

The Vital Force



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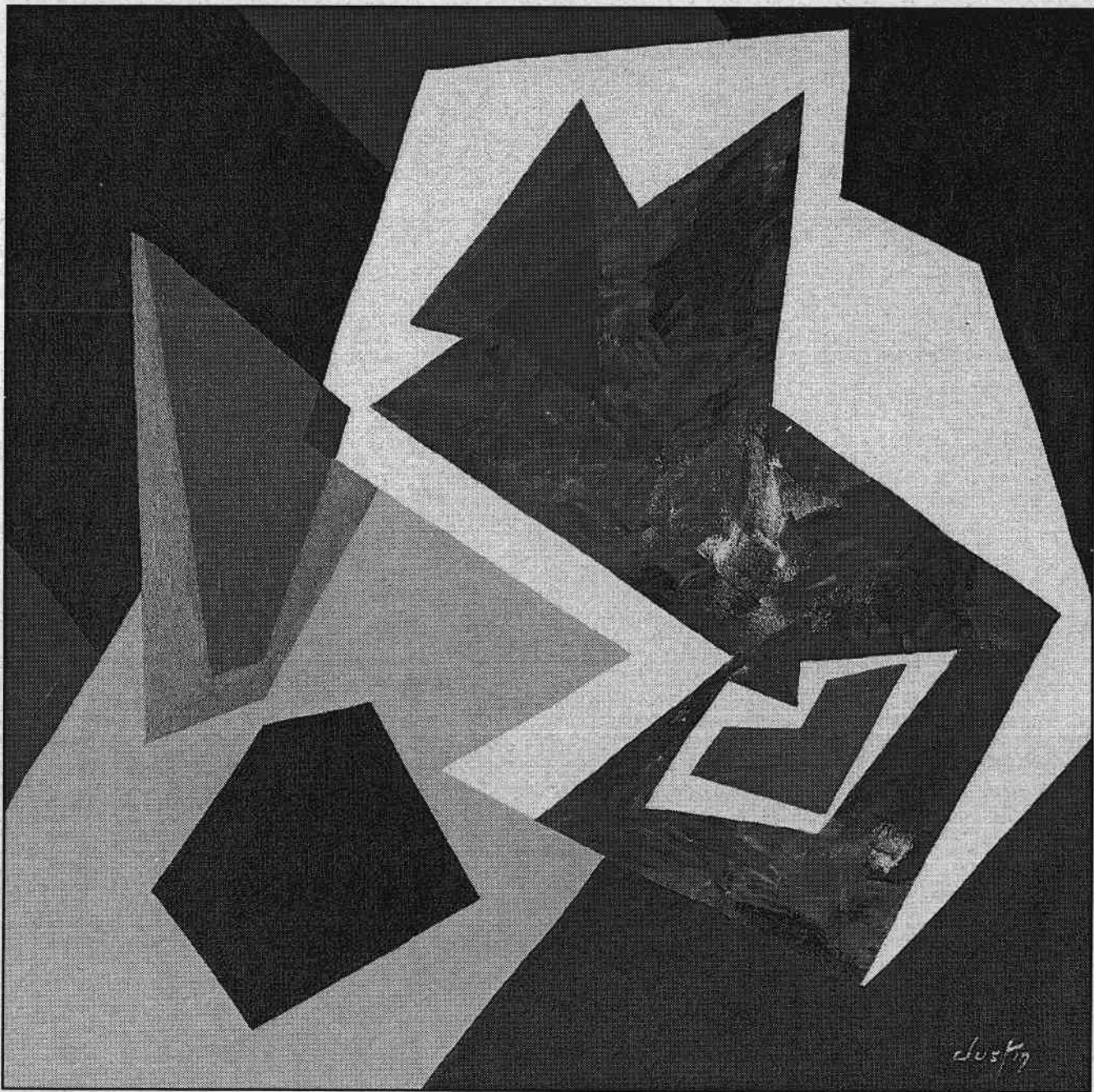




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**Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih.
Ed Altman is the Head of T'ai Chi Chih.**



The Vital Force

Editor: Noel Altman
 Technical Advisor: Ed Altman
 Membership Svcs: Doug Harned
 Information/Outreach: Kathy Albers

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.

Front & Back Covers:



The paintings on the front and back covers of this issue are the artwork of Justin Stone, the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih.



"Beyond Symmetry II" (front) and "The Swiftness of Light" (back) show two very different styles of his artwork, with the latter showing his more recent

technique. Both of these appear in full color, along with 38 others, in his new art book, *Tentatively Forever: Paintings by Justin F. Stone*. (See related articles on pages 35, 36, 37 and insert flyer).

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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

Doug Harned, our Membership Services coordinator, relocated to Albuquerque, NM in April. This should improve the speed at which membership forms are processed and acknowledgement postcards are mailed out, since we have eliminated the extra steps of me copying these forms and mailing them to Doug. We have ideas to discuss of possible changes to come, but will wait until he settles into his new home with wife Karin and baby Jenny, and gets oriented in his new construction engineering job. Welcome to Albuquerque, Doug!

I am pleased to announce a new VFJ Staff Member, St. Louis teacher **Kathy Vieth Albers**. Kathy has been in training since January to take over a new role for The Vital Force. She will coordinate "Information/Outreach." Kathy will be handling all incoming mail to the main VFJ e-mail address, thevitalforce@yahoo.com. Over time, a huge variety of questions have come into that address including: requests for teacher referrals or information on how to purchase TCC materials, questions about upcoming teacher training courses and other events, questions about subscribing to The Vital Force, questions from teachers who have been out of touch with the rest of the TCC community for some time and in coming across the TCC community website, notice that their name is not on the website listing of accredited teachers — they want to know how to get their name on that list. In addition, all sorts of other questions come in from various members of the public about what is happening in their TCC practice, are they practicing correctly, etc. Sometimes we even get specific questions for Justin Stone, from publications wanting to interview him, reviewers requesting free copies of his books, long-lost teachers trying to reconnect with him.

The volume of these types of questions has increased over time and is no longer something I feel I have the time to handle well. I am grateful to Kathy for taking on this important work. In time, when Kathy has a good feel for this part of the job, her duties may expand to other outreach efforts.

Welcome to the staff, Kathy!

Because Kathy will be taking over the general e-mail address for The Vital Force, I now have a new e-mail address just for submissions: VFJSubmissions@earthlink.net. I would prefer that only submissions be sent to this address, unless there is a question that only I can answer — then that would be okay, too.

Doug also now has his own e-mail address for handling Membership Services questions. It is: VFJmembership@yahoo.com.

Please take a moment to note the restructuring of staff tasks and contact information delineated on page 39 under "Vital Force Journal Contacts." Doug, Kathy, and myself each have different e-mail addresses and phone numbers listed as contact information based on the roles we have. By contacting the appropriate person directly, you will save us the unnecessary task of forwarding on information to each other. We appreciate your help in making our hours spent more efficient! Thank you!

Noel Altman, Editor



Readers Respond

Readers: See page 32 for a full explanation of our new bulk mailing process and the overall results nationwide. Individual members' responses follow:

Noel, I received my copy of *The Vital Force* on Monday, March 12 . . . It reached us sooner than in the past. When I reach inside the mailbox and find *The Vital Force* resting inside I always experience a warm sense of gratitude and excitement. Thank you!

Bitsy LeBlanc
Lake Charles, LA

Hi Noel - I received my *Vital Force* yesterday -- March 26. . . . It is such a capricious system. Barbara Riley got hers on the 22nd, and mine didn't come for [four] days after that! Sounds like there is no figuring, except that it seems that Bay Area mail dispatchers feel more put upon than others, and so are grumpier . . . Anyway, the issue looks great. . . .

Pat Bourne
San Francisco, CA

[Editor's note: I'm sorry it took so long to get to you. For whatever reason, it is taking weeks longer to get to the WEST coast (which is closer to NM) than the EAST coast!]

Overall, service has improved for most of our bulk mail subscribers. California, particularly the Bay Area, seems to be getting the slowest service (based on the responses I've gotten back). This may explain why our bulk mail service was so slow for all those years — because we were shipping from the Bay Area!]

Hi Noel! I just received the March 2001 *Vital Force* today, Saturday March 17th, in Annandale, NJ. . . . Great issue. I was riveted by Jean Katus' excellent article on working with troubled adolescents. Thanks,

Carolyn Allenby
Annandale, NJ

Vital Force, Just wanted to let you know that I did receive the *Vital Force* much earlier than I normally do. [Her e-mail was dated March 16]. Thanks for whatever you changed.

Marlene Brown
Cincinnati, OH

I'm enjoying the *VFJ* issue. . . . It is very strengthening to know that there is a COMMUNITY of people who are "on the path" all over the world. It strengthens my daily practice and influences my thoughts.

Linda Braga
Castro Valley, CA

Just a thought! It seems there is so much concern and stress about the mailing of the *VITAL FORCE* and when each member receives their copy.

It may be wiser to send out ALL copies at the same time. Forget the First Class level — "the HAVES and the HAVE-NOTS". I have not known of any organization that goes to all of that stress in all my years in the business. It didn't prove a thing when I had the First Class mailing. Either and/or both all came within a

week of the mailing. . . . Then it could also cut down on the balancing of the money and less book keeping. And remember that the United States Postal Service has a mind of it's own, and a system of it's own in all of it's central terminals. There is one here in Eagan — and I got my *Journal* one day later than Nancy [Werner-Azarski] who lives in the City. Figure that!

Placing the *Journal* in an envelope is wise — there have been times in the past when it has been badly damaged without that protection. It is what is written and shared that is more important than that pesky time element. That's T'ai Chi Chih! Names'te!

Vivian Hoff
Eagan, MN

[Editor's Note: Thanks for the suggestion. As I am reading through the responses from other bulk mail recipients and this new system is proving to be WEEKS faster in some cases, we may just get rid of the domestic First Class in the future.]

My understanding is that the reason First Class was added as an option for U.S. members was because for some living in small towns, it could take four to six weeks to get their issues! And they didn't want to wait.

The First Class handling does take more time on our parts, from the data entry to putting on the stamps.

As Editor, one thing I have wanted to see improve is the speed of delivery for our bulk mail subscribers.

A final point of clarification: ALL issues are shipped on the same day — March 5 in the last case.]



The Zen Way

The Zen Way! The Zen Way!

What is the meaning of
The Zen Way?

"Zen" means meditation, but Zen sitting is Zazen —
It is not like Indian meditation.

How define the practice of Zen?

There are no guidelines.

"Void" means "Emptiness,"

But Void is full of rivers, trees, and moonlight.

"Impermanent" — yes!

"Everlasting" — yes!

How reconcile such opposites?

Many are one but one equals many.

What meets the eye

is not what meets the heart.

A life of loneliness —

"aloneness," really —

Can be full and meaningful.

But, in the end

What is meaningful?

Do we look for satisfaction

Or do we seek to avoid suffering?

Can we have both?

Can we live with neither?

Bodhidharma came from the West

But, if he had continued,

He would have been in the West again.

Life contracts and expands

Everything appears circular and cyclical.

Who ordered it this way?

Can we be thankful

With no thing to be thankful for?

— *Justin Stone*