

The **Vital Force**

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

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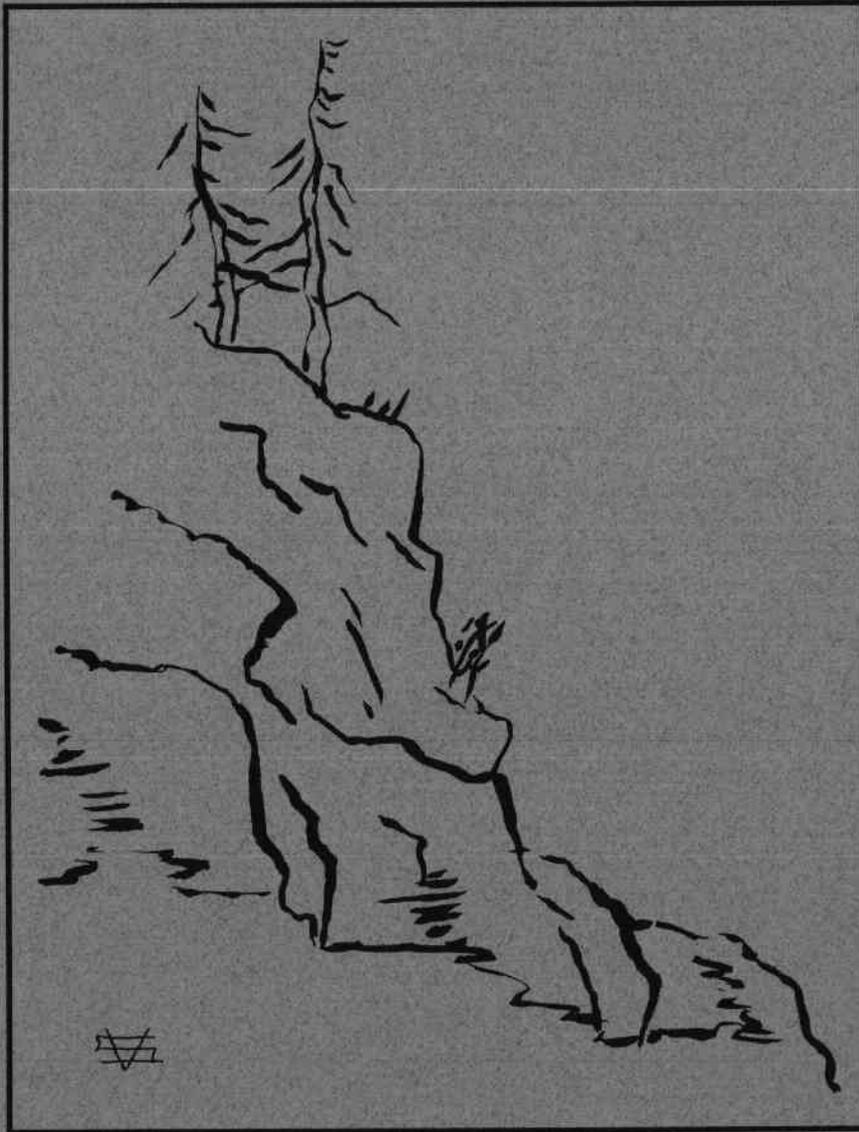




Table of Contents

Articles by Originator and Head of TCC

- 5 Flow Softly Stone
- 6 Sooner or Later Altman
- 7 My Favorite Zen Story Stone

Events Coverage

- 9 Midwest teachers meet in Indiana
- 12 TCC Teacher Training - New Jersey
- 14 Meditation Retreat - New Mexico
- 16 TCC Teacher Training - Chicago
- 20 TCC Teacher Training - North Dakota
- 22 TCC Workshop - California
- 24 TCC Workshop - Texas

Articles by Teachers

- 8 Newly Accredited Woodward
- 10 TCC Feels Like New Hackenberg
- 11 Teachers "Plant Seeds" McElhose
- 24 TCC and Research Patterson
- 25 Holiday Mood Swings Tretheway
- 26 Teaching TCC at HMO Altman
- 28 Liability Insurance Brocklehurst,
Riley, Roache

Articles by Students

- 29 "Expansion" Felt Erickson
- 30 Inmate Shares Rasmussen
- 30 TCC Helps Young Mother Cole

Creativity Expressed

- Cover Brush Painting Shilson
- 5 Brush Painting Shilson
- 6, 7 Pyramid Poetry Altman
- 15 Haiku Poetry Dalton,
Brocklehurst
- 22 Pyramid Poetry Taggart
- 36 TCC Cartoon Viereck
- Back Page Pyramid Poetry Altman,
Houle, Hyde, Kent,
McLain, Pienciak,
Reeber, St. Martin

In Every Issue

- 2, 34 Information on *The Vital Force*
- 2 Letter from the Editor
- 3 Readers Respond
- 18 News Shorts
- 19 Calendar of Events
- 32 Karmic Comments
- 33 Good Karma Publishing Distributors
- 35 Contacts Lists / Membership Form
- 36 The Lighter Side

**Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih.
Ed Altman is the Head of T'ai Chi Chih.**



The Vital Force

Editor: Noel Altman
Technical Advisor: Ed Altman
Webmaster: Victor Berg
Membership Svcs: Doug Harned

The Vital Force, *Journal of T'ai Chi Chih*, is an unincorporated, non-profit association, serving T'ai Chi Chih practitioners worldwide. Membership in the Association includes four quarterly issues of The Vital Force, listing in and receipt of the annual Teachers' Directory (to teachers only), and outreach activities, such as teacher referrals. The annual membership fee is \$30 for teachers, \$25 for interested persons / students. Addresses outside the U.S. require an additional \$10 per year. First Class delivery within the U.S. is an additional \$5 per year.

The purpose of The Vital Force is to provide a medium by which teachers and students of T'ai Chi Chih may share, educate, inform and inspire one another.

Cover:

For the second time this year, our cover is graced with the lovely



brushwork of TCC Teacher Virginia Shilson. Earlier this year, Virginia and husband Doug, (a longtime supporter of T'ai Chi Chih), moved

from Albuquerque, NM to St. Louis, MO to live closer to their daughter.

The three cranes on the cover and on every inside page are the artwork of Ou Mie Shu.

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Letter from the Editor

*WOW! What a year! Editing (really, editing and not editing, laying out, proofreading, writing for, publishing, mailing out) The Vital Force has been an incredibly challenging, inspiring, huge amount of work. I have greatly appreciated the work of fellow staff members **Ed Altman, Victor Berg** and (newest member) **Doug Harned**, as well as the **VFJ volunteers** who assist at the mailings and with specific tasks. The **outgoing staff** was a big help, as well, particularly **Lals Mahaney**, who continues to receive (and forward on) membership forms and submissions mistakenly sent to her. There is no way one person could do all that is involved with not only putting out the quarterly journal, but maintaining the member database, performing outreach activities, maintaining and enhancing the community website. There is also no way that the The Vital Force would be what it is without the input from the teachers and students who take the time to write in about how T'ai Chi Chih is affecting their lives. **So, thank you everyone for your fantastic support of this communication link that connects us all!***

*Over this last year, I have been impressed with the quality of the submissions coming in — many of you are really digging down deep. The quality and quantity, both, have steadily increased over the year. I am now getting more submissions than I can use each quarter (which is certainly preferable to the opposite scenario). In making the tough decision of what will go in each quarter, I know there are certain topics that **WILL** be covered — for instance, the events that have occurred that quarter, as well as the items that are in every issue. Beyond that, timeliness and quality of writing count fairly high, but I also factor in if the writer is someone who hasn't been published before or the topic / viewpoint is one that hasn't been heard from before. I also have a personal bent towards medical studies on T'ai Chi Chih, and hearing from members of the international teaching community. **What I can almost always use more of is: Items for "News Shorts"; (i.e. news that pertains to the national / international teaching community), items for "The Lighter Side" poetry (pyramid and non-pyramid), photos and original artwork. Especially if you have artwork or artistic photography, send it in! It could end up on the cover! Note earlier submission dates for 2000 on pg. 34.***

*Since July, **Doug Harned**, has spent many hours training with Ed and I to take on the very important and surprisingly complex task of updating and maintaining the member database. In September, he took over that task entirely. In addition, he now sends out the acknowledgement postcards and billing reminders. Doug will also be helping Ed and I create the 2000 Teachers' Directory this month.*

***Congratulations are due to Webmaster Victor Berg** who installed the new version of our community website in October. The installation and transfer to a new Internet Service Provider proved more complex than we foresaw and as a result, the site was inactive or incomplete for about two weeks, for which we apologize. Victor, with assistance from **Mary Ruiz**, a student of TCC Teacher **Carmen Brocklehurst**, worked for months on the redesign of the site, with an emphasis on increasing the flow and organization. Check it out and watch for enhancements planned in the coming months!.....Best wishes for the coming New Year!*

Noel Altman, Editor



Readers Respond

Dear Noel,
The Community Education director telephoned me today [Nov. 12] about a T'ai Chi Teacher. There have been three T'ai Chi Ch'uan teachers hired all unsatisfactorily. Another T'ai Chi Ch'uan teacher has applied. They would prefer to omit all TC classes rather than have another failure. . . . There would be two hours evening classes a week. I started out this way but their were so many signing up I was teaching five 2-hour classes a week in a couple of years. T'ai Chi Chih appeals to the New Zealanders.

Just in case one of the teachers has other skills for other work and would enjoy Napier it is a thought!! . . . If anyone is interested:

Joan Clark, Director
Colenso High School
Community Education
Arnold Street
Napier 4001
New Zealand
(From U.S.A.: 011.64-6-843-6674)

With love and best wishes to all.

Theda Gillespie
Napier, New Zealand

Hi Noel . . . The website looks great!! I even sent me a test e-mail, I got it immediately.

I was wondering if you know of any studies that have been done about T'ai Chi Chih helping women through menopause, or if you could put the question in the *Vital Force*. I have faith that it will help me through what I'm told is a difficult time, but with some people it helps

to have written documentation. Thanks again,

Tonya Setzke
Wyandotte, MI

[Editor's Note: There are no studies that I know of on TCC helping women through menopause. Does anyone else have any info. on this?]

Wow!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I am really impressed!!! I had not gone into our website for quite awhile so when I went in today I really liked what I saw. Keep up the good stuff. . .

Jean Horton
Grand Junction, CO

Hi Noel — I wanted to say that your last issue came together very well. You are doing a wonderful job as editor! The layout is fantastic! I know *VFJ* will continue to uphold the uplifting flavor and spiritually beneficial values it always has.

I am writing for permission to use Ed's article entitled, "Softness and Continuity" in the recent summer issue of the *Vital Force* as a handout in my classes. I would photocopy it and distribute it to my classes. It is an excellent article and I think that students, as well as teachers, will benefit from reading it. Please let me know if this is possible. Thanks!

Much admiration and respect,

Roberta Taggart
Cupertino, CA

[Editor's Note: Yes, It is fine to photo-

copy articles from *The Vital Force* for use in your teaching — as long as you are distributing them for free and the issue date and "The Vital Force" appear on the photocopies. (You will have to handwrite in one or the other since the formatting I use is to have publication name and page number on the left-hand pages and the issue month and page number on the right-hand pages.) In addition, make sure the name(s) of the author(s) and any photographer(s) are legible once copied.]

. . . I'd like to have printed a particular call-out to any TCC teacher(s) who has taught within the public school system or is in the process of bringing TCC into the system. Please contact me at (619) 758-1948. Much thanks for all that you do!

Amelia Roache
San Diego, CA

Dear Noel and Ed.....
Greetings from the sunny tip of the globe. . . I have given a few presentations in the last year to adult groups and they have been good listeners. Then the penny seemed to have dropped when I did another presentation at the annual Catechetical gathering at the end of August. Now a group have gathered and have asked me to teach them right from the beginning. So South Africa is now moving on to the map.....
The little children are still loving it, and are being helped to settle down and start the day off well. Well the days we may forget due to unfore-

continued on page 31



Matajura wanted to become a great swordsman, but his father said he wasn't quick enough and could never learn. So Matajura went to the famous dueller, Banzo, and asked to become his pupil. "How long will it take me to become a master?" he asked. "Suppose I became your servant, was with you every minute; how long?"

"Ten years," said Banzo.

"My father is getting old. Before ten years have passed, I will have to return home to take care of him. Suppose I work twice as hard; how long will it take me?"

"Thirty years," said Banzo.

"How is that?" asked Matajura. "First you say ten years. Then when I offer to work twice as hard, you say it will take three times as long. Let me make myself clear: I will work unceasingly. No hardship will be too much. How long will it take?"

"Seventy years," said Banzo. "A pupil in such a hurry learns slowly."

– Zen Buddhism, edited by Peter Beilson

- Excerpt submitted by Dick Detert -



Flow Softly

By Justin Stone

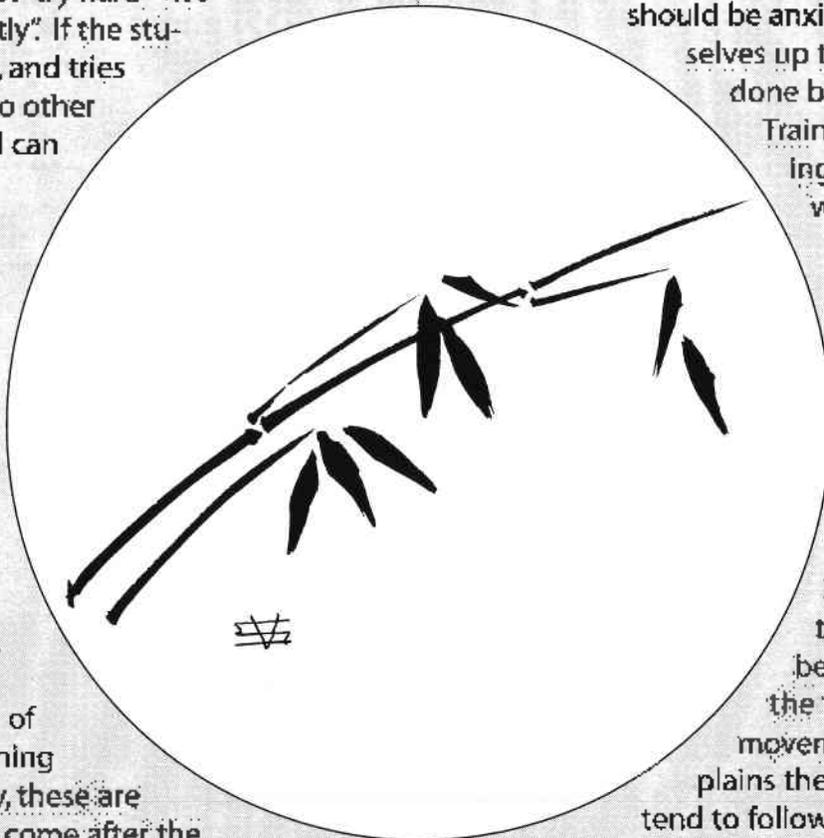
"Flow Softly" should be the first command a teacher gives a new TCC pupil. Not "move the hands and feet" and not "try hard—it's exercise," but "Flow Softly". If the student understands that, and tries to do it, there will be no other problems. Even a child can learn how to place the hands and feet.

Softness is important because of the Meridian channels, thru which the Chi flows. If there is tension or any strain, such as muscular effort, the meridians will contract and the Chi will not flow freely.

Correct shifting of the weight, proper Yinning and Yanning, circularity, these are all important, but they come after the student has learned how to move properly. If the student, after a few lessons, is not making progress, it is best to tell her or him to forget what has

been learned and go back to learning how to move properly. Many teachers have not really learned how to flow from the T'an T'ien, and they should be anxious to bring themselves up to par. This can be done by auditing Teachers' Training Courses and coming to the Conference, where there is much practice of the fundamentals.

Trying hard causes the student to tense muscles, and this defeats the very purpose of TCC. "The effort of no effort" is a phrase the teacher should remember and frequently use. If the teacher does the movements well, and explains them well, the student will tend to follow in the teacher's footsteps and, over a period of time, gradually sink into the Essence of T'ai Chi Chih.



Artwork by Virginia Shilson



Sooner or Later

By Ed Altman

T'ai Chi Chih instructors often feel they need to explain why they did not attend the Annual Teachers' Conference, or a teacher training or workshop in their area. It seems that they believe that "next year" or "sometime" in the future they'll have the time off, the money in the bank, or even the will to do their daily practice. Some things cannot be avoided, but many people are more dependent on their excuses than they realize.

The fact is that our lives will not someday come together to become more tolerant of these "interruptions". There will always be something else to do, and if we aren't careful, these events will run our lives without our consent. This is not "living" but existing through habit and obligation. It leads nowhere.

Each of us must decide how much we value our personal growth, and figure out how committed we are to continually improving the way we teach T'ai Chi Chih to our students. Numerous events are held throughout North America to make it easy for T'ai Chi Chih teachers to come together and renew their practice. There is never a charge

for an accredited teacher to audit a T'ai Chi Chih teacher training course, and the price of the one-day T'ai Chi Chih workshops is minimal to encourage teachers to attend with their students. Of course, the main event of every year is the Annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference which will be held in New Jersey next year. I would think that every accredited instructor would want to be there!

If you feel T'ai Chi Chih is making a difference in your life then why not be with other members of your T'ai Chi Chih family? Look in the *Vital Force* "Calendar of Events" and put the items of interest on your calendar, in your vacation plans, and in your budget.

Justin has often said that our habit patterns determine our future, and that based on the habits we choose to cultivate we can build any type of future we want. In essence, how we choose to spend our time is really a decision about how we'll live our lives.

***Still
the mind!
Rest in the
ever present
moment and
know long
life.***

– Ed Altman

***Great
redwoods
do the Jing
a thousand years.
Marvelous
silent
strength.***

– Ed Altman



**I
BEG YOU
MASTER PLEASE
TEACH ME TO LIVE.
ALWAYS CHOOSE
YOUR OWN
DEATH**

– Ed Altman

**those
who come
here to spend
time with Justin
will end up
with them-
selves**

– Ed Altman

**Tears
Fall From
My Eyes As
Justin Plays The
Piano
And My
Heart**

– Ed Altman

My Favorite Zen Story

By Justin Stone

Daito Kokushi was so-called because he became the Emperor's teacher (Kokushi). First he went thru some unusual adventures. Tired of the mundane administration of a Temple, he left and became a beggar under a famous bridge in Kyoto. Living that precarious life he concentrated on his own spiritual development (there are hints of Taoism in the methods he used). The Emperor wanted Daito Sama to preach at Court, so he could benefit. Hearing that Daito was living under a bridge in Kyoto,

following the life of a beggar, he devised a scheme. It was known that the so-called 'beggar' loved the sweet melons of Japan (like our watermelons), so he sent a messenger to find out which of the beggars was Daito and implore him to come to the Court and teach the Emperor. The courier went to the bridge and, addressing all the beggars, said: "I have a piece of melon to give the one who can come and get it without using his feet." Back came a voice, clearly answering, with: "I'll come and get it without using my feet if you offer it without using your hands!" Exposed!!

The teacher had been found. Daito was persuaded to move to the palace, and, later he was instrumental in founding the great Temple, Daitokuji, named after him (I have sat Zen meditation there in the Kita no ho section of Kyoto).

I love this story—it brings tears to my eyes, and, for that reason, I share it with you. There is no moral in presenting it, though you can determine for yourselves what meaning, if any, the story offers.



Newly accredited teacher sees how much more she can learn in future

By Joanna Woodrow

[Editor's Note: Joanna wrote this article following her training in February, 1999. Although she has since met Justin Stone (at the 1999 Teachers' Conference), her viewpoint fresh out of her training is still valuable to hear.]

Probably the most important thing I learned in the teacher training was how necessary it is to continue improving and deepening my T'ai Chi Chih practice now [that] I've taken the course. Yes, I have some specific items to work on. I also am beginning to understand the process for refining my movements even more, for finding other areas of focus as time passes. T'ai Chi Chih itself will show me if I pay attention. I also need to go where I can observe and request corrections from Ed and Justin Stone (whom I look forward to meeting in person).

The sense of community in our class was wonderful. We supported each other, helped each other, applauded each other. I'm honored to have been a member of this class.

Ed Altman's teaching was clear and vivid. His valuable corrections were given with care and concern, and his movements are a pleasure to watch. He shared stories of his own trials and tribulations, encouraging us also to grow by learning from our rough spots, our funny glitches, and also from our successes (which will in turn eventually

need refinement). In this class, I saw many reasons why he is [the] Head of T'ai Chi Chih.

The auditing instructors were a great boon. I am especially grateful to Elissa Maguire for arranging the course (doing successfully all that detail stuff she dislikes). Her coaching was very helpful. And she also shared so frankly what she too was learning, that I for one am inspired to audit on a regular basis.

I . . . am beginning to understand the process for refining my movements even more, for finding other areas of focus as time passes. T'ai Chi Chih itself will show me if I pay attention.

Roberta Taggart is my referring teacher and mentor. She came from California for three days to audit. She spent considerable time working with the class members, and I know from experience how valuable her assistance is. Her discussion and demonstration of seated T'ai Chi

Chih was impeccable.

The presentations were a major highlight of the course. We got to know each other, and we shared ideas that will help us all to increase the practice of T'ai Chi Chih in our own communities. Personally, the experience of performing T'ai Chi Chih as part of a heartfelt prepared talk allowed me to integrate my past in the business world (doing many presentations) with this wonderful new direction. The bits and pieces came together, and I feel whole and ready to begin my first steps on my new path as an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher.



Midwest teachers reconnect after the August Teachers' Conference

By Sr. Patty Campbell



Thirteen teachers from the states of Indiana and Ohio met at Michaela Farm in Oldenburg, Indiana where TCC Teachers Sr. Patty Campbell and Sr. Claire Whalen hosted a day of T'ai Chi Chih practices, sharing remembrances of the 1999 Annual Teachers' Conference in St. Paul, MN and enjoying a potluck meal. Shown is one of the TCC practices held in the herb garden at the farm.

Photo: Sr. Patty Campbell

On September 12, a group of T'ai Chi Chih teachers from the Indiana and Ohio areas met at Michaela Farm in Oldenburg, Indiana. We shared much, especially our remembrances of this summer's conference in St. Paul. Another activity was to share a pot luck meal at the retreat center on the farm. We were able to practice T'ai Chi Chih twice together during the day—once in the beautiful setting of the

herb garden, and the earlier practice at the San Damiano Center while Sister Patty went back to her home to get the meat to grill. Toward the end of the day, all were invited to go up to the sisters' Motherhouse for a tour of the premises.

Michaela Farm is owned by the Sisters of St. Francis, of which Sisters Patty Campbell and Claire Whalen are members. The farm

has been in existence since the mid 1850's. It has recently been restored as a center for sustainable agriculture, growing food organically, composting and other preservation efforts are used. It is a center of natural energy, and those who attended the T'ai Chi Chih gathering also gave of their Chi energy to the farm, as well as being recipients of its life-giving energy.



When T'ai Chi Chih Feels Like New

By Amy Hackenberg

How strange, I told myself through a rising tide of panic, this is the year 1999, isn't it? I have been doing T'ai Chi Chih for nine years, haven't I? At the T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference in St. Paul this past August, my T'ai Chi Chih practice suddenly seemed awkward, off balance, almost like I had never done it before. On Friday morning it was pointed out to me that my movements had become small, contracted. Oh no! So after breakfast I focused on extending them more fully. But just when I was feeling OK, all better, everything is fixed, another correction came unexpectedly from another source. Amid dismay and confusion I asked Ed for help on a small (so I thought) point. You're using outer strength to move the arms, do you see? You're not waiting, letting the weight shift move them, he said. I felt stupidly floored, aghast: I'm not what? I'm not waiting for the weight shift!? But what do you mean! I'm a patient person! I always wait! (Ha.)

I rallied and studied Ed in subsequent practices, and still felt uneasy and off-balance throughout the next two days. Sunday morning's practice finally felt something like smooth, and I breathed a sigh of relief—thank God, it's all fixed—my T'ai Chi Chih “has returned.” Then another observation after breakfast set me flailing and floundering again: It looks like you're holding back, a teacher said. But I fixed that, I wanted to protest. Everything's all better now! It was then I began to realize that:

1) I can't “fix” anything; I have to get out of the way and do T'ai Chi Chih;

2) These vashanas that are surfacing in my practice and my life are not going to change immediately—certainly not in a couple of days (i.e., I must watch and wait);

3) It is no accident that my practice suddenly seems off balance and awkward right now; big outer changes have happened in the last few months for me, including moving out-of-state, buying a house, and changing jobs/career. The general “upheaval” outside is connected to upheavals inside, and even if the outer upheavals are wanted, they don't come without unexpected inner ones. Or, as my high school English teacher used to quote from someone famous: there is no fine art to suppression—if you suppress one thing, you suppress all. Perhaps it could also be said that there is no fine art to change—if you change one thing, you change all.

I have understood more clearly that holding back = holding on. I see that I reach for outer strength automatically, and as Ed said to us over and over at the conference, if you are relying on your own outer strength, you're missing out.

Nevertheless, from teaching high school and from my generally quiet demeanor, I've always considered myself a fairly patient person, so Ed's comment about my lack of waiting took me by surprise. Combined with the other corrections, his words started a reexamination of my movements, and, without any stretching of the imagination, a reexamination of the reflection of my practice in my life—and/or the perpetuation of qualities in my life



from my practice (which came first?). I have come to understand more clearly that, faced with changes or unfamiliar situations, I tend to withdraw (not a new understanding, just discovered anew.) I have understood more clearly that holding back = holding on. I see that I reach for outer strength automatically, and as Ed said to us over and over at the conference, if you are relying on your own outer strength, you're missing out.

WWW = Watching & Waiting for the Weight shift

My practice now feels deeper than it ever has, still off balance at times, but with a noticeable growth in flow and softness. Of course, it all comes back to the doing of the movements, not all these words in this article or any amount of thinking. Letting the arms **wait for the weight shift** to happen has opened my practice tremendously, made it

feel deeper and more flowing. While moving there are more and more moments when it seems that no one is doing anything. Letting my weight shift happen fully (and letting this fullness be reflected in the arms, without effort) has deepened the softness and letting go, so my T'ai Chi Chih looks "bigger" than it did before but it contains less, or feels emptier. (Ironically enough, in recent months preceding the conference, I thought I was letting go by not extending fully—ah, the limitations of the thinking mind.) Perhaps the best part is that my mind is quieter because it is absorbed by WWW (see above.) Lately I have been doing my morning practice in front of a big mirror in our new house, so I can **watch** to see if the body there matches what I saw Ed doing up in front of us all in St. Paul. It feels truly like T'ai Chi Chih is teaching T'ai Chi Chih! But really I have Justin, Ed, Noel, Carmen, and Lois to thank. Thank you.

Inspired by Carmen Brocklehurst's talk at conference, group of teachers "plant seeds"

Dear Carmen:

Sr. Viola Bens and I went early to the MSP airport. It turned out that Viola would not be able to leave for several hours. I decided not to catch an earlier flight so we could spend some time together. This turned out to be a great idea. Sharon Sirkis joined us and then Viola suggested we do T'ai Chi Chih! Right there in the airport. So we moved over to the side and in the hustle and bustle of the walkway and the moving sidewalk we started "Rocking Motion". A few people stopped and watched. Some asked what we were doing. One Flight Attendant waited for the rest of her crew and told them. I

realized that we were doing it near the staging area for my plane and wondered if anyone would ask about it.

I left when my flight was announced. As I boarded I could see Viola and Sharon doing T'ai Chi Chih. They had asked me to write to *The Vital Force* and tell them we were "Planting Seeds." On my plane a young man (could tell he was very shy) finally asked me if I was one of the people doing that "moving meditation." I said yes. He turned away and watched out the window for about 10 minutes. I didn't say much else because I was so tired that even the muscles in my face wouldn't work. But the chi kept

knocking in my head saying how did he know to call it a "moving meditation." Finally the knocking in my head got my attention. I asked the young man how he knew that and he said he had seen that on television! Yaaaa Carmen. So we talked a bit and I gave him some information. Seed planted.

My first conference was wonderful. Thank you so much Carmen for all the sharing chi you gave to everyone.

Love,

Donna Mc Elhose



Sixth Annual TCC Teacher Training held in Mahwah, NJ in late August

By Sr. Antonia Cooper
Course Host

The T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Accreditation was held in Mahwah, NJ August 29 - September 4. It was a week of transitions, breakthroughs, challenges, tears and laughter. In reflecting on this week of training, Ed said that it was the most difficult training he has experienced, and I do believe everyone who attended felt the tension and pain that emerged. But as I said, it was a week of transitions as well. I am so grateful for all the effort that Ed put into the training, his expertise, insights, perseverance, guidance, and patience. In his article "Raising the Bar" [VFJ - March, 1999] he wrote that the standards for Accreditation are going up. It is up to the teachers who are working with and recommending Teacher Candidates to continue to keep up their own on-going refinements. We were also blest to have Noel join Ed in his trip out to New Jersey. (They planned to extend their time here by touring Manhattan). Noel's gifts in sharing insights, helping to correct movements and giving reminders add a clear perspective which helped the candidates to grasp the essence of the form.

a "Deferred Accreditation" pending their willingness to work through some of the difficulties they were encountering. I am personally working with them now and find their enthusiasm, work and openness to be very promising.

This year we had 18 Auditing Teachers, a few of whom were able to attend the entire week, while others could only attend for a day or two. With so many taking advantage of this time with Ed and Noel it gives me great hope for the future of TCC in our tri-state area as teachers are sincere in their

efforts to continue their own personal growth in form and in interior transformation. Serving the TCC community in offering these training and auditing opportunities has been a growth-filled experience for me. I am deeply grateful for all those who have taken part in the training, auditing and Accreditations over these years.

I am finding that what makes these experiences so enriching for all who attend is a combination of Teachers working with sincere candidates and recommending them for training, along with the

expertise of the trainer who helps to transform both teachers and candidates during this short week, thanks to all of Ed's efforts.

Thirteen attended the training and 11 received their Accreditation. Two individuals received

The week-long training was held at Carmel Retreat House in Mahwah, NJ, which offered a spe-



Graduates of the course: **Back row, (L-R):** Marion Mascone, Course Instructor Ed Altman, Janet Oussaty, Sr. Celeste Crine, Donna Tirolly, Sr. Mary Jeanne Libert, Course Host Sr. Antonia Cooper; **Middle Row, (L-R):** Lisa Distefano, Sr. Ancilla Keinberger, Trisha Jewellen Hargaden; **Front Row, (L-R):** Jaqui O'Shaughnessy, Sr. Rose Marie Adams, Dominique Mlshkin, Nancy Vermont. **Not pictured:** Sr. Grazyna Michniewicz.

Photo: Richard Mascone



cial atmosphere of hospitality, warmth, spirituality and peace. Retreat settings enable the group to focus, relax, learn together and from one another, a great way to be introduced to the TCC International Family.

. . . the standards for Accreditation are going up. It is up to the teachers who are working with and recommending Teacher Candidates to continue to keep up their own on-going refinements.

It continues to amaze and delight me that so many Women Religious are enriched by their own practice and desire to share the simplicity and richness of TCC in their ministries, teaching within and outside the Church. How refreshing it was to have five accredited sisters among the women who will make fine teachers and representatives of TCC.

We enjoyed "meeting" Justin through his presentation at Folsom Prison, as well as receiving new insights through his talk during the St. Paul Conference. Viewing these two videos is only second best to having him in person.

Candidates comment during training

Ed has promised a transforming week. It was for me and for this I am grateful to Ed, Noel, Sr. Antonia and to T'ai Chi Chih.

– Dominique Mishkin

. . . The absolutely most valuable tool was the list of checkpoints to use when observing your form—learning how to observe the areas & spots that need attention & then make the change was amazing!! Thank you,

– Donna Tiroly

I can see so many places in the world T'ai Chi Chih could bring light — it is most critical that I bring the light first to my practise—and pause to practise my practise before I begin to teach the practise.

– Jaqui O'Shaughnessy

Teacher candidate reflects on the training process

I was home for a few days when I began to reflect on how I was changed by the accreditation week in New Jersey. Even as I arrived at the Toronto airport, I was feeling more relaxed and emptied than before, not "so full of myself", more able to respond to and enjoy the people and situations I encountered, to do so with more openness and less expectation.

I am enjoying my TCC practice now more than ever. I am sure this is a common experience with people going through this process, because as corrections are made in our movements, they become easier and more fun to do.

The friendships and camaraderie created during the week will continue to enrich my life. I look forward to being with all my fellow graduates in New Jersey next summer and to the opportunity to meet many more T'ai Chi Chih teachers. A big thank you to Ed and Noel Altman for their excellent leadership, and to Sister Antonia Cooper for her service to all of us by organizing the week so well and taking care of all of us before and while we were there. Also, the auditors made such valuable contributions to our practice and understanding and were just great to be around.

Though I have not set up any classes yet, I have had a chance to teach a few moves to people informally and to teach "Push-Pull" and "Pulling in the Energy" to one of Sister Kay Morrell's classes. So far, we are the only two teachers in Toronto. She has been teaching consistently for five years at St. Joseph's Health Center and is a meticulous teacher, for which I am grateful.

I've noticed many carryovers from T'ai Chi Chih into my daily life: softening my knees when I'm doing dishes or waiting for the bus, not letting my mind get ahead of my actions so much of the time, paying attention to the soles of my feet when I'm walking to the corner store, etc. Thanks to Justin and all the teachers (including myself) for contributing to my growing awareness.

– Nancy Vermont



Meditation retreat led by Justin Stone, enjoyed by 40 participants

By Dan Pienciak

For three days, about 40 participants from six states and Canada gathered at the Dominican Retreat Center in Albuquerque for a meditation retreat with Justin Stone. A quiet valley there is the setting for a ranch-like area of picturesque southwestern-style buildings where a few Dominican sisters and many volunteers extended warm hospitality to us throughout our stay. Without any exaggeration, I can sincerely state that there have been few (if any) days in my life thus far which have been better spent than that weekend last September. In fact, I would have to say that this time was nothing less than life-changing for me!

I have already written several times in the *Vital Force* about how my T'ai Chi Chih practice and teaching have helped me in my life. After attending a Seijaku accreditation course (in this same city) two years ago, and then hosting one such event last year here in New Jersey, I was impressed with the idea of putting periods of meditation into my life on a regular basis as well. But I struggled with actually doing it.

Why is it, I asked myself time and again, that I so resist what I instinctively know is best for me? Perhaps it is because I also know, in that place deep within me, that it will mean permanent changes, and I am not sure that I am ready yet to accept those changes into my life. Yet, from the very first morning of this retreat, when I stepped outside (just before our first meditation session) to practice T'ai Chi Chih, I *knew*. As I took in the early

morning quiet, the soft purple light on the distant mountains, the first rays of sun streaming through the low-lying mist to fall upon sparkling jewels in the grass, I *knew*, I knew that once again, my life was about to change. All I would need to do is "let go"... yet again.

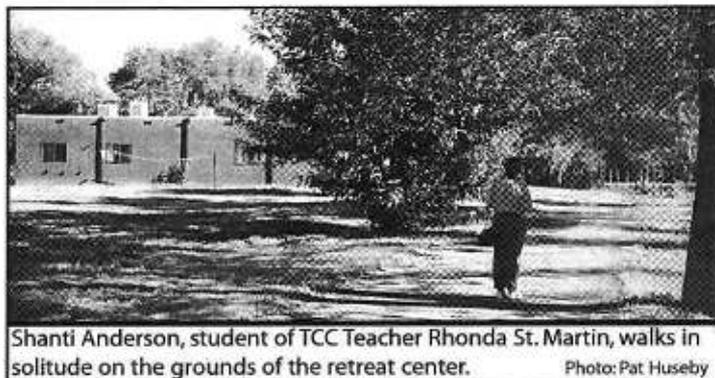
Our knowing teacher led us gently into several sessions of meditation each day. We learned wonderful truths from Justin Stone in those days as he generously



T'ai Chi Chih Teachers, students and others assemble on the last day of the retreat, smiles beaming after a full weekend of meditation, T'ai Chi Chih practice, solitude as well as enjoyable company, long walks in the New Mexico countryside. A weekend so well-spent! Thank you, Justin!!!
Photo provided by Dan Pienciak

shared stories with us. He bid us let go of expectations and let go of ego. He asked us to keep silence for most of a day — a soft quiet broken only by bubbling joy (here and there) at meals. Then we wrote Pyramid Poetry and Haiku as the bright moon smiled through the window.

Again and again I was struck by the idea of the absolute ONENESS of all that is. I met old friends and new, and indeed it seemed that time had stopped. The place, the people, the moments seemed all to come together as ONE. I heard words that I will always remem-



Shanti Anderson, student of TCC Teacher Rhonda St. Martin, walks in solitude on the grounds of the retreat center. Photo: Pat Huseby

ber— and a message that was *exactly* what I needed to hear. I recognized the truth in these words for perhaps the first time in my life.

I can count many miracles of that weekend — too many to put on paper here. But I have one story to share that I will *never* forget:

I was among the first to have to leave on Sunday morning for my flight home. Justin was very concerned that we would have plenty of time, and that we had rides to the airport. Just before leaving, he asked me if I had “some money in my pocket” to get something to eat at the airport, as dinner [at the retreat center] would be served after my departure. I answered, yes, that I did have money, (remembering recent times when I didn’t). Anyway, any words I could say seemed to have no meaning. The gesture went right into my heart. *Gratitude!*

On the way home, I just missed catching the train that was to take me from the airport to my home, and so had to wait an hour in the train station late at night for the next one. I went into a food concession for a fajita. A man approached as I sat eating and, seeing my luggage, began asking me about my trip. I wanted to ignore him, because I *knew* he wanted something from me. I was so used to this! I hated this! I usually will not even *look* such a person in the eye. But something drew me in. Eventually, he asked.

Suddenly, the man standing next to me was no stranger. I saw Justin Stone standing there with all of his loving concern for me. And then I saw others as well. The words, “Enter the ONE” rang in my mind.

I had more than enough money to get home. I gave the man the two dollars he needed to buy a sandwich, which he promptly ordered as I prepared to leave for the train platform. I don’t remember what he said to

continued on page 33

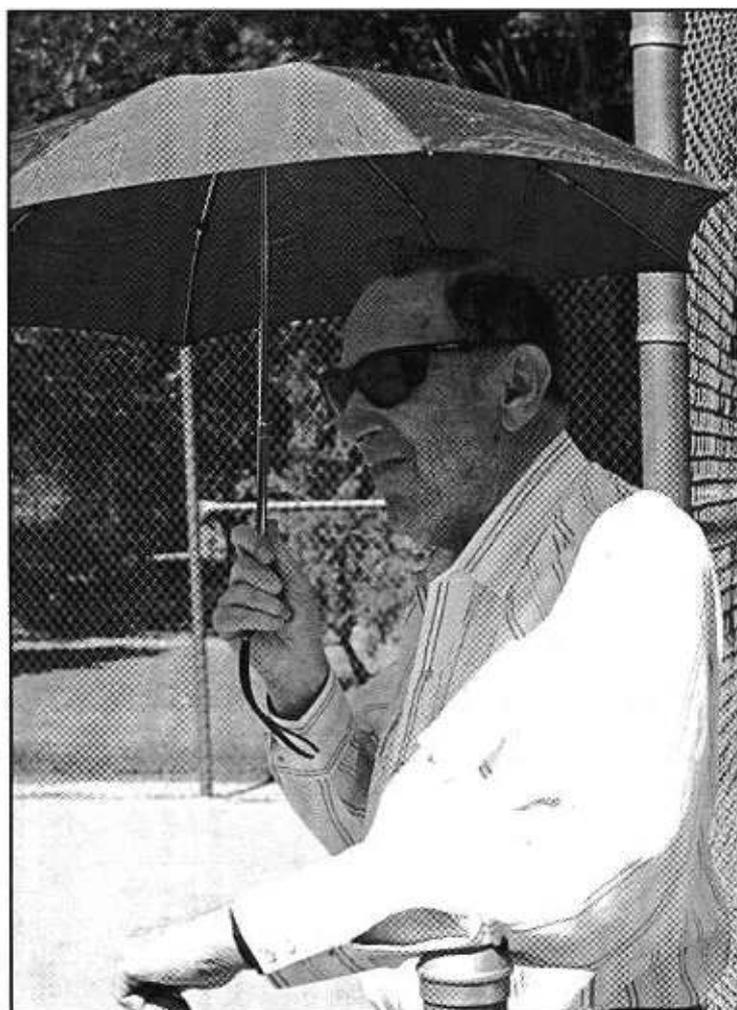
Attempts at Haiku on Saturday:

*The sky azul blue
leaves soft and still as silence
coldness fills morning*

– Cathy Dalton

*Fall is fin-a-lly
coo-ling the earth round
hot thoughts are gone gone*

– Carmen Brocklehurst



Justin Stone protects himself from the sun while enjoying the warm weather during a break in the meditation schedule. Photo: Kim Grant



Candidates and auditors inspired by Chicago TCC Teacher Training

By Hannah Hedrick
Course Host

My deepest thanks to the 14 Chicago-area T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) teachers who shared hosting activities for the October 4-9, 1999, Teacher Accreditation Course. Paula Weiner helped with many of the details, including finding the wonderful space "with a view from heaven" and calling local teachers about the potluck. She also served as the official photographer!

Donna McElhose was there from the first minute of the first day through the potluck lunch Saturday afternoon. Robin Kidd, Linda Prosche, and Peter Gregory were present most of the time. Elaine Unzicker served as "official" host for the twodays I could not attend. Others who assisted at various times included Judy Brannon, Holly Davis (all the way from Michigan),

Drena Dulaney, Sandra Freda, Daryl Isenberg, Susan Larys, Amy Tyksinski, and Vida Wackerling. (I hope I didn't overlook anyone!)

I can't say enough about the many kinds of help and support the out-of-town auditing teachers provided throughout the course: Thomas Davison (Dearborn Heights, Michigan) and Anne Perkins (St. Louis, Missouri) attended the entire course. Ann Daly (Indianapolis, Indiana) and Linda Skuta (Fairfield, Ohio) stayed for almost the entire week. We now consider them a part of the Chicago branch of the TCC family!

I hope that all auditing teachers will write to the *Vital Force* and to Justin and Ed about their perceptions and experiences.

I could write many pages about



Course Instructor Ed Altman enjoys a laugh during course discussion. Photo: Paula Weiner

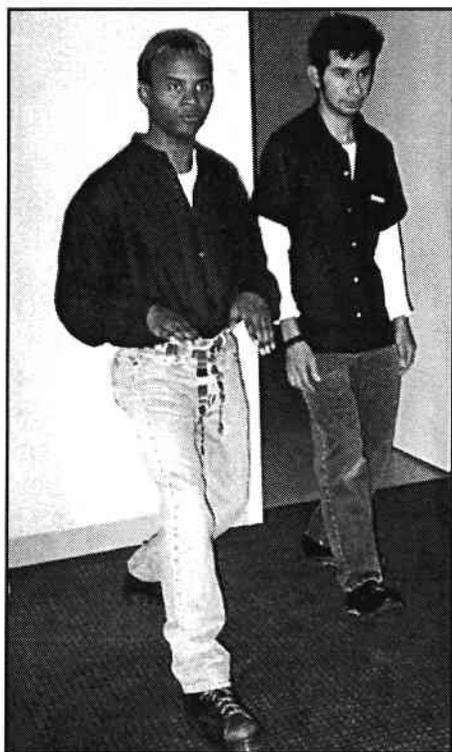


(L-R): Auditors Donna McElhose, Linda Skuta, Hannah Hedrick (Course Host), Thomas Davison and Candidate Bill Mishler share smiles and laughter during course discussion. Photo: Paula Weiner

the effectiveness of Ed's teaching of TCC movements and related philosophy. We appreciate Ed's many stories about Justin and about his own TCC experiences. It was comforting to hear that he had struggled with many of the issues confronting course participants.

"Move from your center."

If Ed gave the seven teacher candidates and 18 auditing teachers one "take home" message, this was it. He offered very clear verbal cues and demonstrations of how to move from the center, including having **patience** in waiting for the weight to shift completely and of being as soft as possible, especially



Candidates Per Erez (left) and Rubin Rios break the TCC movements down to "yinning and yanging." Photo: Paula Weiner

with regard to arm and hand movement.

Preparing candidates for the course

I realized during the course that I should have spent more time with my students on "moving from the center" and on the "windup." In my pre-referral sessions with candidates, I focused more on their knowing all the movements in order, being able to begin and end each movement, and shifting the weight completely than on moving from the center. I will reverse those priorities as I prepare candidates in the future!

While all of the candidates made notable progress, one student was asked to do additional work before beginning to teach and the certificate of another student was deferred. Thanks to the small class size, Ed was able to accommodate the extra time required to work with students who were not adequately

prepared. I and the other teachers are certainly more sensitized to the importance of encouraging sincere candidates to wait until their practice has matured. Some of the Chicago teachers are discussing how to have candidates work with several teachers to ensure that no students are referred who would detract from the progress of the rest of the class.

Accepting and giving corrections during the course

As the course host, I was hoping that both candidates and auditors would be able to "accept" corrections by beginning to incorporate the suggestions in their practice. In my opinion, most of the auditing teachers who attended for a full day or more demonstrated a deepening of their knowledge and experience of the benefits of TCC. I wish we had taken a "before" and "after" video to demonstrate the progression to a deeper level of "flow."

Ed also provided invaluable guidance on how to gently offer "corrections." He was firm about the principles, but for other details he offered the suggestion to "Try it. If it works for you, keep it; if not, throw it away." His approach has led me to try to be less forceful in my suggestions.

Auditing teachers: giving and receiving

As indicated above, the presence of auditing teachers greatly enhanced the energy level of the course and the progress of the candidates. The candidates repeatedly expressed their gratitude for the suggestions they received during the day

and the extra help before and after course hours! The auditors benefited from one another as well as from the individual attention Ed gave to all course participants. We found the course to be so valuable that we are already talking about bringing Ed back for a teacher intensive . . . In addition, as many of us as possible will attend the April 15 TCC workshop in Cincinnati.

Support for moving to a deeper level

The Chicago course was a tremendous gift for me. I was too inexperienced (and nervous!) during my own accreditation course in April 1987 to "absorb" much of what I heard. Seijaku trainings, conferences, intensives, the *Vital Force*, and other teaching aids have helped me refine my moves and stay on track. I hope I can use what I learned this time to move to a deeper level in my own practice and teaching. Thanks, Justin, Ed, the participants in the Chicago training, and all of the TCC family. As Justin frequently reminds us, the future of TCC depends on us.



Graduates of the course: **Back row, (L-R):** Course Instructor Ed Altman, Steve Richardson, Rubin Rios, Per Erez, Bill Mishler, Course Host Hannah Hedrick; **Front Row, (L-R):** Sr. Catherine Fedewa, Rosemary James, Patricia Beverlein Winger. Photo: Paula Weiner



News Shorts

2000 Conference Planning Begun

Carolyn Hales-Perkins and I will be focusing on the Conference 2000 to take place at Xavier Center in Morristown, NJ. This is the site where Justin presented a weekend meditation workshop, accompanied by Carmen Brocklehurst June, 1997. I am looking forward to seeing all the TCC teachers I missed seeing in St. Paul, MN at this Conference! Amazing how an inner ear problem can effect Blood Pressure and in turn effect one's plans! Grateful to so many who asked about me. What a sense of "sister and brother" I felt through your concern and love... let's stay connected through daily practice, the flow of CHI, and being mindful of one another at these times of practice....and meet in New Jersey in July, 2000.

– Sr. Antonia Cooper

National office of Arthritis Foundation releases statement on TCC

"The Arthritis Foundation believes that slow gentle movements build muscle strength without stressing the joints, improve balance, and relieve stress and depression. Exercise programs, such as T'ai Chi Chih, that embrace these principals can be beneficial for people with arthritis," reads a statement released by The Arthritis Foundation and verified with national office spokesperson Kim Sammons, Associate Vice President Public Relations.

In the June issue of *The Vital Force*, it was reported that "T'ai Chi" had been recommended by the Foundation, according to Dr. Nancy Snyderman in a "Good Morning America" segment that aired on January 7, which had resulted in increased class enrollments for TCC Teacher Don Walker. Before the Fullerton, CA training in July, Walker found out that TCC Teacher Candidate Karen Schneider worked for the Foundation as a Certified Group Exercise Leader and a Certified Instructor (Master Trainer). He encouraged her to educate the Foundation about T'ai Chi Chih following her accreditation.

After "a lot of work" in which Schneider began at her local Orange County / Long Beach office, and then contacted the Southern California Chapter, and eventually, the National office, the formal statement was released.

The Foundation has given the TCC teaching community permission to quote the statement in brochures, and on our website, according to Sammons.

Thanks are due to Walker for "planting a seed" (as TCC Teacher Carmen Brocklehurst would say), and especially to Schneider for the work involved in acheiving this.

– Noel Altman

Texas Dept. of Health recommends "T'ai Chi" for Osteoporosis

"What do dancing, sunshine, gardening, almonds and **Tai Chi** have to do with Osteoporosis?" asks an ad in the May, 1999 issue of the on-board magazine *Southwest Airlines Spirit*.

"The answer is everything," reads the ad placed by the Texas Department of Health. It continues, "They all **prevent Osteoporosis.**"

A phone number is given to call to receive a free copy of the Department's "Strong Bone Book," (1-800-242-3399).

– Noel Altman

Doctor studies vashanas at cellular level, recommends "T'ai Chi"

On September 23rd I attended a medical research seminar on addictions given by Dr. John Moth, M.D. Moth gave research findings that helped explain why T'ai Chi Chih is so effective at creating dramatic physical and mental changes in the practitioner.

We are all familiar with vashanas, those thoughts or actions that we repeat so often that they become mentally compelling forces in our lives. Moth showed photos from the research lab which indicated that vashanas are not just habits of the mind. The researchers isolated cells from habituated people, and the cells would pulsate at regular intervals for the accustomed stimulus. **THIS WAS TRUE WHETHER THE HABIT WAS PHYSIOLOGICAL OR MENTAL.** He concluded that habit tendencies are created at the cellular level as well as in the mind. From

continued on page 31



Calendar of Events

<p>April 15, 2000</p> <p>TCC WORKSHOP (9:00am - 5:00pm) Location: Cincinnati, OH Contact: Marlene Brown 653 Cranford Drive Cincinnati, OH 45240-3915 Phone: (513) 742-1866</p> <p>Teacher Fee: \$30 Student Fee: \$45</p>	<p>July 10 thru 15, 2000</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Berkeley, CA (SF Bay Area) Contact: Sandy McAlister 24835 Second Street Hayward, CA 94541-6807 Phone: (510) 582-2238</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>
<p>April 24 thru 28, 2000</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Staten Island, NY Contact: Dan Pienciak P.O. Box 122 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756 Phone: (732) 988-5865</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>	<p>July 20 thru 23, 2000</p> <p>15TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE Location: Convent Station, NJ (Newark area) Contact: Carolyn Hales-Perkins 221-East 50th Street, #8B New York, New York 10022 Phone: (212) 371-0133</p> <p>Registration and payment for conference fees, lodging, all meals:</p> <p>By Feb. 18, 2000: \$250 Between Feb. 19 - April 30, 2000: \$300 Between May 1 - July 20, 2000: \$325</p>
<p>May 15 thru 20, 2000</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Edmonton, AB CANADA Contact: Margo Carpenter 12311 Aspen Dr. W. Edmonton, AB T6J 2B6 CANADA Phone: (780) 434-9433</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$590 CAD (Canadian dollars)</p>	<p>October 7, 2000</p> <p>TCC WORKSHOP (9:30am - 4:30pm) Location: St. Louis, MO Contact: Anne Perkins 2342 Albion Pl. St. Louis, MO 63104-2524 Phone: (314) 771-9728</p> <p>Teacher Fee: \$25 Student Fee: \$40</p>
<p>June 12 thru 17, 2000</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: San Antonio, TX Contact: Sr. Alice Holden 4707 Broadway San Antonio, TX 78209-6200 Phone: (210) 829-5980</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>	<p>POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS:</p> <p>If interested in an event described below, contact the host. These events will only happen if there are enough people interested.</p> <p>Mar. 31 thru April 2, 2000</p> <p>SEIJAKU TEACHER TRAINING Location: Tampa Bay, FL Area Contact: Sr. Jackie Kingsbury Phone: (813) 986-4255</p> <p>Fall, 2000</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Baltimore, MD Area Contact: Jean Markey Phone: (717) 244-1607</p>

Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih.

Ed Altman is the Head of T'ai Chi Chih.

All events led by Ed Altman unless otherwise indicated.



Candidates, auditors enjoy retreat setting during North Dakota training

By Chris McLain
Course Host

With 10 candidates [and] auditors Dale Carrier and Mike Wavra from Fargo; Joe and Barb Apt from Minnetonka, Minnesota; Connie Mack from Grand Forks; Kathy and Bud McLain from Minneapolis, a new wave of integration was gifted. The successful certification of 10 new chi-lings. For the auditors, a deepening of the understanding of accountability [that] being a T'ai Chi Chih instructor embodies.



Course Host Chris McLain (far left, seated) and Candidates (L-R): Robbin Rendahl, David Sakry, Joan Simon and Lora Bertelson enjoy some "down time" during a break in the course schedule. Photo: Jodi Ritter

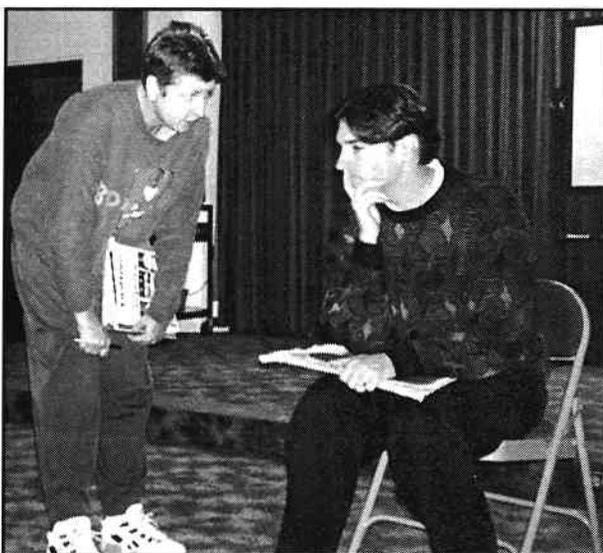
The teaching and clear guidance of Ed Altman penetrated the shields of ego and fear. With the open attitude the candidates brought forth combined with the consistent nurturing Ed offered with identifying principles and boundaries with movement—the wave of softness and continuity swept through—gentle as the breeze blowing the last of Fall's leaves off Maryvale's trees.

The week spent at the Retreat Center was enriching not just for

the T'ai Chi Chih participants, but the entire Spiritual Community at Maryvale. The calm peacefulness of the landscape—opportunities to walk quietly, safely, mindfully—re-enforced the exploration of inner landscape that we all have been introduced to and experienced with the integrative practice of T'ai Chi Chih!

Two of our new instructors will be in Arizona, five in Minnesota and three in North Dakota. What a delight to be extending our T'ai Chi Chih family!

[Editor's Note: Course Host Chris McLain arranged for a National Pub-



Course Instructor Ed Altman considers a question asked by Candidate Paula Ahles. Photo: Jodi Ritter



Candidates Sherry Corson (left, front) and Jodi Ritter (center, front) begin a practice with "Rocking Motion," along with the other candidates of the course and attending auditors.

Photo provided by Jodi Ritter

lic Radio (NPR) radio interview of Ed Altman to be taped on the Sunday before the training began. The interview was broadcast in North Dakota during the week after the training and was intended to generate public interest in T'ai Chi Chih. Chris also

has planned a "self / peer review" gathering six months after the training for the newly-accredited teachers and "seasoned" teachers in the Tri-State area "and beyond," which will occur May 12-14 at the same location, the Maryvale Retreat Center.]



Ten newly-accredited TCC Teachers join the TCC Teaching Community!: **Back row, (L-R):** Paula Ahles, Joan Simon, T.J. Fritz, Jodi Ritter, Lora Bertelsen; **Middle Row, (L-R):** Sr. Brigid Kavanagh, Mary Lee Rich, Robbin Rendahl, Sherry Corson, Course Instructor Ed Altman; **Front Row:** David Sakry.

Photo: Joe Apt

Candidate writes to Ed Altman about the effect of her training

It's been a week now since the Maryvale teachers accreditation and I still have the smile on my face. Although you said that no praise of you would be allowed, I need to say thank you for all that you shared and gave us. You were an example to us of how to teach from the heart, with integrity and without ego. After the experience of the teachers accreditation, I can't imagine any other way to teach T'ai Chi Chih.

As I'm sure you hear from a lot of your students, that week had a profound influence on my life. I made a giant spiritual shift that is difficult to put into words. I am beginning to realize what this 'Chi' really is and that what we are made of is something so loving and beautiful that I can never be unkind to myself again or anyone else for that matter.

On my five hour trip home from the training, I noticed that my fear of driving that usually has me tied up in knots was all but gone. Now how do you suppose that happened?

I continue to practice 'mindfully' and plan to teach a class soon. Thank you again.

- Sherry Corson



Second Bay Area, CA workshop in '99

Students and teachers cultivate their practice of TCC during one-day event

By Roberta Taggart

Co-hosts: Roberta Taggart and Joanna Woodrow

Comfortable Fall temperatures and a wonderful space in which to move set the tone for the one-day T'ai Chi Chih Workshop held on Saturday, November 6th at St. Jude's Campus in Cupertino, CA. More than 30 participants gathered to spend the day deepening their practice. The focus of the day was movement grounded in "flowing from the center," based upon the often spoken counsel of Justin Stone. Teachers and students attending came from all parts of the S. F. Bay Area as well as Sitka, AK, Sacramento and Watsonville.

Students and teachers spent the day enjoying the cultivation of their form as Ed Altman gently, yet capably led three refinement sessions offering suggestions for improvements in form and minor corrections to stance. The sessions, spaced over the period of a day, spanned the breadth of the 19 movements and one held posture of T'ai Chi Chih. A practice session concluded the day.

Basics such as *releasing tension* were referred to time and again as we moved through the day encouraged to *soften the knees* and *flow from the center*. The time-honored principles of *polarity* and *circularity* were addressed during discussion periods as well as the importance of *shifting the weight*, *spinal alignment* (no leaning, please) and other important qualities of movement.

Here is what students had to say about the day:

Roberta:

I enjoyed the workshop very much. I think Ed must be a very old soul. I have come away with several improvements: 1) holding my hands slightly lower in the rest position makes a big difference in the sense of lowering the focus, 2) the concentration on the sense of a wave moving back and forth is a very useful concept to me, 3) on "Push Pull," I had not grasped that the hands are moving in a sort of football shape, 4) with the taffys I was moving the "second" hand too much, and 5) with the "Wrist Circle Taffy,"

I like the feel of using a third circle to smoothly move into the taffy part. I also gathered that 5 minutes of T'ai Chi Chih every day is better than some days of none, which is also a very useful/liveable concept. Thanks for a lovely workshop!

- JoAnn Witt
Compaq Computers,
Tandem Division

**Flow
Soft-ly
Let-ting go
"Ah, but let-ting
go of what?"
E-go?
Yes!**

- Roberta Taggart

Roberta:

I wish to thank you for a very rewarding but humble day on Sat. I enjoyed the session very much and learned quite a lot about my shortcomings and what I need to do to attain a higher level of chi. While I do not feel this is bad, it does give me a sense of joy to know that with time and practice I can achieve a higher level. With my persistence and your patience and skill's as a wonderful teacher I will someday arrive at this higher level. I can see why all of you enjoy being in the presence of Ed. He is a very good example of the meaning of this art we persue, and I will look forward to attending another event that he is conducting.

- Ron Brown
Xerox Corp.



First TCC event held in Texas draws students, teachers from TX, OK, LA, and even Monterrey, Mexico!

By Sr. Alice Holden
Event Host

Sunday, November 14, was a special day in the history of TCC in Texas! Students and teachers from Monterrey, Mexico; Lake Charles, LA; Jones, OK; Plano, Beaumont, and McKinney, TX joined local TCC practitioners. Thirty-two participants dedicated 10am to 5pm to the practice. Ed Altman did a masterful job of sharing the philosophy of T'ai Chi Chih as well as his own journey. The importance of softness and alignment were reiterated in word and in movement.



Ed Altman leads the group through "Bass Drum".
Photo provided by Sr. Alice Holden

workshop, we have heard some glowing reports. Nasha, a nurse practitioner, recently widowed, says that the day's practice totally transformed her life. Being one of the three "uninitiated" did not keep Nasha from letting go of a tremendous amount of tension. She reports that she even sees with greater clarity and depth of perception. Some of the cherished reminders are:

"Learned from the outside in, T'ai Chi Chih is done from the inside out."

Put attention on shift of weight.

Move with softness and continuity.

Be aware of flexible waist and wrists.

Leaning forward or backward compromises the integrity of the movement, the head/spine alignment.

The lunch break included salads provided by local T'ai Chi Chih students. These refreshed and delighted participants who used the time to get to know each other, to integrate the learnings of the morning and to rest for the remainder of the day.

Three people, totally new to T'ai Chi Chih, were invited by friends. It was amazing how they managed to follow the moves and benefit from the day. Two have since enrolled in a class. Several of the students present have determined to become certified teachers. Everyone left quite tired, but exhilarated with new skills for their practice.

In the few days that have elapsed since the

Ann [a student] thought that Ed, surrounded by a circle of students, looked like a fountain of life inviting us to join in the flow of cosmic rhythm.

If there is one wish this writer has for readers of the VFJ, it is that they go deeper into the practice of T'ai Chi Chih. Rather than taking on a variety of practices, it may be more helpful to attend or even sponsor a REVIEW in your area. It will turn the spark of TCC into a conflagration.

I cannot sufficiently thank Ed Altman for the excellent instructions and for the professional manner in which he conducted all business relating to the event. God Bless.



What is Going on with TCC and Research

By Susan Patterson

I am so excited about what has been happening in San Diego with research in the past few years. It all started almost three years ago when Dr. Tahir Bhatti had relief from his chronic lower back pain as a result from his TCC practice. Dr. Bhatti was a Fellow at UCSD Medical Center and applied for a grant that was donated by an anonymous person to study some alternative medical treatments. Dr. Bhatti received the grant and a study was done using two groups. Both groups had chronic back pain and had tried many other treatments, none of which had worked for them. One group did nothing and the other group did TCC at a class that I taught which met for one hour a week for 15 weeks. The end result of the study showed a significant reduction in pain in those who participated in the TCC class.

Dr. Michael Irwin, a well known researcher and head of the Psychiatry Department at UCSD Medical Center was very interested in the results of the back pain study. He called me and told me that he wanted to take a class and look at the possibility of doing more studies using TCC. He signed up for a class and soon had added TCC to his daily life and noticed several wonderful changes. He wanted to study the effects of TCC on the immune system, especially in those who were over the age of 60 years. He wanted to see the effects that TCC would have on people who received a vaccine to prevent shingles. (A disorder very common in people over the age of 60 years). Up to this point the vaccine had not been very successful in preventing shingles and Dr. Irwin felt that if he could somehow boost the immune system that the vaccine would be more effective.

Dr. Irwin particularly liked T'ai Chi Chih because it was a form that could be duplicated because all accredited teachers were accredited by only three different people. (Justin [Stone], Steve

[Ridley], and Ed [Altman]). So many of the other forms do not have any control on how the form is passed on, but he was very impressed with the idea of the Teacher's Training Courses and that the Training Manual was very consistent through the years. He explained to me that this is very important in matters of research and statistics.

Dr. Irwin set up the study, and we both agreed that we would get better results if the students would attend a formal class more than once a week to be sure that they were doing the movements. So we set up the class for 20 weeks and the students met for one hour three times a week in a formal class with me. They also kept diaries on how much they practiced on their own time. There was a lot of paperwork for the students and they also agreed to go into the lab for periodic blood draws so Dr. Irwin could track the effects on their immune systems.

The results of the study were calculated and the results were amazing to Dr. Irwin. Not only did the vaccine antibodies remain very high, but there was a significant enhancement of the over-all immune system of those who were practicing TCC. He also looked at activity of the group and noted that those who were practicing TCC became more active than the control group who did nothing. They were walking more, or playing more sports than they had been prior to taking the TCC classes. Dr. Irwin was very impressed.

Dr. Irwin has sent out one of his Fellows, Dr. Jerry Bobo, to do presentations to physician groups showing the results of this study. Dr. Bobo gave a slide presentation at [a gathering in San Diego] and that was the first time I had actually seen the results of the study. As of yet, no formal paper or publication has been written on this study, but Dr. Irwin will

continued on page 31



Practicing with Holiday Mood Swings

By Judy Tretheway

[Editor's Note: Judy, who volunteers twice weekly in the Folsom Prison T'ai Chi Chih program, wrote the following essay for the prisoners (TCC students) at Folsom last year around the holidays, when many of them tend to get especially lonely or feel depressed.]

Many emotions, both pleasant and unpleasant, well up from deep within and flow through us especially during the Holidays when we are away from our family and friends. You can choose to repress and constrict these emotions or you can choose to allow their flow, opening up and knowing that under a creative and loving release of these emotions is the harmony you seek. The harmony is not found running from our emotions, fearing them or even manifesting them in anger or frustration.

I'd like to suggest that when your sorrows (and joys) bubble up to the surface, remember your T'ai Chi Chih practice and do whatever moves you remember, in whatever order comes to you. In times of intense emotional flow your intuition serves extremely well in selecting the moves and number of repetitions. If in doubt start at the beginning and just do "Rocking motion", or flow through the whole set letting the memory of your previous practices within your body serve you as you allow your heart to open.

Rock your sorrow. Empty of judgements and stories. Let go of the why's and the therefor's. Release any guilt, blame, fear, anger or jealousy. Release your hold on the sorrow and let it flow through your body. No one need know you are doing anything but your practice.

Be your sorrow fully, let it move around with the moves and flow through every aspect of your

being. Feel your feet in the earth, and know she will sustain you in this process. Let go of storing it in any particular place in your body. Like a wave, it will swell. And like the swell of a wave, it will eventually release upon the shore and loose its energy.

When the energy of the sorrow has been expressed and released, the essence beneath the sorrow will be able to nurture your healing. This is the essential aspect of yourself that knew all along you were more than the sum of your sorrows and joys. This essence knows harmony as it's reality.

I'd like to suggest that when your sorrows (and joys) bubble up to the surface, remember your T'ai Chi Chih practice and do whatever moves you remember, in whatever order comes to you.

When the blocks to it's expression have been cleared, this harmony will be free to flow and express and expand within you. Within all of you. Within your body, as the muscles relax and melt into a continuous flow of movement. Within your mind, as it stills

and knows without words, without details, without judgement. Within your heart, as the sorrows and joys are released and you are at home within yourself regardless of how time and circumstances have treated your body. And within your spirit, as it reflects not only a single point of light and love, but becomes a manifestation of a much greater light and love. All aspects of yourself become aligned with the source of life and love, and together you are one.

Experienced even once, this sense of harmony deep within you will call you back to your T'ai Chi Chih practice time and time again as new sorrows and joys seek to flow through you on their way towards release, rather than remaining blocked and allowed to fester. . .



Teaching TCC to a city population through largest U.S. non-profit HMO

By Noel Altman

My Tai Chi Chih (TCC) classes at Kaiser Permanente (the largest non-profit HMO in the country) in San Francisco have steadily increased in number since I began teaching there in January, 1999. We had scheduled three classes at that time, but due to the fact that the program schedule hadn't been printed or distributed until late December / early January, we only filled one class.

The next session, two classes filled. After that, all three, with people being turned away (actually, routed into the next session). I have a lot of students now who have waited two or more months to get into the course. I think this is beneficial for all concerned — one, we fill the classes, but, two, the students come in with a commitment that has been generated after two months of waiting (and consciously or not, focusing on TCC).

I have been really impressed with the great percentage of students who commit to practicing every day (or nearly so) right from the beginning of the course. These are usually the ones who also attend every class of the eight, but not always. I have heard back from a few who couldn't keep attending class (usually due to work scheduling), but continue to practice.

I believe that this level of commitment to practice has something to do with the fact that they couldn't get into the class session they wanted (because it was full), and so became that much more determined after waiting another two months to get in. I think they value something that was hard-won like that, not easily gotten.

I have also noticed that the students who buy Justin Stone's video (particularly seniors, who seem to have the most difficulty remembering how to do the movements during their practice sessions at home) tend to benefit greatly from Justin's instruction and practice. Justin imparts something that I don't. I have seen ones who were struggling in class come back after a week of practicing with Justin and suddenly be able to flow! I believe Justin shows completely relaxed,

completely soft FLOW better than any of us. Why shouldn't our students have the chance to learn from the best?

I encourage students to practice with Justin's video. I say, "Every day, you can practice with Justin Stone, the Originator of the form!"

My number one goal as a teacher is to get my students practicing. Whether they have to do it seated, holding onto a chair, or by watching and following along with Justin's video, I believe that any of those scenarios is better than if they get frustrated and don't practice at all.

My number one goal as a teacher is to get my students practicing. Whether they have to do it seated, holding onto a chair, or by watching and following along with Justin's video, I believe that any of those scenarios is better than if they get frustrated and don't practice at all.

Obviously, the ideal is to have people practicing while standing up (as TCC was originated), doing it well, and able to do it on their own consistently (without the guidance of a videotape or a teacher in front of them). That is the ideal, and that is the direction I would eventually lead every student if given the time to do so. But you have to take students from where they're at when they first come to TCC. I say that in class — that we're all at wherever we're at (including myself) and we're going to progress from there.

The student population at Kaiser SF is extremely varied! Because San Francisco is such an international city, I have a lot of students who were born in other



countries and for whatever reason, now live here. Sometimes they don't understand English very well, and they usually don't tell me. So, I've learned to watch for that when the understanding is not happening. I have all ages — every class has younger people, middle-aged people and seniors. I have more people with disabilities or medical conditions than I ever did when Ed and I taught privately or through the Bellevue Parks and Recreation Dept. in Bellevue, WA.

I have had people with Parkinson's, heart conditions, bad backs and knees, moderate to severe arthritis, depression, high blood pressure, lack of balance, Multiple Sclerosis, asthma, obesity, strokes, poor circulation. As a result, I have learned to alter my approach from: "Wouldn't you rather try this seated?" or "Would you like to hold onto a chair?" to stating during the first class: "If I see that you're having problems with balance, or you seem to be feeling too much strain, I'm going to ask you to hold onto a chair or chairs (one on either side) or to sit down, and I will then show you how to modify the movement from there."

Before I did this, some students would just persist on in their pain or wobbliness and decline my offers of assistance every time. They would go home in pain, and end up dropping out of the class. Mostly, this was younger people who didn't want to admit to themselves yet that they have some disabling condition.

I would rather have them doing seated TCC than not doing it at all. So, now I just lay out that possibility from the very beginning so they don't have an unrealistic expectation for themselves. Anyone who wants to be in the class, I want in the class, and I want them to succeed (at whatever is their capability). Probably the only person with a disability who I would decline would be one with a mental illness that could disrupt the class.

Some of the students I have just cannot seem to do what I show them. They attempt to, but it never comes out quite right. With these students (in my experience, seniors), I have learned to pretty much stop correcting them, and let them get what they can. They know they're not doing what everyone else is, but to keep correcting them gets nowhere productive. They end up frustrated and so do I. When I have let go, I have found that that is when they are able to make progress on their own by watching me, watching me,

focusing, focusing on how I move — then, with no expectation, they sometimes grasp one more part of what I am doing and begin to incorporate it.

It's a great challenge to address all levels of ability in the same class, especially since each of my eight-hour class formats is tightly-designed with very little slack time. When someone is just not getting what I'm trying to correct on him or her after a minute or two, I'll ask the person to stay after class so we can work on it without a tight time constraint. He or she is usually grateful for the extra help.

I teach TCC in two courses: Course A covers "Rocking Motion" through "Pulling in the Energy"; and "Cosmic Consciousness"; Course B covers "Pulling Taffy" through the "Six Healing Sounds." Each eight week period, I teach two classes of Course A and one of Course B. Each course is eight hours long, an hour a week. So, the entire form is taught in 16 hours. After 16 weeks of practice (four months or more, depending on schedule breaks), these students have established a new routine in their lives. To send them out on their own after four months of practice gives them a better shot at sticking to the new habit they have built than if I sent them out after only eight weeks, which is how TCC is most commonly taught.

At the last class of Course B, I tell them, "Congratulations! Now you've learned the entire form of T'ai Chi Chih! Next is a lifetime of refinement!" Throughout the course, whenever I go to audit a TCC Teacher Training Course, attend the annual Teachers' Conference, or visit Justin in Albuquerque, I tell my students about it. If I discover something in my practice (a new understanding or improvement in my performance of the form), or I receive a correction on my form, I tell my students about it. They know I am still a student. I tell them that's what I love about TCC — that there are so many levels to it, that I can keep refining and refining. Actually, quite seriously, does it have an end? The farther I go, the more it seems to open up below me!

Many students want to go on, and they end up repeating Course A and/or Course B. Many have asked for more than that, and I have told them about other formats that I have taught: "Intermediate" (where we work to refine movements, particularly the more difficult ones), and "Practice" (where the emphasis is on

continued on page 31



Three teachers share info on getting liability insurance

IDEA / State Farm Insurance

Reprinted in part with permission from *The New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News*, February, 1999.

Some teachers are required by the place they teach to carry business liability insurance. If you would like to find coverage, it is available in the following ways:

1. **IDEA** (International Dance Educators Association) 800-999-4332, ext. 7 offers all movement teachers membership. It is about \$75 per year for each individual. Membership in IDEA allows you to participate in their liability insurance program. After you have paid your dues, call Murria & Frick Insurance Agency (Solana Beach, CA), IDEA members desk at 800-395-8075, ext. 3. Insurance coverage for \$1 million of liability is \$220 per year for an individual instructor.

2. **State Farm Insurance** also offers business liability insurance, even if you carry no other insurance with them. To be covered for \$2 million of liability insurance, the cost is approximately \$200 per year. . .

– Carmen Brocklehurst

[Editor's Note: Carmen noted to *The Vital Force* that her State Farm agent in Albuquerque, NM — Craig Highfill — can be contacted by your agent if he / she doesn't know how to write up the policy to cover the teaching of T'ai Chi Chih. His phone number is (505) 296-1700. Carmen reports that "he would be happy to walk them through the process," but to be prepared to pay for the long distance call to New Mexico as your agent may not be willing to pay for it.]

California Yoga Teachers Association

If you've considered getting professional liability insurance but didn't know where to start shopping for it, one company to consider is Murria & Frick Insurance Agency in Solana Beach, California. This brokerage company offers excellent coverage nationwide with General Star Indemnity Insurance Company to teachers of yoga and T'ai Chi Chih. After joining the **California Yoga Teachers Association** (\$45/year), which includes a subscription to *Yoga Journal* and other benefits, the current annual premium is only \$105/year for those teaching a maximum of five hours per week, and \$185/year for those teaching an unlimited number of hours.

Each year the coverage through this company has increased and the premium has been reduced because there have been so few claims filed. Most recently, the coverage has been \$2 million per occurrence / \$4 million aggregate.

To speak with an agent about this insurance, call Danielle Bauer at 1-800-395-8075, extension 149. She, or another representative can answer your questions. I have been very satisfied with this firm, and feel comfortable having such good coverage.

– Barbara Riley



Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals

Associated Bodywork and Massage professionals (ABMP) offers:

Professional Liability Insurance of \$1 million incident coverage (\$3 million aggregate) as a practitioner for \$199 - 1 yr, \$368 - 2 yr, \$522 - 3 yr. Coverage cost for a professional, certified esthetician, student or supporting are slightly different.* They do cover T'ai Chi Chih teachers. If five or more people join as a group (you) are eligible for the corporate program, about a \$50 savings per year.

Disability and/or Business Personal Property Coverage are optional. ABMP boasts no charges for naming your company as an additional insured on an ABMP members policy (an AIE).

Other benefits include a *Massage and Bodywork* magazine subscription, Members only credit

card (no annual fees), referral service, certificate and regulatory support.

ABMP is open to new ideas and somatic modalities. ABMP is owned directly by four individuals who work daily with the organization. All other staff members are afforded an opportunity to own shares of ABMP after one year of service. Since 1987 membership has grown from 280 to 25,000.

For more info from this very straightforward group call 1-800-458-2267.

— Amelia Roache

*This covers Bodily Injury, Personal Injury and Property Damage and \$100,000 for fire damage to the premises you rent.

Student feels "sense of expansion" after practicing T'ai Chi Chih in class

By Mary Erickson
Student of Virginia Lee Cepeda

I would like to share a wonderful experience I had at T'ai Chi Chih yesterday. Usually during T'ai Chi Chih I focus about a foot above the ground while doing our movements but I looked up when I felt a sense of expansion. As I looked up I saw, in the mirror, all 14 of us performing the movements in complete unison. It was so beautiful. I knew at that moment our energy had merged

and we were one in complete harmony. I felt my energy, spirit or whatever expand. The feeling was so warm, fluid, safe and so complete. As I walked out of the gym this feeling continued. I felt my energy connect with the door of the gym, the ground as I walked, to the car. I felt I could reach out my hand and my energy would extend to the tree a few feet away and the birds in the tree and merge with them. It was the most wonderfully complete feeling I have ever had. I've

always heard, and I've repeated that we are one with the universe and we need to take care of the earth and all its creatures because we are one. I now don't just know this intellectually—I know this from the core of my being because I experienced it. I am so fortunate. We are like a puzzle piece that fits so completely with everything else that all our thoughts and actions cannot help but affect everything else.



Inside Folsom Prison

Inmate shares his own experience

Dear Noel,

Wanted You to know that I enjoyed Your and Ed's visit very much. As you noticed, interest in T'ai Chi Chih at Folsom is significant ... and growing.

As I read *The Vital Force* I was struck by something; that is, the Yin & Yang symbolism and how something so simple translates into life altering action. While I am not a student of symbolism, I do give attention to the symbolic nature of dreams.

Just after Your visit, I experienced a very vivid dream I would like to share with You and Your readers:

I found myself on the roof of a two-

story house. There were people downstairs who would prevent me from leaving. My attention was turned to a wall as a hidden door opened and a young, dark-headed man stepped out. He, in a deliberately calm manner, pointed to an unusually shaped key, which he held in his other hand.

I spent many evenings thinking about this dream. In addition to the "dark-headed man," the "key," and how he brought it to my attention, the connection to T'ai Chi Chih became clear. The "dark-headed man," who but Ed; the "unusually shaped key," what but an untraditional approach to freeing an imprisoned spirituality and aligning disjointed energy ...? Of course, as with any dream sequence, there are less tan-

gible connections; however, to me there is no question.

One other matter: I wanted You (and everyone from Justin to Ed to Jim . . . Hecker) to know that Your efforts are reaping the desired affect; that is, more people *inside* are showing interest, real progress, and a genuine enthusiasm for learning. I am also very encouraged to learn that there are people on the outside who believe that there are viable people inside these walls, which is evidenced through Your willingness to visit, teach, and sponsor T'ai Chi Chih at Folsom State Prison.

Yours truly,

Don Rasmussen
Student of James Hecker

Young mother finds TCC helpful in raising two boys

Everyone at *The Vital Force*,

. . . I am an at-home mother of two young children and have found that that poses some, maybe, unique challenges with practice as well as attending teacher training. I'm hoping there are other teachers or students who have been in a similar situation who might be willing to share some of their experiences. (See address below**). I am appreciative that TCC practice has helped me somewhat overcome my usual challenge with patience and to feel confident that everything has a time if you just keep working on it. Even I know that my children will not be young forever and TCC will be there tomorrow, next month, or next year.

I still practice almost every day (I'm working on that) and look forward to the day when teacher training will work out for me. After discussing my own benefits of TCC practice (the clarity necessary to handle several things at once, a calmness in the midst of chaos with my two little boys, depression being a thing of the past) many of the other moms and childbirth educator colleges are VERY interested [in] learning more. I hope to continue being a source of information and one day to be able to teach TCC myself. By the way, since consistently practicing TCC, I have experienced a marked improvement in my psoriasis as well as totally asymptomatic carpal tunnel syndrome in my left wrist.

I have Sharon Sirkis to thank for being available to teach TCC when I was ready to learn it.

Sincerely,

Deborah Cole
Student of Sharon Sirkis

**If anyone has information to share I can be reached at: DebCole63@aol.com
or: 506 Grainfield Court
Severn, MD 21144



Readers Respond

continued from page 3

seen reasons ends up with me and the children ready to scream and at the end of the day they say, "Sister I know why you were so cross today; we forgot to put the tape on this morning and do our 'Joy Thru Movement'".

Sr. Marie-Ann Main
Brighton Beach Bluff
Durban, South Africa

A small group of women religious is interested in development of a retreat for sisters by sisters who teach or do TCC. If you are interested in a retreat based on the practice and the principles of TCC, call or write for further development. Date, place, cost yet to be determined.

Alice Holden, CCVI
4707 Broadway
San Antonio, TX 78209
(210) 829-5980
holden@universe.uiwtx.edu

Sr. Alice Holden
San Antonio, TX

News Shorts

continued from page 18

these findings, and from actual clinical experience, Moth concluded that mind control alone is not as effective in changing addictive behavior as when both body and mind are participating in the creation of new habits which lead them to discover who they are and why they are here.

What did Moth recommend to supplant negative vashanas? Although aerobic exercise does raise the "feel good" neurotransmitters in the brain, Moth has found that they only temporarily neutralize anxiety and depression. He recommended T'ai Chi disciplines and meditation as methods which not only create balance in the body and mind, (as evidenced by upsurges of "feel good" neurotransmitters in practitioners), but also lead to the revelation of who we are. These transformations

right down to the cellular level explain why so many brand new T'ai Chi Chih students experience such vast changes in their interior landscape within their first eight week class. Isn't it exciting that some western medical doctors are finally recommending it?

— Ann Rutherford

Teaching through HMO

continued from page 27

having full practices of all of the movements they already know). I proposed the two formats to my coordinator at Kaiser SF, and we decided to offer them twice each next year, if enough people register.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity at Kaiser SF — it is enjoyable, challenging and dynamic. I am grateful to the coordinator I work with, who has held a steadfast vision of success for the program in her mind since before she even had a teacher or a program implemented. It's not very often you have such support! I am grateful to Justin for his continued prodding, pushing and unquestionable support. I am grateful to Ed for his piercing insights on how to do T'ai Chi Chih (and the ability to convey them). I am grateful for my life.

Medical research

continued from page 24

definitely have that available within the next year. . .

[Editor's note: Susan reports that Dr. Irwin did apply for, but did not receive a \$2 million grant from the National Institute of Health to do further studies with TCC through the UCSD Medical Center. Other institutions around the country had also applied for the grant, and only five of them were given. If the grant had been received, Susan notes that she would have been hired by UCSD to teach the TCC classes for that study. The study would have lasted four years and would have included cardiac, chronic pain, and emphysema patients. She concludes, "I will really appreciate all of your energy and good Chi thoughts that we will be given [an] opportunity to prove again to the medical community the importance of TCC practice."

In addition to being a TCC teacher, Susan is a respiratory care practitioner—her specialty, pulmonary medicine.]



Karmic Kommments

from Good Karma Publishing, Inc.
P.O. Box 511, Ft. Yates, ND 58538
Jean Katus, Publisher

New Tape Available

Justin has been interviewed numerous times. Now we are fortunate to have received permission to duplicate Christeen McLain's 1994 interview with him on her radio show "Heart Sounds" from KDSU in Fargo, ND. As a 20th year celebration of T'ai Chi Chih, the interview focuses on some aspects of Justin's life and work that many may not be aware of. This is Justin Stone, the man and his creations, in a candid exchange, much of the information not available elsewhere in his previously published works. Some of the subjects covered are: music, philosophy, writing, painting. He speaks about his jazz compositions and the influence of the Orient on "Serene Nature"; the principles of yin-yang and how T'ai Chi Chih and meditation offer clarity to the practitioner about the nature of suffering and the role habit energies play in our lives; his own writings on such diverse topics (in addition to T'ai Chi Chih and meditation) as language learning and the stock market; some of the key views in *Abandon Hope, Zen Meditation*, and others of his books; Paul Reps' and Krishnamurti's approaches; plus lots more. In the background and in some segments by themselves, large portions of "Serene Nature" and "Night Bloom" can be heard. This exciting tape is available at the same price as our other tapes: \$10.95 retail, with a weight of 3.6 oz. Order your copy of "Interview with Justin Stone on the 20th Anniversary of T'ai Chi Chih" audio cassette today!

Photo-text Calligraphy

The calligraphic lettering on the front cover of the T'ai Chi Chih photo-text was done by Skip Whitson. We offer this information for those who may want to scan the lettering for flyers, business cards, posters, etc. As with the brush paintings by Ou Mie Shu, we ask that you give credit to the artist if you use these materials (See September 1999 issue of *The Vital Force* for details).

A Thank You

We were sorry to receive Dale Buchanan's resignation as a teacher distributor for Good Karma and want to thank him publicly for his dedicated work.

New Order Forms

As you can see from the Good Karma insert included with this issue of the *Vital Force Journal*, we've printed the price list/order form landscape style so that both the teacher and non-teacher forms can be included, one to each side. Teachers, feel free to photocopy the form with retail prices only for students and other interested persons. The teacher form is the one with parenthesized discount prices entered after the retail prices and labeled "Certified Teacher Form." Non-teacher readers who receive these forms, please order from the one labeled "Retail Customer Form."

E-Mail Ordering

My personal e-mail address is listed on the T'ai Chi Chih web site. I have not made it public for customers to use for ordering purposes because it is not secure for leaving credit card information. However, it can be used if we already have your credit card number on file. If you want to order via e-mail, be sure Good Karma has your card information; you can find my address on the web site. For future reference, Good Karma Publishing plans to make it possible to order from a web site that is in the process of being created. We are not set up for that at this time. Watch the column for further information as it develops.



Meditation

continued from page 15

me. It doesn't matter; there is only ONE!

Since then, I have been meditating along with my T'ai Chi Chih and Sejjaku practice everyday. Justin was right. The result of regular meditation will be a changed person. There is a *different* kind of joy that has been filling my life these days...

Thank you, Justin, for generously being our Teacher. Thank you Maggie Berg, for arranging this gathering so perfectly. Thank you all the folks at the Dominican Retreat Center in Albuquerque for giving us such a fine home during those days.

Thank you, Carmen Brocklehurst, for placing this opportunity before me (*so I could see it!*). Thank you, Ed Altman, for whatever you said in our phone

conversation last July that made me realize I'd be a fool to not go to this retreat. But these are only words.

"There is no happiness without gratitude!"

*Days
so rich
loving friends
knowing teacher
sad to leave
why so?
thanks!*

[Editor's Note: See back cover for more Pyramid Poetry written by participants on Saturday night of the retreat.]

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DIRECT ORDERS: To order books and tapes from Good Karma Publishing, please type or print your name and address *legibly* on an order form. Phone toll-free (1-888-540-7459), FAX (701-854-2004), or write if you need a catalog or order form. Please allow at least two weeks from order date for delivery.



SUBMISSIONS:

The Vital Force invites letters, articles, news briefs, poetry, original artwork and photography. Written submissions should be typed. All submissions must indicate the full name and complete address of the person submitting them to be considered for publication.

The Vital Force now has a text scanner which allows us to process typed submissions much more efficiently. Unfortunately, hand-written submissions must still be typed in manually and are prone to human error. Mail, fax, or e-mail your submissions. (See "Contact Information" on opposite page.) **Students**, please indicate who your T'ai Chi Chih teacher is with your submission.

2000 Submission deadlines:

Spring:	January 10th	Fall:	July 10th
Summer:	April 10th	Winter:	October 10th

Note: It may be possible to submit timely news for publication later than the deadline, and it is usually possible to submit items for listing in the "Calendar of Events" up until press time --- contact **The Vital Force**.

EDITING POLICY:

**"But if you turn your eyes within yourselves
And testify to the truth of Self-nature—
The Self-nature that is no-nature,
You will have gone beyond the ken of
sophistry."**

— "ZAZEN WASAN / The Song of Zazen" by Hakuin,
A Flower Does Not Talk by Abbot Zenkei Shibayama

The editing policy of **The Vital Force** is to leave written submissions as intact as possible in order to preserve the original voice of the writer. Therefore, **editing will be minimal, unless explicitly requested otherwise by the writer, or unless the meaning is unclear.** The editing term "sic" will NOT be used to point out errors. Due to space limitations, submissions may have to be shortened, although it is hoped this will be rare.

When an addition or substitution for a word or words in the original text has been made, these brackets: [] will be used to enclose the change, rather than parentheses, which some writers like using. If an omission is made of more than a word or two due to unrelated content (in a letter, for instance) or space limitations, it will be shown by the following version of ellipsis: . . . This is so as not to be confused when the following: is used by a writer to show a lapse in time, a long pause or change in topic.

MEMBERSHIPS:

The Vital Force is published quarterly and bulk-mailed to Association members in the U.S. during the second weeks of March, June, September and December. Generally, the mailing time is 2 - 4 weeks. U.S. First Class and international delivery can be ordered for an extra fee and posts on the same schedule noted above. (See Page 4 for details).

TCC TEACHERS' DIRECTORY:

The T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Directory is for referral and communication purposes among accredited T'ai Chi Chih teachers. **It is not to be used or sold as a mailing list.** Updates are published in each issue of **The Vital Force**. Send your changes to the San Rafael address (on opposite page).

WHEN MOVING:

Please allow 8 weeks notice and provide complete old and new addresses. Because **The Vital Force** has "return service requested" with the U.S. Post Office, an undeliverable issue or Teachers' Directory is returned to us with a charge for the First Class cost to return it (approximately \$1.25 - \$2.50, depending on the weight). Then, if we mail out a new one, it goes First Class (because a bulk mailing requires 200 pieces), resulting in further expense of \$1.25 - \$2.50. Please help us avoid this unnecessary and wasteful expense—send in your change of address information early!



T'AI CHI CHIH CONTACTS:

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THE VITAL FORCE *Journal of T'ai Chi Chih*

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1. () Renewal () New

2. Name _____ Phone () _____ - _____

Address _____

_____ E-mail _____

_____ Zip _____ - _____

3. () Accredited TCC Teacher - Are you: () Active () Inactive () Willing to travel

Membership includes Teachers' Directory _____ year(s) @ \$30.00 / yr = \$ _____

Do you want your name, phone number and e-mail address (if applicable) included on the T'ai Chi Chih community website (www.taichichih.org) _____ year(s) @ \$5 / yr = \$ _____

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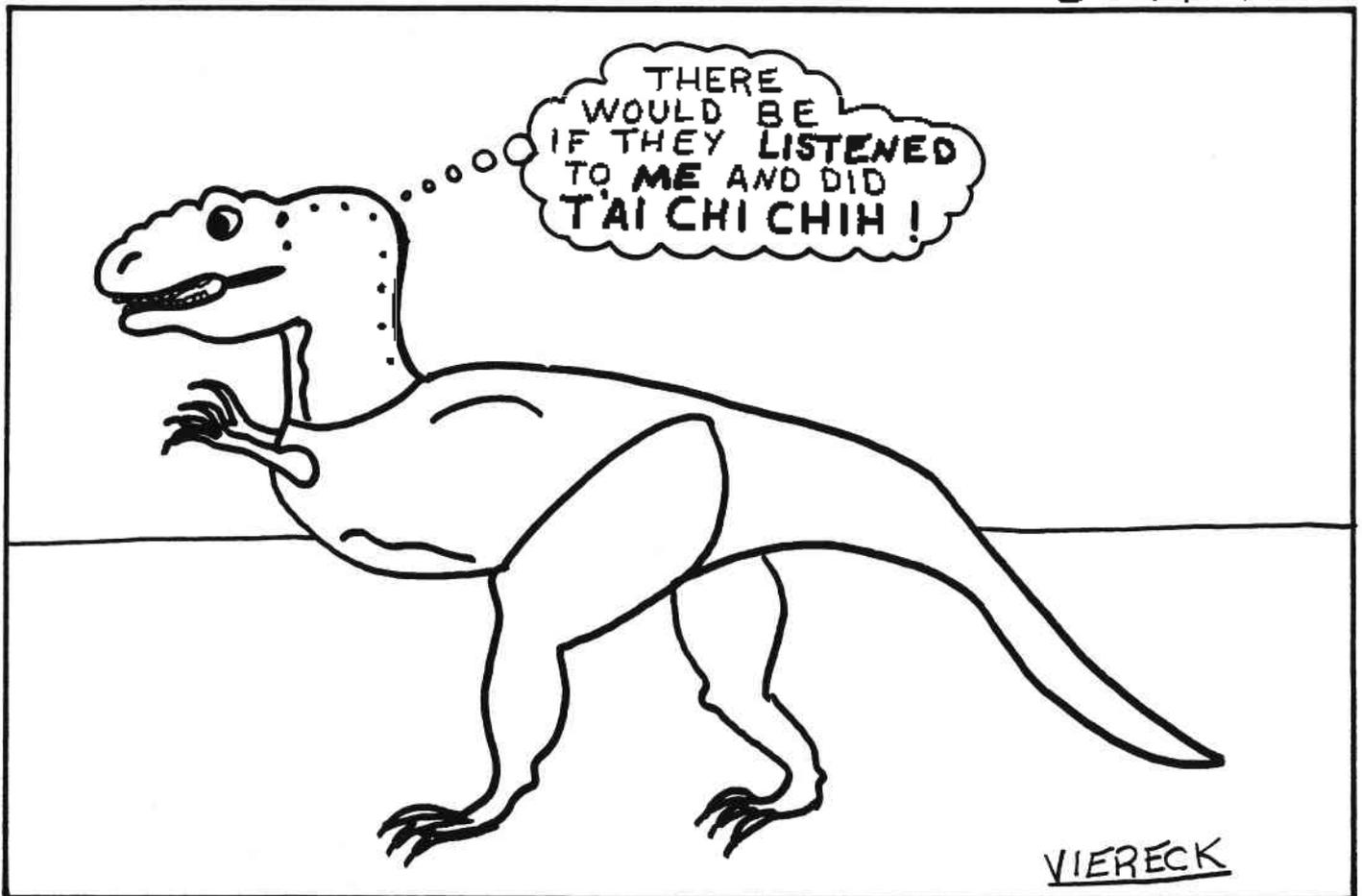
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The Lighter Side...



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Pyramid Poetry *from the Meditation Retreat...*

This form of poetry was originated by Justin Stone and is described in detail in his book, Climb the Joyous Mountain.

**I
cannot
fathom how
things un-ex-plained
are ever
pondered?
Words!**

– Dan Pienciak

**How
many
more days of
silence until
this mind is
without
thought?**

– Ed Altman

**Hush
don't talk
silent day
whispers every-
where I look
"silence!"
not!**

– Ed St. Martin
Student of Rhonda St. Martin

**greed
anger
delusion
always with us
the way out
can't be
thought**

– Jim Houle
Student of Connie Hyde

**who
will teach
if not you
students waiting
where are you
T'ai Chi
Chih**

– Corine Reeber

**Do
Not seek
Approval
He will not give
That is your
Ego's
Way**

– Guy Kent

**DAY
OF THE
DOG ATTACK
MEDITATION
CALLS US BACK
NO FEAR
CLEAR**

– Chris McLain

**DAY
OF THE
GOD ATTACK
MEDITATION
CALLS US BACK
NO FEAR
CLEAR**

– Chris McLain

**Mind
manners
mountains mole
hills — why make sense
with this group
so far
gone?**

– Connie Hyde