

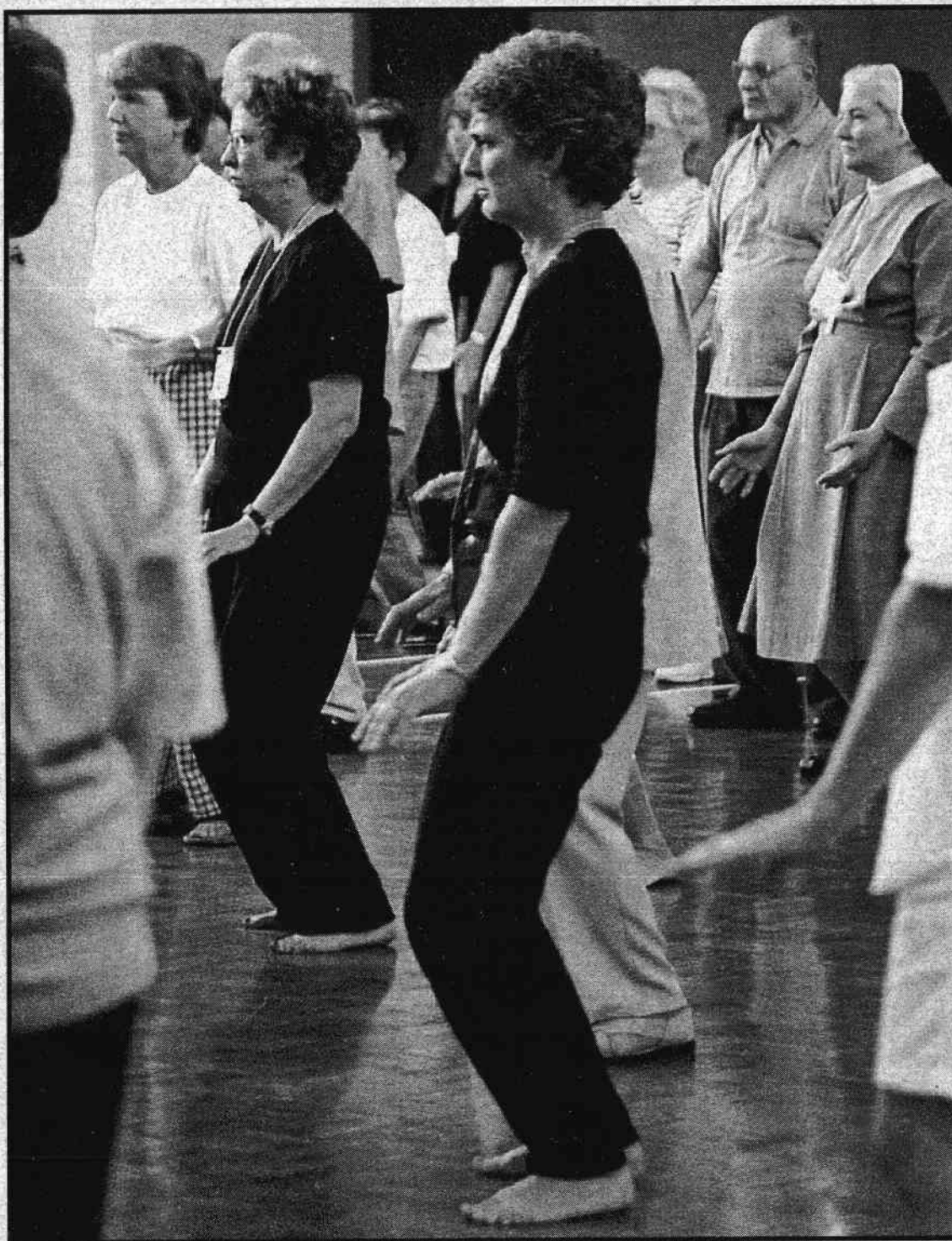
# The Vital Force



*Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community*

Volume 18, No. 4

December 2001



*"Sinking into the soles of the feet..."*



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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.

### Cover:



This issue's cover is again the work of photographer and TCC student Alice Maisel who donated her time and talents photographing the 2001 TCC Teachers' Conference in Moraga, CA.

In deciding last quarter's cover, it was a tough call between the one I did use or this one. In the aftermath of the attacks on Sept. 11, I felt it was a concrete image we could all benefit from seeing—focusing in the soles of the feet!

The photo was taken at the "open practice" which included Bay Area TCC students, as well as the attending TCC teachers. Teachers Athene Mantle (center, in black) and Stephanie Bass (to Athene's left, in black), demonstrate perfect alignment, a theme of the movement sessions led by Head of TCC Ed Altman, Sr. Antonia Cooper (in full habit, in the right rear) allows her hands to rise as she begins the movement "Light at the Top of the Head."

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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

### General TCC News:

**A hearty congratulations and THANK YOU IN ADVANCE to Pam Towne and Sandy McAlister**, whom Ed has promoted to newly-developed roles as "Teacher Trainers." (See full article on page 4). Each of them has worked closely with Ed in recent years in preparing for the positions. In addition to leading TCC events such as TCC Student/ Teacher Workshops and Retreats, they will also be leading Teacher Training courses (beginning in 2003). Also, they will be assisting Ed with some of the behind-the-scenes tasks which, heretofore, Ed has been handling. As TCC continues to expand, this help will be greatly appreciated!

Both of them move exceptionally well, as most of you know. Pam Towne was my teacher 14 years ago in Southern California, so I know first-hand how good she is. At that time in my life, her classes were an oasis of calm, and I absolutely looked forward to them every week! Many of the teaching techniques she used when I was her student are ones I have incorporated into my teaching. Pam was also Ed's second teacher (and the one who prepared him for Teacher Training). She has worked closely with Ed in the last five years hosting two Teacher Trainings in Southern California, and has long been a leader in her TCC Community.

Sandy McAlister has been a friend to Ed and I from the time we first entered the TCC teaching community, and that relationship grew to a new level from 1995-2000 when we lived in her neck of the woods, the Bay Area (Northern California). She worked closely with Ed in the last five years by hosting two Teacher Trainings and this year's Teachers' Conference. In March of this year, she worked closely with me on my Pulling Taffy, helping me take the waist turning to a new level! Like Pam, Sandy has also long been a leader in her TCC Community. Congratulations to both of them!

### The Vital Force News:

**Teachers: Kathy Albers**, our Information/Outreach Coordinator, is beginning a new project — collecting information on what sorts of populations are being taught TCC — so that like-minded teachers can begin networking together, so that Kathy will have more detailed information when giving out teacher referrals to potential students, so that we, as a community, will begin documenting our combined experience (for future promotional efforts). A full letter from Kathy describing the project, and a questionnaire to fill out and return, will be included as inserts with the 2002 Teacher Directory, which will be mailed in December.

**Doug Harned**, our Membership Services Coordinator, is no longer sending out "acknowledgement postcards" when members sign up or renew their subscriptions. Because we print the "GOOD THRU \_\_\_\_\_" information on address labels, members can check their membership expiration date each time a new issue of The Vital Force arrives.

Our FAX machine has died, and because the number of submissions coming to us via this method is very few, we are discontinuing this option. All submissions will need to be sent by U.S. Mail or by e-mail from now on.

I recently sent an e-mail message to all of you who had e-mail addresses in our database reminding you of the separate e-mail addresses that Doug, Kathy and I now have (see page 39 for these). About 50 were returned as "undeliverable." Please be sure to update us when your e-mail address changes! Thank you!

**Noel Altman**, Editor



# Readers Respond

As usual, when the last issue of the *Vital Force* came, I read it with great interest. The conference photos were wonderful.

Of particular interest to me was the back cover photo of Justin & Ed together. Some of us in the Edmonton area are wondering if copies of this photo could be purchased. Please send me the costs, sizes available, if we could order copies. . . . Thanks!

**Bernice Piotrowski**  
Edmonton, AB  
CANADA

This year's Conference Issue of *VF* was exquisitely presented. I especially like the picture of Justin & Ed on the back. Is there any way I could get a print of it?

**Sr. Antonia Cooper**  
North Plainfield, NJ

**[Editor's Note: I have contacted the photographer, Alice Maisel, about the possibility of ordering copies of that photo (pictured below). It has generated more written and verbal response than any single photo printed in the *VFJ* during my three years as editor. Alice has responded below.]**



Many individuals from the T'ai Chi Chih community have expressed an interest in obtaining copies of some of the photos from the 16th International T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference. In particular, there is a lot of interest in the photo of Justin and Ed featured on the back cover of the September

2001 issue of the *Vital Force*.

As the photographer, I will have available color copies of the photo of Justin and Ed at the following prices: \$18.00 for an 8x10; \$12.00 for a 5x7; and \$9.00 for a 4x6 photo. These prices include postage and handling. The color 8x12 group photo is still available for \$18.00. If you have questions about these or any other photos or optional photo mounts, contact me at (925) 631-7824 or write to:

Alice Maisel  
1977 Ascot Dr. #3  
Moraga, CA 94556

To order:  
Please indicate photo and size desired. Send a check or money order in the above amount payable to Alice Maisel to the above address.

**Alice Maisel**  
Moraga, CA

Doug, Thank you for the . . . June issue of the *Vital Force*. I'm so happy to get it. I have been waiting patiently to receive an issue, not knowing which months you actually published.

Enclosed is a U.S. Funds money order for \$35.00 for my subscription.

I practise T'ai Chi Chih every day and hope to become an accredited instructor, as I enjoy the benefits so much I want to be able to help others.

The information / updated news in the *Vital Force* will be most helpful to me. Thank you again. Sincerely,

**Faye Mohr**  
Edmonton, AB  
CANADA

**[Editor's Note: The following message arrived to Ed in November from our only TCC teacher in Italy. She presented at the University of Verona and had a fantastic response!]**

Dear Ed . . . The "Open Encounter" was a success. After talking for two hours (with a five minute interval in the middle where I got the people up to perform a couple of T'ai Chi Chih moves), the professor came up on the podium and said: "You really touched me. Please, as an old man, in front of all these people, I would like to hug your softness (my speech ended with a tribute to softness). I will do everything in my power (and believe me, he is a powerful one) to introduce T'ai Chi Chih in the University of Verona next year. We will start with Physical Education and we will take it from there."

So he did hug me. Everybody (about 300 people) applauded. My mother cried...What a moment! Well, after that we went out to lunch together . . . There he said that he plans to invite the Head of T'ai Chi Chih to the university in the year 2003 (meaning that the university would pay for the trip). What do you think?? And he went on and on about how I had convinced him of the need for a discipline like T'ai Chi Chih in our culture. Wow! I did not even hope for that. So I think that if anything like this materializes, you could give accreditation exams during the same occasion. Well, we'll see. I know you are happy with me about all this. Please tell Justin we are on a roll. I will keep you posted. . . .

**Cristina Minelli**  
Buscoldo, Mantova  
ITALY



# Two promoted to “Teacher Trainer” will assist Head of TCC

By Ed Altman

The T'ai Chi Chih community continues to grow and mature, and as Justin Stone has said innumerable times, we have a “brilliant future” ahead of us. There are now accredited teachers in 40 U.S. states, five Canadian provinces and nine other countries including our most recent addition from Mexico. The Edmonton, Alberta teachers have begun planning for the 2003 Teachers' Conference, our first conference to be held outside the U.S., and as Justin's teaching materials are being translated into multiple languages, the likelihood of a T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training course outside North America appears closer than ever.

This international expansion represents an exciting time in our growth, and we will see tremendous opportunities for our community as well as numerous challenges. During the last several years, I've thought a great deal about how to accommodate the future growth of the T'ai Chi Chih community, and it is clear that one person cannot do it alone. One of the great strengths about T'ai Chi



Pam Towne (second from right) poses with candidates and the course instructor during the Teacher Training course she hosted in Fullerton, CA in May, 2001. Pictured, (L-R): Course Instructor Ed Altman, Candidates Barbara Lippert and Linden Royce, Course Host Pam Towne, Candidate Marillyn DeVine. All three candidates had been Pam's students.

Photo provided by Pam Towne

Chih is that we are a *community* of accredited teachers and students, and the value of our collective efforts is far greater than that of any individual.

It has always been my intention to serve the needs of T'ai Chi Chih while balancing those of my personal and professional life. I've had many discussions with Justin about this topic over the years, and we both feel that we must prepare for the future by bringing in additional experienced teachers to help with teacher accreditation and to assist me in shouldering the many responsibilities of leading the T'ai Chi Chih community.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Sandy McAlister and Pam Towne have accepted my request to become T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Trainers. In my role as Head of T'ai Chi Chih, I will continue to conduct T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training courses as well as teach related workshops, retreats and teacher renewals. However, these responsibilities will now be shared among the three of us to better serve the growing demands of our community.

In addition, Pam and Sandy will also assist me with many administration tasks such as dealing with those who are teaching without accreditation, addressing teacher candidate preparation, mentoring new teachers, and working with the accredited teaching community to deepen their practice and teaching. This change will also free up some of my time to pursue strategic relationships such as the Shepherd's Centers of America, The Arthritis Foundation, and similar opportunities that will have positive effects on the entire T'ai Chi Chih community.



Sandy McAlister addresses the attending teachers at the 2001 Teachers' Conference, which she hosted in August in Moraga, CA, with the support and help of the Bay Area TCC teachers. Photo: Alice Maisel

Pam was accredited in 1984, just a few months prior to when Sandy received her accreditation in early 1985, and both ladies have played important roles in the development of the T'ai Chi Chih teaching community. Sandy has sent numerous students through the teacher accreditation process, served as course host for many Teacher Training courses in the Bay Area, and also hosted four Teachers' Conferences, including the most recent conference held in Moraga, California in 2001. Noel and I were two of Pam's many students who became accredited to teach T'ai Chi Chih. She has also hosted numerous Teacher Training courses in Southern California and hosted the annual Teachers' Conference one year in Northern California. She

also taught her first T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training course in 1997.

Although they were recently asked to "step up" to their new roles, these ladies have been working closely with me to prepare for this transition for the last two years. They were not asked to do this, but they chose to deepen their own practice and selflessly give something back to T'ai Chi Chih. Their commitment and sincere interest in improving their teaching have greatly impressed both Justin and me. During each of the last two years, Sandy and Pam have traveled across the country to audit one or more Teacher Training courses (for the entire week) and provide assistance to the many candidates who sought accreditation. At my urging, they've also taken on larger roles in their regions to foster a stronger sense of community, and we've shared many discussions about subjects affecting the health and future of the T'ai Chi Chih community. I've also had the benefit of their counsel and company during these times, and received their unyielding support and encouragement throughout the years.

Most important, in spite of their tremendous teaching experience, both Sandy and Pam have continued to improve their T'ai Chi Chih practice and assisted me in improving my own during the times we've spent together. We have had open discussions about principles and their application to the T'ai Chi Chih movements, and will continue to meet several times each year to refine our personal practice and ensure we are consistent in the way we teach the principles of T'ai Chi Chih.

During the recent T'ai Chi Chih

Teachers' Conference, I was approached by several groups of teachers about holding a teacher renewal or teacher/student retreat in their area. Pam and Sandy will begin leading some of those events in 2002. Donna McElhose is working to put together a Teacher Training course outside of Chicago, IL. To prepare for this event, I suggested — and Donna enthusiastically agreed — to bring Sandy out to lead a teacher / student workshop and to assist Donna in helping to prepare her teacher candidates. Similarly, Donnis Minx and Ann Daly have been working to put together a teacher / student workshop in Indianapolis, IN and Pam will be leading this event next year. In both cases, I would not have been able to lead these events, given the demands of my schedule and I'm grateful to Pam and Sandy. [See "Calendar of Events" on page 21 for details on both of these events].

Starting in 2003, Pam and Sandy will begin leading some of the T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training courses, and my expectation is that their roles will expand further as the demand for such events continues to grow through the coming years.

Please join me in congratulating Sandy and Pam on their accomplishment, and in thanking them for their willingness to serve the T'ai Chi Chih community in this valuable way. I know we will all benefit from their contributions and tremendous teaching experience. I encourage you to regularly examine *The Vital Force* "Calendar of Events" for information about upcoming events, and invite you to join us in deepening our personal practice of T'ai Chi Chih, *Joy Thru Movement*.