



**Annual Conference 2017**

Orlando, Florida



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This complimentary Humor Connection newsletter is one of the many ways that AATH fulfills our mission to study, practice and promote healthy humor. You can join our efforts by joining AATH at [www.aath.org](http://www.aath.org)

**Letter from the President**

Is there a role for humor during turbulent times?

World news headlines this past month reflect many stories that touch our deepest emotions. We have seen people acting out of anger and fear resulting in acts of violence. Many are mourning the loss of family and friends. Is there a role for humor in the midst of all of this suffering?

The AATH mission is to study, practice and promote healthy humor. We know that laughter is a universal language. As we plan for our April 27-30 conference in Orlando, we are reminded that we will be in a city that has been directly impacted by deadly violence, with many citizens who have experienced tremendous loss.

Our past president Jill Knox is facilitating a Peace through Humor and the Arts Mural that will be created during the conference. More information will be available as we approach the conference. As Jill says: "During tragedy, it is difficult to find a time to laugh, but laughter is healing when the timing is appropriate." As many of you know, Jill was our keynote speaker for the 2016 Humor Academy luncheon when she talked about world peace. Her Humor Academy project addressed this very topic.

Laughter is a universal language that promotes peace and understanding. AATH is committed to pursuing the research on humor and laughter as an integral part of our mission.

We invite you to join our efforts by becoming a member today. During the month of July, we are offering an introductory, new member rate of \$99. We depend on the generous support of our members and donors. More information on joining AATH and how to donate is on our [Website](#). Help us make a difference through the power of humor and laughter.

With humergy,  
Mary Kay Morrison  
AATH President

**AATH Volunteer Spotlight:  
Amy Robbins**

**Book Review**



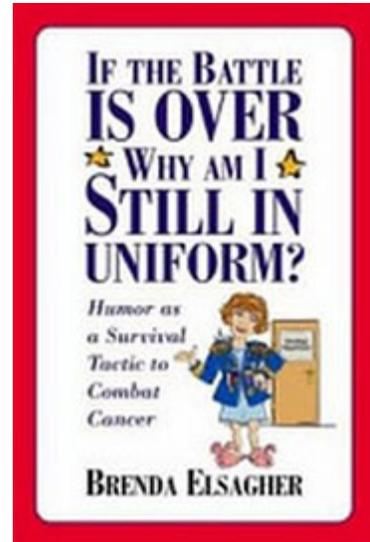
Many of you know Amy from her warm welcome notes on our AATH Facebook page. In addition to her Facebook facilitation role, Amy Robbins has served on the AATH board as membership chair and completed Level II of the Humor Academy. She continues to volunteer on the membership committee working closely with Michele St. Clair from our management office. Thank you Amy for all of your continued efforts to be sure our membership records are up to date!

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**Grant Award - Chip Lutz receives Grant for AATH Humor Academy Project**



Congratulations to Past President Chip Lutz who was just awarded a \$4,000 Art Berg Grant through the



**If The Battle Is Over, Why Am I Still In Uniform?**

by **Brenda Elsagher** (Reviewed by *Diane Roosth*)

I had the privilege of hearing Brenda Elsagher present at the 2014 AATH Conference. Brenda's *Humor as a Survival Tactic to Combat Cancer* is just what the doctor ordered. Our author uses her skills as a humorist in telling her story about being diagnosed with cancer, telling her family, and her fears and anxieties about living with the "scars and stripes" of a permanent colostomy forever. She uses her skills as a cosmetologist to address issues of self-image and discusses fresh make up as a coping mechanism. She talks about the importance of support from family and friends and appreciating life's challenges.

In the forward written by Leslie A Sharpe, MD, retired OB/GYN Surgeon, Brenda is praised for "discovering the value of humor to help her deal with changes in her life" and "probably helping thousands of people cope with their ostomies". In Chapter 25, Brenda addresses the challenges of embracing a comedy class post-surgery: "When am I going to do comedy if I don't do it now? What if I humiliate myself? I survived cancer. Embarrassing myself in front of strangers can't compare I'll have

National Speakers Association to support a technology-related project for the benefit of clients in a non-profit organization. This grant will be used for Chip's Humor Academy project, THE LAUGH BOX. He will be working with Karyn Buxman, Nila Nielsen and Melissa Mork to provide teleconferences for our members. Chip is shown here with 2017 Conference Chair, Sporty King.

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### **Humor Academy CHP Recognition: David Jacobson and Jill Knox**



### **David Jacobson - Utilizing Therapeutic Humor with Trauma Victims**

David Jacobson, LCSW, is the author of the award-winning book *The 7½ Habits of Highly Humorous People*, which was born out of the humor techniques that helped him through hard times in his own life. Several years ago he gave an AATH presentation on using humor to help the recovery of the victims in the 2011 Tucson shooting tragedy that nearly took the life of Arizona Congresswoman Gabby Giffords. While she was being treated at the University Medical Center where he worked, he was personally thanked by our President. As Chief of Social Work, David supervises multiple mental health programs and 200 master-level clinicians.

regrets if I don't at least try." She went on to win "Twin Cities Funniest Person" at the Acme Comedy Club in Minneapolis for comedians who have never been paid to do comedy. She quotes her own one liners at the end of her book, including: "It's not so bad having a colostomy, I just can't find shoes to match my bag," and "I must admit I panicked, when Northwest Airlines came out with the one bag limit."

The "end" of Brenda's book is a resource filled with a glossary of medical terms information resources, and a colon cancer fact sheet, all of which she gathered to support herself and others who have shared her experience. Brenda shares her hope that "One day, when my children delight me with grandchildren and they are curious enough to ask about my colostomy, I hope I can tell them it was because of a long forgotten disease called cancer."

In another book written by Brenda, *It's In the Bag and Under the Covers: Stories of Dating, Intimacy, Sex & Caregiving about People with Ostomies*, Brenda uncovers information from people that you might think is taboo and too private. She writes about Social networking websites C3Life.com and MeetAnOstoMate.com, sharing stories with permission of the authors on topics including Dating, Intimacy, Sex and Caregiving. This book provides a candid story of the challenges that ostomy patients face and how to feel comfortable in their relationships at any age. One was 22 when he had an ostomy, another talks about after ostomy and after college that he discovered the "truth" that he "was gay," and another cites "using humor works best." Brenda the counselor, comedian, teacher, comedian, and advocate encourages people living with an ostomy to explore their feelings, fears, and frustrations and embrace the gift of life and laugh at it. Both Brenda's books are worthwhile reading. My hope is that they are someday translated into other languages. She



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### **Jill Knox - Planting Seeds of Peace: Empowering Peace-Able Youth**

You may know Jill as the immediate Past President of AATH, past Conference Chair, Humor Academy advocate and overall AATH activist, but she is also an educator, speaker, and humorist. A believer in mindful leadership, her use of humor in her classroom inspired her to create The Funnyside, a business that provides workshops and keynotes to colleges, school districts, and health centers emphasizing the power of humor at work and in daily living. Her passion for creating a "culture of peace" led her to pursue a Peace Education Certificate through the National Peace Academy. Now ask her about her ukulele.

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## **Member News**

### **New Member Spotlight: Erica Emanuel**

Hurrah for new member **Erica Emanuel** who has jumped right into volunteering on the membership committee. You may be getting a call from Erica reminding you to update your membership profile on our AATH web site. Erica is from Chicago and recently completed her Psychology degree. [Membership Directory](#).

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### **AATH Remembers Sister Sue Tracy**

has touched on the value of humor to cope with cancer, ostomies, and other medical conditions that transcends boundaries.

*Members who would like their book to be considered for an upcoming Humor Connection book review, should contact [info@aath.org](mailto:info@aath.org). Please use Book Review Submission in the subject line.*

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### **A Great TRUE Story by Bron Roberts about Allen Klein**

Today I supported a friend as she said goodbye to her family home for the final time. Her mother passed away 8 months ago, the house was sold, the contents disposed of, settlement is at 1pm today. I stood back as my friend said goodbye to each room, together we made carpet angels (like snow angels but on carpet) and touched taps and other fittings for the final time. There was a book on the floor in the master bedroom. I moved to pick it up and my friend said "No, leave it for now, Mr Klein must be the last to leave." I gave her my confused look, my friend said the author's name is Klein.

She told me how her father died 14 years ago and at the funeral someone had given her mother the book, it's titled 'The change your life quote book.' She told me how it lived on her mother's bed side table and every morning her mother would pick it up and read a quote for the day. She would say "Good morning Col" her husband, and "Thank you Mr Klein" and at night another quote and "Thank you Mr Klein, Goodnight Col."

She said her mother never let the book leave the room, it lived on her bedside table." When it was time to leave the house there was one more goodbye to each room and then 'Mr. Klein' was collected but before my friend left the master bedroom she said, "Dad, it's time to go, but you know that, look after mum," and then she looked at the book, opened it to a



**Sister Sue Tracy** who was a long time member of AATH passed away on June 29, 2016. She was a retired oncology chaplain for Spectrum Health. Her obituary recalls remembering her as a kind, loving person with a keen sense of humor. Sister Sue was a Dominican sister who had battled six bouts of cancer. She completed Certified Laughter leader training in November of 2010 at Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI. She was a shining example for us of one who lifted the spirits of many others, bringing joy and laughter to the world her special ways. She will be greatly missed by her AATH colleagues and friends. Marlene Chertok noted that at a recent conference she asked Marlene if she would like a "holy card". When Marlene said, "Yes", Sister Sue gave her a card filled with holes. We will miss you Sister Sue.

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### **2017 Conference Proposal Submission Reminder**

**Sporty King**, conference chair reminds us that speaker proposal applications are on line and due by August 15th. Check out our web site for details and mark your calendars for April 27-30th for our annual conference; "Humor" The Power and Purpose of Play."

random page and read this quote "I live by this credo, have a little laugh and look around you for happiness instead of sadness. Laughter has always brought me out of unhappy situations. Even in your darkest moment, you usually can find something to laugh about if you try hard enough" Red Skelton. Then she closed the book and said "Thank you Mr. Klein, you always know the perfect saying."



*Allen shown here with Laurie Young*

We raided the garden one last time, not a bloom was left and then when we got to the car my friend handed me the book. It was only then that I saw that the author was Allen Klein, of San Francisco! I started the next sentence to my friend with the words "You are so not going to believe this. I told her about you, about your connection with laughter and joy, our connection through AATH, AATH's conference at the Red Skelton center, the author of the very quote she read and many many more connections, on and on.

I did wonder if it was the same Allen Klein and then I saw this quote "As long as I have food and remote control, I'm happy" Margie Klein (author's mother).

At this moment I am the holder of the book. It will sit on my bookshelf until my friend is ready to have it back, so, as has been said twice a day for the past 14 years or so, or around 10,000 times or more - thank you Mr. Klein!!

Allen's book has been republished with new title: *Change Your Life: A Little Book of Big Ideas*.

**SEND YOUR MEMBER NEWS:**

info@aath.org

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**Sizzling Summer Fun**

Throughout the hot days of summer, Humor Academy participants keep in touch sharing HOT TOPICS related to humor. The 31 participants currently enrolled, discuss articles, research, and reflect upon the many ways they have experienced humor in their work and leisure time activities. The Humor Academy's certificated programs offer a rich, balanced curriculum blended with supportive collegiality.

With the July \$99 New Member special about to expire - THE TIME IS NOW to join AATH and receive a discount on the Humor Academy. The next Level I class of Humor Academy studies will begin on April 27, 2017, the day prior to the AATH Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. We invite you to come SMILE and SIZZLE with us!

Contact Nila Nielsen at:  
ninielsen@me.com

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**And Finally, a message from Kelly Epperson's garden...**



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**DONATIONS TO AATH ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE:** Thank you for your continued support of AATH!

You can write a check to AATH and send to the office or you can:

1. **[AATH 2017 CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP](#):** There are many ways that you can be a sponsor for our AATH conference for as little as \$50.
2. **SCHOLARSHIP DONATION:** You can designate your gift to the William Fry, Patty Wooten or Ed Dunkelblau scholarship fund.

To make a tax-deductible gift to AATH, you may send check donations to the AATH office at:  
*220 East State St., Floor G  
Rockford, IL 61104*

**MEMBER ASSISTANCE:** If you need help with renewing your membership, or if you forget your member website log-in information, reach out to Michele St. Clair and her team at **815-708-6587**.

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