feeling that everything is made of the same energy, has the same source, whether it is people, animals, plants, or minerals. This sense includes not only our world but the universe and everything that exists.

If the principle is that we are all made of the same energy, let's call it support, then, support is also part of me. Therefore, whatever qualities I feel when I am in support, these qualities are also awakened within me. This fact is a major factor in loving ourselves.

After the meaning of support "clicked" for me, I better understood the process I was going through during each lesson. As I was working through specific problems, if an emotion came up, the teacher would ask me to still feel that emotion but to surround it with support. In other words, I tried to still "hear the flute behind the trumpet." In comparison with techniques such as the Gestalt therapy, I noticed that working things out within support was easier. In Gestalt therapy, the pain is what leads to the expression of emotions. To me, pain feels like a contraction that narrows down my awareness. In the Alexander Technique, it is a release that leads to the expression of emotions. The intensity of the emotion is the same but the context in which it is felt is completely different. In the first one, I am literally struggling with the pain of the emotion and as a result, I cut myself off from my surroundings, reality, and even my own body. It is as if I am in a bubble of pain that separates me from reality.

With the Alexander Technique, on the other hand, I am including my surroundings and reality into my experience to let go of tensions and potentially release emotions. Therefore, when I am crying during a lesson, and keep that commitment to support, I feel that my crying is also naturally part of the bigger Whole. This helps me accept and express it as a natural process. There is no struggle any more since I don't feel the pain as something negative. I think this is the answer to the question why, whenever I experience an emotional release in support, I am never overwhelmed by the emotion.

Furthermore, the Gestalt way of releasing emotions always left me with a feeling that something was missing.... You let go of an emotional pain but what do you replace it with? The new and available energy you were spending to keep the emotion tied up inside, I assume. For me, that was not enough. I was looking for a more positive, even creative "rebirth." With the Alexander Technique, I found it. As Barbara Conable states it, "the truth is

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friendly.” So, as I make peace with myself, I can accept reality better, which reinforces my connection to support and allows more trust in life. This is a never-ending process that allows a lot of creativity to bloom.

Over time, the Alexander Technique has been the key to making peace with my past. Support gives me the opportunity to let go of tensions and knots in my body that reflect a way of thinking. Little by little, the space provided in support has allowed me to let go of these protections, physically as well as mentally and emotionally. The results have been great and they continue to be! However, this process can only happen with the Alexander Technique if one accepts change and takes on the responsibility to change. As Frank Pierce Jones indicates in *Freedom to Change*: “The Technique does two things simultaneously—it displays the prison house of habit in which the individual is enclosed and gives him the combination of the lock.” However, we can choose to remain within the prison of our patterns. That is one of the choices available.

I think questioning our own beliefs is a process any helper who is honest with him- or herself should go through. We all tend to see and explain life through our own experiences, which include fears, anger, pains, and more. The older these experiences are, the more we think they are part of us, and in most cases, we are not even aware of them. If we are not aware of these elements that affect our judgement, we will not be able to see reality the way it is, but we will interpret it through these distorting glasses we built over time. In professions that aim at helping people, this can be a problem. Also, I believe it is a question of honesty with oneself: One cannot claim to help people without doing some self-investigation.

Another major ingredient of love is space. As you know, a cook needs space in the kitchen. Space to move around, prepare different things, and have a glance at everything that's going on.... I believe that love also needs space. Space to grow, bloom, and explore.... For me, finding space in support is one of the main ingredients the Alexander Technique is teaching me. It is a constant wonder for me to see that the more one is given space, the more one blooms and becomes oneself. There is a true beauty in seeing someone simply becoming humanly vulnerable and strong at the same time.

Giving other people space to be also involves that we, as teachers, have found our own space. Again, this is based on the principle that one cannot give what one has not integrated, the same way a cook cannot teach how to make a hollandaise sauce until he has successfully made one himself. Therefore, a major part of our training consists in cultivating support that provides us space to be ourselves. As teachers, I believe our only responsibility is to communicate to students this space where they can transform, after we have done it ourselves.

In the Alexander Technique, space also implies physical space. When we create knots in our body, we limit our flexibility. Therefore, if one is limited in the space one can use, one will involuntarily communicate that also to the student. That's why I have noticed that, as I make peace with my personal fears, protections, and anger, the physical knots and tensions that correspond to my mental patterns disappear and I gain more flexibility. Another

It has become really clear to me that I can only truly help someone when I stand strongly in my own support and remain committed to it.

advantage of this physical release is body awareness. By definition, knots are created as a protection, therefore as a way not to feel. For example, as I released the tensions in my lower back, I realized that it had been "dead" to sensations for a long, long time. It has been wonderful to "feel"

my lower back again and regain a part of myself I had cut myself off from.

Space is a notion I am discovering and cultivating more and more. To me, it is related to Integrity. In the Alexander Technique, integrity means remaining aware of myself as I come in contact with someone else's information. It is a fundamental notion to avoid getting "lost" in someone's patterns, emotions, and pains. It has become really clear to me that I can only truly help someone when I stand strongly in my own support and remain committed to it. If I lose it, I go down with the person and cannot support them, literally. Integrity means a strong sense of oneself. It is not rigidity or arrogance. This emphasizes even more the need to let go of the past so that one has a better sense of who one is.

The one thing I did not expect from the Alexander Technique training is how much I would benefit from it in "real life"! Now, I think of what I learn in the training as the essence of life. I am learning that in order to truly love someone I have to love myself first. Loving and accepting myself, I can better accept others the way they are.

I think of support as a wave: It is never set but can be experienced as something that has no beginning and no end. We can go deeper and deeper into it and never reach the end. This way, we can always learn more from the experience. The same way, I am learning that there is no limit to love. The key is to never fully define a person. Once we decide that we will never know a person, we leave the door open to all kinds of experiences and surprises! The same way, our capacity to love has no limit either.

I am also learning that our behaviors are generally based on patterns created to protect ourselves from pain. Therefore, if I can first see beyond people's reactions to their initial pain or suffering, I take things less personally, can show more compassion, and have a more appropriate response if necessary. I

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also apply this to myself, to judge myself less.

Support has also brought me this certainty that I am acknowledged and loved for who I am. I do not need to do anything to deserve that unconditional love. Just be. That's a real challenge but it is a tremendous relief to know that I can trust that love and stop trying too hard.

I am also experiencing that the more I let go of my fears and conditioning, the less I am afraid of the past or the future. Therefore, I trust the present more. That has allowed me to gain more spontaneity and I feel like I am becoming a kid again!

Another valuable treasure I gained from the Alexander Technique is the fact that we each create our own reality. It is based on our beliefs and thoughts and we create our own world based on them. If we create our own reality, it gives us full responsibility for it, which can be the scary part, but on the other hand, it also means that we have freedom to create whatever reality we want. If we take responsibility for what happens to us and embrace it, the outcome is totally up to us!

As a conclusion, I am thankful for the training giving me the opportunity to discover even more who I am and develop it. I know that being in the Alexander training, I am on my path. ☺

From the Chair

Continued from page 3

Particular attention was required for communication this year as members came from eleven different countries with seven different languages being spoken, English being the common overlapping language. The experience of living and learning together strengthens our community. Special care was given to ensure that what was intended to be communicated was also being received that way.

As we explore and find out what it means to think beyond our own locality, our own language, we become global thinkers. ATI has become a beacon for a community so large as to extend its reach to nearly every continent on the Earth. Our attention is drawn to what we can learn from each other. This shared attention is what enables ATI to continue to grow and prosper.

Please join me in wishing all members of ATI and friends of the Alexander Technique everywhere a wonderful, healthy, and happy New Year. May the year 2001 bring us all home to each other. May we all realize Peace in our Hearts and Peace on Earth. ☺

Thoughts on Languages

Graham Elliott

ATI member and Co-Chair of the AGM Site Committee

Introduction

At the very successful AGM in Ireland in October 2000, we welcomed members from 10 countries. Our August 2000 members list shows members in 19 countries, if we count England, Scotland, and Wales as only one country. (Increasingly they are seen as separate.) Our meeting language was understood to be English but, apart from a brief appeal for presenters to speak slowly and clearly at the beginning, non-English-speaking participants were left to manage as best they could in keeping up with and understanding English. This paper is a first attempt at seeing what we might want to do about this, prompted because Buzz Gummere asked me to do something in the closing session.

The Irish Experience

The most obvious group of non-English speakers was the Hungarians, many of whom had no English at all. Some of those who did were able to follow carefully delivered speeches by speakers who spoke slowly and clearly, avoiding idiomatic use, but got lost at times with others. Many people went out of their way to make contact with the Hungarians, even where there was no common language. I believe they appreciated this and felt warmly welcomed by ATI. But it was certainly true that they were unable to participate fully in many of the workshops and stayed away from several. (There were other factors than language contributing to this, as they were all going through a sponsor-review process to become certified ATI Teaching Members. This took considerable time for the sponsoring members involved.)

When present, anyone not understanding what was being said would have to quietly ask someone nearby who, if they themselves understood, would quietly offer translation. I was asked to do this several times with quite limited Hungarian. Translators would then usually miss what was said while they were talking and would have to try and catch up afterwards. Speakers used a wide range of English—different American English accents, as well as Scottish and different English dialects. One native French speaker struggled nobly with a strong French accent to give a paper in English. I believe non-English-speaking participants were really tested and even some of the native English speakers would occasionally miss a few things! (I'm sure I did.)

We had a very successful AGM despite all this but I believe we need to consider how to make it even better.

Thoughts on Languages

Policy Considerations

What goal might we set ourselves? As an inclusive organization that truly is international, I believe we would want to make our international events as accessible as possible to all our actual and prospective members. Senior teachers in particular have considerable experience of leading events in countries where translation is necessary if all are to fully take part. National events generally take place in the local language, which works fine as long as only locals go along. Would we want a policy of making our international workshops language-accessible to all as far as possible? What would the consequences be and how might we do it?

It is perhaps relevant here to note that much good work has already been done in translating Alexander literature into other languages. I was interested to see the list of German literature in one of the issues of *Direction*. And I know FM's four books have been meticulously translated into French by a friend of mine and that Anna Magyari Beck has written her own book on the technique in Hungarian as well as encouraging others of her students to translate other works. Would we want to have a policy of actively encouraging translations into all the languages represented by our membership?

Would we want a policy of making our international workshops language-accessible to all as far as possible? What would the consequences be and how might we do it?

How about encouraging the creation of specialist vocabularies for AT words/expressions in all the languages represented by our membership? (Perhaps some of these already exist.) Just as in any other specialist field, there will be alternatives for some of the AT expressions such as "direction," "faulty sensory perception," "use," etc., in many other languages. Wouldn't it be good to create a basic language kit for these as an aid to all translators?

Practical Steps

Depending on what our agreed policies were, these might include:

- Organizing translations into other languages at all international events including AGMs. (I have some experience of doing this with a different organization. To make sure time is allowed for informal translations teachers have to get used to speaking in bursts of two to three sentences at most and then pausing while translation takes place. This inevitably slows delivery down, usually to good effect. Having loud, out-front translations of one language at a time ensures that sufficient time is allowed as well as giving everyone the benefit of hearing languages with which they are not familiar.

Translators find it easier to translate into their first language rather than into other languages. This system makes it possible for presenters/leaders to use their first language if they wish. Session leaders need to know ahead of time that this system will operate if needed. A group to organize the arrangement would be required.)

- Create a list of AT literature that has been translated into languages other than English. Publish this list regularly in *ExchangE*?
- Organize translation coordinators for as many languages in the ATI membership base as possible. (Jobs for these coordinators would be to keep track of new translations, create and update a specialist vocabulary list for AT words/phrases, invite volunteer translators at appropriate events and check offered translations for consistency and maybe quality. These and other jobs would need agreeing among a representative group of such coordinators.)
- Publishing occasional non-English articles in *ExchangE* with separate translation. (This is a good way of demonstrating our commitment to non-English members and teachers.)
- Practicing working without verbal communication. (This makes work-sharing possible among everybody at international events.)

Others will identify additional ideas I am sure! I guess some ATI committee or sub-committee would be necessary to deal with the whole question of languages as we develop and grow. I would be happy to join such a committee.

Results

If we go some way down the route of these ideas, I think we demonstrate that ATI is a truly international organization that isn't imposing a "you-have-to-speak-English-to-be-a-full-ATI-participant" policy on its members. We can be a real challenge to the unaware exclusivity of English through its dominant world role. Many who have learnt English as a second or third language would find participation in our events much easier. ☺

In Practice

Andrea Matthews: As I was explaining the implications of Tensegrity for the Alexander Technique to one of my students recently, she exclaimed, "Oh, I get it—it's like freeing your Inner Tigger!" ☺

Anam Cara

Tommy Thompson
Former Chair of ATI & Co-Chair of the Sponsorship Committee

*Keynote address delivered at the
 2000 ATI Annual General Meeting
 at Spanish Point, Ireland*

For no particular reason, except that I very much liked doing so, when I was Chair of ATI, I always gave the keynote addresses. When my two terms as Chair ended, the Agenda Planning Committee suggested politely that I should probably step aside and let others step forward who might want to give the keynote. Last year, in Virginia, in the USA, Buzz Gummere, who was a student of both F.M. and A.R. Alexander, entered the arena and gave his delightful and heartfelt fireside chat in praise of women and their contribution to the evolution of the human endeavor.

This year, after having begged Jano Cohen, our chair for the AGM agenda, for “just one more keynote” so that I could speak in Ireland, and in turn following the example set by Buzz, my intention is this year to praise the Irish, and *their* contribution to the human endeavor.

What, you might ask, have the Irish done except to move away from Ireland and write great literature? And what, you might ask, are my credentials to sing praise to the Irish? Like Buzz, I’ve a bit of Welsh, and quite a bit of Irish and Scottish ancestry, so I am not entirely foreign to the soil. Furthermore, I am relying upon the insight and wise counsel of an Irish friend who assured me that he thought everyone was Irish anyway. (I’m told that’s a very Irish point of view).

Why then have I earnestly sought to come from keynote retirement (alas) for a last go at it?

A year before Ireland was selected as this year’s site for the AGM, one day I found myself browsing in a bookstore in Harvard Square, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Naively, I came upon a book display. One of the books on display was Thomas Cahill’s book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*.

“*How the Irish Saved Civilization*,” I mused, and so I immediately glanced around to see if there were other such books of humor in proximity. There were none. Could this author be serious? Countries flashed across my mind for races of people who might have somehow “saved” civilization. Ireland was not at the forefront.

Historically, Ireland had been, previous to the fifth century C.E., a country of warrior savages, Celtic pagans who painted their bodies and fought naked, indeed, rode naked into battle, possessed by what they called “warp-spasm” where they reputedly shape-shifted their appearances into monstrous, howling, demon-like fighters; furthermore, they sacrificed their own to Celtic pagan gods, and their chief export-import was slaves. How could this race of warrior-poets have saved civilization?

Intrigued, I bought the book. As I read it, the evolution of their thinking sounded remarkably similar to how ATI evolved. Not only did they save civilization, they nourished and enriched the whole bloody thing. Cahill's book was not a book of humor. Far from it.

Recall if you will that the precarious era spanning hundreds of years between the fall of Rome around the mid-fifth century and the Renaissance, the order of the day was the call to battle: war, raids, pillaging, and other unsavory acts of barbarism. The promise of the continuation of civilization as we have come to know it was tenuous at best—certainly not very promising.

What, in those early years, even before the beginnings of the fall of Rome (which itself took several hundred years to complete), were the Irish doing? Like everyone else, they were fighting each other, and everyone else—only usually more fiercely. All feared the Irish.

I repeat, all feared the Irish.

Then, something happened, something fractal occurred. Actually there were two occurrences that set in motion changes which affected all of Europe, and in turn shifted this warrior mentality in the Irish to a race of people devoted to the advancement of knowledge and learning.

The first of the two events only indirectly assisted this change in character. The year was 406, when the Rhine River froze solid, and as Thomas Cahill describes, “provided the natural bridge that hundreds of thousands of hungry men, women and children had been waiting for. They were the ‘barbari.’ With this crossing, and with a natural barrier opened into a segment of the Roman Empire, the hastening of the fall of the Roman Empire began. Beyond that lay hundreds of years of chaos.”

The second event occurred one day, no doubt at a certain hour, at a given moment, when a shepherd slave boy—16 years of age, kidnapped years previously from Brittany by Irish raiders and sold into slavery to an Irish chieftain, bored and unsettled, living a life of desolate solitude while watching over his flocks on endlessly cold, mostly wet days and nights, barely clothed, with no shelter—by his own account, took to praying, and praying, and praying to his god. His almighty, after several years of conversation, told him to leave his flocks and Irish-chieftain master, and to travel a couple of hundred miles across Ireland to the sea and arrange passage to Brittany, to go home and study.

In those days, for a slave to cross Ireland, noticeably a slave, and sail away was unthinkable. It just didn't happen—but that's what Patricius did, only to return having spent years in a monastery and having been ordained as both priest and bishop. His request upon his ordination was to return to

Anam Cara

Ireland, to return to Ireland as Irish as the Irish, even so much as to out-Irish the Irish. His mission was to convert all of Ireland to his Irish version of what was the emerging version of Christian Catholicism.

Patricius the slave was to become St. Patrick. The stage was set for Ireland to save civilization.

How did Patrick succeed in his mission of conversion? Patrick was no Greco-Roman Christian; he held no such view. According to Thomas Cahill, “Patrick viewed the world as holy, the ‘book’ of God, a healing mystery, fraught with divine messages.” This view, pagan as it was, is distinctly Irish.

The Greco-Roman pessimism and Platonic suspicion that the body was unholy and devoid of meaning was anathema to both Patrick and to the Irish. The body was part of the book of God, to write in as you were able; the body had its own healing mystery.

Patrick was around 40 years old when he returned to Ireland as bishop. His mission, which set the stage for Ireland’s contribution to Europe, spanned 30 years into the middle of the fifth century. Probably, Europe will never see such vast and sweeping changes again. What was happening?

By then, in an unparalleled and amazing manner, the Roman Empire (which had held sway for a full 11 centuries) was careening into chaos. Essentially the pivotal basis for Ireland’s legacy to the world was that while Roman rule went from 1100 years of internal peace to both internal and external chaos, along with the rest of Europe, tiny Ireland went from chaos to peace. How did Patrick do it, and what was his legacy? And how can this possibly have anything to do with ATI?

To begin with, most probably he did not rid Ireland of its snake population, driving them into the ocean, as is commonly told. However, he did end Ireland’s penchant for human sacrifice and slavery. For those Celtic pagan institutions to go, Patrick first had to win over the Irish and be accepted by this fierce race of uncompromising people. This he did simply by doing what no man had done before him, which was that he simply refused to be afraid of them. For this unprecedented stance, he was accepted. Then they watched him match word with deed, and they grew to respect and love him so much that he eventually became one of their own—only better. He was, in their words, “a simple man, a true man.”

Patrick dispelled their penchant for human sacrifice by suggesting that Jesus had done it already. His was the last sacrifice for all sins, so there was simply no longer a need for it any longer. Jesus died for all sins, once and for all.

Slavery was another matter. No one in the history of the world had spoken

up against slavery, except for Moses and Spartacus. Simply, Patrick convinced the Irish to let go of owning and exploiting another person by appealing to their own appetite for freedom. Moreover, they accepted Patrick, and to accept Patrick and his distinctly non-Roman version of Christianity, you had to accept the fact that Patrick himself had ceased to be a slave. Thus the stage was set. The Irish were now religious, and, as with all things the Irish did, they were fiercely religious.

Ireland is notable for being a land where Christianity was introduced without bloodshed. As such, there were no Irish martyrs and this troubled the Irish in the fifth and sixth centuries, after Patrick had passed away. A valiant death by violence had always been their warriors' way. So to have received Christianity without a fight spurred the Irish imagination to think up some mode of martyrdom.

Unbeknownst to them, it was this very thinking, iconoclastic and quixotic as it was, that led to "how the Irish saved civilization." Prior to the Irish, Christianity was made distinct by "red martyrdom," that is to say, martyrdom through bloodshed. With the Irish, there was first "green martyrdom," and later, "white martyrdom."

The Green Martyrs were those who, having left behind them the ordinary comforts of society, retreated to the woods, a mountaintop, or a lonely island—somewhere outside "tribal jurisdictions." There they studied scriptures and communed with God.

Often these hermits were simply deluded mystics. Even Kevin of Glendulough, a sixth-century hermit, lived in a hole in the rock wall of a cliff. However, he eventually, and much against his desires, allowed a monastic community to gather and form around him. Compelled to leave his hole in the wall, he moved down to the level shore and there a small monastic community developed. It exists today. Some of you will remain in Ireland after the AGM and visit the site.

It began with a single hut shaped like a beehive, with smaller beehives for his followers. The main hut served as church and altar, while the surrounding huts grew into monastic sites of learning. One after another these sites appeared, which became the first monasteries in Ireland. It is in these monasteries that the Irish scribes copied all the ancient classics (the ones you read today), including their own.

So while the rest of Europe was busily burning Europe's remaining libraries, Irish scribes born from Patrick's legacy of framing Christianity in a distinctly Irish way, the Green Martyrdom adepts, were busily restoring and preserving ancient texts.

Anam Cara

A kind of university developed from those monasteries. Both commoners and nobles flocked from all the countries of Europe to study at these university-monasteries, which accepted both those who simply wished to learn in addition to those who wished for a life of the cloister. These centers of learning became noted for including as part of their emphasis on scripture, a study of all the ancient classics. And, the Irish monks shocked the civilized (Roman) Christian world by including all and everything.

As Green Martyrdom gave way, the monk Columcille, Patrick's successor in Irish history, established "White Martyrdom." He did away with bishops, replacing them with abbots, who were much closer to the people, and established the tradition of stepping into a small boat with no sail, to drift wherever providence might carry you. If you were lucky enough to find harbor, you established a monastery. Otherwise, *fini*. Lindisfarne exists today because of this very endeavor. The White Martyrs established monasteries throughout Europe, even while Europe was rapidly declining in every civilized regard.

To quote Thomas Cahill, "The Celtic mind was neither discursive nor systematic. Yet, in their lyrical speculation, the Celts brought the sublime unity of life and experience to expression. The Celtic mind was not burdened by dualism. It did not separate what belongs together. The Celtic imagination articulates the inner friendship that embraces nature, diversity, underworld and human world as one. The dualism that separates the visible from the invisible, time from eternity, the human from the divine, was totally alien to them."

This Celtic notion of friendship is inspired by a unique understanding of love and friendship called *anam cara* or "soul love." *Anam* is Gaelic for soul, and *cara* is the word for friend. So *anam cara* means "soul friend" or the friend of your soul.

In the early Celtic Church, prior to St. Patrick, and dating back to Druidic thought, anyone who acted as a teacher, companion, or spiritual guide was called an *anam cara*. Patrick literally altered the entire notion of confession under the Roman version of Christianity by introducing the notion of *anam cara* into confession, confession being the basis for the individual's relationship to God. Under his introduction, referring to someone to whom you confessed, you could and would share your innermost self, your mind and heart totally revealable. Prior to this, in the early church, your sins were exposed to the entire village. You were exposed for your sins. Sins committed twice led to your being excommunicated.

No, said Patrick, we are Irish, and we have this concept of friendship rooted in Druidic thought called *anam cara*. When you had an *anam cara*, or friend

of your soul, that friendship cut “across all convention, morality and category.” You were joined in an eternal way with this friend of your soul and this should be the basis for all confession. Do not, he suggested, choose a priest necessarily who holds the proper credentials to hear your confession. Instead, choose, and go to your *anam cara*, who will hear your confession and encourage you to confess the same sin for the rest of your life. For as the Irish knew, you weren’t likely, in Christ’s words, to “go and sin no more.” Undoing your ways is a life’s experience of meeting yourself being yourself as a moment by moment affair.

Thomas Cahill explains the soul’s journey in a beautiful manner:

Real friendship is always an act of recognition. When you find the person you love, an act of recognition begins, and brings you together. It is as if millions of years before the silence broke...your lover’s clay and

An ATI Wish List

In this column we put before the membership ATI’s needs for its growth and prospering. We invite you to share your wishes and to answer these according to your talents and time!

Members interested in working with Graham Elliott on a new “Languages Committee” (as described in his article starting on page 9) are invited to contact him at gje@ntlworld.com.

The Nominations Committee is in need of a new member as well as a new Chair. We encourage the involvement of our non-USA members, especially on this committee. For information, contact: Jamee Culbertson at chair@ati-net.com or by phone at: 617-628-6570.

The Interchange eGroups forum is in need of a Moderator. Basic computer knowledge needed. For information, contact: Dan Arsenault at webmaster@ati-net.com.

ATI has a new phone system that needs some simple programming and occasional maintenance, which can be done by phone from anywhere in the USA. For information, contact: Jamee Culbertson at chair@ati-net.com or by phone at: 617-628-6570.

The Communications Committee needs a Chair, and specifically someone to write and format the Communiqué from input from the Board. For information, contact: Jamee Culbertson at chair@ati-net.com or by phone at: 617-628-6570.

Volunteers in the Boston area are always needed to help our Administrative Assistant with ATI’s many mailings, etc. (Mailing materials could also be transmitted electronically, printed, and mailed from any US locale. ATI would cover the expenses.) For information, contact Raewyn Haywood at membership@ati-net.com or 1-888-668-8996.

And the Exchange is always eager for your input! For submission details, see page 2. ☺

Anam Cara

your clay lay side by side. Thus in the turning of the seasons your one clay divided and separated. You began to rise as distinct clay forms, each housing a different individuality and destiny. Without even knowing it your secret memory mourned your loss of each other. While your clay selves wandered for thousands of years, through the universe, your longing for each other never faded. So when you meet or remeet and form an *anam cara* union, there is an awakening between you, a sense of ancient knowledge.... At this moment your soul awakens. The search begins and you can never go back. From then on you are inflamed with a special belonging that will never let you linger in the lowlands of complacency or partial fulfillment.... When the spiritual path opens you can bring an incredible generosity for the world and for the lives of others.

Now let's expand this notion of *anam cara* as it describes the exchange in learning and awakening through recognition between friends, lovers, spouses, and parents and children, and apply it to situations where there is a teaching and learning exchange, however the configuration manifests.

In this case, there is also a recognition of some deep longing—the desire for complete and total fulfillment of self. In the entire unfolding of human evolution and civilization, a key component to all advancement, both individually and collectively, has been the teacher/student relationship. Everyone learns from someone; if not someone, from some experience. Learning is necessary, inevitable, and natural. You do not have to work at it. You need only come to the point of recognition of the need to know and the recognition of who, among many, will satisfy this longing. Everyone at some point presents themselves as a student. At one instance you will teach, at another you will learn. Knowledge expands through exchange.

In *anam cara*, this exchange is unconditional. You have met the friend of your soul, and through unconditional love and exchange, a need has been addressed, a longing has been satisfied.

You become more of what you wish to be.

One of the truest pleasures I have derived from my experience in the founding of ATI, and during its subsequent growth and evolution as an organization, has been my privilege of being witness to, and part of, our expanding role of friendship.

If you think about it, ATI began amongst friends. There were just a few of us, 28 charter members, I believe. Sometimes small is good. Henry David Thoreau, the American naturalist who for a time (in order to experience his soul's desire) lived in a tiny cabin in the woods around Concord, Massachusetts, remarked about his keeping three chairs in his cabin: One was for himself, the second for a friend, and the third for a party. We began ATI somewhat out in the woods as well, with little more than two chairs—in friendship. But friendship needs recognition.

Having begun in friendship, immediately with us friendship was put to the test. Every aspect of each member's motives for wanting to forge this new society was examined. I believe that we sought out our individual 'anam caras' of necessity—referring to someone to whom we could share and confess our innermost selves, our minds and our hearts totally revealed, and we learned to listen. We learned to trust. And, where once there was misunderstanding, now there is trust; where once there was confusion, now there is clarity; and where there once was chaos, now there is peace.

Time for the next step—

Why are we all here in Ireland? And why so many of us? Could it be that there is some ancient recognition of clay—

some distant longing to share your life, among membership, with your soul friend? That friend whose very presence awakens the higher part of you—that part of your soul that wishes to make a difference, to truly embody your soul’s awakening, and to contribute unconditionally to all people everywhere as teachers and soul friends.

Imagine, as John Lennon imagined, an organization where exchange is rooted in *anam cara*. This is what I have imagined, and I give you, I give us, my Irish blessing:

*In this organization and body of people
may we all support each other
to become all we’ve ever wished to be*

We need some practice in bestowing blessings, so I’ve run off Bob Dylan’s “Forever Young,” which to me reads like an Irish blessing. I’ll pass out copies, and ask for you all to divide into pairs; each of you read the blessing to the other, after which, I’ll play Joan Baez singing Dylan’s song. Consider it my wish for ATI. Thank you.

May God bless and keep you always,
May your wishes all come true,
May you always do for others
And let others do for you.
May you build a ladder to the stars
And climb on every rung,
May you stay forever young,
Forever young, forever young,
May you stay forever young.

May you grow up to be righteous,
May you grow up to be true,
May you always know the truth
And see the light surrounding you.
May you always be courageous,
Stand upright and be strong,
May you stay forever young,
Forever young, forever young,
May you stay forever young.

May your hands always be busy,
May your feet always be swift,
May you have a strong foundation
When the winds of changes shift.
May your heart always be joyful,
May your song always be sung,
May you stay forever young,
Forever young, forever young,
May you stay forever young. ☺

Professional Regulation of Alexander Teaching in the UK

Fred Oldfield, member of ATI & PAAT

The Professional Association of Alexander Teachers (PAAT) recently (October 2000) sent a 5,000-word open letter to each member of STAT. The aims of the letter were: to make the STAT membership aware of the existence of PAAT, to inform them that PAAT is accepted by the Foundation for Integrated Medicine (FIM), a government-funded organization, as legitimately representing Alexander Teachers, and to raise other matters of mutual interest. Foremost among these has been to address the problems created by the government-led moves towards the regulation of what are considered to be alternative approaches to the promotion of health and described either as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) or alternative therapy. Both STAT and PAAT have been involved in making recommendations to the House of Lords Sub-Committee investigating and reporting to the government on this matter.

PAAT’s position is that the Alexander Technique cannot fit into those categories. PAAT has been unhappy about certain initiatives taken by STAT in the recent past which seemed certain to commit the Alexander Teaching Profession to the ‘CAM’ path. PAAT wished to increase the focus on this issue and argue that it was still not too late to try to get the government to accept that there was an alternative route for the regulation of the profession provided that STAT and PAAT acted together, that route being under the auspices of the UK Department of Education. At this time it is not considered useful to publish the letter in full, but interested individuals may obtain a copy from PAAT for £2 (cost plus postage). For more about PAAT, visit their website at www.paat.org.uk, or write to Carol Taylor, Hon. Sec., PAAT, Rm. 706, “The Big Peg,” 120 Vyse St., The Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham, UK B18 4HS. ☺

Book Reviews

Mind and Muscle: An Owner's Handbook

by Elizabeth Langford

Garant, Leuven/Appeldorn, 1999, ISBN 90-5350-883-X. Paperback, illus., 253 pp.

reviewed by Judith Leeman, ATI member, teacher, and artist practicing in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA

“The present ‘handbook,’ though owing much to my experience as an Alexander teacher since 1969, makes no attempt to describe the subtleties of the Alexander Technique in the hands of a good teacher. My more modest hope is that, by giving you such relevant facts and advice as I can write down in plain language, I may help you protect yourself from some of the misconceptions with which we have all been bombarded since childhood.”

Elizabeth Langford, *Mind and Muscle*, p. 85

Mind and Muscle reads as an experienced Alexander teacher's response to a perceived need for accurate and understandable information about the functioning of the body. Elizabeth Langford weaves together observations from her many years of teaching with anatomical information she has researched and brought into plain language. Interspersed throughout are descriptions of experiments the reader can make to understand practically what has just been described verbally.

As a new Alexander teacher, I read the book with the hope of expanding my own knowledge of anatomical structure and functioning. I found myself incorporating bits of what I read into my lessons with students, appreciating the inflow of new information and new ways of describing what I know internally but sometimes stumble over in verbal description. I admire anyone who approaches this challenge of shaping words around physical and mental experience.

Ms. Langford has written out of her experience with the Alexander Technique but makes very clear that she is not describing the Technique. I kept wondering though how her words would be perceived by someone who did not already share that kinesthetic base. If I didn't already know in my body what non-doing or moving from a sense of the whole meant, might I not have taken her well-crafted experiments and made them into exercises? Might I not have started concentrating on this or that or deciding that I had found a righter way of doing? Throughout the text are admonitions against this sort of thing, but I wonder whether I would even have understood the significance of these.

These are the limitations of language and of offering information without being there to see whether what has been heard is actually what was intended, and these are the limits of books. Perhaps also the rich wholeness of hands-on teaching has unduly biased me against other forms of learning about the body. In any case, for students and teachers of the Alexander Technique this book provides thorough and valuable information in a form that we can readily incorporate into our work.

* * * *

Rolfing: The Integration of Human Structures

by Ida P. Rolf, Ph.D.

Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1977, ISBN 0-06-0465096-0. Paperback, illus., 304 pp.

Reviewed by Jocosa Wade, ATI member, teacher, and Performance Coach in Gardiner, New York, USA

One of my dearest and most powerful Alexander teachers began as a Rolfer. Since I first began to study with him, somewhere in each lesson there has been a reference to *Rolfing: The Integration of Human Structures*. My curiosity finally led me to seek out a copy of my own and read it. Now, having completed my task, I thoroughly understand why Ida Rolf's book is still at the forefront of my teacher's work.

This is the first book I have read that clearly explains the anatomical and physiological reasons why Alexander Technique works. I am thrilled with Ida Rolf's ability to explain, in layman's terms, the interrelationship of muscle balance and skeletal movement as it influences and determines human function and behavior.

Through the use of diagrams, photographs, and case histories, the material presented underscores why, when we proceed with Alexander's directions, our head leads and our body follows with greater ease and mobility. The material is presented in a logical, step-by-step journey through the body from toe to head. This may be a little unorthodox for some Alexander people. Still, it's worth the trip.

The book opens with a salute to non-doing. "Shoulders back, guts in,' says the top sergeant, meaning you must do it, it doesn't happen naturally. The minute you force yourself to maintain a posture of this sort, you betray that all is not well with your world. You show the world that your structure and

Book Reviews

your posture are at war.” (p. 30) With this statement, I knew Ms. Rolf and I were on the same page and she proceeded to enlighten my current knowledge of Alexander Technique.

My favorite chapters are six through eight, in which the pelvis and psoas are examined in great length. In chapter six, the pelvis is referred to as “the seat of the soul.” The pelvis acts as the playground where our upper and lower structures converge. The importance of lengthening in order to prevent pelvic tilt is clearly outlined as she works her way through all the muscles and bones of this area.

In chapter seven, the importance of the psoas in preventing pelvic tilt is explained. The relationship of a healthy psoas to our physical sense of “back back” is also made evident, as well as the importance of our constructive thinking needed to stimulate the movement: “[T]he legs support and follow. Movement is initiated in the trunk [when we allow our neck to free, etc. (*my insert*)] and transmitted to the legs through the medium of the psoas.” (p. 118)

The torso, shoulder girdle, and head-neck relationship are given similar in-depth analysis that underscores Alexander Technique and its principles in a clear and concise way even though its terminology is not used.

Although this work may be too complex for a beginning student, in my humble opinion, it is a must read for teachers and teachers in training. It may take some of the mystery and magic out of what we do as teachers; however, it provides a strong place to hang our hat or at least our top joint.

My only criticism is that at the time I tracked the book down it was out of print. So, if you have the time and energy, comb those used bookstores and libraries, or do what I did and call Harvest Booksearch. They locate out-of-print books. The number is 1-800-563-1222. [*Ed.*: If you order from Amazon.com, via ATI’s website www.ati-net.com, ATI receives a commission! Another possibility is www.half.com.]

So, if you’re in the market for expanding your anatomical and physiological understanding and having your Alexander sensibilities enlightened along the way, make that phone call today.

Highly recommended! ☺

ATI Elder Statement

“Each member will stay true to the principles of the Alexander Technique by having permission to stop the action of the meeting when they feel the group has ‘pulled down.’ We’ll have silence/return to ease, then proceed, so that we may behave consistently with our lives, to build a field of relatedness, and to begin to fully appreciate the values and possibilities of a group kinesthetic sense. Whenever we gather, we will remind ourselves of the spirit of our meeting by silence, inspirational thought, or brief hands-on work.”

Buzz Gummere, 1998 ATI Annual General Meeting in Plymouth, MA, USA

Alexander Technique on the Net

Graham Elliott reports he has a new email address: gje@ntlworld.com and web address: <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/gje>. Remember to update your links!

On the Interchange forum, Jamee Culbertson replied to an inquiry about the availability of liability insurance for ATI members: "ATI has a link to ABMP, see the info below. Members from the US and Canada can get a discount for liability insurance. We are looking into other possibilities for our worldwide membership and will let you know as soon as we find something!"

Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals (ABMP) is a professional membership association founded in 1987 to provide massage, bodywork and somatic therapies practitioners with professional services, information, and public and regulatory advocacy. ABMP is devoted to promoting ethical practices, protecting the rights of practitioners, and educating the public regarding the benefits of massage and bodywork. Its current membership totals over 32,000. Members must meet strict educational requirements and adhere to a published code of ethics. To contact ABMP: email expectmore@abmp.com; fax to (303) 674-0859, phone (800) 458-ABMP (2267), or mail to 1271 Sugarbush Drive, Evergreen, CO 80439-7347. Their website is: <http://www.abmp.com>.

New items are always appearing on ATI's web site at www.ati-net.com. Also, at www.alexandertechnique.com/online, you'll find links to the rapidly growing number of Alexander Technique resources on the Internet. Alexander teacher listings can be found both on the ATI website and on the "Ask Dr. Weil" website at www.drweil.com.

To join ATI's internet mail group, Interchange, send an empty email to ATI-Interchange-subscribe@egroups.com. The new list has lots of great features, like common file storage and a chat room. To access these features you need to join egroups. Log into <http://www.egroups.com/> and join up!

You can send mail to the ATI board as a group at board@ati-net.com, or to individual board members at: chair@ati-net.com, assistantchair@ati-net.com, treasurer@ati-net.com, execsec@ati-net.com, or correspondsec@ati-net.com.

If you launch your own website, or find anything Alexander-related on the Web, let us know at: newsletter@ati-net.com! ☺

Worldwide Offices of Alexander Technique International

continued from page 24

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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. Matthias 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 Shakespeare 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” that people can apply to furthering their own special skills and activities. It is also essentially a preventive 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 the nearest ATI office for teacher listings, or visit www.ati-net.com), as your changing experiences through lessons are the only real way to understand the nature of the work and what change is possible.



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