



The Vital Force

Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community

"Tai Chi Chih is a Service to Humanity. It is a Form of Love." —Justin Stone, Originator

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You can be grateful
Without being grateful for any thing
You can enjoy Being
Without understanding what Being is
You can have Faith
Without Faith in something that can be named –
But you cannot be Desireless,
for the wish to not want anything
is, in itself, a Desire.
—Justin Stone



Contributors

Nancy Adams was introduced to T'ai Chi Chih Joy thru Movement in August 1998, after enrolling in her first class with Jean Markey in Stewartstown, PA. She began training and received her accreditation in October 2000. Nancy began pursuing other trainings that are complementary to the T'ai Chi Chih practice. In 2002, she received her accreditation in Seijaku. The same year, she completed a course of study in reflexology and received her certification as a Gendai-Ho Reiki Master in November 2002. In 2003, she completed a course in Mother Earth Warm Stone Massage. Much of Nancy's life has been spent volunteering in positions that improved people's quality of life. As the wife of a retired Army officer, she spent 26 years serving on boards, committees, and volunteer positions that supported the Army community. She feels that sharing the tools for balancing the body's energy is the next step in contributing to World Peace and improving World Health.

Kendelyn R. Beck is a student of Barbara Riley and practices TCC in Berkeley, CA.

Nancy Beck came to the newly opened HealthPoint Wellness Center in Lubbock, TX in May 2001, originally to take T'ai Chi, but the director Larry Sava said she should try T'ai Chi Chih. After years of working she wanted to do something different and alleviate a knee problem and a weight problem. The knees are much better and she lost 50 pounds in a year. In the fall of 2002 Pam Towne viewed a video of Nancy's practice and noted her problem areas. These suggestions motivated Nancy and for the next two months, with Larry's help and the use of the TCC guidelines, worked diligently to improve her TCC. In November 2002, Pam Towne accredited Nancy at the Albuquerque Teacher Accreditation.

Victor Berg is 40 years old and developed an interest in meditation while attending the University of Santa Barbara. It was there that he was introduced to T'ai Chi Chih through his close college friend Ed Altman. He was

accredited as a teacher soon after his introduction to the movements. In 1997 he and his family moved to Albuquerque so that he could study both meditation and T'ai Chi Chih with Justin Stone. Victor is a faithful student and a support to Justin as he advances in age.

Carmen Brocklehurst has been practicing TCC since 1976 and was accredited by Justin Stone in 1980. She now teaches for corporations, conducts retreats & workshops, as well as Beginning T'ai Chi Chih up through Teacher Preparation classes in Albuquerque, NM and other places. In 1985 she was accredited as a Seijaku instructor by Justin Stone. Over 70 of the students she has prepared have become TCC teachers. She conceived, and is the host of, the 13-part PBS TV Series T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement, which began in 1994 and is still being aired throughout the continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii and Canada.

Rebecca Busching is an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher who lives in Sandia Park, NM. Her career has encompassed various kinds of design work, including pharmaceutical graphics, logo and corporate identity design, as well as owning and designing "Becky B's" heirloom clothing patterns for children. Most recently she has turned her creative interests toward "Ponto Fino Interiors," a redesign and interior consulting business.

Denise Clark has been a certified T'ai Chi Chih instructor since 1995 in the East Bay area of San Francisco. Her work has included Kaiser Chronic Pain Management Program and the Respite Center for Alzheimer's at the Jewish Community Center. She completes her Master's in 2005 and is excited about the possibilities of a Healing Ministry. She has three autoimmune diseases and maintains her health with TCC. Her e-mail contact is denise@deniseclark.com

Sr. Antonia Cooper is a Franciscan sister living and practicing in New Jersey. Since November 2003, she is Tai Chi Chih's new Guide.

Marian Demko is a newly accredited teacher and lives in Clarks Summit, PA.

Margery Erickson earned degrees from Penn State University and Millersville University in social science and special education. She has worked with special needs adults and children for more than 20 years. In addition she is an accomplished hand weaver and spinner. She has a business selling hand-woven clothing under the label Opaessence. She lives in a log home and studio on six quiet acres with Chris and two border collies, Lady and Jack. T'ai Chi Chih has been a part of her life for 12 years. She was accredited in 1997. She loves demonstrating and teaching T'ai Chi Chih to people in the community and to high school special needs students.

Kathy Grassel is a farmer's daughter, born in South Dakota, now living in Albuquerque, NM. She's lived in a few states and countries, and hung out in Paris where she put to the test the old refrain, "You can't keep them down on the farm once they've seen Pa-ree." Not true. Kathy sows and reaps no matter where she is, and subscribes to the verse in the old country song, "There's just two things money can't buy and that's true love and home-grown tomatoes." And speaking of true love, Kathy took her first T'ai Chi Chih class in 1991 and finally took the leap to certification in 1994 as one of the November Nine.

Roseann Heinrich has been practicing since 1999 and loves to teach. She was accredited in October 2000 in Columbia, PA. She was working full time until May of this year. Roseann recently moved from York, PA to Middleburg Hts, OH and hopes to begin teaching in this area after the first of the year. Going to the November Teacher Training in New Jersey was a dream come true. She had always wanted to join her friends at previous trainings, but work and family obligations took the



time. If she had to wait to audit her first training, she says she was blessed to be able to attend this one.

Shannon Hoffman is a student of Virginia Lee Cepeda in Dublin, CA.

Roger Hotalen is a PACE Certified T'ai Chi Chih® accredited instructor with the San Diego Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation. Roger first discovered T'ai Chi in 1977 while in Korea. He was so impressed with the power, flexibility and well-being it could generate he began the journey, practicing with groups in parks as he traveled the through the orient. In 1994, after retiring from the military, he began studying TCC from Susan Patterson Haymaker in San Diego. In 1999 he received his accreditation in Fullerton, California from a great teacher, Ed Altman. You can contact Roger at rog4ct@cox.net and www.ajoyfulmovement.com

Lisa Jacobs was accredited in September 2002 in Chicago.

Sr. Carletta LaCour, O.P., has been a Dominican Sister of Houston for more than 40 years. She was a Principal/Educator of young children for 33 years, the last 16 as a Montessori director for children ages 3-6. In 1995, she was introduced to T'ai Chi Chih by Sr. Mary Reynolds, O.P., from Sparkill, NY. The next year, Sr. Carletta took Teacher Training in San Diego, CA, from Steven Ridley, assisted by numerous T'ai Chi Chih teachers. She was on staff at Holy Family Retreat Center in Beaumont, TX, when she began offering sessions in the T'ai Chi Chih moves. Since 2001, she teaches in Houston at several retreat centers, nursing homes, and the Dominican Sisters Administration Facility.

Carla Langdon now lives and practices in Washington state.

Sheila Leonard (nicknamed **Chi-la** at her November 2003 accreditation) is a Presentation Sister living in Newfoundland, Canada. T'ai Chi Chih first

"found" Sheila in 1992 in New Jersey. Being the first accredited teacher in Atlantic Canada leaves her feeling both excited and challenged. She is reassured, knowing that our energies are with her. Already she dreams of one day hosting a T'ai Chi Chih event in Newfoundland. Sheila is a retired educator, feeling more "rewired" than retired, as she pursues other avenues, including now being a Reiki practitioner and perhaps some day a Master. She delights in humour, music (one of her greatest loves), gardening, writing poetry, as well as dancing, some flowing from deep within and some just for fun. T'ai Chi Chih is clearly helping her inner and outer life flow more gently as new paths unfold.

Athene Mantle put off going to teacher training as long as possible, because she had a feeling that once she went she would be all about TCC. Yep! Ever since Ed accredited her in Albuquerque, she has been "babbling" non-stop about TCC. Sharon Sirkus dubbed her the "babbling spring" in the last *VFJ*. Visiting teacher Nancy Adams called her a "walking billboard for TCC" because everywhere the two of them went (running errands around town), she would end up telling people about TCC. In Athene's own words: "I'm afraid it's hopeless!"

Bill Moore is a recently accredited T'ai Chi Chih Instructor. He has been practicing T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement, for seven years. He will be teaching T'ai Chi Chih classes on Monday and Thursday evenings at the high school in his home town of Clifton, NJ, beginning in February. Bill's first Teacher was Gerry McGuire, a student of Sr. Antonia. His sponsoring Teacher for the Accreditation Process was Fran Warren, a fellow student of Ms. McGuire.

Ginny Morgan grew up an only child in Oklahoma and graduated with an Assoc. degree in Business from Oklahoma State University. She married her high school sweetheart and worked as Head Secretary for the Mathematics/Statistics Department until Bob graduated with his Engineering degree. They moved to Kansas City where they lived 28 years before moving to Albuquerque. Ginny was a

stay-at-home mom to two sons. After the boys were in school, she went back to school and became a certified Medical Assistant at a doctor's office. She went back to school again and got her Emergency Medical Assistant license and volunteered at the Fire Department and was the first woman on the department. Ginny has also been active in training and showing Golden Retrievers for the past 35 years. When she got to Albuquerque in 1997 and stood on the patio of her home for the first time, she had an overwhelming feeling she had "come home." Five years later, she found T'ai Chi Chih.

Seon Keun Oh is a member of Marist Brothers of the Schools. He has been studying "Culture and Spirituality" at the Sophia Center in Oakland. He came to know T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement through one of his classes. He was amazed by its immediate effect and simple and meditative moves. Faithful practice of T'ai Chi Chih movements in the morning brightens and energizes his day, grounding himself to the depth of Mystery. He desires to bring T'ai Chi Chih back to Korea knowing that it is a wonderful companion to improve one's physical, mental, and spiritual health, and is a great tool to create a loving community. Seon Keun is going back to Korea in January, hoping to share this gift of T'ai Chi Chih with many people.

Kristin Orwick, newly accredited, lives in East Berlin, PA.

Daniel Pienciak was accredited as a TCC instructor in 1997 and Seijaku in 1998. Dan had very much enjoyed teaching a steadily increasing number of classes at beginner, intermediate and now Seijaku levels. He also has hosted local teacher trainings and other T'ai Chi Chih events, as well as helping students prepare for teacher training. Since leaving the formal ministry as a Catholic priest in 1994, Dan has also studied a variety of other wellness modalities such as Reiki, Integrated Energy Therapy, and Thai Yoga Massage. Seeing folks for private sessions in these modalities along with teaching T'ai Chi Chih classes, plus teaching private piano lessons, has enabled him to earn a living in a way that is spiritually and creatively

meaningful and enjoyable.

Terry Gay Puckett is a San Antonio artist/educator. She teaches telecourse and internet classes as an adjunct professor at St. Philip's College, and leads groups to Guatemala each January for T'ai Chi Chih and sketching lessons. Terry Gay was accredited in Albuquerque in November 2002. Her passions are painting, drawing, enameling, T'ai Chi Chih and chocolate, not necessarily in that order.

Barbara Riley is a longtime TCC teacher from the Bay Area in California.

Linden Royce is a TCC teacher from California.

Ann Rutherford is the 5th child of six and grew up in a coastal California farming community. Her parents taught her to honor hard work, honesty and service to others. As a teen, she became interested in Zen Buddhism but never had a teacher. "I have always wanted to realize what is true and live by those discoveries," Ann says. She lived in Argentina in 1984 and left the day Juan Peron died. For many years she taught history at various universities. She is presently a dyslexia therapist and an active T'ai Chi Chih teacher. About her life these days, she says, "Meditation and study with Justin Stone are the most growth-producing events that I have experienced in my life."

Larry Sava, while attending a demonstration of T'ai Chi Chih® at the Southwest Yoga Conference, was impressed with the flow of chi. He worked with a cancer survivors group using T'ai Chi Chuan and, feeling that was not the answer, began to search for other methods. He came back to Tai Chi Chih and was certified in the first Texas teacher accreditation in San Antonio by Ed Altman (and by the prayers of Sr. Alice!). Larry later completed Seijaku training. He believes the chi has helped with recovery from thyroid cancer. He is currently director of the HealthPoint Wellness Center in Lubbock, a facility for seniors. Larry says, "I believe in, and have seen, the dramatic benefits of TCC in our senior membership."

Virginia Shilson was born in 1920 in Chattanooga, TN. She grew up in Detroit, MI, where she met and married Doug Shilson in 1942. She graduated from East Stroudsburg State College, PA, at age 56 with a BA in Philosophy. Virginia is grateful for a kind, patient, and compassionate husband. She is grateful for Tai Chi Chih. At age 83, she can still experience its softness, its slow, easy pace, and its continuous flow. Both Virginia and Doug are grateful for the frequent visits of Justin Stone and Dr. R. Svoboda during their super-wonderful years in Albuquerque.

Sharon Sirkis achieved her BS in Nursing in 1979. At that time she also studied Ed Parker's kenpo karate and became a karate teacher in 1982. She earned her black belt in 1984, and opened her own karate studio in 1985. Unfortunately, all those years of karate took a physical toll on her body. Fortunately, this led her to T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement. Sharon was accredited in 1997 by Ed Altman in Mahwah, NJ. Her favorite TCC class to teach is the college class at UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County), where she gets much of her material for the Lighter Side column, which she originated. Sharon is also a Reiki Master, a Chakra Energy Healing Practitioner, and a firekeeper for Native American sweat lodge ceremony. Her other favorite things to do are to read and to laugh.

Freddie Soloman lives and works in beautiful Burlington, Vermont, where the Chi is quite strong. Along with teaching T'ai Chi Chih, he also is a writer and independent cab driver. After a grueling night working the bar crowds, he says he gets out of his taxi, steps to the sidewalk and does a few rounds of rocking motion. "That's all it takes," he says, "to get re-centered and relaxed for a good night's sleep."

Justin Stone is a jazz pianist and abstract artist. He is also the originator of T'ai Chi Chih. He celebrated his 87th birthday on November 20, 2003.

Becky Watkins lives in Alexandria, LA with her husband of 32 years and two dachshunds. Their three grown children and two grandbabies live close

by. Becky works as a counselor for a large Catholic hospital, and she also teaches yoga. She is a Master Reiki practitioner, and will begin teaching her first TCC class in Jan. 2004. Becky says she is drawn to the deep spirituality at the core of TCC practice and it has enhanced her quality of life. She says counseling can be healing for the wounded psyche and so can movement therapy and human touch. Hospitals are realizing this and Becky hopes to introduce these complementary modalities as part of her hospital's new Center for Integrative Medicine.

Vicki Webb grew up in Minnesota, but has been living in Georgia almost long enough to be considered a native (She eat grits and can use the term "y'all" fluently). Professionally, she is involved with staff and organizational development at Emory Healthcare in Atlanta. Discovering T'ai Chi Chih practice has been a remarkable blessing in her life. She is sure her teacher was amused after telling her that she wanted to become a TCC teacher after learning just the first few movements. For her, it felt like coming home. Life on life's terms can be very challenging. But she's still here, still practicing, and so excited finally to be accredited so that she can share this gift with others.

Nancy Werner-Azarski makes her home in Minneapolis, MN when she is working as a nurse and in Finlayson, MN when she is not. She has been practicing TCC since 1996 and became a teacher in 1998. She enjoys volunteer work, quilting, gardening, reading and rousing conversations.

Jack Wheatland (BA, University of the Pacific; MA, Stanford) taught elementary school for 48 years. As a sixth grade teacher, he taught his students haiku and sumi painting. He is now a T'ai Chi Chih student of Barbara Riley and John Steinmetz.



T'ai Chi Chih and Health

Justin was asked to write an article, medically slanted, for a health organization.

The medical establishment begins to take notice of the Chi

by Justin Stone

In the East, Chi is often called “The Vital Force,” “The Life Force,” or the “Intrinsic Energy.” It is recognized as the Building Block of life. When the Chi leaves the body, that body dies. Chinese doctors, understanding the flow of this Chi, are now performing serious operations without anesthesia. I saw on television when an abdominal growth the size of a cantaloupe was removed from a woman, after which she got up from the operating table and walked back to her room. All this is possible because of understanding the knowledge of Chi and how to use that knowledge favorably.

When the Chi is circulated and balanced between positive and negative (Yang and Yin), the metabolism changes. At Folsom Prison, in California, it was noted (in a letter from Dr. Shrum) that, while the usual rate of recidivism at the prison is an astounding 90 percent, those who practiced Tai Chi Chih at the prison had a return rate of 0 percent. This meant the change in metabolism of those practicing TCC had reduced criminality in this group to where it no longer existed. This is one aspect of T'ai Chi Chih that has never been noted.

Would it not be a blessing if criminals did TCC regularly—after staff were assured that it was not some Martial Art that could be used

against them—and criminality was slowly done away with? This was not a controlled experiment, planned and verified by scientists, but an actual happening that cannot be denied.

Recently an article appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* that reported an experiment that was verified by scientists, a study to show how immunity against shingles was greatly strengthened by TCC practice. This article is readily available.

I am continually getting letters from TCC students, telling me of their experiences, and most of these letters include the statement, “T'ai Chi Chih has changed my life.” These letters were not solicited. Some of the students, in gratitude, go on to prepare for teacher training so that they can pass on the benefits to others. Non-practitioners would be astounded at how much gratitude is generated by TCC practice.

T'ai Chi Chih was not developed by me in order to make money. I do not take anything at all from those who have become teachers, who after considerable training go on to teach beginning classes for which they are paid by the students for an initial eight-week course.

From these students, and from the teachers themselves, have come numerous letters telling of unexpected cures of migraine headaches, asthma, high blood pressure, etc., and of great improvement in sarcoidosis, Parkinson's disease, osteoporosis, etc.

These letters are entirely unsolicited. Moreover, TCC was not developed as a medical tool. There are other, possibly greater benefits that will not interest medical authorities but, nevertheless, are of real importance.

From time to time organizations have noted what TCC is doing. To mention three of them, the American Medical Association wrote me a letter commending TCC as an “alternative” form of healing. The Mayo Clinic Medical Journal suggested that people buy my instructional videotape, and I heard from someone at the United Nations about giving a talk at their Hammersjold auditorium in New York. (They postponed the first, which many people around the country were going to attend, and we have not tried to arrange a second date as yet.) These isolated incidents, and many more not mentioned, show that the value of TCC is gradually being recognized.

Recently, an active nun from New Jersey, who has become very important to the TCC community, told me that there are about 60 nuns who are now accredited TCC teachers, all with the approval of their supervisors. When one time it was previously checked against lists of teachers some years ago, there were 40.

Aside from helping with disease, emphasis on the relief from stress and tensions in our everyday lives has been surprising in the letters we receive. Often those who have benefited this way take the time to write articles for the two T'ai Chi Chih journals, the *Vital Force* and the *T'ai Chi Chih News*, and it might be rewarding to scan these, which are available.

Perhaps I will close with a description of two events in my own life. Years ago, in Needles, California, I took a bad fall on pavement. There was a big bump on the sidewalk and I did not notice it. Consequently, I went



flying through the air, landing on my right hip and right forearm. I am now 87 years old, and I was in my 80s then. Usually, after a fall on a hard surface, old people will break a hip or an arm. Aside from being scratched (becoming black and blue), I was not injured and able to do my share of the driving the rest of the afternoon. When a bone specialist, later saw x-rays, he remarked, incredulously, "You have the bones of a 30-year-old man, no arthritis at all." I responded, "Have you every heard of T'ai Chi Chih?"

One time my doctor, whom I seldom see, suggested an exam because I'd had a heart operation 25 years ago (when I was told it would be good for five to eight years). From the results, he suggested I take two pills, which I reluctantly did. They caused my lower legs to go numb during the night, so I threw them away. The doctor then predicted my blood pressure would shoot up. "No, it won't," I told him. "For two weeks I will do TCC three times a day, and then follow up by doing it twice a day." Being 87, I could be expected to have a slightly higher blood pressure, but what happened? Gradually my pressure dropped to where it stayed between 100 and 110 over low 60s. I was actually alarmed by how low it had gone, but the doctor assured me it was good news.

The above remarks are meant to show what TCC has done for people, and for me. I believe that, eventually, TCC will be adopted (and adapted) by medicine. It works. If there had been more space, and the reader had unlimited time, I would conclude with remarks about the Chi (called "prana" in India) by some of the great saints and sages of modern times, such as Niyanda and Nisagardatta. Hopefully, medicine will come to appreciate the meaning of Chi relatively soon, while I am alive and can, perhaps, be of help.

—Letters about "Getting it right"— T'ai Chi is not T'ai Chi Chih

Date: Tue, 30 Sep 2003
From: Barbara Riley
<barbara.riley@stanfordalumni.org>
To: Weekly Bulletin From DrWeil
<membership@drweil.com>
Subject: Dr. Weil's Weekly Wellness
Bulletin

Dear Dr. Weil,

As an enthusiastic supporter of your writings and work, I was pleased to see that you featured the recently released study from UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, which showed significant improvements in virus-specific immune response of seniors who took T'AI CHI CHIH classes for 15 weeks. We who teach this form feel it is most significant because this form is NOT a martial art; its purpose is to improve health by circulating and balancing chi (life force energy). This form of meditative movement is taught in basically the same way throughout this country and in many other countries.

The study referenced was the first randomized, controlled clinical trial to demonstrate a positive, virus-specific immune response to a behavioral intervention. It is actually part of a four-year study, which is now nearly completed. Further information about the study may be found at the following resources, as well as in the September edition of the journal, *Psychosomatic Medicine*.

www.npi.ucla.edu

<http://www.cousinspni.org/aboutus.htm>

<http://www.medsch.ucla.edu>

The T'ai Chi Chih community would appreciate it if you would include in a future newsletter more news about

this very important study, and the website www.taichichih.org, which has information about the form and a list of teachers who may be contacted. Thank you very much for your interest.

Barbara Riley

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Date: 10/2/03
Subj: Article about T'ai Chi in 9/29/03 issue
From: Metrikareiki@aol.com
To: letters@time.com

Dear Sirs: I saw with great interest the article about a study done on the benefits of T'ai Chi in the 9/29/03 issue of *Time*. Please check your source material. I was able to read the original article from which yours was taken and if you read that article carefully, it states that T'ai Chi Chih is the form of gentle movement documented in the study. My belief is that all forms of T'ai Chi benefit the practitioner. However, the study cited used a specific and unique form of T'ai Chi, called T'ai Chi Chih founded by Justin Stone, and it was this practice that created the results cited in the study. I think it is misleading to not mention the full name of the practice. I would hope that *Time's* editorial staff would be more careful in the future.

Sincerely,
Kendelyn R. Beck
T'ai Chi Chih practitioner
Berkeley, CA

Feature Interview



—Breaking down barriers through T'ai Chi Chih—

An interview with Sr. Antonia Cooper

Antonia Cooper, OSF, became an accredited of T'ai Chi Chih instructor in 1991, getting her training in Bemidji, Minnesota. Sister Antonia is also an artist, spiritual director, and director of novices for her

Franciscan community. Antonia has been a member of the Franciscan Servants of the Holy Child at North

Plainfield, NJ since 1969. In November 2003, she accepted the position of Guide of T'ai Chi Chih. In the national and international community, Sister is perhaps best known for her re-dedication ceremony at the annual teacher conferences. She is also known for opening up the entire east coast to T'ai Chi Chih. She graciously agreed to this interview so that we may get to know her better as she begins this new endeavor in the service of T'ai Chi Chih.

VFJ: Sister, what were you like as a child and what childhood experiences shaped your spirituality?

Sr. Antonia: I was always a shy child. My first religious experience came, I remember distinctly, when I was five years old. At that time in the Catholic Church, there was what was called afternoon benediction. I was along with my mother and I remember just kneeling there, my head just about level with the pew, my mother singing in this language I'd never heard before, and wondering what was going on. I just had an overwhelming feeling that this was very special. Later in Catholic school, when I was seven years old in second grade, I wanted to become a Sister. That stayed with me until I began high school, and that thought went out the window (laughter) with the regular teenage life. I dated and all that. When my senior year came, I began to think, "What am I going to do with my life?" The thought came back to me again about religious life. And this is quite interesting—I did not want to teach. The community of sisters who taught me for 12 years was a teaching order. So I inquired about other communities and a priest who was holding a retreat told me about the community that I am in now. It's interesting because it's German, and when I entered the sisters were German. The school sisters who taught me really tried to dissuade me from entering this community because it was so backward and it would be difficult for an American woman to make it in that community. I was bound and determined, so I entered, which brought me on a whole other journey. I entered in 1966 right after high school. I worked in our nursing home as a nurse's aide, and after some time I studied to be an ac-

tivity director. I began to become less shy, but I still did not want to teach. I then took classes to become a dietary manager here in our nursing home.

VFJ: What brought you to T'ai Chi Chih?

Sr. Antonia: When I was about 40, I was going through a mid-life crisis. All the things I valued, the belief system that I was into—I began questioning everything. Things weren't working anymore like they had been. My community was very supportive, and in that experience of total brokenness, they encouraged me to go to a program. And so I landed up in St. Paul, Minnesota, at the Franciscan Center for the Religious. That's where I learned T'ai Chi Chih. Sr. Anita Germane was my teacher. At that time she was the holistic therapist in that program.

We were also learning other things, and we had teachers and other therapists, religious and non-religious, coming in. This one sister who was a therapist was talking about going from the false ego self to the true Self, and she said one way to do that would be through Centering Prayer. And I thought, Oh, that's pretty nice, if it's going to be that easy, that's what I'm going to do (laughter). So I began doing my daily practice of Tai Chi Chih and Centering Prayer together. I would sit, and then I would do the practice. One day as I was sitting I noticed how quiet my body was, but how my head was always all over the place. I didn't want to waste any time. I couldn't sit actually; it was just that disturbing. So I got up and did my full Tai Chi Chih practice and sat back down. I was so centered and focused and quiet and energized. I thought, what's going on here? That's the moment I decided to become a Tai Chi Chih teacher. It was that experience between meditation and prayer and

the form. I felt that if this could happen to me and for me, what could Tai Chi Chih do for other people? That's what really made me want to become a teacher. Again, I asked my community, and again, they were very open to allowing me to take the teacher training course. I took the course in Bemidji with Jeannie hosting it. I'd just learned Tai Chi Chih in March of 1990—I was one of those quick persons (laughter)—and took my accreditation in February of 1991. I thought if I don't do it here and now, I might never get out of New Jersey again to do it later. I'd never heard of Tai Chi Chih in New Jersey, and when I went back there were no teachers, so I had no one to connect with. So my community just allowed me to do as many classes as I wanted. They even gave me a car—it was just amazing. They gave me all this time. I think for about five years, I was only doing Tai Chi Chih. It was wonderful. It still is. I mean I have other responsibilities now, but they were delighted that I was so well again, and I was delighted that I was so well. It was wonderful, and it all worked very well together.

VFJ: Was there never any concern among some in your community that this activity was not exactly what a Sister was supposed to be doing?

Sr. Antonia: Yes, there were some very conservative sisters. They were very concerned about me teaching Tai Chi Chih. At one point, we had a visitation from our superior who came from Germany. She asked me to please call it "Spiritual Movement" and not "T'ai Chi Chih" when I would speak about it, so I thought, okay, I can do that. On another occasion, one sister came up to me and said, "Antonia, I'm very worried about you." I answered, "Really? How?" I knew what she was talking about. "I'm afraid you're going to land up like Thomas Merton," she

Bow River, Banff, Canada

Photo: Pat Gillman



said. And I said, "How did he land up then?" And she said, "He became a Buddhist!" And I said, "No he didn't." I told her the story and why he was praying with Buddhists and visiting Asia, and that he died a priest. And I told her that she never had to worry about me becoming a Buddhist nun. I said, first of all I look terrible in orange, and I'm too vain to shave my head (laughter). So she was very happy. That's some of the stuff I went through in the beginning.

Now, the sisters are just so open. They see me setting up the space here and they say, "Oh, you're having Tai Chi Chih this weekend." They love when the people come in because those who are attracted to Tai Chi Chih are such fine people, and my community sees that, and they love to talk to everybody. So it's a gift to the sisters as well as the space is to the people who come. So it really works out well here. That acceptance has formed me as I am today.

VFJ: Have any of the sisters taken the class?

Sr. Antonia: Yes, a few, but around the country there are many, perhaps as many as 80 now.

VFJ: Do you think there is a link between Tai Chi Chih and religion?

Sr. Antonia: No, rather I think it touches into the deep spiritual part of who we are. It breaks all the religious barriers. The differences that we experience, which are those barriers—it cuts through all of that to the core of who we are. My sense is that it has been a healing experience,

I can only speak for myself, but I also know that other sisters have gone through different programs of healing in various ways, and even people who have no religious affiliation tell me what a spiritual practice this is. I think that's the core of what Tai Chi Chih is and why it draws so many religious people.

VFJ: Many seem attracted to it because they get relief from various physical ailments such as high blood pressure or migraine headaches, and

cause they fell away from their religions and eventually needed something to replace what they lost in practicing religion. In hindsight, I was probably one of them.

Sr. Antonia: I would agree with you.

VFJ: Maybe your being the new Guide will give people the confidence they need to name their practice, too, as a spiritual practice.

Sr. Antonia: Well, I'm very careful not to push any religious words in my classes.

VFJ: You have a meditation practice, too, dating from when you learned T'ai Chi Chih?

Sr. Antonia: Yes, what I do is Centering Prayer. You can sit with anybody and still do Centering Prayer. Two years ago I made a Buddhist retreat at the University of Massachusetts done by Thich Nhat Hanh. It was wonderful. He and his monks and nuns and 800 other people were there. It was such a sacred, quiet retreat like I've never had



*TCC Practice in Chinatown, New York City.
Trisha Jewellen Hargaden and St. Antonia*

maybe that spiritual dimension is falling into the background in favor of the health dimension. If that is so, do you think the pendulum will swing back? Or that there's room for both?

Sr. Antonia: I think people are looking for more holistic ways of being, and I don't doubt that the people actually have received those physical benefits. We don't ask if there have been any spiritual benefits, and I guess we hesitate to ask those questions because we don't want to have T'ai Chi Chih be a strictly spiritual practice as such. People can get a little nervous when that is mentioned, and maybe so do we.

VFJ: I know many people were drawn to something like T'ai Chi Chih be-

fore. There was the walking meditation, of course, and during the sitting I was doing Centering Prayer.

VFJ: One person here asked, "Will Antonia have to leave the Church to be head of Tai Chi Chih?"

Sr. Antonia: I guess I would answer with a question, "Does one have to leave a religious practice in order to do a spiritual practice?" It's my hope within any religion that people will go beyond dogma and rules and regulations to experience a relationship with that God that they are worshipping. Because often that doesn't happen when one is only following rules and regulations about that relationship. I think that Tai Chi Chih helps develop that personal relationship, rather

than take it away.

VFJ: Did your superiors object to your “extra duty” taking on this big job?

Sr. Antonia: When I talked with my regional superior, she was just concerned if this responsibility would draw on the funds of the community. That was her concern. She wasn’t too concerned that I would fly off out of my community. She knows me (laughter). Those questions naturally come out of people’s not knowing what religious life is. I would like to help to clear up some of that.

VFJ: Will your duties as Guide come on top of your present duties at your religious center?

Sr. Antonia: Yes. I have a full-time job, and I know I couldn’t do this if Sandy and Pam weren’t there, and I told Sandy and Pam that I wouldn’t do it unless they were there. I depend very heavily on them. Justin said he sees my responsibility as connecting with teachers, and also leading the conference.

VFJ: As such, would say the role of being at the head of T’ai Chi Chih is evolving?

Sr. Antonia: I think if there were teacher trainings every month, I would certainly get more involved in that part of it. My hope, besides being a unifying force for the community, is to inspire teachers to a deeper confidence in themselves so that they will have the confidence to send their students for teacher accreditation. We’re working with a base of teachers and students who want to embody the essence of Tai Chi Chih and want to pass that on. They make up the community that is going to lead Tai Chi Chih into the future. I see myself in a role of guiding that, but I’m not out there doing all the teaching. It’s all the teachers who are doing that. I don’t think they know how important they are for the future of Tai Chi Chih, and I would

like to work with that.

VFJ: On Saturday nights some of us mediate with Justin, and afterward he reads from the works of Zen masters or Indian saints such as Ramana Maharshi and Nityananda. Who would you call your wisdom teachers? Who are your role models as you go about your work?

Sr. Antonia: I suppose being brought up in my own religious tradition, and because I am a Franciscan, of those men and women who have really affected me in my spirituality, the most important for me are St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare. My life is already modeled on them in a natural way, just by being in this particular community, as being peacemakers.

VFJ: How does your community focus of peacemaker manifest in your work?

Sr. Antonia: One thing that I’ve been doing for 18 years is my ministry of spiritual direction. That has brought me together with people as a peacemaker, to help them become at peace within themselves with other people and with God. A second, equally important, focus is to be reconciled as well as to be at peace. To accomplish this can be as simple as walking next to a person and having a conversation. It’s one-on-one. I am spiritual director to all kinds of individuals, each desirous for a deeper spiritual life—a Catholic priest, a Catholic sister, lay women and men, a scientist who is Lutheran, a minister in the Unification Church. The invitation is to track where God is present in their life and where God isn’t present in their life, or just hearing what questions they have regarding life. I see my role as reflecting back what they’ve said or asking questions regarding what they’ve said. So I don’t give them answers; I give them questions. It’s a very sacred time when people are opening up with their questions and their doubts. People have questions like why they

are so sick and are still elated in God’s presence and seeing God all over the place. It’s been a very precious experience.

VFJ: As a peacemaker what concerns you about what is happening in the world today with your fellow humans?

Sr. Antonia: There’s a saying “Think Globally, Act Locally.” I’m disturbed by world events, especially by our troops in Iraq. I have one nephew who has just come back and another who is over there now. It really hits home for me, this whole war, plus the injustice of it. So there’s injustice around the world, and injustice in my backyard.

VFJ: In the midst of a not-so-perfect world, what are your greatest joys?

Sr. Antonia: I have many joys. Being with people is a joy for me. Being by myself in nature is a joy for me. Seeing a baby. Just watching snow fall. My practice of Tai Chi Chih is a joy. Being in stillness is joy. Riding the latest roller coaster is a joy for me (laughter). I love it. Being in the ocean swimming is a joy for me.

VFJ: Do you feel like you are doing what you were born to do?

Sr. Antonia: Yes. I feel guided. I feel so guided. And I feel that everything in my life up to this point was preparing me for this point in time. It’s amazing.

VFJ: Thank you, Sister, for sharing with all of us.



Perspectives on Change



Being Grateful

by Sr. Antonia Cooper

Anyone who knows Justin, or who has read any of his writings, realizes that he is steeped in Gratitude. One of his favorite quotes on the subject is from Paul Rebs: "How grateful I am with no thing to be grateful for." And Justin comments, "He did not say Nothing to be grateful for, but No Thing to be grateful for."

Each of us as T'ai Chi Chih teachers and humans can echo this phrase. I am particularly conscious of my personal gratitude to so very many teachers, who behind the scenes have spent time, energy and talent to further the cause of T'ai Chi Chih. I would like to mention a few who have chosen to allow others to use their talents in their place and wish to acknowledge them.

Over the past several years, Ed

Altman endeavored to lay a solid foundation in our understanding of the TCC form, the Accreditation process; and

supported, encouraged and developed teachers to use their talents in the cause of promoting TCC programs. Noel Altman produced high quality issues of *The Vital Force*, as well as the Teacher's Directory. Jean Katus served the TCC community for 15 years distributing TCC materials through Good Karma Publishing, Inc. Kathy Albers volunteered her time to coordinate web site e-mails as well as teacher outreach information; i.e., special groups learning the TCC form. Ted Fleischman served as Web Master for three years monitoring and changing content and then working toward a smooth transition from this responsibility. Marjie Bassler's organizational skills, along with her Albuquerque team volunteers, enabled us to receive our *Vital Force* on time.

It is my hope that as each of you will continue to contribute to the TCC community through your teaching and participation in Events. My gratitude for all you have done up to now so that it can be built upon and carried into the future.

I invite you, the reader, to heighten your awareness of the little and great things for which you are grateful in your life, and in your TCC practice/teaching. I am sincerely grateful for each TCC teacher as you deepen and refine your own practice, and continue to spread TCC throughout the world and into the future.

This brief Thank You ends with the same closing lines Justin used in his recent article for the December 2003 issue of the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News: "We Live with Impermanence: Gratitude for each day, and for this life, is the antidote for unhappiness."

May each of you discover a deeper sense of joyful gratitude in your lives this New Year.



What I am trying to say is.....

by Margery Erickson, Hanover, PA

*"Life is change
Growth optional
Choose wisely"*

*"Students seek teachers.
Teachers seek students.
One day the student becomes the teacher."*

"A good teacher is a student forever."

"Bamboo is flexible it moves with the wind."

"Flow with the river."

*"The sharp edges of rocks become smooth
from wind, rain, and water. Move softly
through life."*

ing us, often we feel the emotion and hold on! A while ago, my teacher was relaying to me a difficulty with a mutual friend. I felt sad to hear of the predicament. The talk changed to something else, and I said, "Wait! Maybe I could call him and -" He interrupted with, "Call who?" The teacher had already moved on.

It seems that T'ai Chi Chih tills the soil so that we can allow writings, experiences, and conversations to take root and show us a softer way to move through life. Things will do what they are supposed to do; we can rest in that. —*Connie Hyde, T'ai Chi Chih News, July 2003*

sciously change. Am I harboring negative emotions that can impede the flow of Chi? I continually try to be open to change and to recognize and let go of negativity – resentment, anger, and cynicism. Changing one's attitude is not "effortless effort," and it can be a gradual process, but I definitely have a gentler approach to life than I did when I opened the door to the Center for my first T'ai Chi Chih class. As I invite the Chi at the beginning of each practice, I am so very grateful for this journey of self-discovery and the profound experience that awaits me. —*Melinda Menke, T'ai Chi Chih News, May 2002*

These are a few words of wisdom we have most likely heard at some point in our lives. I remember hearing some of these statements during my continuous study and practice of T'ai Chi Chih. It does not matter who said them or when they were said. I remember the words and try to apply them to my life and practice.

The following are taken from articles students and teachers of T'ai Chi Chih have written. I find their words of wisdom pertinent during this *time of change* within the T'ai Chi Chih Community.

.....

I am also trying to be more like the flexible bamboo rather than the sturdy oak. I have always wanted things done my way on my schedule. When things did not go my way, I would begin to get stressed out and things always seemed to get worse before they got any better. Being a flexible bamboo does seem to alleviate some of my stress, and believe it or not, things seem to get done more effectively. —*Lisa Renee France, Vital Force, July 2003*

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What I am trying to say is, may we remember our practice and practice what we have learned.

.....

Feel the emotion;
then let go. Recognize what is real.
With all this sticky stuff entic-

Justin teaches us that the Chi affects our thoughts and feelings, and our thoughts and feelings affect the Chi. If I am to be an active participant in my growth, it's critical that I look within and take note of the things I can con-



Breaking through is up to you

by Victor Berg



One look at this planet will tell anyone with two eyes that it is not a happy place. The human condition is ruled by greed, anger and delusion. In order to change, individuality must be removed. Greed, anger and delusion must be pacified. Change is difficult and most people are not really interested in change if it means giving something up. It is easy to give up the bad, but it is much harder to give up the good and you can't have one without the other. To change means to give up good and bad, likes and dislikes.

To be involved with Justin, you have to change and go beyond the human condition. Justin is very critical of his students, many times openly critical of them in front of others. There are many teachers who will tell us what we want to hear and make us feel good about our lives, but will this bring about change? Criticism, though difficult to deal with, is a very effective and expeditious way to bring about meaningful change in a short

time frame. There are countless Zen teachers in the past who would absolutely agree. Hakuin, P'ai Chang, Huang Po, Yunman are just some of the great Zen teachers who were terribly hard on their students in order to bring about change, remove individuality and elevate the student beyond the human condition.

The truth is that most people really don't want to change and it is very easy to walk away from the criticism of a true teacher. Some students, however, don't simply walk away. They lack honesty to admit their shortcomings and, instead, blame Justin. "It is not my unwillingness to change that is the problem; rather it is Justin's inability to teach." This is a typical defensive reaction created by a student's lack of honesty. There have been some who have taken this reaction to an extreme and attempted to harm T'ai Chi Chih and discredit Justin within the community.

As Justin is critical of students in Albuquerque, he is also critical of students he has placed in positions of im-

portance within T'ai Chi Chih, sometimes critical in public forums such as this newsletter. Always remember that when he is critical of someone, he is trying to help him or her and it does not matter what responsibility or role the student has within T'ai Chi Chih. Justin will use any and all means to help that student break through.

Most people in the community do not understand what Justin is doing. Some believe that his recent criticisms over this last year are the result of his unwillingness to let go of T'ai Chi Chih. When I hear this, I can only laugh. When he is critical of someone in a public forum, he is risking everything, including T'ai Chi Chih. He is risking his reputation, credibility, a negative reaction from the community, or extreme reaction of someone harming T'ai Chi Chih. Does this sound like the actions of someone not willing to let go, or like the actions of someone risking everything to help us break through? We should be very grateful we have someone willing to go these lengths to help us.

WOW!! What an experience!

by Lisa Jacobs



The second week of September 2003 was my T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training.

WOW!! What an experience! Ed Altman and his supporting "staff" of auditing teachers gave us more than what we could sometimes wrap our minds around. I was chal-

lenged beyond what I could have imagined, but, sequentially, I was rewarded far greater than what I could have imagined, too. I spent the better part of that week exploring the inner landscape, as I worked to correct and improve my movements.

Just one week following TCC Teacher Training and I was seeing the "outside" differently. And, I am called to change. Change how I had viewed

things previously, and change how I will approach things—NOW. THIS is the time of change. Somewhat scary, though also exciting, because when you allow things to unfold naturally, beauty occurs.

I am humbled by all I am a part of. I am grateful, and thankful to my teacher Donna McElhose, Ed Altman, and all the auditing teachers who saw us and worked with us for this week.



Ch'i at Work

Passing Clouds:
In Memory of my Son

It was a perfect September day. The sky was clear brilliant blue. The air was fresh and energizing. The wind chimes on the deck were sounding without any apparent breeze. I had just finished my afternoon T'ai Chi Chih practice when I got the call from his friend's house. "We can't wake Matt up. He's supposed to be at work."

"Call 911. I'll be right there."

Slow motion, as in a dream...moving through heavy air, I put on my shoes, collected my car keys and tried to remember how to drive. When I arrived, the ambulance was already there. When I saw him I knew. The substantial 20-year-old form, tall, slim, curly red hair and sparkling blue eyes and once so full of life was now empty. My son was not there.

The weeks have passed, the flowers have faded, family and friends have long since gone. I am on my back deck again, passing clouds, trusting in the circles and in the cycles of life. I am letting go at new levels, yielding to the emptiness, trusting that I will be filled again. As one hand passes from my sight, another returns.

As I practice, the double pane window in front of me reflects a shadow moving in unison with me, slightly above me to the right, matching every nuance of my movements. I observe circles within my circles, platters around my platters, twin daughters. He announces his presence on the wind chimes, and quietly we flow from the center.

**A mother deepens her practice
to go to the depths of grief**

doing Passing Clouds

By Vicky Webb



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Why I do T'ai Chi Chih

By Shannon Hoffman, student of Virginia Lee Cepeda, Dublin, California

My first experience with moving the chi was at a summer workshop for the performing arts. I felt as if I were stepping into an enchanted world vaguely remembered from age four or five. Although I couldn't explain what the "chi" was, I knew that it was real and that I wanted to experience more of it. I found T'ai chi Chih when I returned home and experienced a sense of joy and wonder in practicing it. It helped me be more in the present moment, with a special kind of concentration and an absence of striving or end-gaining. As I continued to attend classes, I began to notice changes and benefits that lasted the rest of the day after the practice. Clarity of mind, increased awareness and energy, and spontaneous feelings of gratitude came to me more easily, and I was less hard on myself holding onto the

"steering wheel of life" with a slightly looser grip.

Initially I was drawn to T'ai Chi Chih as a tool to improve my profession of teaching and performing singing. There are many immediate and direct applications of TCC to singing including improved posture and alignment, awareness of the breath and body, and an increased sense of vitality and joyfulness that lead to the desire to sing and express through music. However, the effects of T'ai Chi Chih are creeping into all areas of my life. I have experienced significant relief from long-term depression, far more so than conventional therapies. I have fewer "pity parties" now and more "gratitude parties," not as a result of positive self-talk, affirmations, or "trying," but from the effects of balancing the chi.

Perhaps the most beautiful part of

—Jack Wheatland, student of Barbara Riley, writing "T'ai Chi Haiku," in response to Barbara asking the class to think of how softness would feel.

"Soar like an Eagle
Starting from a mountain top
Move forward and float."



my experience with T'ai Chi Chih has been a reduced sense of ego. In Christian terms, we are described as being created a little lower than the angels. We fight and struggle with the part of ourselves that is base and beastly. We are elated and excited when we come into contact with the part of us that is created in the image of God. I think I speak for most of us when I say we have a love-hate relationship with ourselves. T'ai Chi Chih seems to help me forget about myself long enough to let the truer, more authentic self emerge. It feels like a process of becoming what we already are. I still don't know what the chi is. I can't touch it or see it. But I know it's there as I feel it between my hands and as it makes its subtle changes in my life. The sheer mystery of it is part of the wonder of it all.

My teacher, my practice

By Carla Langdon, University Place, WA

My teacher Roger Hotalen has been a tremendous blessing in my life during a time of great transition. His TCC instruction helped me gain the confidence and courage to change jobs and relocate from California to Washington. I used TCC prior to my job interview. While standing in a quiet place beneath beautiful trees, I used the methods that Roger taught me to remain focused during my interview. I maintained a state of calm throughout the interview process and sure enough, got the job.

I also used TCC while vacationing this summer. Many travelers were frantic due to airport shutdowns and planes with mechanical failures causing many delays. To avoid this chaotic energy, I found the only private place in the airport (a restroom stall) and practiced my TCC, remaining calm and centered in a stressful environment. What a super tool this is!

Roger is very devoted to his students, always encouraging them to be consistent with practice and to get a "feel" for the amazing energy of TCC. His zest for life overflows into the individuals he teaches. He has forever made a difference in my life.

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Awareness is

by *Rebecca Busching*

In the process of creating a new redesign and consulting business, I recently attended a finance and marketing seminar in Los Angeles. The days of work began early and ended late, and in an effort to keep my energy up and fatigue level down, I made certain that I did a few T'ai Chi Chih movements during every break. It took a bit of trial and error to find the right place, a spot where I would be out of the mainstream of activity and bathroom lines, and yet still be able to hear the bell that signaled five minutes until the end of the break. After a couple of poor choices, where I was interrupted and continuously questioned, I finally settled on the last of three long, parallel corridors, well past the general hubbub.

The last break before the final afternoon session was announced, and I quickly moved to my chosen spot, slipped out of my shoes and began to do "Rocking Motion." I was trying to keep my concentration in the soles of my feet, keep count of the movement, and listen for the five-minute signal so I could, at the very least, close properly. I am not sure what number I was on, but I was suddenly aware of a presence and I glanced over my right shoulder. From my peripheral vision emerged a small Oriental gentleman whom I had not seen when I rounded the corner of the corridor. As he walked past me he smiled and said softly, "Ah, you are aware, little Grasshopper."

I smiled in return, finished "Rocking Motion" and closed just in time for the five-minute signal. For the remainder of that day, and for the next two days, I looked for him during the breaks and in the conference room, only never to see him again.

It was indeed glorious!

by *Virginia Shilson*

I was doing my T'ai Chi Chih practice out-of-doors focusing on the flow of vital energy throughout my body. When a thought interfered with my concentration I released the thought and continued my practice **as a meditation** and never before had I been so immersed in the chi. Finishing my practice I

seemed to float indoors where I sat down and wrote: "Life is glorious! All creation is performing a beautiful, harmonious dance! Come, let us join in the celebration!" I then began to dance and dance around the room. The music for my dance arose from my heart, from my very soul. It was indeed glorious!

The exquisite mystery of transmission

By *Kathy Grassel*

I've always considered myself a rather mediocre practitioner of T'ai Chi Chih. No one ever says to me, "Wow, I wish I could yin and yang like you do," or, "Boy, can you flow from the center or what!" I do think I'm a good teacher, however, judging by how quick my students catch on, not to mention how some move better than I do after just a few weeks of classes.

Or, maybe there is something else going on.

I have been teaching at the juvenile detention center for some years now. Any one of a number of wardens is assigned as a monitor to keep order and break up potential fights or riots. One Saturday a warden named Jonathan was our staff person and also joined us in practice. I was totally amazed—his T'ai Chi Chih form was absolutely perfect. Was he a beginner and just talented? Was he a martial artist? The kids were mesmerized. After the class I asked him where in the

world had he learned his T'ai Chi Chih form. "Why, from Ron C., one of your students from last year," he replied. "He taught me all the movements and we would practice together on the Unit when nothing was going on." It took me several days of searching my memory to remember just who Ron was, and when I finally did, I remembered him as a quiet pleasant boy who had been incarcerated there for a long time—maybe two years. He always wanted to come to class, even while never particularly distinguishing himself in the form. Eventually, because of his very serious charges, Ron was tried as an adult and is now doing hard time in prison. I often wonder if he is showing the T'ai Chi Chih movements to the wardens there, and how many of those wardens are doing it better than I am.

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Growing through T'ai Chi Chih practice

Carmen L. Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

For many years I have offered a T'ai Chi Chih review class to my students every other month. The class brings in students from all the different classes I offer: Beginning, Intermediate, Seijaku, Teacher's Preparation (1) & (2), and even students who have only learned from Justin's or my video, or the 13-part, PBS TV Series *T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement*. As a testament to what we are teaching, the program is still on the air after its initial showing in 1994.

The skill level and understanding of the T'ai Chi Chih movements by the students is varied, to say the least. But since this is held on Saturdays, the students who do show up care a great deal. They come because of "teh." With that thought in mind I always know it is going to be a wonderful session.

Each Saturday session is different. The only standard is that we are going to work with the T'ai Chi Chih movements and learn, again, to apply the basic principles: flowing from the center, grounding the chi, softness and continuity. It is always wonderful to watch the changes that happen within the students during the class. Going back to basics is always very powerful.

Many times I will ask the students what they noticed as they changed the way they had been doing the movement.

Not being quiet in the body is often a common problem. Some of the

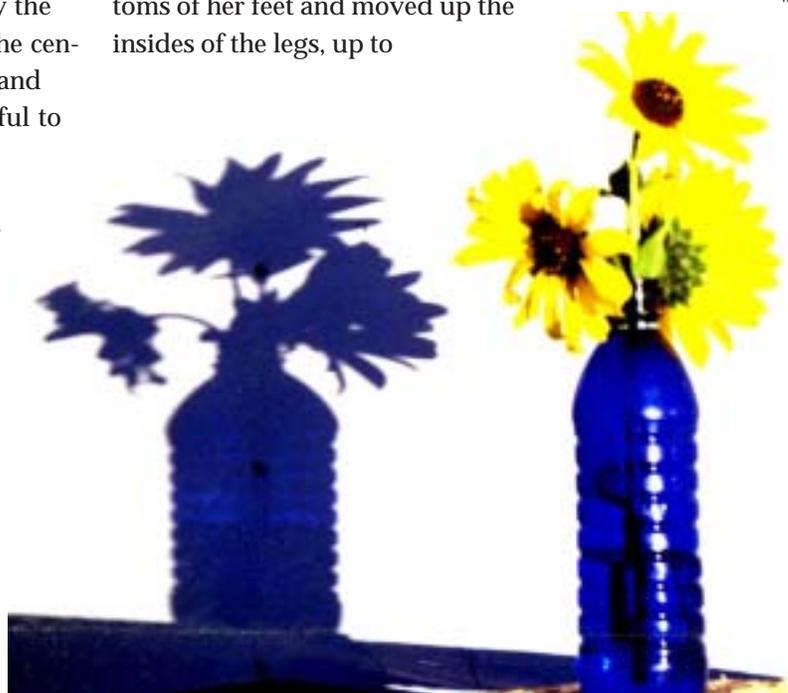
things to look for include: arms moving too far out from the body, taking too large a stance, leading with the shoulders, or leaning. It is amazing how much discomfort is eliminated just by observing and changing whether we are leaning or not.

When I ask students to verbalize their experiences, some are very unaware of anything happening -- perhaps because they have gone inside so deeply that they move into a timeless space. Many times they seem not to recognize me. Other times they don't say anything because they are very unassuming, and they don't trust their own experience. But many do speak up. I call it the joy bubbling up. They give me a very accurate picture of the chi's movement through their body. One woman's face suggested a lot was happening during the movement. When I asked for comments, she started using her hands to show the trail of the chi. She started at the bottoms of her feet and moved up the insides of the legs, up to

the belt and then out to the sides of the body at the waist, etc. It was the same pattern that Justin taught us in the Seijaku Teacher's Training. I was surprised and not surprised at the same time. This particular student is a beginning student, but not a weekly student. She is learning from a T'ai Chi Chih video tape because she lives in a remote part of Arizona where there are no T'ai Chi Chih teachers. She drives four hours to Albuquerque every two months for the review class. As we know, T'ai Chi Chih heightens the senses, and during the review class, she became aware of one of the activities we learned in the Seijaku class that I hold in the same room.

As both teachers and students, we have so much to learn about the movements as we do our T'ai Chi Chih practice. As we grow we learn that what is happening to one of us is important for all of us. We can learn to deepen our practice through "teh," and as we do, we will love and share the chi.

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Teacher Training in New Jersey

Candidates from around the world come to beautiful Ringwood

by Nancy Adams and Roseann Heinrich, attending teachers

Nestled in the middle of the lovely Ringwood National Park at Mount St. Francis Retreat Center, 11 candidates gathered to pursue teacher accreditation. Sandy McAlister was the group's leader, Dan Pienciak, their host, and Sr. Antonia Cooper, the T'ai Chi Chih Community's new Guide, was also available for the better part of the week to lend her support to the process.

Sandy led the group with a compassion and strength that reflects her many years of T'ai Chi Chih practice. Her dedication and understanding of the T'ai Chi Chih principles enabled the class to reach deeper levels each day.

Dan offered insight and inspiration to the daily sessions. Due to his gentle nature and his attention to detail, Dan

was able to host yet another successful T'ai Chi Chih training.

Approximately 15 auditing teachers offered their time to support the candidates in all aspects of their training. The auditors expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to deepen their own practice as well. Most believe this is a type of continuing education for their own practice.

It was apparent that several of the teacher-candidates had participated in the Intensive Trainings. From the very first practice the group exhibited a high level of preparedness. Their movements and sincere attitudes can obviously be credited to the new T'ai Chi Chih training format.

In spite of the heightened level of movement, the candidates found and released tension over and over again. Weight shifts improved, waists

moved more easily and all learned to move with soft wrists to assist the flow of the Chi.

The evenings were filled with working on movements, practicing presentations, viewing tapes of Justin's message to the attendees of the San Antonio conference, his visit to Folsom Prison and a video of the rededication ceremony offered by Sr. Antonia in Banff, Alberta, Canada. The aspiring candidates were rewarded for their hard work with a variety of treats to whet their appetites and sweeten their spirits.

These new teachers will take the T'ai Chi Chih practice to New Jersey; Pennsylvania; Virginia; Tupelo, MS; Alexandria, LA; as well as, for the first time to Newfoundland, Canada; Korea; and the Dominican Republic.

Hello, All!

by Dan Pienciak, Course Host

And at this holiday of gratitude, many thanks to all of you who attended the recent TCC Joy thru Movement events and helped make them so successful, most especially teachers who audited the accreditation. Sandy, Antonia, and I together agreed that this was by far the best prepared class we've seen thus far. Kudos to Ed Altman for instituting the "intensive" and "two-signature" system. All his hard campaigning for what he deeply believed in has paid off many times over, as far as we are concerned. WE HAVE ELEVEN NEW TEACHERS !!!

T'ai Chi Chih will be going out to Korea, Dominican Republic, Newfoundland, Mississippi, Louisiana . . . and adding more teachers to other more nearby places as well.

It was truly an inspiration to work with these very fine candidates, now new teachers. An inspiring balance of humility and strength, with sincere and earnest intention and endeavor, were the key elements to the success of the week (along with the high level of preparation).

THIRTY FIVE attended the Teacher Renewal Day, which was also very helpful and full of new insights for our practice.



Leaves
Falling
Letting Go
Seasons Changing
Surrender
Ego
Joy!

—Dan Pienciak

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Thoughts on Teacher Training

by Becky Watkins, newly accredited teacher

Dan
Sandy
Do you know
The fire you lit
In our lives
Burning
Joy

—All the newly accredited
T'ai Chi Chih teachers

The gentle whispers, "Let go of the tension, allow the Tan Tien to move the arms, the back arm needs to come all the way back, remember circularity, pretend there is a gentle giant behind you lifting you as you come up, let go, let go, and let go some more. . . "

There was never a negative word. The love and positive energy was behind us (auditing teachers) and in front of us (Sandy McAlister). We felt free to be... vulnerable. As teacher candidates, we tore down our practice and then built it from scratch again and again.

We weren't perfect, but we were okay and felt the support of each other and the teachers. Most of all, as corny as it sounds, we were loved into exploring and becoming and being. The gentleness of Sandy's love and Dan Pienciak's love moved us to tears and to joy.

I hopefully speak for the group when I say our gratitude for this week runs deep. How blessed we are!

Fold
Unfold
tap into
Healing Wisdom
Bathing you
With Joy
AHHHH!

Eyes
fill with
true wonder
when no
effort
is needed
effort
Stops



Ah, yes, the presentation. Auditing teacher Sky Young-Wick gives a sample TCC presentation to candidates.

T'ai Chi Chih is New-Found-Land

by Sheila Leonard, newly accredited teacher

New and Wonderful learnings/awareness
Bubbling up from inside
About my life, my very being
Without my trying to touch into them
Effortless compared to always
"trying so hard" in my life

I feel deeply grateful, awed and honored as a recently accredited Tai Chi Chih, Joy Through Movement teacher. It is indeed a gift that keeps on giving. As my practice deepens and I allow the Chi to flow more freely, I can feel my aliveness grow and everything about me soften more. It is an awesome privilege to be the first accredited Tai Chi Chih teacher in Newfoundland, Canada. My dream is to be a channel through which others at home may deepen their own journey inward through Tai Chi Chih practice and discover more of the "New-Found-Land" that awaits them there. For it is true, sometimes we have to give something away in order to keep it. Tai Chi Chih, Joy through Movement, is too wonderful a gift to keep just for oneself.

YES!
Ringwood
Tai Chi Chih
2003
Precious Time
Grateful
Gift!

—Sheila Leonard



Ring of support in Ringwood for this teacher

by *Marian Demko, newly accredited teacher*

The week began with some trepidation; I knew something of the process we would take since I was also at an intensive. My fears were slowly vanishing. Our instructor Sandy McAlister and our host Dan Pienciek began by telling us that we would be doing many corrections by quietly coming to you and showing you how to do the correction. In essence, Sandy was a steel hand in velvet gloves. I felt her support the entire week.

The teacher auditors were greatly appreciated. They give you a different perspective (a different word for a correction) so that you might understand a little better. They were another way of supporting our learning process and understanding the moves.

Sandy, Dan and all the teacher auditors were very accessible. Whenever anyone was asked for help, day or night, no one refused.

I can't personally thank everyone involved, but I wanted to let them know that they truly are the Gems of T'ai Chi Chih.

I came away from this week feeling true love, support and a sense of wonderment at the entire experience.

Teacher Prep big plus

by *Kristin Orwick, East Berlin, PA*

Up
And Down
Loop-de-loops in
Teacher Prep
Holy
Cow

I thank those who helped me prepare for the T'ai Chi Chih teacher-training week. I believe retreats and teachers, besides my primary instructor, are an asset. I had a wonderful experience. I thank those who supported me (auditing teachers and candidates), especially Dan Pienciak and most importantly... Sandy McAlister.



Pyramid Poetry

by *Becky B. Watkins*

Written on the plane home to Louisiana
after Teacher Training week 11-23-03

Pull
the plug
sinking down
move from center
let go
breathe.

Pull
taffy
and mean it
waist turning slow
deep and low
pulling
back

Reflection on the Principles

Love
Resides
Underneath
the principle
taking me
way down
deep.

All
are one
in God's eyes.
Her presence felt
in stillness
brings such
joy.

Chi
life force
energy
moving in us
to grace us
in the
now.

Trees
sink deep
into the
heart of mother,
sister earth,
sending roots
reaching
out.

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Becky. . . still on the plane

Move
circles
in and out
softly listen
for the sound
of God's
sigh.

Tap
into
Humankind's
diversity
understand
we are
one.

Who
would you
like to be?
Hopefully more
of yourself
than you
dreamed

Yes
to life,
all of it!
Without judgment,
gratitude
is not
hard.

I
offer
a pure heart.
Loving-kindness
possible
through the
chi.

Reflection on Push/Pull

Soft
hands flow
up, over
and back again
resting now
at your
side.



*Opening the back arm in
Working the Pulley*

Prep Class key to this new teacher's success

by Bill Moore, newly accredited teacher

At our final Teacher Training Prep Class in NJ, I remarked to the group that the candidates who had been coming to the meetings were very fortunate for the experience. The guidance and advice we received from Dan, Sr. Antonia, and the many teachers who took the time to attend, and work with us, was invaluable.

The most helpful session, which many of us were lucky to take advantage of, was certainly the TCC Intensive held in Ringwood in the spring of 2003. Those of us who attended learned much from Pam Towne and course host Dan that we have been able to apply to our TCC practice. This individual practice, and the Prep Class review, has helped us to refine our movements, and to deepen our appreciation of T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement, allowing for the optimum use of time at the Accreditation week.

Sandy, Antonia, Dan, and the wonderful crew of auditors who shared their time and experience with us all remarked that we were very well prepared, and so the Teacher Training Course proceeded smoothly and on schedule. I am very grateful to all who worked so hard to realize the Intensive last spring, and I encourage prospective Teacher Training candidates, and their sponsoring teachers, to take advantage of these opportunities as they are offered. Warm regards to all!



*Candidate Doreen Krause leads
the group in Anchor Taffy.*

A theological reflection of my *T'ai Chi Chih* ministry

by Denise Clark

Oakland, CA—Sr. Delores Rashford's class in Spirituality at Holy Names College in the spring of 2002 provided an opportunity for me to deeply reflect on my connectedness with God and how I hear his call. Following that, I began my Master's program in Pastoral Ministry and learned even more how to create a dialogue with God through personal theological reflection and contemplation. Circumstances made me realize that my final thesis and project is to create a Healing Ministry within the Catholic Church, including *T'ai Chi Chih* classes that would profoundly help the sick and dying.

Realizing *T'ai Chi Chih* practice is already one of my ministries, I was honored to teach two extended classes of *TCC* at Holy Names College for Sr. Rashford. I had no idea the group consisted of religious brothers and sisters

from all over the world attending this program as a rest and rejuvenation period.

The class exploded with excitement after learning the *TCC* movements. They carried forward using videos to refine their practice. Seon Keun Oh, a Catholic brother from Korea, was one of these students who took it to the next level asking me to review his moves. We met and after a complete teaching practice, I saw his desire for more feedback. I contacted Athene Mantle to see if she could include him as a student in one of her classes. She kindly took over and Seon Keun demonstrated the capacity to be a certified

instructor. With the support of Athene and the Bay area teachers, a plane ticket was purchased, arrangements were made for expenses. Seon Keun accepted the challenge to earn his certification.

Now, the seed of *T'ai Chi Chih* education will grow not only in Korea but also in the many other countries that the students returned to with the special knowledge of a way to find peace and regenerate energy. I am happy to be part of God's work seeing his plans are greater than mine with a simple "yes" to teach a class or two.

Seon Keun Oh will teach in Korea

by Athene Mantle

It has been a very exciting experience working with Seon Keun Oh (pronounced "Sun Gun Oh"), our newly accredited *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher from Korea. His amazing proclivity for the *T'ai Chi Chih* practice combined with his already established flow of the chi (through breathing exercises) made the effectiveness of the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements extremely apparent. When I gave him suggestions for improving his movements (regarding softness, flow, alignment, correct yinnying and yanging, etc.), he was able to report to me the immediate awareness of an increase in the flow of chi. I was overjoyed!

Seon Keun is a wonderful young man with an open mind and an open heart and is especially well suited to bring *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* to another part of the world. Before he returns to Korea, his influence has already been felt right here in this country. San Francisco Bay Area

teachers, as a result of their desire to help Seon Keun achieve his goal, have established a Teacher Training Fund to help him and future candidates with their financial needs. From here to New Jersey, all those who have met him have felt his excitement and enthusiasm for the *T'ai Chi Chih* practice and its benefits. His simple humility and his devotion to helping his fellow man have sparked our own love and compassion. His vision for the healing and peace that this practice can bring to his country renews and deepens my own dedication to spreading *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* to anywhere they will listen. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to work with Seon Keun and for this opportunity I will be forever grateful.



Course teacher trainer Sandy McAlister leads 35 attending teachers at the Teacher Renewal on Sunday, Nov. 16.

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And still more poetry
from Becky . . . plane still
in the air

Reflection on fellow teacher candidates

How
is it
possible,
this connection
between us
growing
deep?

Love
is the
essence here
even when we
cannot feel,
even when
numb.

Light
comes in
welcoming
the chi to flow
surrender
your heart
space.

Reflection beginning Rocking Motion

Sink,
steady
toes pointing
forward while hands
are resting
on the
chi.

Reflections on Sandy McAlister and Dan
Pienciak (almost direct quote)

When
moving
properly
the universe
tends to join
in with
you.

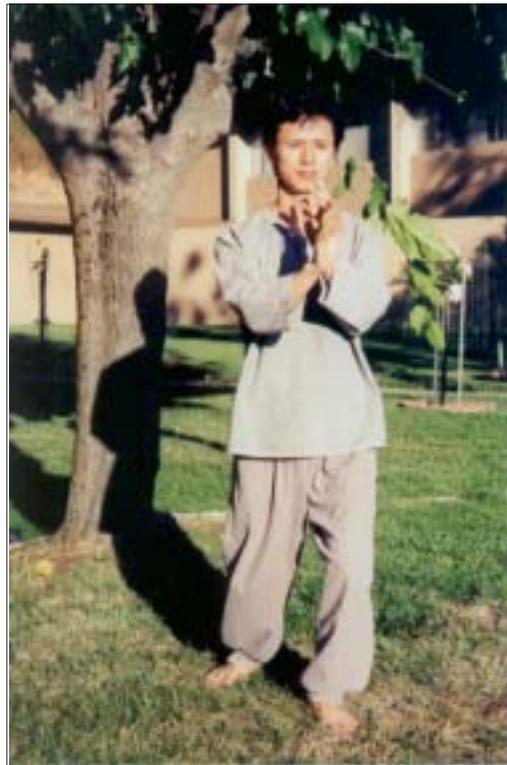


From the state of emptiness, each man's body is a body pervading the Universe; his voice is a voice filling the Universe; his life is a life which is without limit" (from the Lotus Sutra).

You must give the gift if you want to keep it

by Seon Keun Oh

I had a wonderful *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher training, which was a moment of opening my heart and body. "*T'ai Chi Chih* practice is really not about 'doing,' but it is all about 'letting go.'" My teacher often emphasized that, and I was finally able to comprehend it. How nice to let go of controlling myself and let it be. One of the frequently used words during the course was "allowing." Allow myself to be soft, gentle, and



Come
Falling
In Love With
Joy Thru Movement
T'ai Chi Chih
Training
Wow!

Leaving wonderful friends is not always easy for me. I realized that my eyes were wet with tears and I said to myself, "It's O.K. to be who I am." That's one of the great lessons I learned throughout the teacher training course. The next plane was delayed for two hours at the O'Hare airport, and I thought of Debbie Cole saying to me; "Don't roll your tongue as if you speak Spanish. Just say O'Hare." Deb often playfully talked to me with her big smile. Because of

empty, in order to let go so that I can be present with the "effort of no effort." With this "allowing," my life can be more at ease and wholesome, gracefully unfolding the mystery of my life.

Flying back to Oakland, the beautiful memory of the *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher training course came to me like a panorama with a gentle sense of sadness.

this memory and many others, I really missed everyone. I opened my luggage and took out a book "Meditation for Healing," which I received last night as a gift from all the teachers and the candidates (Now we all are FRESH *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers). As I opened the cover, I saw the messages from each one of them. Immediately I noticed that I wasn't alone. I, full of tears, gen-

tly held the book close to my heart. I didn't care what people thought of me because I knew that I was surrounded by loving and gentle friends. My teacher was right. She often said, "When you go for the teacher training, you will meet beautiful people."

The teacher training course was wonderful in many ways, and I was truly glad to be a part of the circle, which was very welcoming, supporting, encouraging, and loving. I was deeply impressed by the auditors. They have a great love of *TCC* and were very humble wanting to continually learn and to elaborate their moves. When we practiced the movements, the teachers' soft voices whispered in the candidates' ears like angels. Every morning we had an informal *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, which was indeed a meditation and body prayer. I felt it was a loving community experience. A new discovery: *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement is a wonderful tool for creating a more wholesome, loving, and viable community. I was even more convinced to bring the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline back to Korea because the teachers and the candidates proved to me with their presence that the *T'ai Chi Chih* practice is a wonderful inner discipline.

The days had passed quickly and on the last day of the course I received the certificate. At that moment, the thought of my two teachers, Denise Clark and Athene Mantle, came to my mind. Without their generosity, encouragement, and support I would not have been able to participate in the course. I know that they know the wonderful gift of the *T'ai Chi Chih* and wanted to share the gift with me. The words of one of the candidates during the presentation still lingers in my heart, "Sometimes to keep something you need to give it away...." *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement has become

one of the companions on my journey, and I know that I need to give this gift away because I want to keep it.

I am truly grateful to my two teachers: Denise who introduced me to the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline and Athene who deepened and expanded my knowledge of it. I am also thankful to many people whom I haven't met who supported my journey in Ringwood, New Jersey. I sincerely express my deep gratitude to Dan Pienciak for hosting the course, to Sandy McAlister for her gentle heart and strong leadership, to Sr. Antonia Cooper for her presence that brightened the program, to all the auditors and candidates for journeying together with support and laughter, and to Sr. Rosemary who cared for me at her retreat house. Lastly, I give my respect to Justin Stone for bringing this great gift to us.

More Becky . . . smooth landing . . . back home in Louisiana

Reflection after Dan Pienciak showed teacher candidates Seijaku

Hold
fast and
letting go
serenity
in the midst
of the
storm.

Reflection on Sr. Antonia's suggestions of imagery after Variation 3, Taffy, Wrist Circles

Chi
Lifts the
Heels like a
Gentle giant
Standing in
Back of
Me.



On behalf of all the new teachers, Barbara Balsam presents new teacher Seon Keun Oh with a gift of remembrance. Sr. Antonia and Sandy McAlister look on.

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Newly Accredited Teachers Nov. 18~23, 2003, Ringwood, New Jersey

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barbarabalsamo@cox.net
Sponsoring Teacher:
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Sponsoring Teacher:
Valerie Drucker

Kristin M.C.Orwick
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Sponsoring Teacher:
Margery Erickson

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Sponsoring Teacher:
Bev McEntarger

Sheila Leonard
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Sponsoring Teacher:
Sharon Matesi

Ron Richardson
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Sponsoring Teacher:
Justin Stone

Marian Demko
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Sponsoring Teacher:
Lucia Veteran

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Sponsoring Teacher:
Fran Warren

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Sponsoring Teacher:
Caroline Guillott / Bitsy Leblanc

Seon Kuen Oh
Oakland, CA 94619
510.436.1593
fmsoh@hotmail.com
Sponsoring Teacher:
Athene Mantle

Front Row L to R:
*Kristin Orwick,
Deb Burger, Seon
Keun Oh, Becky
Watkins.*

Second Row (seated) L to R:
*Sheila Leonard, Linda Joy,
Doreen Krause, teacher trainer
Sandy McAlister, Barbara
Balsamo, Marion Demko.*

**Back Row (stand-
ing) L to R: Bill
Moore, course host
Dan Pienciak, TCC
Guide Sr. Antonia
Cooper, Ron
Richardson**

Linda L. Joy
Washington, DC 20016
202.364.4456
ljoy428@juno.com
Sponsoring Teacher:
Karen Rowade



Commentary

Finding your voice as a new teacher

By Freddie Solomon, Burlington, VT

It all looked so easy, so natural, before you became a T'ai Chi Chih teacher. Your teacher would move and talk, make corrections. Perhaps even a joke or two would flow out with apparent ease. Now you're going to be the one in front of the room, and all you can think is, "My God, I can't even chew gum and walk; how am I going to pull this off?"

The short answer is: the same way you learned. You learn to teach by being open and humble, and by allowing the T'ai Chi Chih to show you how to teach the T'ai Chi Chih.

When you received your accreditation, it didn't mean that you automatically knew how to teach; rather, it signified that you have what it takes to now begin the process of becoming a teacher. And that process gets underway—terrifying as it may seem—by actually jumping in, rustling up a class or two, stepping in front of the lovely students and saying, "Hi, I'm Jane Johnson, your accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor."

All of this may appear self-evident, but it surely wasn't to me when I began teaching a few years ago. When I graduated from teacher training, I thought I was supposed to know what I was doing. Indeed, on a good day, I did feel fairly confident on the nuts and bolts of the practice. But as to the actual process of teaching—well, I was a babe in the woods. Only when I realized that this sense of incompetence was entirely OKAY and normal was I able to open up to and embrace this new adventure of becoming a teacher.

For me as a newly-minted teacher, the biggest challenge was what to say

to the class—how much, how little, when to speak, how and when to make corrections. These questions loomed before me like a mountain. I began to scale that mountain when I understood that in the practice of TCC we confront a natural reality. If we speak to the class falsely, from our heads and not from our whole being, it is the same as moving with tension, without flow.

For the new student, the precise accuracy of the movement is dwarfed in importance by how he or she moves. The detail and refinement comes later; at the early stages the key to learning is simply to experience flowing softly and continuously, without tension or effort.

So too for the new teacher. What you say is far less important than how you say it. Are you speaking honestly, directly? Is the *teh* (the inner sincerity) coming through? The truth is, and this may bring some comfort, it isn't that crucial what you say anyway. Though the information you convey verbally is certainly an important aspect of the teaching process, the students are learning primarily by watching and doing. So why stress over it?

My sense is that every new teacher needs to discover his or her own voice in front of the room. It's natural, when we begin as a teacher, to adopt the style of our own teacher. That's appropriate and helpful; we all need role models. But ultimately, the teaching of the practice must become our own. To be successful, your approach to this magnificent endeavor must become firmly grounded in your own character and sensibility.

This may seem paradoxical. The practice is about getting out of the way, about releasing ego and control. How can it help to bring your personality into play? Well, the truth is that all of who you are is revealed anyway, no matter how hard you try to cloak it in your version of what a TCC teacher is supposed to look and act like. Think of your personality as a gift, the vehicle in which the universal spirit is being expressed. If you hold that back from your students you're actually ripping them off.

Don't take yourself too seriously. Experiment with various approaches. Try talking a lot, a little, while you move or only between movements. See what works; see what feels right.

I've been at this now for a couple of years, and I don't consider myself a natural. I still have a difficult time diagnosing a student's mistakes and making the best suggestions for improvements. But I don't fret about it; I've given myself a lifetime to grow as a teacher. I try to bring a seriousness of intent and a diligent attitude to class, but I always do my best to keep the atmosphere relaxed and fun. A class without some laughter is lacking in my view. That might be my personality talking, but that's the point.

If in the early stages of teaching you do become discouraged, here's your ace in the hole. You were accredited. Ed, or one of the other teacher trainers handed you that certificate, and they don't do that lightly. You do have what it takes. T'ai Chi Chih is a gift. Share it with the world!

Workshops, Retreats, Intensives



Pam, Wade, Daisy (retired), Joe (came 100 miles from Amarillo), Doris (retired nurse), and Orveta (retired teacher)

Pam Towne comes to West Texas

By Nancy Beck with Larry Sava

University Medical Center's HealthPoint Wellness Center, a facility for seniors 50+, in Lubbock, TX, welcomed Pam Towne for the first ever T'ai Chi Chih Workshop in West Texas on October 10 and 11, 2003. Fifty students were registered for a Fundamental and Refinement Workshop for Students held Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. A Teacher Renewal Workshop was held on Saturday afternoon.

Larry Sava, HealthPoint Wellness Director, felt that the two sessions, instead of one daylong session, were easier for his students' endurance and yielded greater benefits for them. Predomi-

nately seniors 55 and over, the class also had one 89-year-old participant. This workshop was also an attempt to enlarge the TCC community in West Texas, attracting students from surrounding communities as far as 50, 100, and 150 miles away.

The Teacher Refinement session was a small group of five, allowing in-depth work on refining movements. Pam and Nancy gave an update of the Teacher Conference that they attended. The first session with teachers enabled the teachers to pick up some very important teaching techniques to assist them with their individual classes.

UMC Health Systems hosted a dinner after the Friday evening session at HealthPoint. A program honoring Justin Stone and his works included

—Getting the word out— The Media gets involved

We were able to get very good coverage from the media with the help of several of our members who knew the networking that must be done. Larry had a very important TV interview in a key noontime news report. Another TV station filmed the class and conducted interviews with Nancy and Larry for their evening broadcast. We did a live radio broadcast. The local newspaper had a Women's Expo where we were invited to demonstrate for almost an hour. The newspaper also used the information under Coming Events and ran a free ad in a Community Service section of the paper three times.

Larry highly recommends that you prepare the interviewer with a press release and some frequently asked questions about TCC well before the interview. However, be prepared and focused for the interview because sometimes you will get some strange questions like, "Is TCC a religion?"

readings from his writings and a wonderful presentation by Pam Towne regarding her long-time friendship with Justin as her teacher, mentor and father figure. A portion of the video that Justin made for the International Teacher Conference in Banff was shown, as well as a clip of "Interviews with Justin Stone & Carmen Brocklehurst."

There were many positive com-



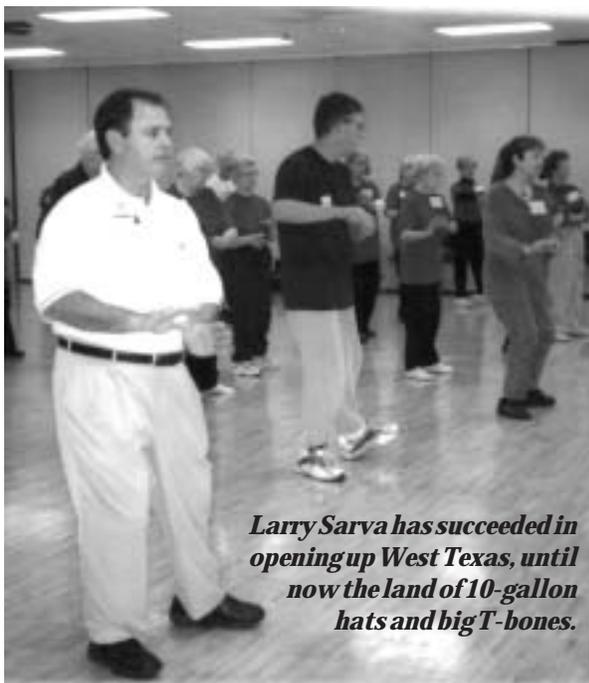
ments from the students. One member, Orveta, started the day after the workshop with her personal practice and felt much better. She felt that she learned to slow down, use her wrists properly and concentrate in the soles of her feet. Another member, Star, found she needed to bend her knees more and was reminded that she needed to go back to her personal practice on a regular basis for more benefits. Doris' brother joined her, experiencing TCC for the very first time, and was able to do the movements with little problem. Doris feels that, although her movements were good, she now can refine her movements after Pam's class.

Larry has attended numerous workshops across the country and felt this was probably the most beneficial. Pam was very gentle and inspiring in her teaching and she brought great clarity to the movements by incorporating the principles of TCC — polarity, circularity, continuity and shifting of the weight. In less than a day, the participants showed a dramatic improvement in their movements by incorporating the principles combined with focus and softness.

It was a great pleasure for Larry and I to see all of our students of varying ages coming together with new inexperienced students and enjoying Pam's very professional, caring teaching of the 19 movements and 1 posture. We give many thanks to Pam for coming to our first TCC Workshop in Texas.

The Lubbock Experience

Terry Gay Puckett, San Antonio, Texas



Larry Sarva has succeeded in opening up West Texas, until now the land of 10-gallon hats and big T-bones.

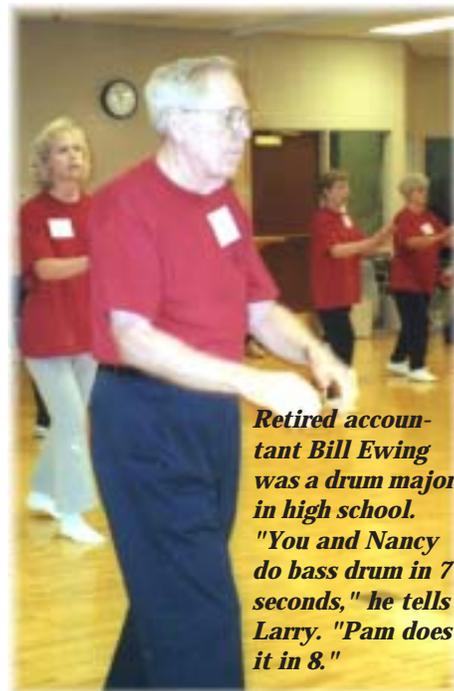
teachers. Sophie Rowland, Nancy, Larry and I were fortunate to have Pam's undivided attention. We each received valuable corrections and encouragement, and felt better prepared to proceed with our own classes and individual practice.

Sophie and I returned home to San Antonio, refreshed and inspired, feeling strong ties to the South Plains and T'ai Chi Chih.

Nancy Beck and Larry Sava orchestrated an outstanding T'ai Chi Chih workshop at Health Point in Lubbock, Texas, blending the abilities of approximately 50 participants at various levels. Pam Towne patiently and enthusiastically encouraged the group, producing significant improvement in a short time. Watching Pam work with students was a great learning experience. We ended Friday filled with gratitude for a day of progress.

A delicious Italian dinner was served on Friday night at Health Point. Several students read selections from Justin's books. These words of inspiration had a calming, positive effect. Pam received a skillfully painted gourd as a gift, created by a Lubbock artist, featuring Indian motifs combined with flying cranes to represent TCC.

Instruction continued on Saturday morning, and concluded at 11:30 a.m. Saturday afternoon was reserved for



Retired accountant Bill Ewing was a drum major in high school. "You and Nancy do bass drum in 7 seconds," he tells Larry. "Pam does it in 8."

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—September Retreat in Santa Barbara— "I'm not ready to leave!"

By Linden Royce

Driving along the coast to Santa Barbara, and then onto the peaceful grounds of La Casa de Maria retreat center, the things “of the world” began fading away. Seventeen teachers and students gathered under the stately oaks, sycamores, and eucalyptus trees with the common intention of deepening our Tai Chi Chih practice. As the group practiced outside before dinner, there was more letting go. After the practice, an almost instant rapport and sense of community seemed to spring up during the last-minute food preparation and the enjoyment of our potluck dinner. At the evening gathering, we looked at how to get the most out of this weekend together, including “emptying the cup” so that we might “fill the well of the heart.” The dormitory setting seemed to enhance our sense of camaraderie as we retired to our comfortable bunks.

Saturday brought lots of TCC practice and refining the movements. Course leader Pam Towne led the group with great softness and sureness. Our thanks go out to her for her gentle encouragement and thoughtful corrections, and for her obvious joy

in watching our gradual transformations.



Course host and teacher Linden Royce with teacher Pat Bourne outside the dorm

The emphasis was on how to move, flowing from the center in softness and continuity, yinping and yangping correctly while focusing in the soles of the feet, and applying the principles of circularity and polarity. We ended the day with sacred circle dancing, which

deepened our sense of connection with each other.

Sunday began with a very special early morning practice led by teacher Roberta Taggert. After breakfast, we again worked with Pam on refining the movements and then followed that up with a final outdoor practice. Idaho teacher Sandy Smail echoed our thoughts when she lamented, “I’m not ready to leave!” It seemed that we had just arrived, and it was hard for us to scatter and depart.



Feedback from the Santa Barbara T'ai Chi Chih retreat

"I will leave revitalized, refreshed and encouraged — and smiling more."

"It has been a time of renewal and reflection...I have experienced greater Chi flow as a result"

"Very powerful."

"I discovered Justin Stone the man, the enlightened teacher for whom I have profound respect and trust."

"The best part of the retreat was receiving valuable individual feedback that will help me improve my practice."

"I realized how important it is to stay connected to the TCC community. This place is a tub of love."

"You just can't do TCC practice with a group of people without getting connected."

"The center — which was always there — emerged to guide me."

"It was like one organism doing this together. It was truly a gift."

"I came to refill my cup and it's overflowing."

*Deepening
our practice,
poolside at
the retreat
center*



Meditation Retreat in Albuquerque

Autumn was in full color for the meditation retreat at the Madonna Center Oct. 17-19 in Albuquerque. Carmen Brocklehurst, a life-long meditator, led the retreat in the style of Justin Stone, "the ordinary man," as he calls himself. The traditional day of silence on Saturday fell by the wayside as Justin's afternoon presence made silence impossible. Ah, yes, meditation waits for you. After enlightenment, you come back and live the ordinary life. May we enjoy our ordinary, enlightened lives together like this!



Justin with Carmen and her sisters Corine Otero (l.) and Anna Mares (r.), both from California. That's Kim Grant from Boston behind Carmen. Carmen led the retreat. Justin joined in for an afternoon, and easily resisted Carmen's requests to lead the session.

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What have you gotten out of this meditation retreat?

By Ann Rutherford

In past meditation retreats, Justin asked participants, "Why do you want to meditate?" This year's question from Carmen was different. "What have you gotten out of *this* retreat?" The following are a sampling of answers.



I left this Meditation Retreat changed. Returning to work, I have maintained the profound sense that "there *is* only one thing going on." This is new for me. It's not, "That was a relaxing retreat." It wasn't relaxing. It was rich, vibrant, deep and very

1. "I realize I don't have to segment my life into little pieces. Meditation has helped me integrate them into a whole."

cage."

3. "I can feel the Universe breathing, and it is breathing me."

4. "It's like coming home, whether I like the home or not."

alive. The preoccupations of my everyday life paled in comparison. A deep bow to Carmen who skillfully led the retreat, and to Justin who feels I am ready to be taught.

2. "I've given up fighting against the

5. There's only one thing going on."

Chi and the creation of the universe

By Ann Rutherford

At the October 17-19 Meditation Retreat in Albuquerque, we watched a PBS documentary about the quest by physicists to find the instigation for the Big Bang. They took us back through time, before planets, before stars, before galaxies, before the universe, when all was empty space. But when they got to the second before the Big Bang, they were at a loss. What made space and matter expand? They are so close yet so far from the answer. Sri Aurobindo said, "There is one all-pervading life or dynamic energy, Prana, (Chi)—the material aspect being only its outermost movement—that creates all these forms of the physical Universe. Even if the whole figure of the Universe was abolished, it would still go on existing and would be capable of producing a new Universe in its place."

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Justin's Birthday Nov. 20

Celebrating in Minnesota



by Nancy Werner-Azarski

The metro area students and teachers celebrated Justin Stone's birthday on November 21st at the Fridley Community Center. Ron Barker hosted the event. Judy George led about 25 attendees in a T'ai Chi Chih practice. It was a great practice and reminded us again what a great gift we have in Justin and in T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement.

After the practice, we had a potluck meal and birthday cake. The group visited and ate well. We then had a short meeting to discuss the plans for the next year. It was great to have the students present and give input into the plans. During the discussion someone asked about developing a webpage so folks could keep up-to-date with the available classes. And as

one of the teachers was explaining the difficulties with setting up such a site, a student's husband offered to do the work of setting it up and up dating the site!

The evening together was a gift for us all. We signed a birthday card for Justin and talked about welcoming Sr. Antonia as the guide for TCC. One student talked to me as she was leaving and she was so excited about the evening. She said she was finally feeling like she knew the practice

well enough to ask questions and take advantage of our group meetings so she could improve her practice. Every time we get together and talk about the gift of TCC, we celebrate the birthday of Justin Stone—regardless of the date!



Celebrating in New Mexico

by Kathy Grassel

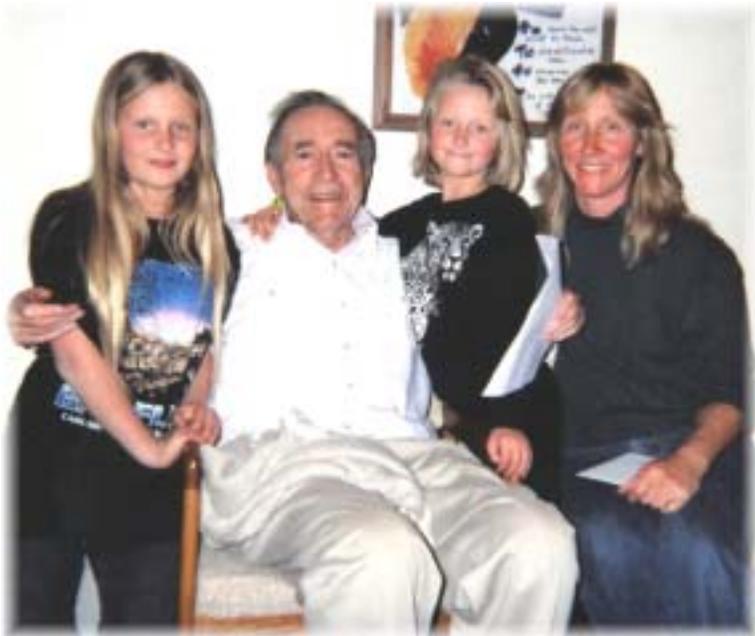
Joy Thru Movement Day was almost eclipsed by Joy Thru Dessert Day as New Mexico teachers and students celebrated Justin's birthday on Nov. 20. Two practices at the Center, a sit-down lunch at an Indian restaurant and a potluck dinner and slide show at the Center that evening were among the choices that day. Some exuberant participants claim to have done it all, though astral traveling was suspected by astute observers. Justin, turning 87, was the life of the parties and the recipient of a lot of love, cards, and good wishes for this birthday and those to follow. Happy birthday, Justin, and Happy International Joy Thru Movement Day to everyone everywhere.



Lunch at the India Palace



Happy Birthday, Justin



Justin with teacher Dora Derzon and her daughters.



Justin with his friends David Feise from Carmel, CA, and Rick Cramer, still teaching after all these years. After a potluck dinner at the Center, David presented a fascinating slide show of his pilgrimages to the holy places of Mexico, China, Nepal, and India. David says that he plans his life to be able to take a year off for travel every ten years.

The Sensational Hit of Justin's potluck birthday party at the TCC Center in Albuquerque

Ginny Morgan's Date Pinwheel Cookies

[I have been making these cookies for our family for a long time. It brings up wonderful family memories since it was my Grandma's recipe.—Ginny]

Filling:

1 8 oz. package chopped dates (I use Dole)

1/3 cup of sugar

1/3 cup of water

Mix together in pan and cook until slightly thickened, stirring constantly. Add 1/2 cup of chopped pecans.

Let cool while you mix the dough for the cookies.

1/4 cup margarine or butter

1/4 cup crisco

1 cup packed brown sugar

1 egg

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1 3/4 cups of flour

1/2 teaspoon soda

1/4 teaspoon salt

Mix dough well together and divide into 2 parts. Roll each piece of dough out on wax paper to a rectangle about the size of 11" x 7". Spread 1/2 of the date filling carefully over the dough. Repeat with the rest of the dough and filling. To roll them up into rolls, roll gently pulling waxpaper back as you go. Can be put in freezer and sliced off as needed. I wrap each roll separate in waxpaper and then in foil. Can be put in refrigerator for a week and sliced off as needed. Bake at 400 degrees for about 10 minutes until golden brown. Let cool on cookie sheet for a few minutes before trying to remove.



Enjoying good company after a potluck dinner at the Center.

Amy Tyksinski cuts the cake.



**TCC teachers
Pat Bourne, John
Steinmetz, Pat
Huseby, Linda Braga.
Photos: Pat Huseby
Nov. 20, 2003**



Celebrating in California

by Barbara Riley

To celebrate Justin's birthday on November 20th, I invited other local T'ai Chi Chih teachers to come celebrate with one of my classes in Walnut Creek. I had to miss the class to attend a memorial service for a close friend, but John Steinmetz took over as host. Linda Braga spoke about Justin, Pat Huseby took pictures, and all the teachers took turns leading movements during the practice. Following the practice, refreshments were served, and everyone talked about how meaningful T'ai Chi Chih practice is to them, and all sent Justin their best wishes for a happy birthday, and the year ahead.

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**Karmic
Komments**

by Kim Grant



reetings,
I'm pleased and honored to be taking on Good Karma. Although I haven't officially stepped into Jean Katus's shoes at the time of this writing, I will have met with Jean in North Dakota by the time of your reading. I fully expect a smooth transition and assume you will experience a seamless transfer. The Board and I have many exciting ideas about growing the publishing company and spreading T'ai Chi Chih and Justin's words. I look forward to sharing these with you as time passes. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, ideas, and concerns.

I'm grateful for Justin's, Jean's, and the Board's support.

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The Calendar

Calendar of Events

Dates	Activity	Location	Contact
March 13, 2004 (9am-5pm)	TCC Workshop w/ Pam Towne Fee: \$40.00 (includes lunch)	Phoenix, AZ	Robin Spencer (602) 263-5013 x107 5510 North Central Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85012 e-mail robin@fumcphx.org
April 22-25, 2004	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy McAlister Private room/common bath w/ cont. breakfast and noon meals, 4 nights Attendance fee: \$140	Houston, TX	Sr. Carletta LaCour 6505 Almeda Road Houston, TX 77021 (713) 741-8298. Register with Caroline Guilott by e-mail: rcsguilott@aol.com by April 7, 2004
Late June 2004	TCC Teacher Training w/ Sandy McAlister Fee: \$450 No fee for Auditing Teachers	San Francisco, CA	Athene Mantle 1717 "D" Street Hayward, CA 94541 (510) 886-3829 e-mail:chigoddess@hotmail.com
July 15-18, 2004	19th Annual International T'ai Chi Chih Teachers Conference Registration and payment dead- lines for double occupancy room & board: by May 1, 2004 \$350 by July 15, 2004: \$375 Non-US teacher fee: \$325	St. Louis, MO	Deedie Cote 6615 Arsenal St. St. Louis, MO 63139 (314) 645-6978 e-mail: galeportman@sbcglobal.net
Sept 9-12, 2004	TCC Intensive w/Pam Towne Student/Teacher attendance fee: \$200	St. Paul, MN	Cathy Dalton (651) 426-9284 e-mail: csdalton1@comcast.net
Sept. 16-19, 2004	TCC Retreat w/ Pam Towne Fee: Contact Donna for cost.	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada	Donna Aldous (306) 236-4610 e-mail: aldous.home@sasktel.net

The Lighter Side



I teach high school special needs students. As part of the curriculum twice a week we learn and practice the T'ai Chi Chih moves. One of the students, Andy, has been intent on learning how to do the moves correctly. During the beginning of one of the sessions he was having some difficulty and said, "I'm having trouble keeping my balance." Before I could comment, Amanda, who is acutely aware of what I say during our lessons, said confidently, "Andy you must be thinking of something else. You are not focusing your attention on the balls of your feet." All I could do was nod and smile.

—Margery Erickson, Hanover, PA

When I saw the upcoming teacher training in Chicago (Sept. 03) listed in the VFJ, it definitely got my attention. Hmm, I thought, this would be a good training to audit. Led by Ed, hosted by Donna, a chance to visit a city I've never been to...well, it sure sounded like a plan.

To go, or not to go, that was the question. Unfortunately, I couldn't make up my mind. I felt overwhelmed with the details involved, I worried about finding enough money, and I was also concerned with who my roommate might be. My inner tug of war started. One end of the rope...yes, I'm going. The other end of the rope...no, I'm not. I was getting very frustrated and making myself nuts! (For those of you who know me, no comment)

Finally, I asked for a "sign" that could help me decide what to do. I was tired of trying to figure it all out. Of course when I finally let go of the rope and surrendered, I got my sign.

Before leaving for TCC class, I was

putting my music CD in my carry-bag, when I noticed another smaller bag tucked inside. I've been carrying this smaller bag around for years, but I had never really taken a good look at it. But this day, for some reason, I had a strong intuition to take a closer look at this bag. And to my surprise, bold blue letters spelled out City of Chicago. Ah yes, that intelligent chi! Needless to say, my decision was made.

PS. I somehow managed to find the money, it turned out to be the last teacher's training taught by Ed, and I had two great roommates. (Wendy Howard & Athene Mantle)

—Sharon Sirkis, Co.umbia, MD

Marcus has been in the D-home for quite a while now. He's, well... let's just say he has no impulse control, but he has a quality about him that tells me he could go far some day if he can ever get out of the vicious cycle of the corrections system. He asked about the Six Healing Sounds, so I explained about how monks who meditated in caves high in the mountains, far from HMOs or Medicaid, used sounds that vibrated their internal organs so they wouldn't get sick, or, if sick, recovered. "So, it's kind of like blessing what's inside," he commented. The next week, another student, Dante, asked, "Hey, Miss, are we going to do that 'Blessings Your Innards' one today?"

—Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM

Jo Therese said to her husband Tom, "I am going to T'ai Chi Chih practice and when I return I will prepare our lunch."

"Fine," said her husband.

When Jo returned from her T'ai Chih session, her husband was already eating.

"Tom, why did you eat before I returned?" Jo said. "I said I would prepare something for lunch when class was over."

"Oh! I though you said you were going to 'High Tea' with the nuns and they would feed you."

—Sr. Carletta LaCour, O.P., Houston

My student Massako Young returned from Pam Towne's T'ai Chi Chih retreat in San Diego with a big smile and a wondrous look on her face. She told our Kaiser TCC continuing class that at the start of the retreat Pam asked that everyone come as an empty cup and that at the end of the retreat Pam had hoped that everyone was going home with a full cup. Massako enthusiastically, if not a little breathlessly, shared with our class that she learned so much that she felt like she came home with "buckets and buckets full"!

—Athene Mantle, Hayward, CA

At the end of a holiday Open House practice, at the T'ai Chi Chih Center, a student turned to me and asked, "Is this a Parkinson's Disease Support Group practice? So many people's hands are shaking!"

—Ann Rutherford, Albuquerque, NM

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Weekly T'ai Chi Chih practice is alive and well in Balboa Park, San Diego, CA. It's now in its 6th year, every Saturday morning at 9 am. Four instructors volunteer for this community service. Today's leader is Roger Hotalen. Thank you, Ed and Justin, for this gift. It is a wonderful tool which has made profound changes in the quality of many lives, including mine.
—Roger Hotalen, Accredited TCC Instructor

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