

The

Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

Archived Columns "From The Editor" Editorial Policies & Guidelines Originally Published in The Vital Force

November 2009

T'AI CHI CHIH ENTERS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING REALM

TaiChiChih.org is embarking on an exciting outreach campaign to spread word of TCC, to reach more people who could benefit from practicing this moving meditation. To do this, we will employ online social media marketing tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. (Yes, we have already dipped our toes in this arena, but now it is time to wade in with both feet.)

Why social media marketing? Through it TCC hopes to:

- Increase our web site traffic;
- Increase TCC's presence online (on other sites);
- Broaden the reach of our content by starting conversations about the practice and its benefits;
- Build valuable, interactive relationships with web site audiences;
- Spread awareness of our mission and increase advocacy of that mission.

We will build a stronger online presence through a number of strategies, including the development of a TCC blog comprised of posts and videos centering on health themes and upcoming events. The purpose of the blog will be to provide current content, answer questions and build an audience while increasing the relevancy of TCC's web presence. Most importantly, the blog will give you a central place to share your TCC insights, testimonials, class videos and more. It will be your place to publish content that can reach millions of people via Facebook and other social media outlets.

GKP currently has a fabulous collection of video clips of Justin Stone teaching that are housed on YouTube, and www.taichichih.org would love to increase the collection with videos by teachers and students from around the country. Other ways to help include supporting the TCC Facebook page by joining and commenting; and sharing our content with others via Twitter and social bookmarking sites such as Digg and StumbleUpon. Additionally, we are considering reaching out with an e-newsletter to various health communities to spotlight benefits, fabulous teachings, testimonials, classes, tips and news.

As always, we greatly appreciate your support of this endeavor to spread the word about T'ai Chi Chih. We can't do it without you, and we'll need your help to make it a great success.

GIFT GIVING

As you consider your year-end charitable giving, please consider making a gift to support *The Vital Force* and www.taichichih.org outreach efforts. Your contributions are fully tax-deductible. You may donate online at http://www.taichichih.org/vital_force.php. Thank you.

August 2009

~ RENEW ON-LINE !! ~

We're trying to make your lives easier: *The Vital Force* now offers secure, on-line renewals. Visit www.taichichih.org/vital_force.php. Subscribe for one, two, or three years (domestic and foreign) and hit the blue "BUY NOW" button. It's almost as easy as one-two-three. If you don't have a gmail account with a password (to use on the right side of the screen), you can use your regular email address and a made-up password (on the left side of the screen). Of course, you can still order via our post box and check.

~ RENEWING (IN GENERAL) ~

The mailing label for your *Vital Force* contains your subscription expiration date. A few weeks after you receive your last paid issue, we send you a "snail mail" renewal form – printed on colored paper to grab your attention. About sixty percent of subscribers renew immediately using this form. Then, a month before the next issue goes out, we send an email reminder to those who have still not renewed, and another twenty percent renew via snail mail or using the on-line link we provide. Because this process represents a great deal of time for a tiny volunteer operation, we ask that you renew on-line and renew early. Although we strive for a one hundred percent renewal rate, we gain and lose subscribers in unequal (and decreasing) number. Thanks for your help in spreading the word about *The Vital Force*.

- CREATIVE GIFT GIVING -

We're up to \$851 and counting – that's the amount given in one person's name to *The Vital Force*. One particularly devoted teacher, who wishes to remain anonymous, recently celebrated a 60th birthday. Since she was not in need of anything material, she asked attendees to her celebration to consider making a donation to *The Vital Force*, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. (Donations are fully tax deductible.) Apparently her friends and family are well aware of her enthusiasm for T'ai Chi Chih and couldn't resist her request.

Perhaps this is something you might consider for an upcoming celebration or holiday. We can assure you that the funds are put to very good use in distributing *The Vital Force* and in upgrading the website, www.taichichih.org. We deeply thank this teacher and her generous circle for their gifts and this idea.

- PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR USE -

Jim Eagle, who posted dozens of 2008 conference photos on Flickr, the photo sharing web site, has graciously offered use of his banner photos (featuring quotations by Justin Stone) that appeared in the November 2008 *Vital Force*. Sheila Leonard, who spearheaded this initiative with Jim, suggests using them on your web site or in promotional materials. They are available for download at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jeagle/sets/72157606285837025/>. From there, click on the thumbnail photo you want; then click on the small magnifying glass directly above the photo labeled "all sizes;" then click on "original;" and then click on "download the original size." This downloads the largest (most detailed) photo.

May 2009

- REPRINTING THE VITAL FORCE -

To clarify: Subscribers of *The Vital Force* are welcome to make copies of articles with permission. (Authors never need permission to make copies of their *own* articles.) Only one person has been denied permission in the last two years – when he wanted to reprint the entire issue every quarter as a series of blog posts. If that had been allowed, why would any of those readers subscribe to *The Vital Force*? Why do people need permission to make copies? To maintain copyright protections. Protections from what or whom? Unfortunately, we don't know that answer until it is too late. So we need to be proactive. The only thing we ask when permission is granted is that you include *The Vital Force* footer (or cut and paste the masthead) on your reprint – to give credit to and spread the word about *The Vital Force*.

Perhaps you've noticed that *Vital Force* articles are laid out so that they don't spill over on to additional pages. Why? So they are easier to reuse if and when they are copied. Perhaps you've noticed that articles of a similar ilk are laid out together (see the New Jersey articles by Bill Moore's students or the Nebraska ones from Rita Otis's students or the teacher/student articles from Donna Aldous). Why? Again, this is done with reprint usage in mind and to help teachers build community.

- COMMENT ON SANDY'S ARTICLE: "T'AI CHI CHIH VERSUS TCC" (SEE PAGE 7) -

I understand and respect the points Sandy is making in her article. But it's simply a matter of style and every publication develops a style sheet: *The Vital Force* spells out *the first use* of "T'ai Chi Chih" in every article and then uses the abbreviation "TCC" to save space and for convenience. (You'll also note that Justin often uses the abbreviated form, "TCC," in lieu of spelling out its entire name in every instance.) I would suggest that if you, too, are getting hung up on reading "TCC" aloud, simply substitute "T'ai Chi Chih" when you come across it. It may be second (or first) nature. As for abbreviating with initials in print (*after the first full use of the form's name*), it doesn't seem to have hurt Transcendental Meditation to be referred to as TM sometimes. Certainly, if you are writing about T'ai Chi Chih for a general trade publication, web site, or newspaper, it would be beneficial to write out the whole form each time. Don't be surprised, though, when the publication utilizes its own style guidelines.

February 2009

Toot Toot

We haven't blown our own horn since our tenure began with the May 2007 issue, but when someone commented at Justin's 92nd birthday party in November that, "Would it really matter if there was no more *Vital Force*," we felt like it might be time.

Although we get lots of complimentary emails that we don't publish, here's one from Jocelyn Sampson, a devoted student working to become a teacher: "As I practice entirely alone up here on my lakeshore in Northern Ontario, I am hungry for *The Vital Force*. What a boon it is to be connected through this and the website. After reading Justin Stone's words on the last front cover of *The Vital Force*, I became newly mindful of the weight transfer through the whole of my TCC practice. Hopefully this is the impetus for further progress. I am working diligently on enlarging my understanding of Bass Drum, just as I continue to work on softness during Rocking Motion (after having re-read the teaching tips in the May 2007 newsletter) that I downloaded on-line. I am so very grateful. Thank you for providing me with a point of connection to the TCC organization." [Editor's Note: or non-organization, as the case may be.]

And from YouTube, where two instructional videos were posted by Good Karma Publishing and viewed by almost 19,000 people around the world in the last 12 months: "It's so nice to watch you teach. I am Chinese but I know nothing about it. I didn't believe those things about 'Chi' before but recently I saw a few videos on YouTube. I strongly believe that the famous Chinese T'ai Chi masters would not lie to make [falsities] due to the Chinese culture background. Really appreciate your work here which can pass on one of the greatest human civilizations. Hope I could learn it."
– supersig1

RENEWING SUBSCRIPTIONS ON-LINE

You've asked and we're answering. Quite soon (check www.taichichih.org periodically), you'll be able to renew your subscription on-line with a credit card via a secured server. This should be particularly helpful to those who are piles-of-paper-everywhere-challenged and to all Canadian teachers.

You'll also note that the web site indicates when it was last updated.

PRINTED ANNUAL DIRECTORY

The annual teacher directory is available for FREE on-line at www.taichichih.org/teachers.php. You can access teacher information by last name and by location (by state and country). Most importantly, the on-line version is updated every six weeks. In light of this (and the rising costs of printing the directory), the cost of the printed annual directory will be \$15 for the 2010 version.

November 2008

SOLICITING EXPERIENCES

Articles do not pour into *The Vital Force* in numbers great enough to sustain a quality publication without solicitations from the Editor. We know from feedback that you are quite appreciative of *The Vital Force* and look forward to reading it cover-to-cover upon arrival. So please consider adding your voice to this chorus by writing. If you don't, who will? Well, perhaps the people that the Editor calls and emails ... perhaps. As the deadline approaches each quarter, when not enough submissions have been received, active teachers around the country are contacted and asked write. Most do. (And we are grateful.) But what happens if the Editor does not know you or if you aren't as active as others? Does that not mean you do not have anything to contribute? No. Every single teacher and student of TCC has a story worth sharing. Ideally we'd like a more organic process of submissions, with readers taking responsibility for their publication. The Editor is often asked, "What would you like me to write about 'X'?" The answer is always the same, "I wouldn't for a second imagine that I could know what you should write. I am continually surprised and impressed at the breadth of what people express. Your consciousness is your only limit (or not)." Please carve out some time to give back, to put your thoughts and experiences on paper. Take a little risk by writing. You might be pleasantly surprised at what comes out. That's the feedback so often heard. If not you, then who?

NEW THEMES

This is the seventh issue of the new incarnation of *The Vital Force*, where we have suggested a theme around which to help practitioners organize their thoughts. Going forward, we hope to pose a different question for each issue and have teachers and students respond. The November 2009 issue will be the first with this new format. Please email us your suggestions for questions.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

With its new appearance, *The Vital Force* costs more to produce and mail than it receives in subscription fees. If this situation does not change within the next six months (or two issues), modifications will have to be instituted. Please encourage your fellow teachers and students to subscribe to *The Vital Force*. We only need 100 new subscribers. Make a phone call and ask your TCC friends if they subscribe; show them a recent issue. Tell them that they can download a free sample from www.taichichih.org/vital_force.php. Thank you.

August 2008

WWW.TAICHICHIH.ORG

After our teachers, the web site is our most valuable resource for spreading the word about T'ai Chi Chih. If you are a teacher, please consider linking your site to this main one. On the flip side, it has long been the policy of *The Vital Force* not to link out to individual teacher sites, as we do not want to co-mingle TCC with other practices. This is the same reason that we only list 100% TCC-centered events in the Community Calendar.

The website serves many purposes for a myriad of audiences. If you are a teacher who wants to give an overview of TCC to a journalist, the site has great background information about the benefits of TCC; commentary, articles, and insights about the originator, Justin Stone; a photo gallery of Justin Stone performing the movements; and press clippings and studies about TCC in the news. It has a complete Community Calendar for events held around the country, as well as information about *Seijaku* (advanced TCC) and Good Karma Publishing. If you are a student who just moved and are looking for a teacher in your area, we have an easy, drop-down menu to search state-by-state or country-by-country. If you are a student wishing to become accredited to teach TCC (which is a requirement), all the information is readily available at your fingertips. If you are a teacher wishing to promote a retreat or event wholly related to TCC, the site has a place for you. It's all there in an easy-to-use format.

EMAIL LISTS

Although teachers are listed publicly on the web site, so that students may find them, this contact information is not to be culled from this site for any use. We rely on the integrity of the teachers to maintain this.

ACCREDITED & NON-ACCREDITED TEACHERS

If you hear of people teaching TCC without having become accredited to teach, please contact Good Karma Publishing (which holds the copyright and registered trademark for T'ai Chi Chih) and Antonia Cooper (TCC's guide) with pertinent details. Contact information is on the back page. In order to maintain the high quality of teaching and the integrity of the practice, accredited teachers must impress upon their students that only accredited teachers may teach TCC. The future of TCC depends upon it.

May 2008

SHARING THE NEW WEBSITE

You've sent some great feedback about the new taichichih.org site. Thanks and keep it coming. At the upcoming Bay Area conference, a supply of promotional postcards for the site will be available. The postcard is an easy and attractive way to spread the word about TCC. Those not attending and wanting a supply of postcards should send a check (payable and mailed to *The Vital Force*) for \$3 to cover postage.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

PRESS KIT & BROCHURES

Under the web site's hidden community resources page (contact Lorraine Lepine in Kansas if you have forgotten to bookmark it), I have posted seven Word files from the Good Karma press kit presented at the 2006 conference. Feel free to download them and use the press releases verbatim (after inserting your own contact information). With Pete Gregory's permission, I have posted a pdf of the brochure he designed to promote his classes. I encourage others to send fine examples of their brochures to be posted and shared with the community.

GRAPHICS USAGE

The graphics from the taichichih.org web site are copyrighted by *The Vital Force* and are not for use by others. To allow that would imply that there is some organizing body for TCC that confers an imprimatur of authority. But there is not.

STUDENTS WRITING

It is with honor that *The Vital Force* has received so many wonderful testimonial stories from students. As a result of this sharing, one teacher (whose students have shared their stories) has written to *The Vital Force*, "Thank you for the opportunity to know my students. I had no idea. The lives we touch, the feeling of new life that our students experience is beyond what I had known. When I teach, I am not myself. Something else comes through me and happens. It is good to know that."

CHANGE IN SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

A couple of years ago, *The Vital Force* subscription price was reduced from a longstanding annual price of \$40 to \$30. But costs have risen and it is time to reinstate the \$40 annual price. The fee also includes designing and maintaining the new web site. We hope you agree they're worth their weight in gold.

February 2008

WEB SITE

It's done!!!!!! Please visit taichichih.org.

Regular monthly site updates will now be done through our consulting web designer. Submit your changes by the first of the month and information will be uploaded within a few days. As a reminder, all teachers are welcome to submit calendar events for upcoming retreats and workshops. We will have a space on the site for folks to download information about events. The VF thanks Lisa Thorburn, our web mistress, who has been a dedicated servant of TCC.

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS

As Justin says of the letters he has received: 90 percent of practitioners have been changed by T'ai Chi Chih. Tell us how you have been touched. The Vital Force is only as vital as your contributions, and we think it gets more vital with each issue!

Some have written asking why their articles did not appear in the last edition. It's about balancing voices and shaping content into a cohesive journal – within confines of space. Rest assured that all submissions are considered for future editions.

TO STUDENTS

The Vital Force is as much for you as it is for students! In fact, your experiences are vital to reminding teachers why they teach in the first place. We value your voice and want it to ring loud and clear.

TO WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Because of space limitations, The Vital Force will generally only run one specific article from each event with one photo. This does not mean that people cannot (and should not) write a general article about what they've experienced. It just doesn't have to be done in the context of an actual event summary.

November 2007

WEB SITE

Our community site, www.taichichih.org, exists under the aegis of *The Vital Force*. I am in the process of "branding" it and making it more reflective of www.gkpub.com. Now (through early December) is the time for your feedback. The new site should be ready to unveil in the next edition of *The Vital Force*.

INTENTION

It is my hope and expectation that this newsletter will be in every reporter's hands who writes about wellness, healing practices, and the like. It is also my hope and expectation that it will be in every hospital waiting room in the country. Please join me in affirming many, many more outreach venues.

WIKIPEDIA.COM AND YOUTUBE.COM

Welcome to the 21st century: I have recently posted entries about T'ai Chi Chih and Justin Stone on www.wikipedia.com. And I have uploaded a video clip of Justin Stone teaching Bird Flaps its Wings on www.YouTube.com. Even more people will now be exposed to the pearls of T'ai Chi Chih.

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS & TEACHERS

Thank you for your outreach donations for *The Vital Force*. From \$5 to \$150, your generous contributions enable us to cast a wider net spreading the word about TCC. You have large hearts.

If you are teaching somewhere and think it would be beneficial to have an additional subscription to leave where you are teaching, please let us know. Or, as Donna McElhose suggests, consider buying an extra subscription that you can circulate among your students.

GOOGLE ALERTS: What? How? A Google Alert is a means of creating a do-it-yourself customized Internet clipping service for the subject of your choice. I created two alerts for Tai Chi Chih (without the apostrophe) and T'ai Chi Chih so that any news story which appears virtually anywhere in the world will be relayed to me via email. It may relate to medical news, classes, intensives being offered, or a new research project.

To sign up, follow these instructions: Go to <http://www.google.com/alerts>. Enter the topic you wish to monitor. Under search terms, write Tai Chi Chih. Under type, select News or Comprehensive. Under how often, choose once a day, once a week, or as it happens. Then fill in your email address. Press the Create Alert. Then repeat the process and create a second alert using the correct variation of T'ai Chi Chih. You will then get an email from Google with a link to confirm that these are alerts you wish to receive. You must follow through with this last piece. KEN GRAY, NEW YORK, NY

August 2007

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MANY OF YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED that the Community Calendar was opened up to community members giving T'ai Chi Chih retreats, workshops, and intensives. As Justin said when he and I were discussing the fact that the Calendar had been limited in the past, "The only thing reserved for Teacher Trainers and Guides is teacher trainings." Imagine ... when our calendar listings grow to be three pages long! That will be a wonderful "problem" to have! In considering the issues, someone asked, "What will happen if a teacher publicizes an event that is not completely about TCC?" In considering a "bright line" test, the cleanest and clearest way to make it police itself is this: When you contact the Editor with your TCC event, she will ask you if it is 100 percent about TCC. If it is, it gets in the Community Calendar. If it turns out that it isn't (after the fact – since we can only rely on the integrity of the teacher), that teacher will lose Community Calendar privileges. (Sorry if this sounds harsh.) Someone also asked, "What happens if the teacher giving an event doesn't do TCC properly? Will s/he still be allowed to list their event?" The Editor is not a policewoman. Hope this is fair and clear.

THE DATABASE

It has come to my attention that the email list is being used improperly for purposes other than that for which it was originally intended: for important (border-line emergency) announcements directly related to The Vital Force. The Vital Force cannot control the email addresses being taken from www.taichichih.org, but we do have the responsibility to act responsibly in regards to what is sent from our email address. The policy is simple:

"The database is not for personal use or public distribution. If you have an announcement you consider extremely urgent and it is something that needs to be brought to the attention of the entire community (between editions of The Vital Force), please contact the Editor, who will discuss it with the Guide. Because we respect your privacy and time, it will be a rare event when something is distributed to the entire list."

FOR THE RECORD

The last edition was mistakenly mailed bulk rate by the printer, who called to apologize. Please accept our regrets. The printer also mistakenly used GKP as the return address for that issue. Please note, for practical and legal reasons, The Vital Force and Good Karma Publishing are completely separate entities. ... Photo and credits were omitted from the last edition. Stones were photographed by Kim Grant and designer Amy K. Brown; other photos were supplied by the article's author. We will always give credit where credit is due.

May 2007

REVITALIZING THE VITAL FORCE

When I first learned that Victor Berg had resigned as editor of *The Vital Force*, I thought that if no one wanted to step forward from the subscriber pool, perhaps the journal should fold. If the community then felt it had lost something, the newsletter would be resurrected. If not, it would remain dormant. But then I realized what a shame that would be. So here we are.

Over the last 20-plus years of professional life, I have developed some expertise that will be helpful as editor – not the least of which is that, in my role at Good Karma Publishing, I have the opportunity to speak to the most active and enthusiastic teachers and students each week. These folks speak volumes about the vitality of our community.

For the record, this is basically a volunteer position, although I am paid a small sum for each of the quarterly issues. My day jobs, from which I have picked up relevant skills, are numerous and include being: an Acquisitions Editor for Countryman Press, a division of WW Norton; a public relations and marketing freelancer; a travel guide author for Lonely Planet and other publishers; a travel writer for numerous Web sites and new media companies; a professional photographer; and the one-woman ringleader of Good Karma Publishing.

Since the editorial change was announced in late April, there has been an outpouring of support for the VF. Justin is heartened.

I know you are out there and you have offered to share your experiences. So keep those cards and letters (and photos and artwork) coming.

We hope you like the look of the new *Vital Force*. Comments, ideas, and suggestions are always welcome.

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