

The Vital Force

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

Volume 17, No. 3

September 2000



*"Flowing
through
very heavy
air..."*

at the
15th
Annual T'ai
Chi Chih
Teachers'
Conference

Coverage begins
on Page 24.



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



The Vital Force

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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:

The beautiful photograph on the cover was taken by Melinda Rispoli, a New



Jersey photographer who volunteered her time and talents to the 2000 TCC Teachers' Conference weekend. She and her business partner, Penny

Schiefelbein, both of Star Shine Photography, spent the greater part of the weekend (along with another photographer, Jo-Anne Montanti), trying to capture a movement art in still photographs (not an easy task)! Our sincere thanks to all three of them! See their work beginning on Page 24.

The teachers pictured on the cover are: Judy Mirczak (left) and Deanne Hodgson (who has had her artistic photographs published inside and on the cover of *The Vital Force* in the past!)

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

My heartfelt thanks go out to the entire committee of New York/ New Jersey teachers who hosted one of the best, if not the absolute best Teachers' Conference ever! (See Page 24 for the beginning of coverage). They were graced with two leaders, Sr. Antonia Cooper and Carolyn Perkins, who so smoothly (and seemingly calmly!) dealt with every little detail both before and during the actual weekend. Even the weather was a minor miracle in my opinion — very comfortable temperatures in the low to mid-70 degree range with very little humidity! According to Committee member Janet Oussaty, whom I spoke to in advance, Sr. Antonia had been "praying" for cool weather in advance. "And she's a very powerful woman, so she just may pull it off!" Janet joked. Well, it came true! Thanks, Sr. Antonia — it made it so much more enjoyable for those of us not used to warm, humid weather!

We were very lucky to be able to enjoy the weekend in a retreat setting on beautiful grounds which were part of a small college. People could take walks outside and enjoy the fresh air and scenery.

The careful thought that went into the details was evident, and the whole weekend flowed seamlessly from one event into the next to the meals and back together again. Of course, there's never enough time in one short weekend to fit in everything we might like! This is the second year, however, in which an extra day was added. Registration began on Thursday afternoon, but the actual conference schedule began the next day. (We used to begin checking in on Friday afternoon and the conference would begin that evening. Because most people had been traveling all day to get there, there would be nodding heads as people tried to stay awake. Now, everyone gets a good night's sleep on Thursday before we actually begin on Friday morning with the first practice at 7:00am). Response to the extra day seems to be overwhelmingly positive, and my personal opinion (and Ed's) is that it would be nice in the future to add another day. We could fit in more time for movement, "down time" (for rest and/or socializing, as desired), and more time to hear detailed presentations from teachers with experience in particular areas. This year, we had a presentation from Carmen Brocklehurst on how to prepare candidates for Teacher Training, and a presentation from Sandy McAllister on how to modify T'ai Chi Chih for people who need to do it seated. In addition, we had a whole slew of topics covered during the Friday lunchtime "Roundtable" discussions. The only drawback was you couldn't be in more than one place at the same time!

I noticed on the list of attendees that 56 people from the East Coast (including Pennsylvania) of the U.S. and Canada attended this year! What a turnout! I met for the first time quite a few people from the East Coast who have not attended a conference before. I certainly hope we'll have another Teachers' Conference on the East Coast at sometime in the not-so-distant future!

The teachers who traveled the farthest were Cristina Minelli from Italy and Nancy Jo Bleier from Alaska, (who impressively attends every year — no matter where it's held).

Special thanks to VFJ Volunteer David Schulberg who set up a live connection to the TCC Community website on his laptop computer at The Vital Force desk and steered people (many who had never seen the website) through the screens and Teacher Listing.

Noel Altman, Editor

Teachers: Please remember to get any changes/updates of your name, address, phone number, e-mail address or teaching status to us by DECEMBER 1, 2000 as the 2001 Teachers' Directory will be finalized and shipped shortly afterwards. Thanks!



Readers Respond

I have somehow gotten out of the loop with the T'ai Chi Chih community. I am accredited and have been teaching for the last three years. Can you add my name to the list of teachers [on the website]?

Bob Stone
New City, NY

[Editor's note: I audited for the week of your Teacher Training course in 1997 and remember you well, Bob.

The website listing is offered by *The Vital Force* as a service to its members who are accredited teachers. For teachers, the basic membership is \$30/yr. which covers receipt of four quarterly issues and the Teachers' Directory. Website listing is available to teachers for an additional \$5/yr, for a total of \$35. First Class delivery is optional, for another \$5/yr. Since you live in an area without many teachers, it will take as long as four weeks or so for the issues to get to you by bulk mail, so you may want to consider paying for First Class delivery. If you e-mail me back your street address, I can send you out the form to fill in, which you can mail back with your check to get your membership started and your name onto the web. Thanks for your interest!!]

Dear Ed and Noel,
Greetings from the most Southern Slide Tip of the Indian Ocean.....I will make sure that I send you some news by the 10 October as I have missed the 10 July [VFJ submission deadlines]. All is going well here in this State!!!! I am still teaching a group of women plus 62 children who are in Grade 3.

I am sending this E-mail prior to my Sub-cription fee which one of our Sisters will be posting to you when she comes over to the States by the end of the month. Hope this does not confuse your books but with the exchange rate at the moment it is very high and we get nothing for our Southern Rand.....So keep well and keep up the good work. May it be known to you that I really enjoy receiving the *Vital Force*. God Bless, Love, Prayers and Chi till I write again.

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

Dear TCC Friends:
Journal looks & reads Great—appreciate the larger print size alot—thanks!

Closed my studio & office this year to help my partner Brendan Curtis with his healing from his cancer & treatments. However, TCC has helped me so much to handle all the stress & concerns, etc.

Also, I discovered a great place to do most of my TCC movements—in the deep section of our neighborhood swimming pools—I'm very buoyant & just stand up in deep water & do them (do not touch bottom). (One could use a float belt to get the same buoyancy if not as lucky as I). Try it—you'll like it! Love to all—appreciate your prayers. Vayo con Diaz,

RuthMarie Arguello-Sheehan
Sun City, AZ

Hi There
I have been looking in *The Vital Force* for anyone having the same experience I am having. During the movements where my hands are close I get a tingle or numbness or force. It is the strongest for Light at the Top of the Head/Temples where I can not only feel it in the hands but also on the top or the side of the head. Is this common?

Henry C. Smith
Sacramento, CA

[Editor's note: Yes, Henry, the tingling in the hands is very common with practitioners of T'ai Chi Chih. I know you subscribe to *The Vital Force*, but are you working with an accredited teacher (who can answer these types of questions for you)? Other resources for these types of questions are the text and videotape written by/featuring the Originator of the form, Justin Stone, and available through most accredited teachers or from Good Karma Publishing directly. Also, the audiotape, "Justin Stone Speaks on T'ai Chi Chih" is another valuable resource in addition to *The Vital Force*. The materials are complementary—they each have their advantages, and cover the material in a different way, so all together you get a pretty complete picture.

Working with an accredited teacher is an eventual must for anyone wanting to progress, as that is the only way you will be able to receive feedback on the way you are moving and make any necessary corrections.

If you are not working with an accredited teacher, I can give you a list of names of teachers in your area...]



Knowledge and Wisdom

By Justin Stone

There is a great deal of difference between Knowledge and Wisdom. Knowledge connotes facts crammed into the memory, certainly necessary in this life. However, Wisdom means, in the spiritual sense, that which is intuitive and profits from the Universal Mind (if we can use that expression) and goes beyond what is the known. We all have touches of the latter, at times, unless we totally suppress it with drugs or some unnatural means.

When I came to Albuquerque, in 1993, to meet Carmen Brocklehurst and go to the Television station to make plans for the T'ai Chi Chih Program on PBS stations (which is still playing in its sixth year), I suddenly got the idea of buying a house and living in Albuquerque (I was then stationed on the Monterey Peninsula in California). When a Real Estate agent came to the house with a list of 40 available places, I said "I don't have time for all that." She

Recently there was a gathering, at my house, of meditators. Afterward we had the usual discussion and Kathy Grassel read from a book that contained Ramana Maharshi's

There is a great deal of difference between Knowledge and Wisdom. . . . Wisdom means, in the spiritual sense, that which is intuitive and profits from the Universal Mind . . .

answers to questions from seekers who had come to see the great Sage, who was certainly not a scholar.

Occasionally, someone would ask me to comment on or explain the subject that was being dealt with. It gradually became clear to everyone, including me, that my comments were such that they preceded what was written in the book. I would say something and Kathy would laugh. She would then read the next paragraph, or the one following that, which would echo, in the same words, what I had just said. It was laughable, and it was not because of effort on my part. Also, I am not Clairvoyant. Whatever I said would then be repeated as Kathy read from the book.

answered that it usually took months to suit a client, and she asked how I expected to do it. I replied: "Let's just get in your car and let it take us there." Looking at me as though I was slightly off my rocker,

she agreed. Doug Shilson and Carmen got in the car with us, and within five minutes we were in front of a house-for-sale, just several blocks away (and not on her list). You know the rest: by 10 o'clock that night I had bought just the right house for me. One spiritually advanced friend said: "It had your name on it. Nobody else could have bought it."

Over the last 40 years, since my time in India, Japan, Chinese cities, etc., my life has pretty much progressed in that manner. My studies and practices in the Far East had opened me to such things.

I am not patting myself on the back. Many others have the same experiences. What can we do to encourage such 'intuitive' living? Practice T'ai Chi Chih and, possibly, do the type of Meditation that takes us to the Turiya State (the fourth state of consciousness). These methods do not usually fail.

This is Prajna, the inherent wisdom that was not learned. We all have it, but we cover it up with our mental processes. No amount of learning will cause it.



Violence

By Ed Altman

Violence seems to play a big role in our world, and this is due to the fact that many people desire to wield power over others. There's no escaping this, and my first spiritual teacher told me that this world was all about "power" and learning to use it wisely. This had a big impact on me.

I often hear that violence leads nowhere, but this is untrue. Violence always leads somewhere; usually to more of the same. The father who had a bad day yells at the child who turns around and kicks the dog that runs out and bites someone else. It never stops. Or does it?

I remember watching a group of inner-city kids taunting a dog that was tied up while the owner was shopping in a store. Noel and I were very upset by the violence of that moment, but what could be done? I was older and bigger, so I could have gone up and yelled at them. I was also seriously outnumbered, and what would that have accomplished? They were obviously already upset in the first place, and I had no interest in addressing violence in a way that might lead to even more in the future. In the end, I simply got up and walked over to pet the dog and knelt by its side. This action broke the chain of events, and the youth were unwilling to continue to abuse the animal while I was next to it. Without uttering a word, and with no violence in my thoughts or actions, the situation was resolved. It just dissipated, and the action left no trace.

The lessons I've learned through T'ai Chi Chih have caused countless shifts in my life. I've come to discover a deep reservoir of feeling and "inner strength." Unlike physical strength or vio-

lence, these will never fail, and this inner strength has led to stillness. Not inactivity, but deep stillness that is working to permeate my thoughts and actions. It is not a matter of trying to avoid acting on violent thoughts or tendencies. The karma is still created! Of course, there *are* situations that require action, but I simply rest in the still center, and recognize the proper time and place to make the appropriate statement (or action). The anger and violence are an unnecessary liability; they're no longer needed.

The way to cultivate inner strength is by learning to "let go" in T'ai Chi Chih practice. It begins by releasing this tension in the knees, waist, wrists, and so forth. This doesn't happen by accident, but rather, by a choice. I tell new teachers that softness is a decision we make over and over and over in our practice, and it brings great inner strength to our lives. As one friend stated recently, "Softness holds great strength...more than I ever realized."

It is only through the stillness discovered within that we feel our connection with the Chi, and through it, to everyone and everything around us. When we lack a connection with life, we are filled with doubt and concern, and feel the need to control situations. Through T'ai Chi Chih, we *realize* our connection with all of life, and allow it to unfold and make itself known to us. This leads to Prajna, the inherent wisdom of the Chi that can only be found within. Without trying to control it, we find that life seems to teach us and respond to subtle suggestion. We discover a way to thrive without struggle, and our needs are easily met. This is what Justin Stone calls "Entering the Cosmic Rhythm" and it is the essence of his teaching.



Letter to Justin

New teacher has “unfathomable” gratitude for T'ai Chi Chih, Justin

Reprinted with permission from *The New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News*, July, 2000.

Dear Justin,

Thank you for your thoughtful, inspiring letter of congratulations on my becoming an accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor. I appreciate very much that you took the time to write it.

I have been waiting for the right time to unfold for me to write to you...a time of deep quiet...a moment in which I might be able to find the words to express and describe to you what is beyond the realm of words. My heart is full, and my spirit is quiet, glowing with the light that has softened and deepened within me as a result of the profound experience of the T'ai Chi Chih Teachers Accreditation Course week. I truly cannot adequately express the vastness and the depth of what occurred for me, under the extraordinary guidance of Ed Altman. I can only say that I know, with complete certainty, that a profound shift has occurred within my being as a result of that week, and I feel as if I have crossed over a bridge and am standing on firm ground, ready to devote my life to listening to the guidance that is within me...that “still, small voice” (Prajna)...it is from this place that I choose to live, and I dedicate my life to attuning to the flow of the Chi, and, trusting its innate wisdom, to allowing it to be my guide and teacher both in my own life and in my mission to help others to discover, through T'ai Chi Chih, their own inner teacher.

The most profound feeling I have been experiencing as a result of the T'ai Chi Chih accreditation course is learning to deeply listen, within, to the Chi...to deeply attune every second, and to be aware of even the most subtle shifts in its character, remaining vigilant at all times, noticing anything that interferes with the purity of the flow of the Chi, allowing the Chi to call me back, helping me to remain in the Cosmic Flow, experiencing the Real. And how wonderful to realize that one need not feel a sense of “failure” or self-criticism! All that is required is to be aware of the interference, and re-focus the attention back to the soles of the feet and

the shifting of the weight, feeling the substantial and the insubstantial, the softness of flowing...swimming through very heavy air, effortlessly...surrendering to the Chi...As Ed Altman said, “The breeze blows, and the clouds move,” on their own. As I constantly, second-by-second, go deeper within, I find that all I need to know is right there, in the flow of the Chi, within me. And when I experience a discomfort in any form (physical, emotional, mental) I experience a deep hunger to return to Cosmic Consciousness, a longing that comes from a state of imbalance. Through doing T'ai Chi Chih that hunger is filled, effortlessly and naturally. The wonderful thing is that the wisdom of the Chi knows how to restore the balance. If I stay attuned, allowing for softness and continuity of mind, the Chi will lead me back once again, filling me with the awareness of “peace that passeth all understanding.”

The gratitude for this “Knowing” is unfathomable. As an accredited T'ai Chi Chih Teacher, may I help others to find this gift which is theirs to know. T'ai Chi Chih will show me the way. Also, as I am embodying its principles, my life is flowing more easily. I am discovering trust...for, as T'ai Chi Chih is showing me, there is an intrinsic order and balance in the universe that can be felt within, and if one lives in accord with this truth, life unfolds naturally and effortlessly. T'ai Chi Chih is the teacher; one needs only to listen and respond to the inner “dialogue,” beyond words.

Thank you, Justin, for bringing T'ai Chi Chih into the world. Your teachings are an integral part of my spiritual work. I refer to your books, tapes, and videos constantly. Your clear, straightforward teachings are both illuminating and enlightening...

It is a joy to awaken each day to do T'ai Chi Chih and feel it in my life all day long!

– Beverly Weil

[Editor's note: Beverly was accredited at the Staten Island, NY T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Training in April, 2000.]



Letter to Justin

Physical and mental benefits gained

Reprinted with permission from *The New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News*, July, 2000.

Dear Justin,

It is a joy for me to have received your recent letter congratulating me on achieving my accreditation as a T'ai Chi Chih instructor. It is meaningful for me to have a personal connection with the person who has been

the vehicle of such a gift in my life. I have been practicing T'ai Chi Chih for five years, and know first hand the truth of what you say "that T'ai Chi Chih is of great benefit to humanity." I thought you might be interest-

ed to hear a little bit of what brought me to T'ai Chi Chih and the benefits I have experienced through my practice. About five years ago, I received a diagnosis of a very early stage, non-invasive breast cancer. Although my health was not actually at risk at this point, I nevertheless went in search of ways to take charge of my own health and wellness. When the mind is ready, the teacher appears! Someone suggested I try T'ai Chi Chih. Anthea Lee teaches in my community. About two thirds of the way through my first class, I received word that my father was in a serious condition, requiring immediate by-pass surgery (heart), to save his life. I flew to Vancouver to support him. Normally, I would have been highly anxious and emotional in this situation, but as I continued to practice the T'ai Chi Chih movements I knew so far on a daily basis, or whenever my anxiety started to build, I experienced beautiful peace, lightness of being, and even joy in the midst of this crisis. I felt support both inside me and all around me. I was able to support my father and all my family, instead of being incapacitated by the crisis. By the way, I have been cancer free for five years now, and my father, although he

died twice during the by-pass surgery, is doing very well these days, having experienced no damaging effects from his crisis.

Throughout the years following the above situations, I have practiced T'ai Chi Chih daily in my office before I start work. My job is very demanding in terms of volume of workload and other pressure. When I practice T'ai Chi Chih, I find I am not overwhelmed by the

work demands; I move slowly but accomplish more, with less effort, and maintain serenity.

Normally, I would have been highly anxious and emotional in this situation, but as I continued to practice the T'ai Chi Chih movements I knew so far on a daily basis, or whenever my anxiety started to build, I experienced beautiful peace, lightness of being, and even joy in the midst of this crisis. I felt support both inside me and all around me.

The Teachers' Accreditation with Ed Altman was invaluable to me, helping me go deeper with the movements and my practice. I learned from Ed's metaphors about the

movements and from the way he walked us through each aspect of each movement, and challenged us. I have so much respect for him as the leader of T'ai Chi Chih.

In response to your encouragement to do demonstrations as soon as possible, I can report that I have now done two that were well received, and I will be doing four more over the next two days. I find that all I have to do is mention that I have become accredited, and many people say they want to enroll for a class.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us new teachers. I hope to meet you next summer (2001) when the conference is in San Francisco. With respect and gratitude for the gift of T'ai Chi Chih. Happy Chi to you, also!

– Louise Bureau

[Editor's note: Louise was accredited at the Edmonton, AB, Canada T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Training in May, 2000.]



Forwarded letter

News from Folsom State Prison in CA

June 6, 2000

Mr. James K. Hecker (C-65520)
Folsom State Prison (1/C3-30)
P.O. Box 715071
Represa, CA 95671-5071

Good Karma Publishing
Ms. Jean Katus, Publisher
P.O. Box 511
Fort Yates, ND 58538

Dear Jean;

Thank you so very much again for all that you are doing for our group here in Old Folsom Prison. I have received the damaged books from the Bookpeople of Oakland, CA and the Bookmen Inc. of Minneapolis, MN. I believe Dr. Shrum is reviewing the new Justin Video. I will check with him. I am very anxious to see exactly how Justin is now doing the TCC movements and the most useful examples of the four teachers you mentioned. As I hear from various teachers returning from conferences and meetings, it seems that there are some subtle changes going on in the movements. The video should be a great help as it is the latest

information. It is very important to me and the men learning the form that we do it correctly. I have been informed that Ed Altman is going to come to Folsom on the 22nd of this month. We are all looking forward to his visit. Although the men learn from three accredited TCC teachers, they still consider it a great privilege to meet and talk to Ed, the appointed head of T'ai Chi Chih.

The books have been a great help. Justin has a unique way of knowing what a student's next questions will be, and answering those questions in an easy, logical, even historical manner. Many of the teachers and T'ai Chi practitioners that visit Folsom present other forms of Chi Kung and their interpretation of movements that will raise and store the chi. However, it is T'ai Chi Chih that the inmates continue to embrace. Much of this has to do with the form itself, however, I think an equal reason for their steadfastness is Justin's writing in the books you have donated.

Thank you, Jean, for your continued support of the Old Folsom T'ai Chi Chih program.

James K. Hecker

T'ai Chi Chih Teacher

Ed Altman responds to mention of "changes" in TCC

From time to time, I hear comments that the T'ai Chi Chih movements have "changed" in some way. Although there have been a few (extremely) minor adjustments in the way Justin Stone teaches T'ai Chi Chih, the movements themselves have remained very consistent throughout the years.

One day I asked Justin about this because I wanted to make

sure I'm not teaching the T'ai Chi Chih movements incorrectly. My objective is for students 20 generations from now to have the opportunity to learn and practice T'ai Chi Chih as it was originated.

Justin's response was that T'ai Chi Chih is now being taught the way it was originated, but that for many years people were teaching it differently. He explained further that since we are

now emphasizing the proper principles and focusing on *how to move*, people perceive that things have changed, when in fact, this is how he has always taught and practiced the movements.

Ed Altman



International News

French Teenagers and T'ai Chi Chih

By Catherine Brioussel

I started a T'ai Chi Chih presentation in front of a new group of teenagers. As I started doing the movements, the room became very quiet. Had they stopped breathing, focusing on the movements, Rocking Motion in their eyes? They were amazed, just as if I was someone else.

But between watching and practising, there is a big step. I only asked for volunteers. You know teenagers are very much aware of each other. Signing up for T'ai Chi Chih was daring, something unusual and needed courage. Eight of them signed up.

I could see what T'ai Chi Chih could and would bring to some of them but I didn't want to influence them.

There was that shy boy who sat at the back of the class, his head in his shoulders, having difficulties with his writing, tiny little letters I could hardly read. As I was watching him, I was thinking of a late fall leaf. He had been away from school for a couple of weeks so I asked him why. Without a word, he showed me his notebook and I read that his father had just died. I was very sorry and felt uncomfortable. This is the sort of personal event a teacher should know about but the school is quite big and we are not told about such things. For me, it was another reason to have him in my group but I

didn't feel like insisting. The next day I was starting T'ai Chi Chih and I couldn't help thinking of that boy and the benefits he could get. And...You must have guessed...He just turned up and said "Would you accept me?"

THE CHI WAS WORKING ON ITS OWN! There must be a pulse !

He has been simply GREAT! After two weeks, he was more relaxed. He could smile and I discovered he had quite a sense of humour!

Maybe you know that most schools in France are rather academic and teachers haven't got many opportunities to talk to the pupils and really get to know them. With my class of T'ai Chi Chih, I happened to find out more about them— that most of them had problems. A girl was having epilepsy. Another one was wearing a surgical corset to strengthen her back. A third one had to get used to being in a new family with other children after his parents' divorce. But I also had this girl who has been doing Karate for several years and really enjoyed T'ai Chi Chih and the notion of "letting go".

Having this group has been a real gift. I don't know whether they will go on with T'ai Chi Chih on their own but they have become aware of the power of the chi. Thank you Justin, Ed, Florence, Marlène and all of you.

Teaching T'ai Chi Chih Without Classes

By Jan Linthorst

When I returned from the teacher's training class, last July, I found that opportunities to teach classes in this area of Orange County, California, were not so easy to come by. For one thing, a plethora of classes ranging from a variety of Qi Gong practices to T'ai Chi Ch'uan were on every Senior Center program and city Parks and Recreation department. And also churches had some

classes along that line. Then, something interesting occurred. On occasion, I would be with someone who, as I saw it, could benefit from T'ai Chi Chih. I would ask if I could show a few movements and I would end up with teaching them these movements. This continued for a while. Sometimes there would be someone who complained about anxiety. Another time there would be someone with failing health, or a weight problem. After a few

months of introducing movements here and there, there are now quite a few practicing T'ai Chi Chih and coming back for more. Now I have once a week an ongoing practice class. I have found that demonstrating T'ai Chi Chih on the basis of need and interest to individuals sticks better. And even if you have classes, opportunities like this may show up.



Following conference, others react to teacher's heightened state of chi

By Sandy McAlister

Have you ever felt really good, happy, contented? You smile at everyone, you talk freely to strangers, and the world seems just a wonderful place. You just feel high on life. (I know that sounds corny, but I bet you know what I mean.) Well, I've had that experience in reverse, sort of, a couple times. The most recent going home from the conference. I felt contented, calm, slowed-down, but not particularly smiley, or "Chatty-Kathy," or oozing a love-and-peace goeey attitude.

But people were soooo friendly toward me. They smiled at me, they initiated conversation, and they answered my questions for directions and help pleasantly. At the train station one young fellow offered, as he reached for my suitcase, to carry it down a long flight of stairs, not waiting for my response. I'm sorry to say I had a passing thought of never seeing it again, but he simply handed it to me and walked on.

I arrived home 11 hours later than was scheduled, due to a small mechanical failure on one airplane, which snowballed into various other delays. It wasn't until I arrived home that I looked back on the past day with clarity. Have you ever been in a group setting and

I didn't feel any differently but people were sure reacting to me differently, in a subtle but noticeable way.

the joker of the group slyly puts a sign on someone's backside with an obnoxious message? Well, that's how I felt I must have looked the past day — A big neon sign on my forehead saying "talk to me, I'm friendly," or "help me, I need it," or maybe just a picture of a big toothy grin on my forehead. I didn't feel any differently but

people were sure reacting to me differently, in a subtle but noticeable way.

The one other time I had this experience was after my teacher training and it lasted about three days. It was kinda spooky. I really

did feel like I had some kind of sign on my forehead. I know I looked in the mirror more than once to see if I looked different in some way.

Justin has said that if enough people do T'ai Chi Chih there would be peace in the world. I experienced that to a small degree. Both experiences followed a lot of T'ai Chi Chih practice with a lot of other teachers. I'm convinced there was something different about me — not that I could tell, but others could. Some might call it picking up the vibes but we know it was sensing the state of chi. Others felt it and reacted accordingly. T'ai Chi Chih is life-changing in more ways than we can sometimes perceive.

Letter to Jean Katus

[Editor's note: The following accredited teacher, known previously as Robert Buss, wrote to Jean Katus recently about coming back to his T'ai Chi Chih practice after learning T'ai Chi Ch'uan.]

... Several weeks ago I was spending the better part of the day at my office previewing some videos that I had gotten for the parish. They were very good ones and I probably had been sitting watching them for

close to three hours. I decided to get up and move around a bit and it occurred to me that I could practice a little T'ai Chi. Then I realized that instead of moving a table to make room for T'ai Chi Ch'uan, I could try doing some TCC right where I was standing. I wasn't sure that I would remember all of it (as it turned out, I did) but thought that I could at least do a few movements. Well, those few movements were so pleasant that I continued until I did the

whole form and the energy was terrific. I have continued to do TCC ever since. I have also found that if I do a few minutes of TCC before doing TCC it makes the latter slower and better. I thought that you might like to hear about this and thus the inspiration of this letter. Please feel free to share it with others if you deem it appropriate.

Fr. Gregory Buss



Practice, Practice, Practice

By Carmen Brocklehurst

As I did my T'ai Chi Chih practice the day after coming home from the great 2000 Conference in New Jersey hosted by Sr. Antonia and Carolyn Perkins, I noticed that I was being extra careful in doing the movements. We had received many helpful tips from Justin, Ed, and each other. The Chi was very much at work helping me incorporate the best way to get the most out of my practice. This was probably true for many of you also.

It would have been easy to say, "This feels awkward, so I guess the old way was right." However, I know from experience with my students that corrections may feel awkward for a while. It is also easy to feel that the person correcting us doesn't have as much experience as we do, and perhaps they are wrong. But I try never to

discount what any T'ai Chi Chih teacher tells me, especially if they can show me what we are supposed to be doing and the wrong way that I may be doing it. Our bodies truly do feel the flow of the chi with every movement, and if this isn't happening, we must be open to a correction regardless of how long we have been doing T'ai Chi Chih.

Justin has often said, "Never do a careless T'ai Chi Chih." He does not say this because he is being picky, but because he wants us to get the maximum benefit from our practice. It is up to us whether or not we will allow ourselves to get that benefit. For those of us fortunate enough to attend the conference, the heightened flow of chi is sure to follow as we practice correctly, love, and share the chi.

Newly-accredited teachers respond to Edmonton, AB Teacher Training Course

Hello, *Vital Force*. I have a T'ai Chi Chih story to share. I am a brand new T'ai Chi Chih Instructor from the recent (May 2000) Edmonton, Alberta training. Anthea Lee from Edmonton is my instructor. My story is about a recent job interview held a few weeks after the training. About an hour before my scheduled time I did a full set of T'ai Chi Chih and took the interview feeling relaxed and composed. I knew I had done ok but the feedback was amazing. Apparently I really aced it. One of the panel members said she would talk to me next time she was to do an interview. My new manager (yes, I was offered the position and accepted) said what struck him was my being so 'grounded'. I know for sure that this was T'ai Chi Chih doing its thing. Ed Altman: ya did good! Thank you, I'm very grateful.

— Garret Tayler

Greetings from Marilyn to Ed, Pam, Don, and all my other dear friends in the T'ai Chi Chih community. How did T'ai Chi Chih teacher accreditation change me and the other students who attended the training? I can only speak for myself when I say that I am more joyful than ever before. I attribute this to the stimulating discussions and lectures led by Ed, and to the mindfulness and concentration which were felt during our daily practices. The opportunity to enter into the cosmic rhythm was profound.

As an aside, I began thinking about any undesirable old habit patterns I might be carrying around. I decided by the end of the week that I could be more joyful still if I would let old habit patterns that plagued me at times (such as worry, anxiety, and yes, even anger, flare-ups) drop away. I am learning to let them go—it's wonderful!

In closing, again and again, I ask the same question, "How did T'ai Chi Chih teacher accreditation ~~wreak~~ change me?" and I answer myself... "I can truly say that I felt that not my body, but ME, was sharing a life with the cosmic universe."

— Marilyn Wilson



TCC Workshop in Bay Area, CA

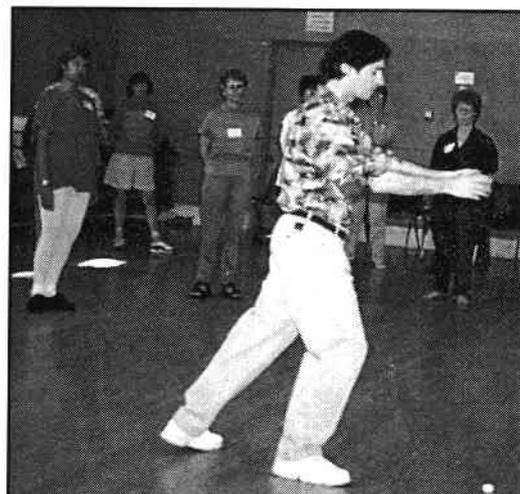
Kick-off to Summer

By Denise M. Clark

The Memorial Day weekend elicits reminders of the kick-off to summertime. The first juicy bite of corn-on-the-cob, a nice wedge of sweet watermelon and the soft swaying of the back porch glider all beckon us to relax and reflect upon the warm days of a new season. Who would consider attending a TCC Workshop with Ed Altman on Sunday, May 28,

and Recreation program. Pat Huseby and I greeted our guests and ushered them into a large, wooden-floored ballroom as we answered questions about street parking and lunch at local spots. (Sundays and holidays are a good time to host as parking is generally free.)

After a brief introduction, Ed jumped right into the morning session beginning with a new



Students and teachers watch as Ed makes a point while demonstrating *Bass Drum*. Photo: Pat Huseby



Sandy McAlister (center) chats with her students Karen Silva (left) and Georgann Wright, both of whom were in final preparation stages for the Teacher Training course in July. Photo: Denise Clark

2000 as part of this holiday weekend? Fifty-one dedicated practitioners all came to improve and refine moves. Veteran teachers, new students, and teacher candidates all found new inspiration and techniques as the day progressed.

The event began on a pleasant, bright California Sunday in the small, tree-lined town of Danville at the Veterans' Hall, provided by the sponsor, the Town of Danville Parks

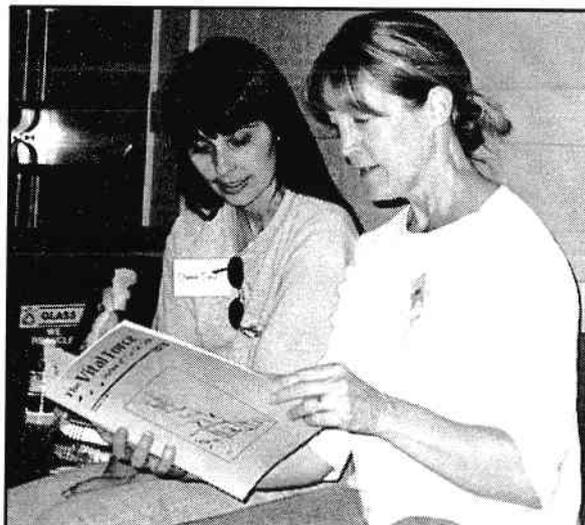
and Recreation program. Pat Huseby and I greeted our guests and ushered them into a large, wooden-floored ballroom as we answered questions about street parking and lunch at local spots. (Sundays and holidays are a good time to host as parking is generally free.)

After a brief introduction, Ed jumped right into the morning session beginning with a new way to sense Rocking Motion by waiting for the heels and toes to naturally lift and return rather than forcing the movement. We also practiced the transfer of weight from one leg to the other by first keeping the feet flat on the floor. Once we felt a complete move-

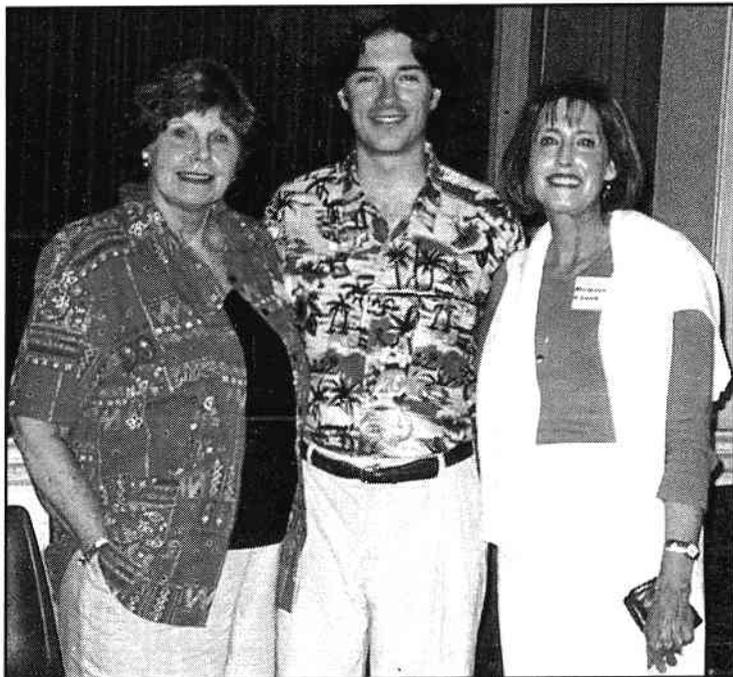
ment of weight exchange with the back leg straight and knees soft, then we practiced lifting the back heel slightly (one to two inches) so that we could maintain proper form.

have short arms, making small, concise movements, while the legs are solid and firmly planted as a foundation. We concluded the morning and many left in groups to lunch together, catching up on news or establishing new friendships.

As we reconvened for the afternoon session, Ed selected certain moves, including Carry the Ball to the Side and the Taffys, and emphasized the importance of a soft, pliable waist. This helped us to improve the execution of the move and have a greater sense of balance, especially with Perpetual Motion



(L-R): Students Diana Day and Jan Heinz browse a sample issue of *The Vital Force*. Photo: Denise Clark



Co-Hosts Pat Huseby (left) and Denise Clark smile with Course Instructor Ed Altman. Photo provided by Denise Clark

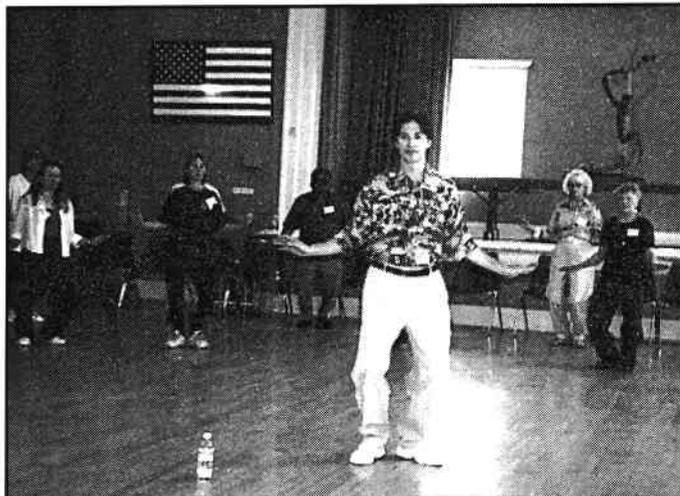
Taffy. We continued with a full practice.

"It sounds like a ship listing from one side to the other," commented one student as we practiced the movements in unison. The creaking of the wooden-planked, suspended floor responded graciously to the give and take of our movements, like a mother rocking a child in her arms. Peacefulness enveloped the room.

With a wonderful sense of calm, Ed moved us into a question and answer session. "[Do you have anything to say on practicing with shoes or not, in sand or not?]" asked RoSanna, an exuberant, new student. "No sand in shoes," [quipped] Ed. We discussed our expectations of TCC. "I no longer expect TCC to cure me of my illness," said Jan, "but I know it will be with me, making the process easier."

As a kick-off to summer, attending Ed's workshop was a very "cool" thing to do. The candidates sharp-

ened their skills for teacher training, the teachers were given new tools to improve explanations of moves, and the students were exposed to a large group practice and sharing time that they never had access to before. Ed Altman is responsible for making this a special holiday weekend and we thank him and all the volunteers who helped to make it happen, including Barbara Riley for designing yet another beautiful floral arrangement for our enjoyment. [See photo at right.]



Course Instructor Ed Altman (center) leads the group through *Bird Flaps its Wings*. Photo: Pat Huseby



Barbara Riley donated her talents to the event by designing an elaborate, yet simple Japanese flower arrangement for all to enjoy. Photo: Denise Clark



Through a Beginner's Eyes

By RoSanna Braccioforte
Student of Noel Altman

As soon as I noticed the May 28 Workshop with Ed Altman on the TCC web site, I registered to attend without hesitation. I knew what a rare opportunity this was and didn't want to miss out. Okay, so I hadn't even taken my first class yet, big deal. The workshop was being held on the weekend after my fifth class. By then, I would have some clue as to what was going on. Right?

It wasn't until the day of the workshop that I started to have reservations about going. I thought to myself; *"Who do you think you are? You have no right going to this work shop. This is something that you have to 'earn.' You attended only FIVE classes. You only know up to 'Daughter in the Valley', and you keep screwing THAT up ... you shouldn't be going."* I was nervous and excited. I decided to go, even if I had to sit in the back and observe the whole time.

From the minute I walked in the door, I knew I belonged there. There was an overwhelming vibe of "coolness". Everyone was friendly and "at peace". I was no longer nervous. I realized that I had attended this workshop to learn, and so did every other person in that room. I felt honored to be in that room. To be taught by someone as knowledgeable and gifted as Ed Altman. To have this opportunity to observe a room full of poetry, grace, elegance and energy. WOW!

As the day progressed, something dawned on me. Some of the people in that room with me, the "I've only taken five classes" beginner, had been practicing TCC for 20 years. Some of them were Teachers and yet, they were still students — just like me. They too were there to learn from Ed. They too were there to find their faults and then concentrate on improving them. I no longer had to strive for perfection, just constant improvement.

By the time the work shop was over, I wished it had been longer, or maybe even two days. I had absorbed so much knowledge but craved more. I couldn't wait to apply everything I learned that day in my next practice.

That night, I dreamed about T'ai Chi Chih. I was floating, just like Ed described. In my dream, T'ai Chi Chih was doing T'ai Chi Chih. I had perfect balance, perfect alignment, perfect form...then Justin screamed; "It's all wrong!"

When I woke, I couldn't wait to begin my practice. Everything Ed taught me was racing through my mind. I visualized being at the workshop and doing the movements as he described. There was a difference in my balance, my yinping and yanging, my concentration. My pace slowed, I felt more at ease and, well, the best way I can describe the difference is that it was like taking the BART train as opposed to the NYC subway.

I felt empowered. Going to that workshop was powerful even if I had only taken five classes. I got from it what I was supposed to get, nothing more, nothing less.

I look forward to future workshops, to receiving my *Vital Force* subscription, to constantly improving my practice and, eventually, in a few years, when I have earned it, to becoming a teacher. I would love to teach children. I have two sons (five and six) who have already taken an interest in TCC and have asked me to teach them. I am hopeful that they will be patient, as it may take me a few years to get to that place. Even as a beginner, I know that the journey will be well worth it.



June 4, 2000

Twenty-two volunteers meet to prepare *The Vital Force* for mailing



(L-R): Wendy Helms, Former VFJ Staff Members Lois Mahaney and Barbara Riley, and Sharon Potts—a student of Opie Reed who was visiting California from New York—stamp the return address information and the bulk mail permit on all mailing envelopes. Photo: Pat Huseby

(Clockwise, beginning in front left): Sandy McAlister, Enid Meyer—a student of Barbara Riley, David Schulberg, VFJ Staff Member Doug Harned, Joanna Woodrow, VFJ Editor Noel Altman, John Steinmetz and Eddie Roberts stuff issues with inserts, fill envelopes with issues, and apply First Class postage to stuffed envelopes. Photo: Pat Huseby



VFJ Staff Member Ed Altman (left) supervises the grouping and coding of issues being sent by bulk mail, while **(L-R)** Linda Prosche, Former VFJ Editor Roberta Taggart, and Linda Braga seal envelopes and apply address labels and bulk mail codes. Photo: Pat Huseby

Not shown, but present (and helping) at the mailing were: Pat Huseby, Yuko Borland, Student Al Borland, Diane See, Pat Bourne, Adele Wenig.



TV station films and broadcasts San Antonio, TX teacher training course

By Sr. Alice Holden
Course Host

What comes to your mind when you hear "San Antonio"? The Alamo? Not for long! Soon it will be known for its prolific classes in T'ai Chi Chih.

The camera rolled on Wednesday, June 14, 2000, as FOX TV filmed an interview with Ed Altman, Head of TCC and director of the Teacher Training, and Ann Sollars, teacher candidate. Reporter Cynthia Lee asked poignant questions, none of which stumped the experts. After the interview, Cynthia joined in the practice while the photographer rolled the film. He took pictures of the practice from every conceivable angle. At 9pm that evening, Fox TV's

feature, "The Edge," aired an excellent show. The results would make you proud. Ed and Ann spoke quite clearly about TCC. The practice group, under Ed's lead, looked very smooth. People were invited to call a designated number for more information about classes. We received a few calls and hope to get more.

How did that happen? One of the students asked a friend in public relations (who had just moved to Austin) to send some Press Releases out regarding the Teacher Training. She did and Fox TV responded. Now we have a short demonstration video and a whole lot of momentum.

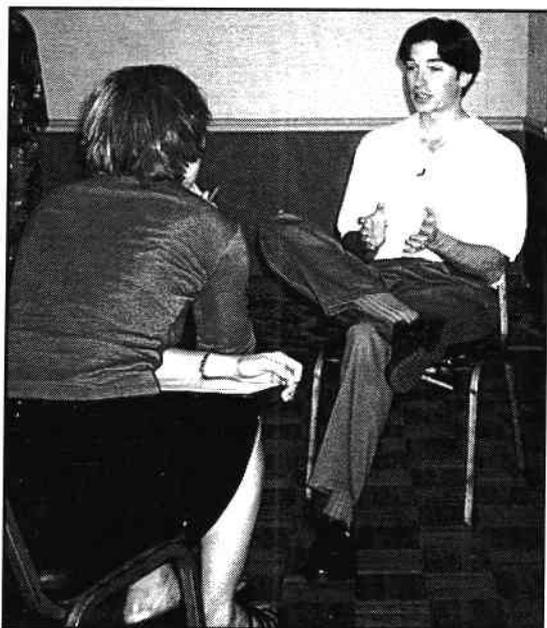
At the Saturday graduation, everyone received their certificate, signed by Justin Stone, and a list of all participants in the training course. Teachers Auditing: Caroline Guillott and Bitsy LeBlanc of Lake Charles, LA, and Jo Trautmann of Georgetown, TX.

At the Graduation on Saturday, friends and families of the graduates, other students of



Fox 29 News reporter Cynthia Lee (far left) and her cameraman set up for the interview with Head of T'ai Chi Chih Ed Altman. Course Host Sr. Alice Holden smiles in the center. Following the interview, Ed led the candidates, the auditors and the reporter in a practice, which was filmed from all different angles. The final segment, which lasted about five minutes, aired on the 9 o'clock news that night.

Photo: Caroline Guillott



Cynthia Lee, reporter for "The Edge," a Fox 29 News Show, listens intently as Head of T'ai Chi Chih Ed Altman discusses the purpose of T'ai Chi Chih.

Photo: Caroline Guillott

TCC and Sr. Geri Kline, local teacher, enjoyed a practice together, followed by a light lunch. All visited and enjoyed each other's company.

On Sunday, the graduates who reside in San Antonio met at the Center for Spirituality and the Arts and gave birth to SARA of TCC (San Antonio Regional Association of T'ai Chi Chih). This group pledged to practice regularly, to meet monthly and to assist in the staffing of a Saturday on-going open practice at the Japanese Garden. They also agreed to teach classes at the Center, beginning in July. They will assist each other in the teaching process. We pray that Sara of TCC will have a long and happy life spreading the CHI.



The Press Release

T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHER CERTIFICATION
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
JUNE 12-17, 2000
CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY AND THE ARTS
CONTACT: SISTER ALICE HOLDEN, CCVI
210-829-5980

Thirteen students are hoping to be certified as teachers of a new form of T'ai Chi, called T'ai Chi Chih (pronounced Tie-che-chuh). Certification class will be conducted by Ed Altman of San Rafael, CA, appointed head of T'ai Chi Chih.

STUDENTS

From San Antonio:

Renza Baker
Penny Bowen-Oliver
Vivian T. Chicca-Sikora
Stella Jaidar
Sophie Roland
Bonnie Susan Simons
Ann Sollars
Eugenia A. Stell

From out of town:

Andrew J. Anderson, Illinois
Roberta J. Anderson, Illinois
Carla Kelley, Oklahoma
Larry Sava, Texas
Alejandro Rodriguez, Mexico

T'AI CHI CHIH was originated in 1974 by an exceptional man named Justin Stone. Mr. Stone lives in Albuquerque, NM and is still personally involved in this form which, within the past 25 years, has spread across the world. An instructor of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, the ancient form, Justin went to the Orient in search of a greater understanding of the philosophy, culture and spirituality of the East. His genius was to create an entirely new form

which is based on the principles of the ancient form; but is incomparable to that form as T'ai Chi Chih is NOT a martial art. None of the movements has any martial application whatsoever. Rather, it is often referred to as a "moving meditation." When practiced regularly, it serves as an aid in balancing the Chi, or Vital Force, within a person. Results reported from practitioners of the form are outstanding.

Twenty soft, flowing, continuous movements are each repeated nine times and followed by a rest where the chi is grounded and the energy balanced. This results in a renewed spirit, mind and body. As the circulating of Vital Energy or Chi continues throughout the practice, participants feel a diminishment of pain and a clarification of mind. It needs to be experienced to be believed.

Some of the beneficial effects of faithful practice include: increased energy, reduced tension, weight and blood pressure control, acceptance of reality, increased creativity, spiritual attainment, serenity, joy.

Classes are now held at The Center for Spirituality and the Arts, 4707 Broadway in San Antonio. With new teachers, the hope is that there will be more sites available. If any club, church, business or other organization would like a free 20 min. demonstration of the form, call the Center for scheduling.

Graduation from the Certification Class will be held on Saturday, June 17, after a Practice Session (11:00-12:00) to which all are invited. It will be held in the dance studio in the Agnese-Sosa Building of the University of the Incarnate Word, Broadway and Hildebrand.



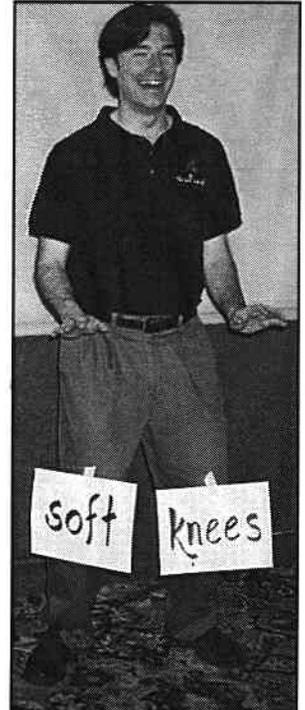
June 12-17, 2000

Scenes from San Antonio, TX Teacher Training



(L-R): Sr. Geri Kline and Course Host Sr. Alice Holden visit on graduation day.

Photo provided by Sr. Alice Holden



Course Instructor Ed Altman wears a gift from the newly-accredited teachers on graduation day!

Photo: Bitsy LeBlanc



Newly-accredited and auditing teachers alike join together with area students to perform the final practice.

Photo provided by Sr. Alice Holden



On Friday night the candidates celebrated on San Antonio's famous "Riverwalk" with Mexican food and mariachi music. (Clockwise, beginning at far left corner of the table): Lucky Sikora, Sr. Eugenia Stell, Andy Anderson, Bobble Anderson, Course Instructor Ed Altman, Larry Sava, Bonnie Simons, Stella Jaidar.

Photo: Caroline Gullott



Candidate Alejandro Rodriguez (left), a resident of Monterrey, Mexico has plans for opening up Central America to T'ai Chi Chih. Auditing teachers Bitsy LeBlanc (second from left) and Caroline Guilott (far right), traveled from their homes in Lake Charles, LA to assist at the training for the entire week. The two co-teach their classes. Course Instructor Ed Altman stands in the center.

Photo: Sr. Alice Holden



(L-R): Husband and wife candidates Andy and Bobbie Anderson listen to fellow candidate Sr. Eugenia Stell (right).

Photo: Sr. Alice Holden



(L-R): Candidates Carla Kelley, Bobbie Anderson, Stella Jaidar, Course Instructor Ed Altman and Candidate Larry Sava are all smiles on graduation day.

Photo: Sr. Alice Holden



The proud new teachers! **Back row, (L-R):** Andy Anderson, Larry Sava, Carla Kelley, Bonnie Simons, Course Instructor Ed Altman, Alejandro Rodriguez, Course Host Sr. Alice Holden; **Front row, (L-R):** Sophie Roland, Bobbie Anderson, Renza Baker, Sr. Eugenia Stell, Ann Sollars, Lucky Sikora, Stella Jaidar, Penny Bowen-Oliver.

Photo provided by Sr. Alice Holden



Berkeley training yields 16 teachers

By Sandy McAlister
Course Host

Every teacher training is a wonderful experience but this one, held July 10-15 in Berkeley, CA, was particularly special for me because I was there every day. I watched as the students bloomed into teachers under Ed's guidance. I received teaching from Ed to such a depth that I have never heard before. And I experienced the support of the T'ai Chi Chih family. Thank you to all who gave of their time and energy to see that the training ran well and the students were supported.

Through Ed's excellent teaching he is enabling everyone (if they are an empty cup) to take their T'ai Chi Chih practice to a much deeper level. A couple students mentioned they had no idea the depth of this practice, that they never realized there was so much to T'ai Chi Chih.

Watching the candidates struggle to make changes, to let go and embrace change, was painful, funny, sweet, joyous, and satisfying. The whole range of emotions are experienced at a training and all who attend are affected and touched.

We cannot be good teachers unless we move well and embody the practice. The training gives all of us, candidates and auditing teachers alike, a chance to strengthen and improve our form, to pay attention and work with the chi through our movements.

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to be part of 16 candidates' transition to teachers. While all



Congratulations to the 16 graduates of the course! **Back row, (L-R):** Mary Pat George, Karen Silva, Roxanne Reynolds, Betty Lue Lieber, Stephen Morse; **Third row, (L-R):** Kathy Brunson, Sarina Rosen, Patricia Strand, Georgann Wright; **Second row, (L-R):** Caryn Law, Ursula Smith, Course Instructor Ed Altman, Course Host Sandy McAlister; **Front row, (L-R):** Linda Frampton, Martina Kurzer, Barbara Buckley, Lilliana Mendez, Norma Jennings.

Photo provided by Sandy McAlister

made progress, three candidates were asked to continue working with their teachers for a while before teaching, and another received a deferred certificate requiring further work.

Ed is continuing to raise the standard of proficiency required to receive certification. Don't we all want T'ai Chi Chih to be represented well? So teachers must be diligent in thoroughly preparing students for training. The training process is difficult enough without the strain of ill-prepared students. It makes it hard on them, and the whole class is affected.

Congratulations to the 16 new members of the T'ai Chi Chih family. May your practice continue to grow and deepen and may those you teach honor the gift you give them.

Teacher appreciates opportunity to audit

Auditing the Berkeley Teacher Training was a fulfilling experience that I highly recommend to every teacher! Even after 16 years, I always learn so much that deepens my awareness, practice & teaching of T'ai Chi Chih. I also feel it is an opportunity to be of service...to give back to T'ai Chi Chih by assisting in training new teachers.

Thank you Justin & Ed, for making the Teacher Trainings available to auditing teachers at no charge! I encourage every teacher to audit at least once a year. Not only will you benefit...so will your students...& the teacher candidates.

- Pam Towne



Becoming an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher

By Patricia Strand

After the first day of class [in the Berkeley, CA Teacher Training course], I was sure I knew nothing about T'ai Chi Chih. Then on the morning of the second day, while practicing the move Pulling Taffy, Ed came up in front of me and said softly, "There is nothing you are doing about this move that is correct."

I studied the words for the move. I practiced. I asked for help, and advice. I worked diligently. The next morning, Ed said to me: "I can see some improvement."

That afternoon he said he could see I was paying attention, but more work was still needed. I asked Pam Towne if she would teach me this move tomorrow morning as though I had never seen it before—I felt I needed to start from scratch. She agreed to meet me before class the next day. Then Wednesday evening each of us had our "talk" with Ed and Sandy. Ed said to me: "I am concerned with the way you do the side to side movements, especially in Pulling Taffy—concerned enough, you may not be accredited this week."

My disappointment hit first, then anger, then, a phone call from my husband. He said, "Well, you could have continued doing the move as you were for another six months, or be where you now are, learning to do it correctly."

Wow, he was right—those words started my thoughts off again in the right direction. I practiced and read more that evening. I let go of needing to be accredited this week—I knew I would be when the time was right.

That night I woke up thinking our room was on fire! I felt an intense heat in the center of my body radiating out through my arms, and fingers, my legs and

toes. I threw the covers off, still partly asleep. I drifted back in slumber. Finally awaking fully at 5:00am., I got up to practice T'ai Chi Chih. When I began to move, these words were inside me somewhere: *I am nothing, I am one with the Tao, the Chi moves me.*

Thursday morning I felt so different. I met with Pam Towne and we had a beginner's half-hour class. Then later, when we all began our practice together in class, soft music was playing. No one spoke. I began to cry. I could not stop. I continued to do the movements, with my nose running and tears running down my face. I began to feel a deep release, healing a long ago physical trauma to my lower body.

That afternoon during practice Ed said to me: "I am very encouraged by what I see."

More practice, more reading. I went to class again early on Friday morning. Another student arrived shortly after I did. We spoke briefly. I explained what I was working on. She watched me and asked if I minded if she made a suggestion. I started to say please don't, then felt, yes, it would be okay. Two things she said to me clicked—the rest of the move changed. After practicing this way three or four times, Ed walked in. He watched me doing the move, and said softly, "Well done."

My heart leaped, but I was afraid to show it. I wasn't exactly sure what he meant. I asked Pam. She said: "He means you have done what he asked you to do." That afternoon, Ed and Sandy took me aside and told me I would be accredited tomorrow. I had done the work.

By stepping aside and allowing the Chi to flow, I received my own miracle. I am now an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher. Kindergarten is great—I can't wait for the first grade!



News Shorts

Update

Day of "Joy Thru Movement" Celebrating T'ai Chi Chih

By the time the September issue of the *Vital Force* reaches the T'ai Chi Chih Community, there should be concrete ideas and plans as to how and what each participant will do to celebrate this very special day.

I am getting in touch with all my past and present students and asking them to join me in a practice session. This will have to be planned and coordinated well as November 20, 2000 is a Monday, which is a workday for many.

Some examples are: a daytime demonstration at a university campus, a lunchtime demonstration at a public area (if it is not too cold), or at a shopping mall, an evening demonstration at a bookstore like Borders or a community center where T'ai Chi Chih is taught. If you work in a hospital, a corporation, a government facility, get permission from the Human Resource Office to make a presentation or offer a sample class. I am making posters and will be handing out flyers with information on T'ai Chi Chih (classes, benefits, etc.), for participants and "watchers" or "passersby". Be creative on how to make this first **Day of "Joy Thru Movement" / Celebrating T'ai Chi Chih** as much fun and worthy of the purpose (to honor Justin Stone and to educate the public about T'ai Chi Chih) as possible. I am sure everybody has ideas and I urge you to join in in this celebration. Make this day one where you will experience and manifest joy in the heart, joy in the mind, and joy in the soul!

— Aida Wilks

[Editor's Note: Please use the title given when publicizing this event so we, as a community, can be consistent.]

Aug. 2-5, 2001

Next Teachers' Conference Booked!

If you were not at the New Jersey Teachers' Conference this summer, you missed a good one. The setting, the planning and the attendees combined for a marvelous experience. But, guess what? It's happening again. Next

summer, Conference 2001, in the San Francisco Bay Area. Set some time aside NOW for the conference, and you may want to add a few extra days for some sightseeing, too. (Dip your toes in the Pacific Ocean, hug a redwood, or stroll The City.) The Bay Area teachers are preparing a conference that will nourish us and benefit our students. Teachers can benefit now by early registration. The form is enclosed with this *Vital Force* issue. If T'ai Chi Chih is important in your life, then it is important for you to be at the conference.

— Sandy McAlister

Candidate info on TCC website

The T'ai Chi Chih web site (www.taichichih.org) has been updated to include information about the T'ai Chi Chih teacher accreditation process. The site now emphasizes the need to be accredited to teach T'ai Chi Chih, and includes the Teacher Candidate Preparation Guidelines as well. Please refer to this information when working with students who are interested in becoming accredited T'ai Chi Chih teachers. When you have students who need this information (and you do not have a computer), please send a SASE to me and I'll send a copy to you.

— Ed Altman

Info on teaching for college credit

Any one who is interested in Teaching TCC for College Credit and wants input on curriculum guidelines and procedures: Let Christeen McLain, P.O. Box 2821, Fargo, ND 58108-2821 share input, if needed, for your vision with TCC.

I have taught for credit since 1996 at Minnesota State University in Moorhead. Initially it was listed under Physical Education but now is being re-aligned for HEALTH. For the first two years, students were college students. Now Human Resources has covered ALL staff and faculty with tuition waivers to attend TCC. This has been active since 1998. One faculty member (Paula Ahles) went on for certification.

— Christeen McLain



Calendar of Events

<p>Sept. 21 thru 24, 2000</p> <p>MEDITATION RETREAT W/ JUSTIN STONE Location: Albuquerque, NM Contact: For the NM TCC Center: Marjie Bassler P.O. Box 53034 Albuquerque, NM 87153 Marjie's Phone: (505) 823-1817</p> <p><i>(limited space available)</i></p> <p>Attendance Fee: \$170</p>	<p>November 20, 2000</p> <p>DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT" CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH Location: Worldwide <i>(See opposite page)</i></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 e-mail: aperkins@midwest.net</p> <p>Teacher Fee: \$25 Student Fee: \$40</p>	<p>April 27</p> <p>HALF DAY TCC TEACHER RENEWAL (8:30am-noon)</p> <p>April 27 thru 29, 2001</p> <p>SEIJAKU TEACHER TRAINING (Begins 4:00pm) Location: Edmonton, AB CANADA Contact: Chery Ann Hoffmeyer PO Box 57032 Sherwood Park, AB T8A 5L7 CANADA Phone: (780) 467-8701 e-mail: cheryann.hoffmeyer@home.com</p> <p>TCC Teacher Renewal Fee: \$20 CAD Seijaku Teacher Training Fee: \$300 U.S. Auditing Seijaku Teachers: \$20 U.S.</p>
<p>October 9 thru 14, 2000</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Columbia, PA (York, PA area) Contact: Jean Markey 351 East Maple St. Apt. A Dallastown, PA 17313-1831 Phone: (717) 244-1607</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>	<p>May 7 thru 12, 2001</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Fullerton, CA (Orange County) Contact: Pam Towne 107 Calle Vista Camarillo, CA 93010-1711 Phone: (805) 987-3607 e-mail: ptowne@inreach.com</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>
<p>October 23 thru 28, 2000</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Albuquerque, NM Contact: For the NM TCC Center: Dora Derzon 1554 Rosalba NE Albuquerque, NM 87112 Phone: (505) 299-0523 e-mail: msderzo@earthlink.net</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>	<p>June 18 thru 23, 2001</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Minneapolis, MN Contact: Sr. Rita Foster 2005 2nd Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55404-2602 Phone: (612) 872-8624 e-mail: rfoster@csjstpaul.org</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p> <p>August 2-5, 2001</p> <p>16TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE Location: San Francisco Bay Area, CA <i>(See opposite page and insert flyer)</i></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.



FLOWING INTO THE NEW MILLENIUM with Softness and Continuity

15th INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHER'S CONFERENCE
JULY 20 - 23, 2000

Xavier Retreat and Conference Center
Convent Station, New Jersey

[Editor's note: *The Vital Force* received 70 written responses from the 152 attending teachers during and after the conference weekend! Thank you to all of you who took the time to write! Due to space limitations, I, unfortunately, couldn't print them all]

What was amazing to me was the wide range of comments—while there was some overlapping, particularly in expressing gratitude to the conference committee, there was much more variety than similarity in what was noticed and appreciated. All together, and with the photos from our volunteer photographers

(who donated their time and talents to this endeavor), I think they present well the overall feeling of the 2000 Teachers' Conference.]

Just a fantastic job done by the conference committee under Sister Antonia's and Carolyn's guidance. Lots of elves that magically attended to all the details - posting signs, water refills, chairs, electronics, music. Many thanks to all for making this a great momentum builder for the new millenium!

- Guy Kent
Albuquerque, NM

What an enriching & enlightening experience!! I always learn something new. The lessons of hard work & repetition reinforce the depth of my practice. What a duality: hard work & working for softness. Thank you.

- David Schulberg
San Lorenzo, CA

I always seem to hear what I need to hear and see what I need to see at the annual conference. My understanding of TCC seems to be more real as time goes on.

The interactive practice on Saturday was particularly helpful and was handled very well with microphones provided for questions and answers. This format gives us a healthy forum for interchange in an undefensive way.

My particular thanks to Ed for being candid, open, vulnerable and humorous in his sharing with us all. It seems like he erases any tension with his understanding and choice of words. Now we have two great leaders who seem to complement each other. I am very grateful for both of them.

- Jan Arrott
Las Vegas, NM



THANK YOU — 2000 Teachers' Conference committee members! **Back row, (L-R):** Victor Vier-eck, Marion Mascone, Fran Warren, Bobbie Ruocco; **Middle row, (L-R):** Carolyn Allenby, Judy Feltman, Linda Sercarz, Paula Favorito, Maureen Taylor, Dan Pienciak; **Front row, (L-R):** Janet Oussaty, Viktoria Vercelletto, Conference Co-Hosts Carolyn Perkins and Sr. Antonia Cooper, Sr. Margaret O'Connor. *Not pictured: Edie Budney, Ralph Garn, Rosemarie Hallenback, Beverly McEntarfer, Gerry McGuire, Sr. Juanita Morales, John O'Connor.* Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



Joyous Justin enjoys a good laugh during his spiritual talk.

Photo: Melinda Rispoli

I have always been extremely impressed by the teachers who travel such long distances to attend the conference.

There has to be something extremely special about T'ai Chi Chih to make such long journeys. . . . Other than improving my T'ai Chi Chih movements, I thoroughly enjoyed Justin's spiritual talk (and Ed's) very much. Totally excellent!!! . . .

* Extra thanks - to Sr. Antonia, Carolyn Perkins & Victor Viereck who did most of the work. I have

had the pleasure of being associated with the planning of the conference and the committee members.

- Paula Favorito
New Milford, NJ

. . . When we received a piece of sea glass at the opening ceremony it reminded me of my differences as it was odd-shaped with rough edges. The rough edge was a constant reminder to become soft in my practice. With the help of some wonderful available teachers, it was possible for me to smooth some of my rough edges during the conference. . . .

- Larry Sava
Lubbock, TX
(First-time Attendee)

The energy, vitality & love in this conference was inspiring to us all. Even I could revel in the subtle energy that filled every cranny of Xavier Center. Ed's talk on integrity gave us so much to think about & to put into our lives. Thanks, Ed. And we were so fortunate that Justin stopped the "show" to wisely emphasize the importance of moving, swiveling from the waist. I'm grateful to him for his kind words.

Every conference must have its own personality and this one was JOYFUL! Carolyn & Sr. Antonia set the tone for that. Thank you Sr. & Carolyn & your "staff" for a beautiful weekend.

- Jack Stankard
Hopkins, MN

. . . The opportunity to focus on refinement with Justin and Ed is the primary reason I come to conference year after year. It was wonderful to practice with 150 teachers who are dedicated to spending time to raise their level of understanding of how the chi moves through them. . . .

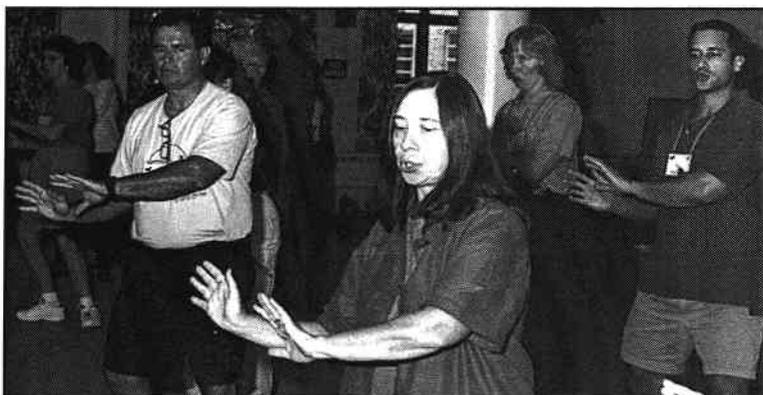
- Roberta Taggart
Cupertino, CA

The 2000 Conference is everything everyone had told me it would be. The sincerity and joy of the participants was catching. The energy, the chi was all around . . .

- Sr. M. Pauletta Kane
Henderson, KY
(First-time Attendee)



Conference Co-Hosts Carolyn Perkins (left) and Sr. Antonia Cooper worked selflessly all year leading their committee through every stage of planning. Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



Performing *The Six Healing Sounds*—(L-R): Larry Sava, Elissa Maguire, Dora Derzon, Dale Buchanan. Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti

This is so wonderful to flow all together. So many faces, so many different individuals all doing 19 movements and one pose—all in unison, we enter the cosmic rhythm as Ed has so often mentioned. . . . From the start, people were attentive and very appreciative of the teaching Justin, Ed and all of the teachers shared with us. Isn't this the best reason to come back for more? I'm very grateful to be part of this growing "family," to be part of this evolutionary process. Once more, Thank you Justin.

– **Caroline Guillott**
Lake Charles, LA
(First-time Attendee)

. . . The TCC movements and insights as taught by Justin and Ed were great and have certainly brought my practice to a new level. Working with other teachers at this level was also very productive. It was also wonderful to see old friends and to make new friends. Throughout the conference, I appreciated the effort that Sr. Antonia and Carolyn put into this event. I wish to thank them for making this happen on the East Coast. . . . This was my first conference, but it won't be my last.

– **Opie Reed**
Holley, NY
(First-time Attendee)

tions. I haven't taught a class yet, and thought that I wouldn't feel very much a part of the TCC Community. I was wrong. I've not only been able to connect with old friends, but have made some new ones. I'm already looking forward to next year's Conference. I can't imagine teaching TCC classes without the regular support (and corrections) that we get at the annual Conference.

– **Paula Ahles**
Gilbert, AZ
(First-time Attendee)

Thank you for choosing a quiet and beautiful location that allowed for walking and outside places for meditation/contemplation. . . . The practice refinement talk by Ed about moving from the center, staying in alignment and asking questions about weakness and tension was immensely helpful to me and will be something I will share with my students!

– **Eric Imbody**
Denver, CO

There was a part of me that was hesitant about coming to the conference. I was accredited last October, and have since gone through some difficult life transi-

A beautifully planned out and executed event. I was very impressed (and amazed!) at how smoothly it went—one after another, each 'segment' flowed seamlessly, and each thing on the daily schedule was balanced by what followed.

The group practice was what I needed badly, to reinforce my understanding of the moves and to refine my form, and each time we met, the comments on specific aspects of each move were of great value. In addition, we had enough practice sessions to really solidify what we'd discussed the time before. . . .

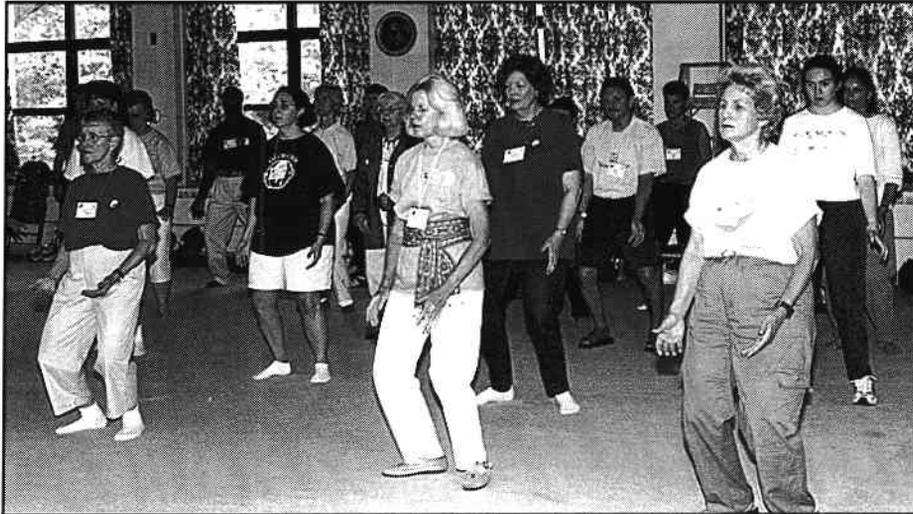
– **Karen Roewade-Houser**
Silver Spring, MD
(First-time Attendee)

This was a most enriching TCC conference for me. . . . Most grateful for corrections made to me personally. I leave here very enriched, uplifted, very elevated to teach. . . . Ed's presentation on Chi and Violence made a lot of sense and it was very practical for our group and how we respond to life's daily challenges. . . .

– **Sr. Juanita Morales**
Newburgh, NY
(First-time Attendee)



Practicing *Pulling Taffy*—(L-R): Sue Reed, Senora Avery, Lyn Welch, Elissa Maguire, Roberta Taggart. Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti



Practicing Joyous Breath—**Front row, (L-R):** Sr. Rita Foster, Beverly Weil, Lucky Sikora; **Second row, (L-R):** Sharon Sirkis, Marty Beery, Phoenix Wilson. Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti

At the last practice of the conference, I found myself standing in PERFECT ALIGNMENT—with Ed Altman, Noel Altman, Sister Antonia and Justin Stone (across the room). It was such a perfect moment that tears were streaming down my face. I will always remember that moment. It will remind me to be in alignment.

Justin	Sr. A	Noel	Ed	Mary
X	X	X	X	X

Chart by Mary Stebbins

I was facing Justin and Sr. Antonia and we were moving toward and away from each other like YIN and YANG! WOW!

– **Mary Stebbins**
Baldwinsville, NY
(First-time Attendee)

The image of “no splash” really speaks to me. For me it was emphasized in Justin’s two attributes of gratitude and desirelessness and Ed’s talk on Violence (for me, non-violence) – “petting the dog.” This “no splash” is an inner strength and a whole way of being that bespeaks the spirituality of my life. Thank you for helping me to name what’s been going on.

– **Sr. Rose Marie Adams**
Wayne, PA
(First-time Attendee)



Mary Stebbins receives a correction from Ed Altman. Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti

A few weeks before coming to the T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Conference at Xavier Center in New Jersey, I was doing one of my periodic checks of my moves. I asked myself questions. Am I shifting my weight fully? Is my spine straight? Am I moving as if I am moving through very heavy air?

These are the same questions I ask my students. What I felt I needed were more specific questions. On Friday afternoon the questions I asked for were spoken by Ed:

- Is there any tension in your body? If there is tension you are using strength to cover up a weakness. Release it. Work from the bottom up.**
- Check your ankles. Is there tension? Release it.**
- Check your knees. Is there tension? Release it.**
- Check your back. Is there tension? Release it.**
- Check your shoulders. Is there tension? Release it.**
- Check your wrists. Is there tension? Release it.**

As I review these checkpoints, it reminds me of the oil change and lubrication we give our cars every 3000 miles. It's good to give our T'ai

Chi Chih practice a good check up, too. Of course, this needs to be done more often than every 3000 miles.

– **Margery Erickson**
Hanover, PA

This was my first conference ever and I really loved it! It was very worthwhile and helpful. I would have liked more time for round table discussions and more opportunity to attend several . . . What I liked BEST is that I could walk up and ask Justin Stone himself any questions that I wanted and walk up and ask Ed Altman anything I wanted. And they took the time to answer thoughtfully and carefully! Lots of Great energy and wonderful, joyous connections at the spiritual level! I made fabulous new friends that really resonate!

It was difficult being corrected over and over & over for the same errors when I had just learned something new and hadn't had time to incorporate it into my practice yet. I tried hard for an open cup and refrained from saying I'd already been told that ten times. I need time to make changes. I am grateful however for the pain & embarrassment of this—it will drive me to work harder on these changes.



I appreciated the schedule. It was full yet there was breathing space within the time frames. There seemed to be an effort to meet and give a suggestion to each person. Having experienced teachers leading the practices modeled well the flow & continuity of the moves. . . .

– **Sr. Celeste Crine**
Wilmington, DE
(First-time Attendee)

. . . I appreciated the jewels of wisdom that nourished my soul:

1. "I patted the dog—that gentle action changed everything."
2. The generosity of people who gave me gifts of appreciation, healing, prayers, Justin's tape....In their giving I learnt to receive.
3. (Being part of) Justin's stillness.
4. Moving in unison in a large group—experiencing the stillness, and harmony.
5. Being aware of my own movement—transferring weight, gentle hands moving through the air, giving and receiving.
6. Sharing with so many people—Thank you everyone!

– **Trisha J. Hargaden**
New York, NY
(First-time Attendee)

This was the best Teachers Conference so far. The instruction by Ed and Justin was excellent, the atmosphere was very relaxing, and the teachers were warm and joyous to be around.

– **Dale Buchanan**
Herndon, VA

What a privilege to be present here! It was wonderful to see Justin, Ed, Noel and others I had met at my own training, Seijaku, and the

[NJ] teacher training last year. It was also wonderful to make new friends! I so appreciated all that Justin and Ed shared . . . I'm going home renewed and inspired. . . . May we all flow with softness and continuity from our deepest center so others can share in our peace and joy!

– **Sr. Mary Griffin**
Brookhaven, PA
(First-time Attendee)

Everything went very smoothly and well. Ed's corrections of the movements was very clear and helpful. His personal testimony was very inspiring. We are fortunate to have Ed for our leader and head of T.C.C.

Carmen's ideas on forming classes and preparing teachers was very well done.

Each conference that I attend seems to be better than the past ones.

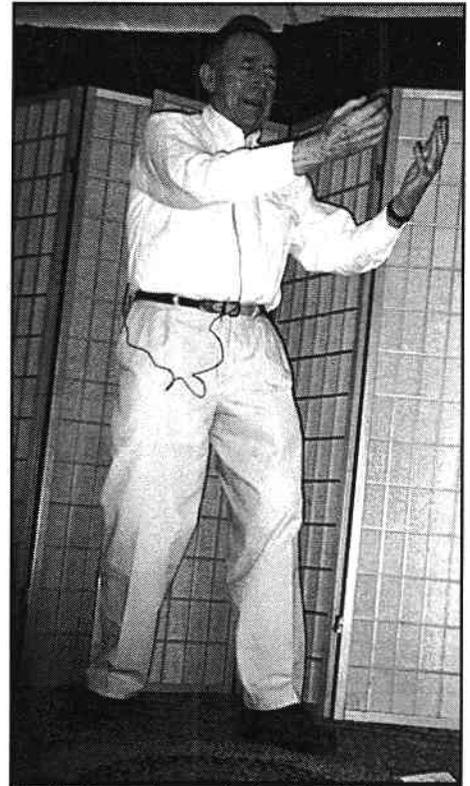
T.C.C. is in for a great future. Hopefully our world will become a better place through our efforts.

– **Caroline Chavez**
Albuquerque, NM

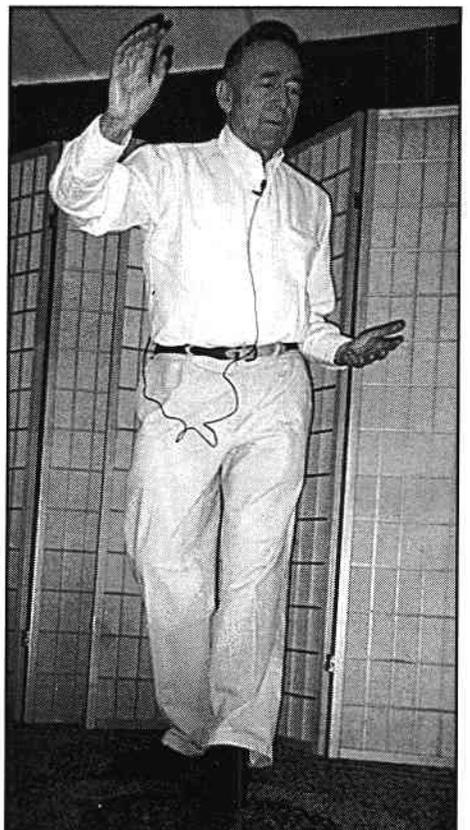
My strongest feeling is that the spirit of love, commitment, and community that was so present during the Conference drew me back to the heart of TCC which I experienced during my teacher training a year ago.

Coming into the early practice on Friday morning felt very sacred. It was such an honor to participate with the other teachers. Having Justin at the Conference sharing himself with us was very precious. . . .

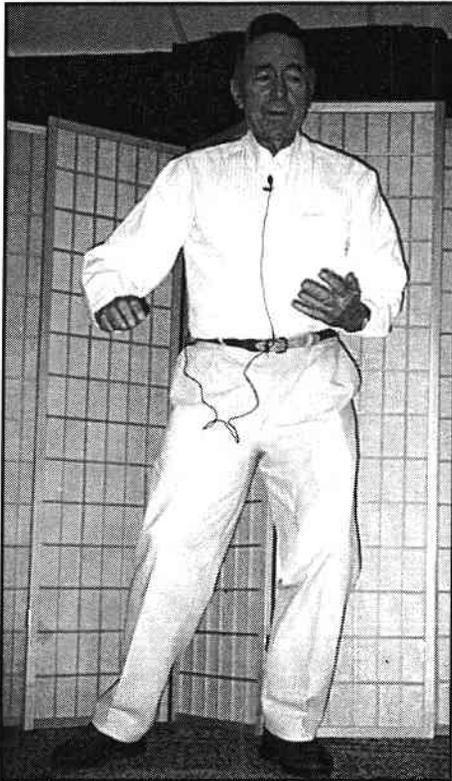
– **Diana Wright**
Fountain Valley, CA
(First-time Attendee)



Justin Stone demonstrates *Push Pull*.
Photo: Paula Weiner



Showing the turning from the waist, Justin Stone demonstrates *Working the Pulley*.
Photo: Paula Weiner



The hands perform the pulling apart *as* the weight shifts on *Pulling Taffy*, (not before), Justin Stone explains and demonstrates.

Photo: Paula Welner



Justin Stone acknowledges the overwhelming applause of the audience!

Photo: Paula Weiner

... I was very impressed with the care and concern our "planning committee" had that our conferees got the appropriate transportation to the airline terminals. It was a Trojan effort and I, for one, was impressed, even though I didn't need the services myself.

It was a special treat to have Justin be present to share his experiences and wisdom with us. His generosity of spirit, positive encouragement, humility, and sparkling wit explain why he is so loved and respected by his students/teachers. It was truly an honor to have met him.

- **Sue Reed**
West Nyack, NY
(First-time Attendee)

This was a special weekend - so very much sharing and joy. Words are not sufficient to express the gifts that I will take home. (a) the getting acquainted time sharing was profound - sharing from the heart. (b) being with Justin Stone - listening to his stories, experiencing his sense of humor, reaping the rewards of his creativity. Justin has such a wealth of knowledge and life experiences that he freely shares. (c) The special interest groups - Seated TCC and Accreditation Preparation were especially helpful - and opened up new areas of TCC for me. (d) I would like to thank Ed Altman for sharing what is in his heart with us, this was a very precious gift. (e) all of the hard work and dedication of the Committee Members was appreciated and applauded. (f) Sister Antonia's rededication ceremony - uplifting and memorable. Thank you one and all. I will leave New Jersey revitalized.

- **Patricia Herbig**
West End, NC

"Flow from the center".... It was great to be reminded to come back to the "center," to the T'an T'ien. I can't say enough about how this conference has helped me. I can enter my practice with new awareness and spirit because of what I have gained from this weekend. The chi brought me here and knows what I have needed.

It is also a gift to be able to do T'ai Chi Chih with so many other teachers. I don't have that opportunity throughout the year. I thank everyone for sharing their time, space and chi with me.

- **Arthur Foo**
Schenectady, NY
(First-time Attendee)

As I spiral out of this powerfully moving Conference I begin to reflect on the joy that built momentum as I renewed so many old and new friendships. An impressive "perfect wave." Inwardly I watched my T'ai Chi Chih practice rise, fall, crash & burn and then begin the rebuilding process. It's a marvelous process to watch & it's wonderful to feel the support from the entire T'ai Chi Chih Community as we continue to unveil each of our own perfection.

There are no words, only hugs & deepest gratitude to Sr. Antonia, Carolyn Perkins & the entire staff that facilitated this hugely successful conference. PERFECT!

On a lighter side:
What do you call a group of T'ai Chi Chih teachers who come together from different parts of the USA & the world to do T'ai Chi Chih together?

Answer: A celebration of diversichi!

- **Holly Davis**
Fennville, MI



The conferences only get better and better! T'ai Chi Chih 2000 was exceptional. The setting—a beautiful retreat (Xavier Center) was wonderful as we lost no continuity between group meetings, eating and resting. The information provided by Justin and Ed was clear, to the point and very meaningful. When others asked questions about movements, I would realize “Oh, that’s me doing that.” Can my body do that movement differently—can I let go and trust? The other teachers I dined with are wonderful—so much TEH!

Thank you NY/NJ folks who put such a gathering together. Thank you Justin for originating T'ai Chi Chih and Ed for continuing to make it flow!

I miss not seeing other teachers I have seen in the past—I challenge you—if Alaskans can come to conferences so can you. (We all need you).

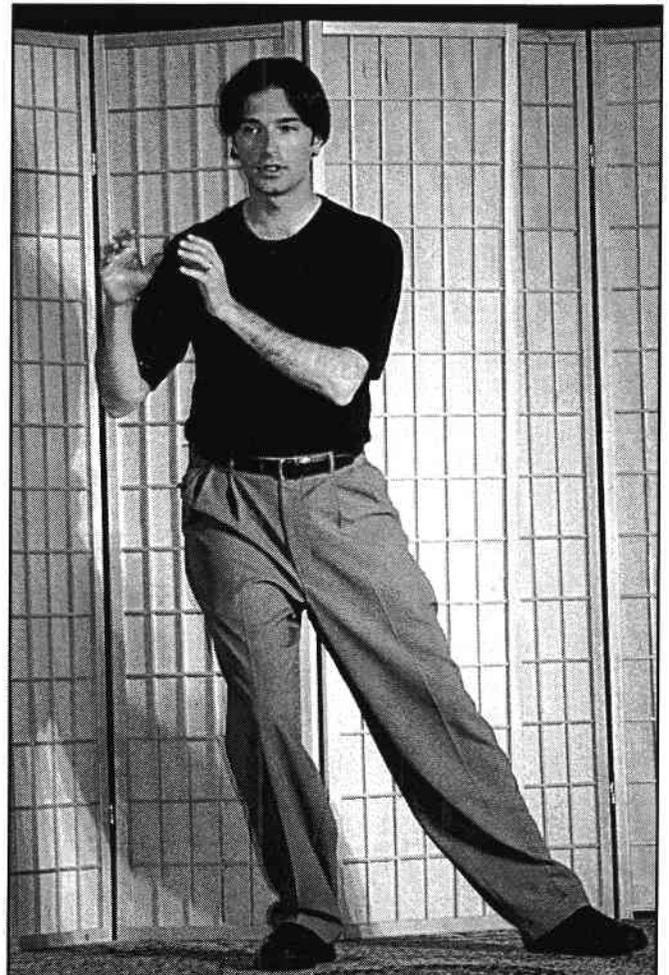
– Nancy Jo Bleier
Sitka, AK

My heart is filled with gratitude and I know this is a feeling that will last and carry me to next year’s conference. Each year that I attend I am warmed and delighted, even somewhat amazed by this group of people that gathers annually to celebrate T'ai Chi Chih—it’s not always the same individuals but it’s always the same combination of remarkable characteristics. The spirit of T'ai Chi Chih is concentrated, and beautifully expressed, at our annual conference. This year’s conference was its highest expression to date.

– Beverly McFarland
Cedar Crest, NM



Carmen Brocklehurst (center) talks to Lucky Sikora (left) about moving from the center while Sharon Sirkis (rear, left) chats with Jean Markey.
Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti



Ed Altman demonstrates a full shift of the weight as he performs *Carry the Ball to the Side*.
Photo: Melinda Rispoll

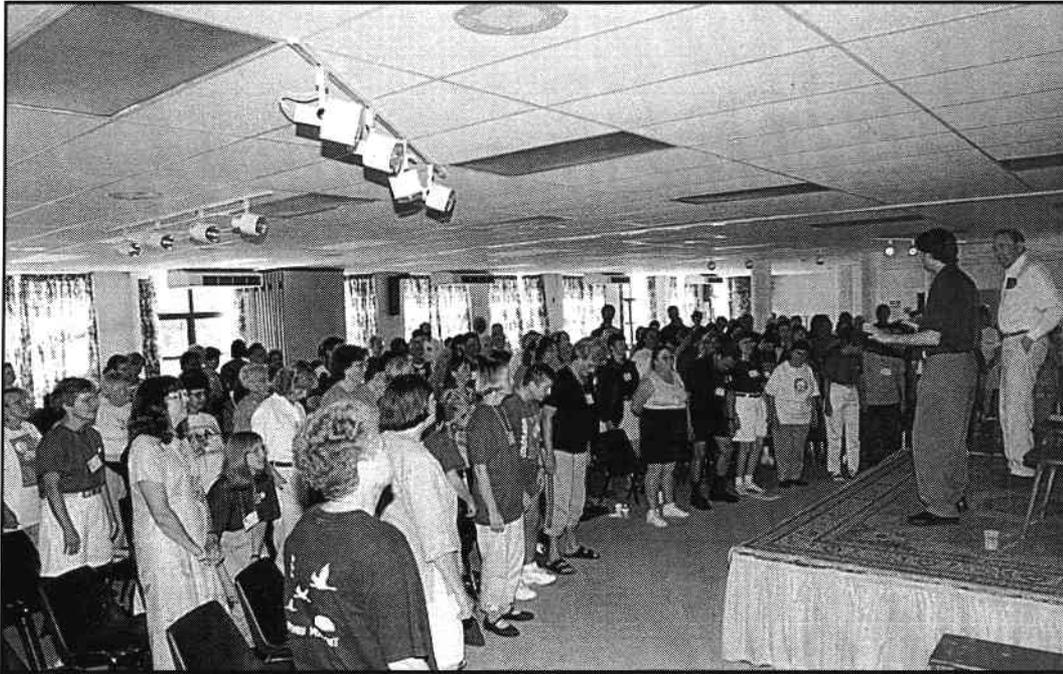
Last year, we didn’t have Sister Antonia to lead the candlelight ceremony. Now I understand what we missed. Her smiles (and Carolyn’s) have lightened and brightened our days here, as well. . . . Thank you to all the planners and doers, both TCC teachers and Xavier staff, for three beautiful days here outside of time, living in a sea of shared and heightened chi, learning and growing. Thank you, Justin and Ed.

– Joanna Woodrow
San Jose, CA

For some reason I felt a lot more relaxed at this, my 3rd, conference. I’m not sure why, but I didn’t feel as rushed & I didn’t feel the tension that I felt at the ‘98 and ‘99 conferences. Maybe partly because there were not as many group practices as previous conferences. Last year I felt that I had too much chi built up within me & I could not dissipate it. This manifested itself as pressure at the temples.

I really liked the refinement & detailed correction sessions with Justin & Ed. I hope that these sessions will be included in all future conferences.

– Susan Evans
West Chester, OH



The entire group gets to its feet to put into practice the points Ed Altman and Justin Stone make from the stage.

Photo: Melinda Rispoli

cious memories of exchanges with old & new friends. See you next year! . . .

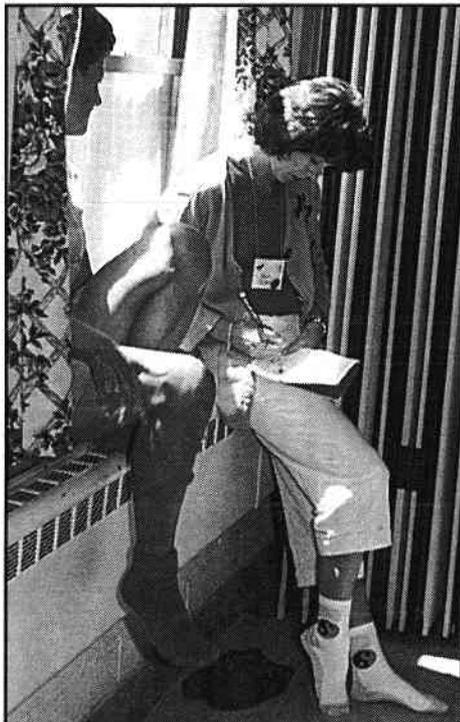
- Rhonda St. Martin
Albuquerque, NM

This was my first TCC Conference, and it was a very spiritual, rewarding, educational, Love-filled three days thus far. Tonight's (Saturday) Candlelight Rededication Ceremony was so exquisitely done by Sister Antonia, and appropriately dedicated by Justin to Carmen Brocklehurst. I thank my TCC Family for their Love and acceptance of me. . . .

- Grady F. Anderson, Jr.
Nanuet, NY
(First-time Attendee)

This is perhaps the most gentle, light-hearted & joyous conference I have ever attended. There was obvious great attention to the details of the schedule, housing, and

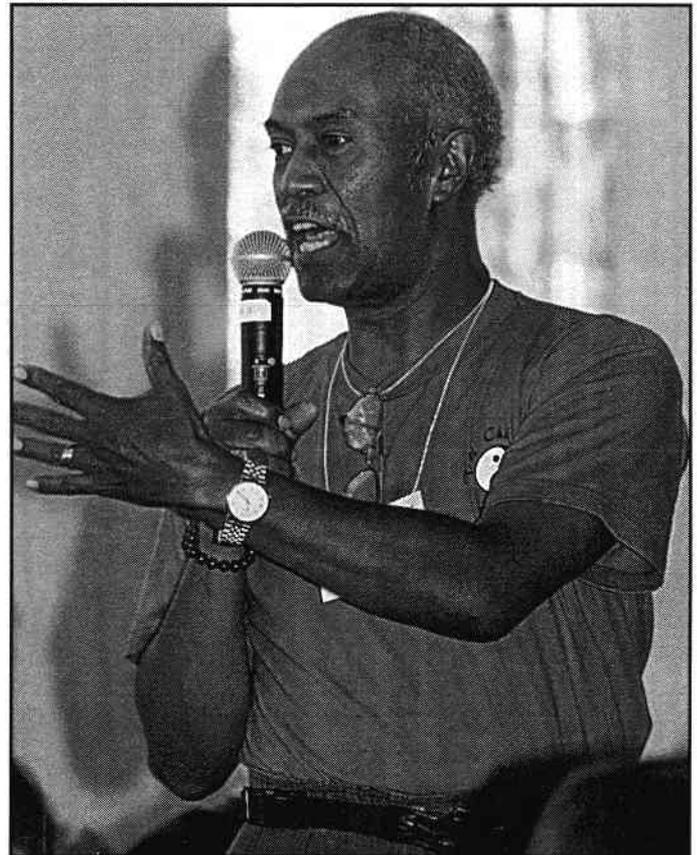
programs which allowed the Conference to flow so smoothly from our collective T'an T'iens! I believe the physical safety & energy at the Xavier Center allowed me to personally move to much deeper levels & allow the Chi to do its work this weekend. . . .



Rhonda St. Martin (right) takes notes while Hannah Hedrick looks on.

Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti

I particularly enjoyed Justin & Ed's spiritual talks concerning gratitude & Ahimsa [non-violence]. As teachers it is not enough to be soft, stay in our feet, allow the waist to turn, etc. We must live our lives accordingly. I take home with me renewed enthusiasm and commitment for my practice and teaching, and pre-



Grady Anderson Jr. makes a point at the microphone about continually improving our practice of the form.

Photo: Melinda Rispoli



Good Karma Publisher Jean Katus shows the group the "new new" video cover for Justin Stone's instructional videotape which was filmed in January, 2000.

Photo: Melinda Rispoli

I am so grateful for all the work that Sister Antonia and Carolyn put into planning and organizing this conference, along with their very hard working committee. Things went very smoothly and all the effort really showed.

I also especially want to thank Trisha for all the work she did organizing cabs to the airport for so many of us. That was a huge undertaking and she remained patient and friendly even though it was very stressful. . . .

- Robin Kidd
Chicago, IL

. . . The beauty/joy/spirit of each participant was evident. . . . Even Justin Stone was impressed with the feelings of joy & gratitude. He was truly happy & radiant. I for one experienced his essence & glow when he played the piano & interacted with our most wonderful, talented singer, Grace O'Connor. There was magic in the air. . .

- Paula Weiner
Chicago, IL

Justin spoke of gratitude and grateful is how I feel about being at this conference. It was wonderful to be a part of the unity & joy in the growth and positive direction of TCC.

The pointers I received from fellow teachers for improving my movements were valuable gifts that I could not have gotten anywhere else. Deepen my stance; step out farther.....all signs of holding back as I have been holding back in my life.

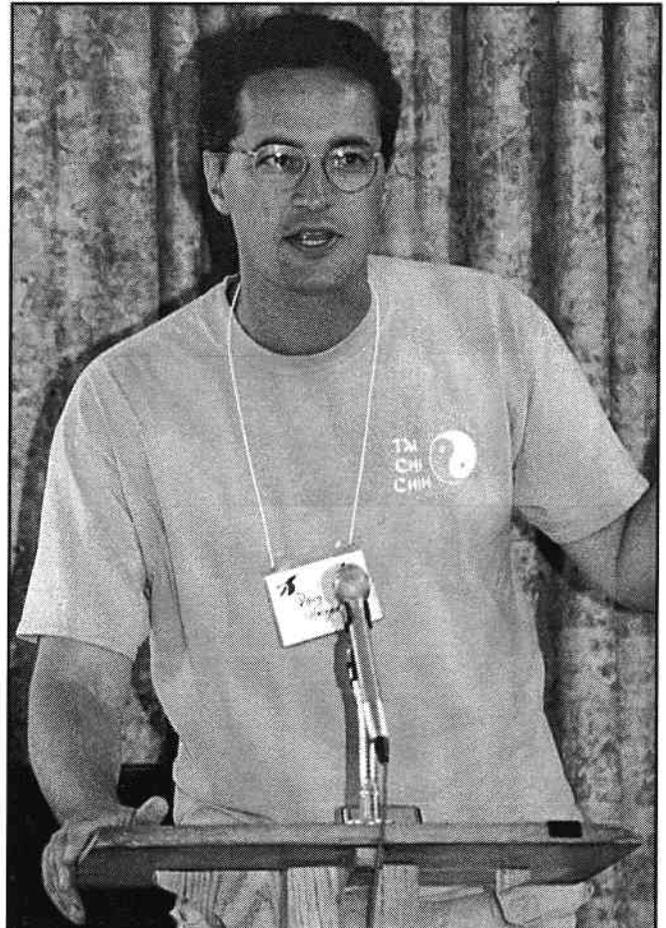
The presentations given by Justin and Ed

and also Sr. Antonia's closing about "Where Chi Can Take You" were all deeply inspiring. Once again I go home having experienced a spiritual shift that will forever change my life.

- Sherry Corson
Bemidji, MN
(First-time Attendee)

Sitting here listening to Justin play great jazz is the ultimate closing to a wonderful conference. We moved, we connected, we laughed and cried—new friends and old. I'll be floating with softness and continuity for a long time.

- Carol Houtkooper
Yankton, SD



VFJ Staff Member Doug Harned explains some of the details of Membership Services, which he runs.

Photo: Melinda Rispoli



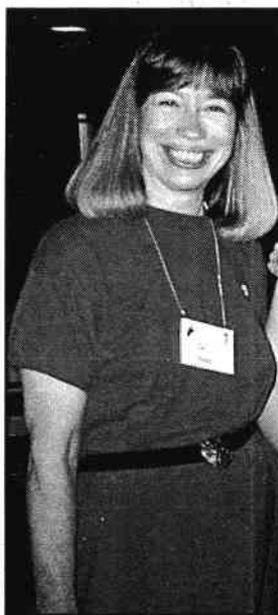
The Charmer! Justin Stone has Sr. Margaret O'Connor (center) and her sister (and TCC student), Grace O'Connor, in stitches following Grace's (direct from Broadway) cabaret singing show. Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti



(L-R): Nancy Werner-Azarski, Cristina Minelli (all the way from Italy) and Carol Houtkooper strike a pose. Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



(L-R): Head of T'ai Chi Chih Ed Altman, VFJ Editor Noel Altman, Sr. Alice Holden and Renza Baker pose for pictures. Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti



Pam Towne flashes her smile. Photo: Paula Weiner

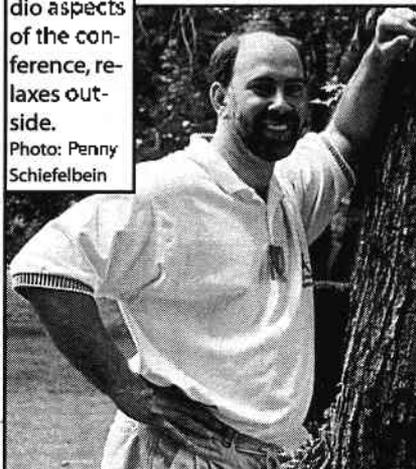


Suni McHenry (left) models the conference tote while Caroline Chavez relaxes during a break. Photo: Paula Weiner



Judy Mirczak watches Justin Stone play piano. Photo: Paula Weiner

Below: Victor Vlerek, who handled all audio aspects of the conference, relaxes outside. Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



Jeanne Engen-Duranske (left) and Sherry Corson smile outside. Photo: Melinda Rispoli



John O'Connor and Edie Budney— father and daughter teachers, practice *Passing Clouds* outside. Edie, who was back in the U.S. for a visit, returns shortly to São Paulo, Brazil, where she is teaching TCC to inner city children (with the help of an English-to-Portuguese translator). Photo: Melinda Rispoli



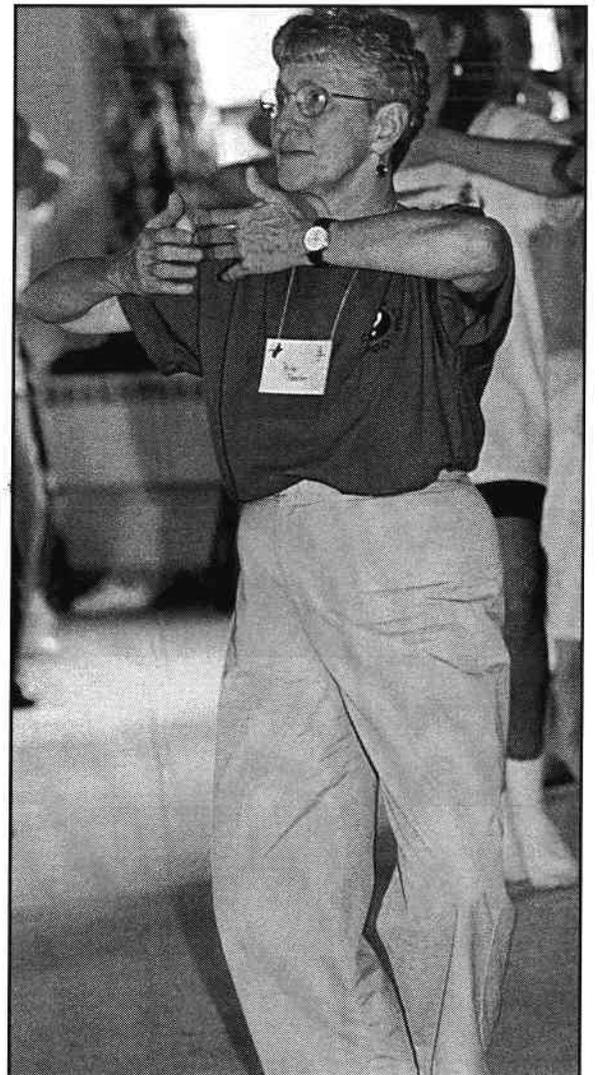
Beverly McFarland focuses inwardly during *Pulling in the Energy*. Photo: Melinda Rispoli



Marjie Bassler (left) and Corine Reeber pal around after practice. Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



Janet Oussaty performs *Carry the Ball to the Side*. Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti



Sr. Rita Foster holds *Cosmic Consciousness* after group practice. Photo: Melinda Rispoli



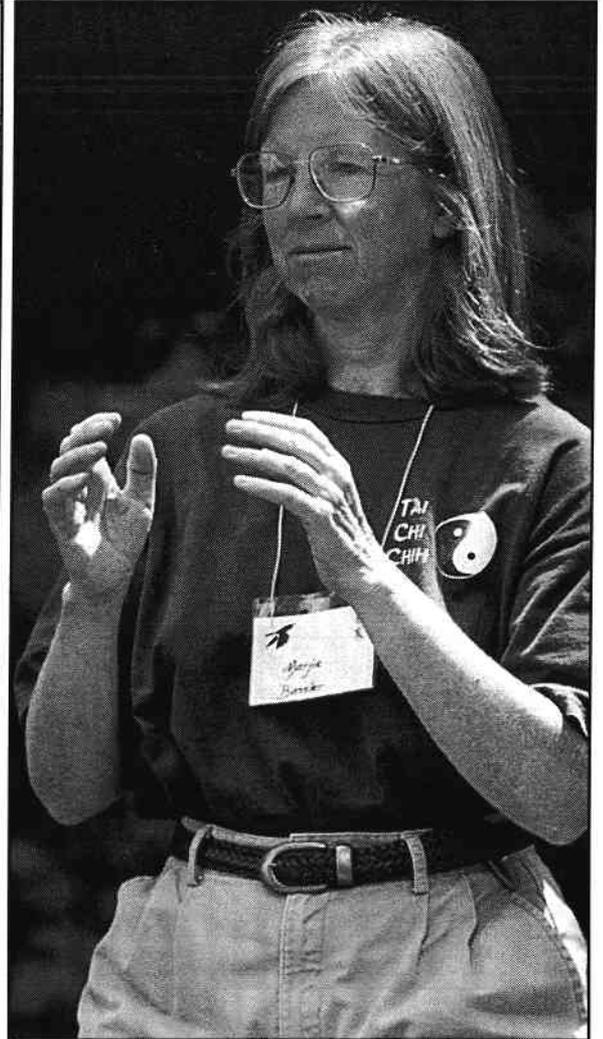
(L-R): Cathy Dalton, Chery Ann Hoffmeyer, David Schulberg, Sandy McAlister and Connie Hyde perform the candlelighting ceremony dance. Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



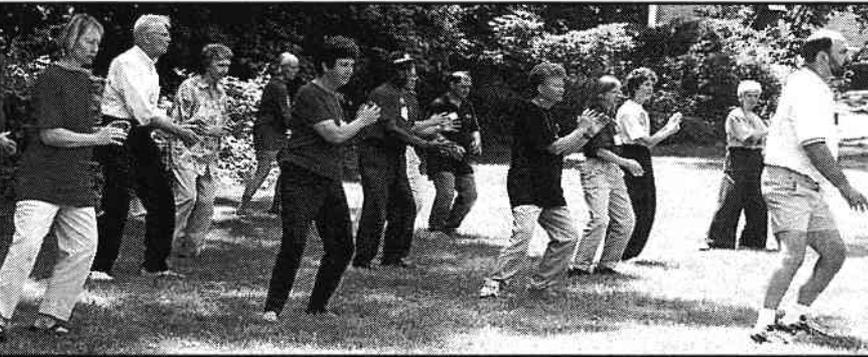
(L-R): Elissa Maguire, Holly Davis, Hannah Hedrick and Tonya Setzke wave and smile on the steps of the outdoor amphitheatre. Photo: Melinda Rispoli



Dora Derzon smiles for the camera. Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



Marjie Bassler relaxes into *Carry the Ball to the Side*. Photo: Melinda Rispoli



Victor Viereck (far right) leads a group of teachers in practice outdoors on the lawn. Photo: Penny Schiefelbein



Most of the 152 attending teachers gather outside on the steps of the outdoor amphitheatre for this group photo. Okay, everybody say "chi!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" Photo: Jo-Anne Montanti

T'ai Chi Chih teaches students to feel energy

Participants find practice to be a relaxing stress reliever

BY MICHELLE HABRYCH
Staff Reporter

Standing in a circle in low light, music softly plays in the background while the students listen for the instructor's direction. Slowly, the group rocks back and forth in a smooth motion.

The students are focused as their instructor, Donna McElhose, reminds them to focus on their feet. With fluid motion, the group moves to the right, to the left, and back to the right again, some concentrating on each movement while others move as though it's part of who they are.

This group of students ranges in age from early 20s to mid-70s. These men and women have taken classes in the moving meditation known as T'ai Chi Chih from McElhose at various places, including the College of Lake County, Trinity United Lutheran Church and the Center Wellness Center in Northbrook.

Unlike T'ai Chi Chih, this is not a martial art. T'ai Chi Chih was created by Justin Stone in 1974. A

T'ai Chi Chih master himself, he found the ancient martial arts form difficult for students to do, requiring many years of practice to perfect in order to receive the benefits. Stone found 20 simple movements, which he named T'ai Chi Chih—Chinese for "Knowledge of Superior Principles." McElhose said these movements can be learned in eight weeks.

"This is not a religious practice," McElhose stated. She said even children can learn the movements.

"It's a way to incorporate your mind, your body and your spirit in the now," she said, trying to explain T'ai Chi Chih. She said the practice contributes to health, energy and balance.

McElhose herself was a student of T'ai Chi Chih when she became frustrated with the difficulty and number of movements. "The road is too long," she said. "You can't see the end goal." When she was introduced to the newer form, T'ai Chi Chih, she said it was what she had been looking for.



Donna McElhose of Wildwood and Sandy Darda of Grayslake do T'ai Chi Chih in the community room of the State Bank of the Lakes in Grayslake. —Photo by Lynn Gunnarson Dahlstrom

By nature, McElhose said she is quiet and shy. T'ai Chi Chih brought her out and she began teaching it after becoming a certified masseur. Her students attempted to put into words what T'ai Chi Chih has meant to her.

"It's amazing what it'll do for you," commented John Nemeth of Grayslake. "It takes away the aches and pains."

Susan Bradford-Smith of Wildwood, said, "It relieves my stress in both on a daily basis."

Others say they have experienced lower blood pressure as a result. Earl Kelly of Grayslake is one of those who believes that practicing T'ai Chi Chih has resulted in lower blood pressure. His wife, Dorothy Kelly, explained that their son got them involved in the med-

itation. The simple practices at home together. "It's nice to have someone to do it with you," Dorothy Kelly said.

The group consensus is that the reason behind their good experience is that they feel energy around their arms in doors, especially in their hands and fingertips. "There are no words for it," Kelly said. "My description or words would be inadequate." She said the energy works differently in each person.

"The more you slow down, the more you can start to feel the energy that's there," commented Anne Kroese of Northbrook.

Frank Sinton of Zion explained, "The energy is what I'm getting out of this." He noted that although he is still learning the movements, he believes it's not too difficult.

Nate Kalnes of Lake Villa said he had looked into T'ai Chi Chih through books and tapes. Taking McElhose's class at the College of Lake County, he said, is "one of the best things I've ever done." Kalnes described it as a "slow centering meditation." In this fast-paced society, "This is where we are right now when you do T'ai Chi Chih. The rest of the world can go away."

McElhose will be offering an introductory class at the Greenbelt Cultural Center in North Chicago June 7, 14 and 21. For reservations or information, call 609-1600.

Grayslake Times article reprinted with permission.

Grayslake Times text: Michelle Habrych, Grayslake Times photo: Lynn Gunnarson Dahlstrom

Editor's Note:

Donna McElhose was pleased to hear from the paper above when they wanted to cover her T'ai Chi Chih classes. In addition to answering questions during the interview, she provided written explanations of T'ai Chi Chih for the reporter to take with her. She also suggested that, for the facts alone, she be allowed to review the article before it went to press. The reporter declined (as most will). The only problem with this is that it is nearly

impossible for the average reporter to get all of the facts correct when it comes to T'ai Chi Chih. Donna's reporter was no exception.

Although I will not normally reprint articles in *The Vital Force* which contain gross misinformation, I did this time because overall I felt the article had a nice flavor and because (most importantly) Donna took action to rectify the situation. In response,

she wrote a letter to the editor of the paper (see next page) thanking the reporter and the paper for the coverage, but also correcting the misinformation. If printed, this is a way that the correct facts can get to the readers. If not printed, the correct facts still get to the reporter and the editor, who (hopefully) will not make the same mistakes in covering future TCC events.

— Noel Altman



The Letter to the Editor

Donna McElhose, Accredited T'ai Chi Chih Instructor
18160 Twin Lakes Blvd.
Wildwood, IL 60030
993-6065

Mr. Robert Warde
Managing Editor
30 South Whitney St.
Grayslake, IL 60030

Dear Sir,

This letter is regarding the article in the Lakeland Newspapers' *Grayslake Times*, June 2, 2000, under Community Neighbors titled "T'ai Chi Chih teaches students to feel energy."

I am the accredited instructor leading the session that was covered in the article. First, I would like to thank the paper and the reporter, Michelle Habrych for doing an excellent job of explaining what the students were expressing about T'ai Chi Chih.

However, I am concerned about two points in the article that need clarification. In the fourth paragraph Ms. Habrych says, "Stone found 20 simple movements, which he named T'ai Chi Chih." To clarify—while the word "found" may be defined technically in different ways, most people think of 'found' as locating something that was lost or as happening upon something by chance. Justin Stone ORIGINATED the 20 movements of T'ai Chi Chih.

The other point has to do with characterizing me as a master of T'ai Chi Chih. This is absolutely incorrect! In this discipline the only master is Justin Stone. While I am an accredited instructor of T'ai Chi Chih, it is incorrect to refer to me as a master.

This is the first time in my life that I have felt so strongly about an article in a newspaper or magazine that I have felt compelled to write the editor. While the points above may not seem that important, the distinctions I make are critical to those of us in the T'ai Chi Chih Community.

I am not sure if the article in question appeared in other publications, but if so, those articles would also need correction. Except for the two points mentioned above, I felt Ms. Habrych's article was insightful, informative, and captured the spirit with which T'ai Chi Chih is practiced. For further information, your readers might be interested in the T'ai Chi Chih web site at WWW.TAICHICHIH.ORG.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sharing the Chi
Sharing the World

Donna McElhose
Wildwood



Poetry Page

TCC Teacher Training
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, May 2000
(*Observations and experiences from an auditing teacher*)

Excitement building
It does show.
Serious concentration
Begins to grow.
Movements feel awkward
It is so!
Yinning and yanging
To and fro!
Posture upright
No more leaning.
Stack those coins
They are gleaming.
Shifting weight fully
I am beaming.
Focused awareness
It is streaming.
The key point of this move...
Do I remember?
Mirroring movements
Will I learn this technique before September!
Softened knees
Can I let them go?
Strength and softness
Does it show?
Sinking into the t'an t'ien
Arms are lighter and they flow.
Joy and sadness flow thro' me
Surrender, trust, let it be.
All is right,
Just as intended for me.
Joy thru movement
It is so.
Joy thru movement
It will grow.

– Chery Ann Hoffmeyer

Watching TCC stones
drop in my garden of Chi.

– Donna McElhose

Surrender
the mind
quiet the spirit
meditation points the way
to deeper peace
sweet serenity
Joy!

– Jean Krumboltz
(Student of Pat Huseby)

REJOICE, REJOICE GROW DEEPER STILL

Listen and look within.
The answers are there. Go deeper still.
Within the dark recesses
Be patient, kind too.
What is not rushed is what is gained.
The road is long complete with guides
If within I listen and look.

Rejoice, Rejoice grow deeper still.
Joy abounds unknown, captured within the still.
Unleash the pain and sorrow along the way.
That is why the road is long.
It cannot be rushed or hurried.
It must be traveled.
If within I look and listen.

The choice is mine and mine alone.
I can go far, deep, short, or wide.
What is pleasure? pain? can only be
Determined on the inside.
Seek and find.

The answers are there. Go deeper still.
Look, listen, seek, and find.
In the stillness within
Learn to trust. Learn to rely.
Rejoice, rejoice grow deeper still.

This journey, this adventure, this odyssey
is traversed
knowingly and unknowingly.
The stillness brings the answers.
Grow deeper still.
Submerge into the depths, fly into the sky,
Rejoice, rejoice grow deeper still.

– Linda Skuta

J.S. BBQ

I watch him light the burner
and get out his spatula —
time to cook a burger
to well-done!

– Noel Altman



Group practices unite students

By Donna McElhose

In January 2000, I decided to find some way for my T'ai Chi Chih students from all the classes to meet each other. A place was found at the State Bank of the Lakes in Grayslake. It has a large carpeted room and the bank does not charge us for its use. So I made 200+ phone calls. In February, 35 students from a dozen different locations came together to do T'ai Chi Chih! We have been meeting once or twice a month since then. The dates are not compatible with everyone's schedule, but we average 25-30 students a meeting. The idea was to get the students from the different towns to meet one another.

We do a refinement for a movement or emphasize softness or patience, etc. Then we do the set. The energy level of that many students has taken some get-

ting used to. But with each meeting we all are more in tune with T'ai Chi Chih and the chi feelings each receives. We have meetings planned through December.

T'ai Chi Chih in the bank is not the same as T'ai Chi Chih in the park but it's either very cold, snowing, too windy or there are too many mosquitoes for planning monthly events outside in our area. If anyone is going to be in this area on September 16, October 21 or November 18, we meet at 10:15am on each of those days, and you are welcome to join us. We will do a full practice of T'ai Chi Chih. My number is 847.223.6065. The location is northeast Illinois, 10 miles south of the Wisconsin line.

A Thank You to a T'ai Chi Chih Student

By Donna McElhose

All instructors should be so fortunate to have students who not only love T'ai Chi Chih, but love it so much that they volunteer for tasks. Gigantic tasks. John Nemeth is such a student. (John's wife Nancy is also a student and she is gracious about the telephone calls that are necessary to get things organized. Thank you Nancy!) After I found a place that was large enough, and surprise, was free of charge, the T'ai Chi Chih students needed to know about the new monthly meetings.

These meetings would not be a class, but a practice session for students to come together and practice T'ai Chi Chih. At first I called about 200 students. Then I realized this was not going to work and I would need help with the an-

nouncement dates. So I asked John. John not only said yes when I asked if he would help me with the announcements of the monthly T'ai Chi Chih meetings, he said he would do all of the work. John took on the task of locating the newspaper offices. John visited all of the newspaper offices personally. Each newspaper has very specific rules for free meeting announcements in their papers. John set out to get all the details on how to do this—which papers we needed to focus on and the person in charge of the calendar section of the papers. This was no small task as we have found out! Undaunted, John has even contacted several local cable stations and we hope to get announcements of the meetings on their community calendars. For our meeting on June 17, seven announcements were sent out and students saw them in five

of the papers. The meeting in May even brought out two new students who just moved here from Arizona!

Then John decided we needed a web page! I am not connected to the net and it will be some time before I am. John now has our web page up and running. We will add photos soon. The web page announces the monthly meetings and has information on the classes offered.

We invite everyone passing through our area to join us for the T'ai Chi Chih sessions. You can check out the dates at <http://members.aol.com/Waukejohn/Index2.html>. Thank you John and Nancy Nemeth, T'ai Chi Chih students, for sharing the gift!



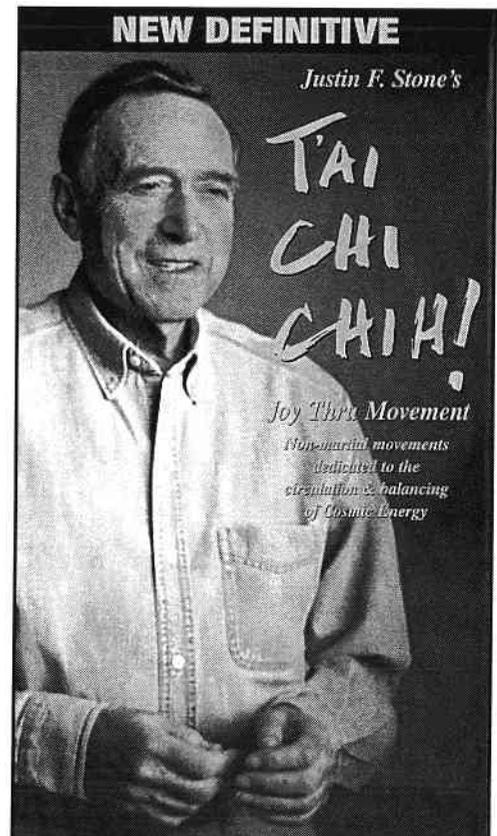
Karmic Komments

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Jean Katus, Publisher

New New Video Cover

The "new, new" video cover, as we're calling it, made its debut at the conference. It features a larger photo of Justin and a simpler design. Please be aware that the same video is inside, no matter what cover you have: the two-hour-playing-time one that was filmed in January of this year and released in March. Because the inside is the same, we suggest that if you have the other cover (green color with a Japanese screen in the upper left behind Justin), go ahead and sell those videos to your students. When we re-supply you, you will receive the videos with the "new, new" cover. For those who haven't seen it yet, here it is. [See photo at right.]

Other items listed as "new" in the current catalog and mentioned at the conference (besides the new video) are: the accompanying "Music for T'ai Chi Chih Practice & Restful Listening", which Justin wrote for the practice segment of the video, available in cassette tape and possibly available as a CD if there is enough interest (those whose names we don't already have can contact us if the music in CD format interests you); "Spiritual Stories of the East" in two-volume cassette tape set (still also available individually), introduced at last year's conference; and "20th Anniversary of T'ai Chi Chih interview", cassette tape introduced in December 1999 *Vital Force Journal*.



Conference Activity

The new video was a big hit. Several recently accredited teachers who hadn't yet seen it got that opportunity. We sold almost four-and-a-half times more (448%) videos at this year's conference than at last year's! It is very satisfying to us that teachers see its tremendous value. We are grateful that, having heard requests from many of you for some time about Justin making a video that was more professionally produced and that offered a nine-repetition uninterrupted practice, we have been able to provide this service. The positive comments that several of you shared at this first conference where the video was introduced (even though numerous teachers had purchased copies of it earlier in the year) is confirmation that we made a wise decision in filming a new video. No doubt, those who have begun using it with their classes realize how practical it is for beginners as well as for more advanced students.

Most conference participants took advantage of the opportunity to pick up materials at the conference minus the shipping charges. One teacher purchased over \$500 worth of materials! Another packed an extra bag in her suitcase so she could take more materials home. It is significant to note that 13 Seijaku videos sold. Some of the teachers purchasing that video mentioned that they intended to use it in preparing for the upcoming Seijaku accreditation course in Edmonton, Alberta.



A suggestion came up that we might use the photo-textbook more in our classes by reading from it when students need a break from movement. A wealth of background information and tips on moving correctly make the resource very usable, even when sharing only small sections of it at a time. Whether the book is part of the class fee, whether it's simply on display at class, or whether one actively sells it to students, it can be used in numerous creative ways to enhance our teaching—from the words of the originator.

The video and book can be presented to students, especially those who are serious, as complementary materials, each of which has its unique features but which, together, are comprehensive tools to help us move as correctly as possible and fully understand the underlying principles and framework on which T'ai Chi Chih is based.

Thanks to teacher distributors Jeanne Engen-Duranske, Sandy McAlister, Christeen McLain, Pam Towne, and Kathy Vieth Albers for working at the GKP table. Special thanks to Sherry Corson for setting it up and assisting with sales, and also to Victor Viereck for helping with videotaping and operating the audio system for Justin's and Ed's sessions.

Additional Numbers on Credit Cards

When we get Visa/MasterCard charges approved, we are now being asked for an additional three digits that are on the back of the card after the sets of numbers like those embossed on the front. The card approval people tell us these numbers will eventually be required as an added security measure for the phone customer. For those teachers whose card numbers we keep on file, please drop a note or phone in this information.

For first-time credit card users at the conference, know that we can keep your number and expiration date on file to simplify future phone orders. The only time you need contact us further is when the expiration date and/or number changes.

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**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.

Issue 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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Vital Force Association Memberships, updates for Teacher's Directory, updates / sign-ups for Website Teacher Referral List, submissions for publication:

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

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The Vital Force

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The Lighter Side...

1. An earnest student at a recent one-day T'ai Chi Chih Workshop asked me the following questions about preferences in personal practice:

"Shoes, no shoes? Sand, no sand [as in practice on the beach]?"

"No sand in shoes" was my reply.

— *Ed Altman*

2. In a beginning class that was moving very well, I had just finished demonstrating "Working the Pulley." We practiced some parts of it together (the arms, the waist), examining the importance of circularity and the waist spiral. As we were about to try the entire movement, some of the students looked uncertain.

"When in doubt, swim," I said.

After about six repetitions we came to a conclusion, and one student clearly looked concerned.

"Swimming didn't help?" I asked.

"I tried to swim but I think I'm drowning!" she said.

— *Amy Hackenberg*

3. One evening I was fine-tuning Debbie, an upcoming teacher candidate.

"You're over-rotating your waist," I said.

Without missing a beat she replied, "I'm sorry. It's the over-achiever in me!"

— *Sharon Sirkis*

4. One of my students went to an energy vortex in Arizona. As she was standing on top of the mountain, she leaned slightly forward to see into the canyon. Automatically, she shifted right into Rocking Motion!

— *Sharon Sirkis*

5. Heard said to Mr. Baker [on graduation day of the San Antonio, TX course], "You're getting your wife back" to which Renza [Baker] responded, "Not the same one, dahling — you're getting a new woman."

— *Bitsy LeBlanc*

6. After TCC class, students usually report feeling peaceful, calm, and relaxed. One student whose joints kept cracking, had a different response. He smiled and said, "I hear castanets clicking."

— *Sharon Sirkis*

7. One of the centers where I teach contains a memo board listing the day's activities. Today's board listed two columns, meant to be read from top to bottom. However, when I looked at the board I naturally read the first line across. It read: YO YO Sharon Sirkis!

— *Sharon Sirkis*

Editor's Note: If you have a funny story to tell regarding your T'ai Chi Chih practice or teaching, write it up and send it in for "The Lighter Side..."

Pyramid Poetry

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

