

# The Vital Force



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

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*Opening practice began in a circle with 116 accredited teachers...*

*at the 17th Annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference*

*Coverage begins on Page 6.*

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**Justin Stone is the Originator of *T'ai Chi Chih!* Joy Thru Movement  
Ed Altman is the Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community**



## The Vital Force

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*The Vital Force, Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community, 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 and outreach services such as teacher referrals. Teacher memberships also include listing in and receipt of the annual Teachers' Directory.*

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

### Cover:



*The cover photo was taken by TCC student Dale Sollars, husband of TCC teacher Ann Sollars, at the*

*opening practice of the 17th Annual TCC Teachers' Conference in San Antonio, TX. Dale volunteered as one of the videographers and also snapped photographs during the conference.*

*Also volunteering his time and effort at the conference this year was Columbus Smith, a professional photojournalist with impressive credentials. Nearly all the photos on the inside pages of this issue are Columbus' work. We were privileged to have a photographer with his background offering his services!*

*Thanks very much to Dale and Columbus!*

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# Letter from the Editor

*The wonderful thing about our annual teachers' conference every year is seeing the teaching community in a different part of the country (and after next year's in Canada, we'll be able to say, "in North America") band together and offer up their collective best, often with a regional flair. It's wonderful because the conferences are never the same — they are dynamic and changing. Good new ideas come from each conference and are often carried forward by future conference committees.*

*We all owe our gratitude to the group of teachers who commit selflessly to this task of hosting the biggest T'ai Chi Chih event of the year, many working for up to two years in advance in researching and booking locations, planning the agenda, working out the logistics, coming up with a theme, publicizing the event in The Vital Force, and sometimes the local media. This is a completely volunteer effort, and absolutely qualifies in the category of "giving something back" (a phrase Originator Justin Stone has continually challenged us all to do.)*

*The "San Antonio Six" (as I call them) were absolutely amazing. Such a small group, such a big accomplishment. When they had volunteered for the hosting duties two years earlier, there had been nine local teachers committed to the cause, but after some out-of-state moves, their numbers were reduced to the Six. Led by Sr. Alice Holden, they also included: Stella Jaidar, Sophie Roland, Renza Baker, Lucky Sikora and Sr. Eugenia Stell. These ladies made it look easy — always gracious, always accommodating. Any time I looked around, there were always two or three of them posted at the doorways or in the foyer of the gym to assist with any needs that arose. Several of them told me that the most amazing thing to them was how they all got along so beautifully. When something was assigned, it got done. There weren't any hassles whatsoever in the group dynamics. Sr. Alice made it clear over and over that although she was the designated speaker and facilitator, the work was all group effort. With the challenges of a schedule that was changing sometimes hour to hour, Sr. Alice was the perfect no-nonsense gal to move us forward and keep us on track. Her job wasn't easy this year, but Sr. Alice was perfect at it!*

*The San Antonio Six had help from quite a few out-of-state teachers with the set-up and registration process as well as some of the photography and videotaping. I hope I'm not leaving out any names, but I know Bobbi and Andy Anderson, Mary Cameris, Deb Cole, Caroline Guillott, Amy Hackenberg, Nancy Bordley Hall, Carla Kelley, Bitsy LeBlanc, Robert Montes de Oca, Ann and Dale Sollars, and Rhonda St. Martin are all worthy of a big THANK YOU! They made it possible for a small group to actually execute the event they had planned for two years!*

\*\*\*\*\*  
*As promised, this October issue is devoted to coverage of the recent Teachers' Conference. In addition, coverage of the ongoing discussion of the teacher candidate deferral problem is also presented. I made it a priority to make sure that every person who submitted a comment or article on this topic would be published in this issue, and by expanding to our maximum size of 44 pages was just able to do it. Many wonderful unrelated articles are waiting in my "To Use in Future Issue" folder, and I expect to use many of them in the next issue.*

**Noel Altman, Editor**



# Readers Respond

**[Editor's Note: On May 15, an e-mailed letter was sent to every current subscriber for whom we had an e-mail address. It let them know of changes in publication dates, and that the June issue would not ship until July. All of this information was repeated in the July Issue, so that all readers would be fully informed. Following are some responses to the e-mail.]**

. . . Thank you for your detailed e-mail regarding the new publishing dates of *The Vital Force*. Your reasons for the changes make eminently good sense. The contents of the journal are well worth waiting for so we bear the delay gladly. This week I will get my renewal off so I will be on the list when the second year of my subscription begins. . . . I am so thankful that Ed and you will be able to continue your leadership roles in the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community from your far distant location. It would be very hard to rejoice at what seems to be your good fortune if it meant that you would be lost to us in this capacity. And so for now, "Aloha."

**Mary Schapker**  
Galloway, NJ

Thanks for the recent email about your move to Hawaii and the status of the *VFJ*. I am sure it will be in good hands in Albuq. for the mailing. . . .

**Linda Braga**  
Castro Valley, CA

I think that it [changing the publication months] is a great idea and like you said it will give you more time to cover and receive articles concerning the conference. Things have a

way of working themselves out. If we can eliminate unnecessary stress out of our lives, we are doing well. . . .

**Caroline Guillott**  
Lake Charles, LA

Thank you Noel for the update. This gives me the opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate our magazine and how much I look forward to it. I use a lot of the material for the classes I've taught, especially for those students that want to go on to become T.C.C. teachers. In my own practice, many of the articles help me to refine, rethink, and/or ponder both my practice and my fidelity to the movement of the Chi. Thank you so much for all the wonderful work you do to give us such a top notch magazine. . . .

**Viola Bens, ose**  
Christopher Lake, SK  
CANADA

I have some serious reservations about the July 2002 cover, although it utilized a technically good photo. Specifically, I am concerned with the prominence of the cross. Don't get me wrong, I am certainly grateful for all the work done by nuns and other Christians among us to further the TCC discipline. If I'm not mistaken, though, the *VFJ* is intended to serve our community of teachers and students, as well as to disseminate and introduce information about the TCC discipline to the world-at-large. In my mind, this July issue meets only half that criteria. The *VFJ* is a valuable tool to promote the TCC discipline and I always look forward to using the published nuggets that serve that goal. I make it a point to tell

students that the TCC discipline has no religious affiliation. But for beginning and intermediate students, as well as institutions to whom I'm pitching classes, this cover suggests otherwise. Since I do not want to share this issue with a disclaimer attached, I have not shared it. This is unfortunate and avoidable. As a professional photographer, I truly believe that a photo is worth a thousand words. I just hope they're the right ones.

The other issue I'd like to raise concerns the content of letters to the editor and the amount of space allotted for those letters. I often feel as if I'm reading personal letters to the editor that aren't for public consumption, or that merely serve the purpose of thanking those involved for putting out the *Journal*. Gratitude is imperative, and in my mind it needs no wider audience than subject/object (preferably merged). But I would personally rather read more letters or articles of substance. Perhaps there aren't any, though.

Please do not take this as a personal affront. I appreciate your work for the TCC community. It is merely meant as two thoughts between two editors, and as one community member to another.

**Kim Grant**  
Boston, MA

**[Editor's Note: Thank you for your response to the last issue. I acknowledge your concern about seeing a cross in the background of the cover photo. The *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline, as**

*continued on page 41*



# The debate continues...

[Editor's Note: The debate continues over what to do with the situation of *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher trainings producing deferred candidates at a consistent rate of 12% per year. This debate has continued to generate responses from readers since it was first proposed by Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community Ed Altman in the March 2002 issue of *The Vital Force* where he asked for community feedback on one proposed idea.

The July 2002 issue was devoted to the discussion that ensued, and every submission to *The Vital Force* which related directly to the topic was printed at that time.

Since the July issue, more responses continued to flow in, and then the matter was fully discussed in August amongst the 116 teachers attending the teachers' conference.

Although he didn't attend in person, Justin Stone's comments were also considered in the discussion as a letter he had written to be read at the conference was printed off for every attendee. That letter is included in this issue. (See page 11).

Following the conference, responses from attend-

ing teachers, many of them quite long and well-thought-out, flowed in to *The Vital Force*.

It is exciting to me to see the larger *T'ai Chi Chih* community involved in the discussion. It is exciting to me to see *The Vital Force* used in this way — as a forum for discussion of an idea that affects the future of all of us, and *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement.

We also have responses from students who are preparing to become teacher candidates, and I am pleased to offer their perspectives in this issue.

Once again, all received submissions on the topic of what to do with the deferred candidate situation have been printed. I have presented the material in a *chronological order* — responses *before* the conference, *during* the conference and *after* the conference are interspersed with coverage of the teachers' conference itself. As a result, this issue does not begin with Justin Stone and Ed Altman's articles. Rather, it ends with them, since theirs were the last ones in, and since it is fitting that they have the final say.

Below and right are pre-conference responses.]

Read *The Vital Force* discussion re: teacher training. My thoughts:

One of the qualities of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement is its "simplicity". And I too like to keep a perspective re: more institution.

The process for teacher cert should be kept simple, yet achieve the desired results: reduction in deferrals.

The process begins at the grass roots. If students are coming thru only to be deferred, then the referring teacher is lacking in understanding. Can this be corrected? I believe so. Consider the following.

1. Teacher & student use the certification check list from the web site. When the teacher is satisfied, he/she signs off on it (yes, date and signa-

ture). Student presents it at a 2-3 day precert screening workshop. A maximum number of students should be set. Eight?

2. Precert teacher uses this check list to evaluate the student. Use a highlighter to mark the areas that need improvement. I am sure that this can be determined in one session. Review this with student. Proceed with corrections as necessary. Use a different highlighter to mark areas that have showed improvement.

3. Lead teacher and student together evaluate the work with a final decision to advance or defer.

4. Either way the student has an evaluation product to take back to the referring teacher. The wise teacher will use this to improve/cor-

rect his/her teacher prep.

5. A deferred student uses the check list, preferably with a different teacher, as the student might not have related to a teacher's style of teaching. That teacher, when he/she feels student has corrected weaknesses, can sign off and the student reapply for precert.

6. The advancing student hones his/her TCC practice, perhaps for a period of months? The referring teacher again signs off and student applies for certification.

Video tape is not the best idea. It may show technique but it will not convey attitude, inner discipline, etc.

**Neena Mitchell**  
Syracuse, NY



Dear Ed:

. . . In the current "Vital Force," I was impressed with the discussion of the training issue. I appreciate the honest and open way you have engaged the TCC community on this important matter. The type of leadership demonstrated by you on this bodes well for the health of the organization.

I agree with the solution taking shape: the 2-tiered process. It would have been great for me. As you well know from my training last year, I had good spirit, teh, attitude etc., but my technique left a lot to be desired. A pre-training course would have brought this to light, and given me time to work on it.

Thanks for your dedicated work on behalf of the TCC world . . . and I look forward to being with you at the New Jersey training in October. With fond regards,

**Freddy Solomon**  
Colchester, VT

Hi, just a quickie, to let you know that we appreciate your efforts in keeping the far-flung TCC community together. Having just completed a trans-continental move, I sympathize with you and feel that you have nothing to apologize for.

I just got the new issue and must confess that I have not stayed current on the difficulty of adequately preparing TCC candidates. It was a great issue and I look forward to finishing it later.

Without a great deal of deep thought or meditation, I must say that a TWO-step process seems to be a great way to go. I learned where there were plenty of teach-

ers. Then, I lived and taught subsequent to my certification where there was no-one, until Ed came and taught in Orlando.

I witnessed the struggle of inadequately prepared candidates, as well as, candidates that were trained by instructors certified under Ed's predecessor. The solution may be as simple as an intermediate step in the training. It would serve a secondary purpose in deepening the practice of anyone who attended and might help those of us who are isolated. It could be part of a continuing education program (which I think is a great idea every three years or so).

Yes, money is an issue. I am, after seven years in Orlando, starting over, again. Unfortunately, that is why I am unable to attend the convention this year. Once I get back on my feet, I hope to audit a teachers training sooner rather than later, to deepen my practice.

When I finish this issue and find the previous one and read that one, I will revisit this subject with you. . .

**Elissa Maguire**  
Kennewick, WA

Dear Noel,

First I want to thank you for your article starting on page 24 [of the July 2002 issue]. It helps fill in some of the history on the issue under discussion for those of us who are newer to the TCC practice.

I understand this discussion will continue at the Teacher's Conference. However, as a committed student I am very interested in what will happen and feel it important to share where I am. I would

like to apply an analogy from my Profession of Nursing to TCC Teacher Training. In both it seems to me that there is a need for levels of practice. In Nursing, the first level of practice is to be a good nurse. The next level is to specialize and teaching is a specialty. Continuing education is essential to maintain quality of both practice and teaching or any other specialty.

I strongly support the suggestion to separate the Teacher Training into two courses with the first having a focus on practice and the second having a focus on teaching. (This does not [correspond] to mandatory continuing education for teachers — that could come later.) This approach would have the additional advantage of providing intensive practice training for those who may not feel called to teach — or may help a candidate discern whether or not they are. The first level would come after the referring teacher has done what they can to prepare the candidate. It could be an advanced "intermediate" training where learning rather than teaching is the principal focus. In either case, I would see it not only as an opportunity to improve the student's practice but to also improve the quality of the entire TCC Community. I would personally be interested in the first level with an openness to eventually working toward teaching.

I am very grateful to have had good teachers in Kathy Albers and Susan Kissinger. However, I could not help but observe some other teachers in various situations and wonder about the variations. Sincerely,

**Ann Marie Wyrsh**  
Student of K. Albers and S. Kissinger  
St. Louis, MO



# FLOWING FROM THE SOURCE

17th INTERNATIONAL TAI CHI CHI TEACHER'S CONFERENCE  
AUGUST 1 - 4, 2002

University of the Incarnate Word  
San Antonio, TX

It took me only eight years to overcome the discomfort of seeking scholarship help from a community I had, for the most part, not even met before. I was so grateful for the opportunity to finally forge a link to connect me with the support, guidance, learning, and joy I had missed all those years.

– **David White**  
Valparaiso, IN  
(First-time Attendee)

with a deeper commitment to continue to deepen my own practice, for my students will only be as committed as I am. I feel strengthened within to continue the journey called "life in the present moment." Many thanks to each person's effort and presence to make this conference a valuable learning for me.

– **Sr. Phyllis Ann Ries, RSM**  
Little Falls, MN

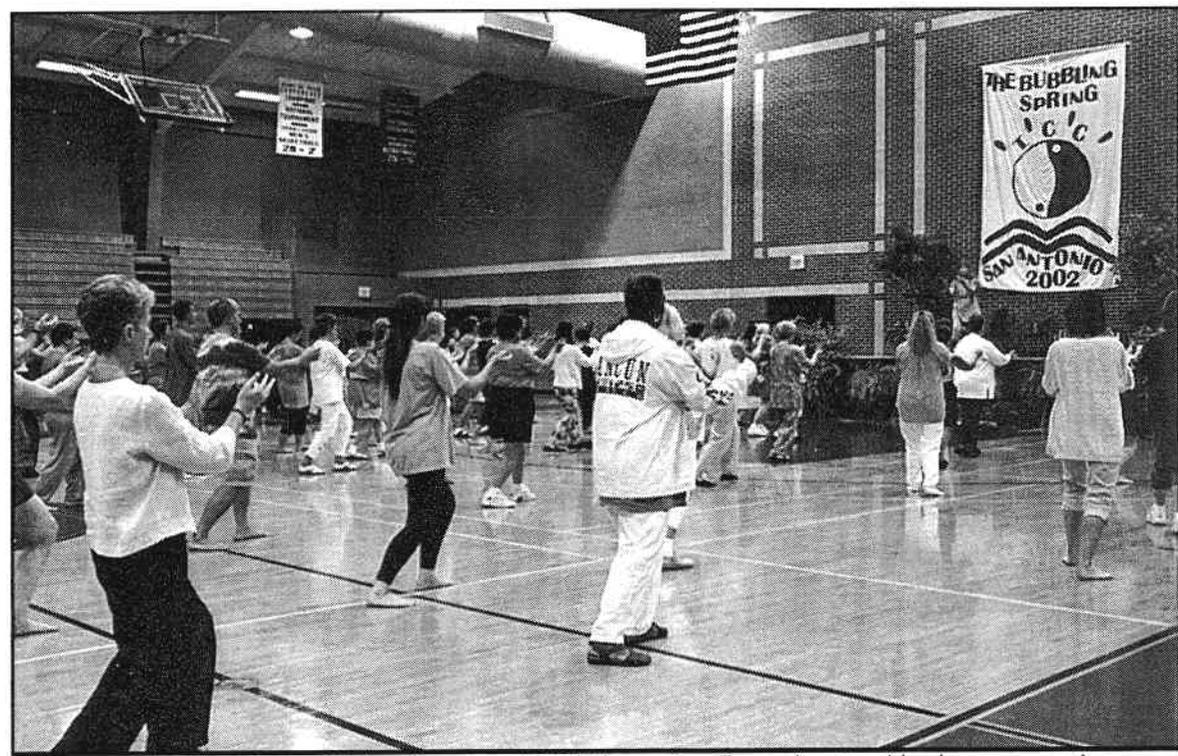
My first conference last year in the secluded Northern California hills felt euphoric and touched me on many different levels. This year in San Antonio, a for-

mer home place for me, was much more grounded. Of course there was much pertinent business at hand with the discussion of teacher candidate preparations and such. The course hosts were marvelous just as they were last year. Having Pam and Sandy as obvious co-teachers with Ed was a special bonus. The way they chose a few specific moves to work on rather than trying to go over all or most of the movements was very effective. They gave us several pearls of wisdom from their own experience in deepening their practice — like how to sense the weight shift from moment to moment, how to not over extend on Perpetual Motion,

Each time I attend our TCC Conference I come away with great gratitude for the gift to be among everyone present. I leave

Pulling Taffy, and how to let the arms flow from the weight shift effortlessly in Daughter in the Valley. The 4-5 things they shared for us to try in our own practice was manageable to remember and experiment with instead of overwhelming as when all movements are covered — quite appropriate for a teachers' conference. So, Thank You, Ed, Pam + Sandy.

– **Gale Portman**  
Manchester, MO



Following practice sessions on Friday afternoon with Ed Altman, Pam Towne (on stage) leads group practice before dinner.

Photo: Columbus Smith



# How it Was to Host a *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers' Conference

By Alice Holden, CCVI  
for SARA (San Antonio  
Regional Assn. Of TCC  
Teachers)

It is hard to say just what dynamics took place in the hosting of this year's Conference. We are grateful to the University of the Incarnate Word for providing housing, food and ambience. We are grateful to the 116 teachers who came, to the many volunteers who helped. We are grateful to Ed Altman for his direction and to Justin Stone for his inspiring video presentation. We are grateful to ourselves for hanging in there in tough times, allowing the CHI to do its magic!

Magic, we define as our use of spiritual power to bring about positive physical change. There are three kinds of magic: black (we don't want that, it hurts others); white (we accept that, as it does good to ourselves and others); and CLEAR MAGIC (which is present when we do all that we do for the glory of the CHI, or God).

As a team, we felt this clear magic at work even before the Conference began. There were inconveniences and problems of various sorts. However, due to the CHI flowing through all involved, these were addressed and managed with joy.

The University gave us a special cost price for all services rendered. Though the college dorms were not first class hotel rooms, they were adequate and allowed us to keep costs down and to have money left to pass on to the *T'ai Chi Chih* community.

The real success of the Conference, we feel, was in the fact that as a Community, we were able to listen to each other speak to the question of change. Each of us has our opinion, which we state elsewhere. What became evident to us is that we are asked to give our opinions. We are urged to be a participative community. This process is not often well modeled in our world. It is



Conference Committee members take a break amidst their hosting duties to pose for the camera, (L-R): Lucky Sikora, Stella Jaidar, Renza Baker, Sr. Alice Holden, Sr. Eugenia Stell and Sophie Roland.

Photo: Columbus Smith

too difficult. It will take much trial and error to make it work for the *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers in 2002 and beyond.

Justin Stone's video presentation called us to gratitude. To be happy each day, we need only be grateful for what is. Justin was indeed present, an inspiration as always, as he challenged all certified teachers to bring the TCC discipline into the future. His voice continues to inspire.

The panel on building community called us to greater responsibility on the local as well as on the national and international levels. As individual teachers and as regional groups we can foster the growth and continued purity of the *T'ai Chi Chih* form (see pg. 10).

Discussion about a two-tiered approach to teacher training was passionate and challenging. We are grateful for the opportunity to share. Ed's closing remarks were powerful. A standing ovation ushered in the closing practice of the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements.

We, as a team, apologize if anyone felt rushed or inconvenienced in any way. Our aim was to make the Conference as comfortable as possible for all. If any participant was not issued a roster and would like to have one, please email: [sjaidar@stic.net](mailto:sjaidar@stic.net) and one will be sent to you.



# Videotaped message from TCC Originator is played for attendees

Transcribed by Dan Pienciak

**Transcriber's Note:** The following is the transcription from Justin Stone's video greeting to those present at the conference, for publication in the *Vital Force*. Note that this text is taken directly off the video as spoken. Where needed, the written text of Justin's read message was consulted for spelling or punctuation.

**[Editor's Note:** Brackets are shown where words have been added to make this speech trademark-compliant. They were not the spoken words.]

Hello, everybody.

I'm very happy to greet the teachers of [the] *T'ai Chi Chih* [Community] at this summer's conference.

It isn't by accident that you are here. You're pioneers in a movement that I think will have a very big influence over the next 50 years. I believe it will change the way that medicine looks at life. So your being here means that you are the pioneers in something which is very young. *T'ai Chi Chih* [Joy Thru Movement] is destined to bring a good deal of health and joy to the world, and you will be the ones to do it.

I'm going to read a little piece that I've written:

In the middle east, the word "rain" is the synonym for "grace". When I think of grace, I can't help but follow it with gratitude. In my life experience, I've come to the conclusion that the recipe for happiness and joy is being grateful — for this day, for this life, and for nothing in particular. Paul Reps said, "How grateful I am with no thing to be grateful for." He didn't say "nothing to be grateful for"; he said "no thing to be grateful for". If you do not express gratitude each day, you are missing the boat. The cynic, the skeptic, is not a happy person. You cannot be grateful and unhappy at the same time.



**(L-R):** Linden Royce, Conference Committee Member Lucky Sikora (standing), Linda Williams and Guy Kent sit up close to one of the TV screens to see Justin Stone's image more clearly as the rest of the attendees listen from their seats. Photo: Columbus Smith

Simple, isn't it?

Wisdom is not made up of theory or of symbols. It comes from the inside. When I think of "doctrine" and "dogma", I remember the saying, "my karma just ran over your dogma". True dogma cannot be formularized. True wisdom is inherent in each one of us. When we live too much from habit energies, the wisdom is covered up, and tendencies develop which we may carry through many lifetimes.

*T'ai Chi Chih* [practice] and meditation both help to rid ourselves of these habits and tendencies. *T'ai Chi Chih* [practice], for instance, enables us to circulate and balance the chi, and this has great effect on the mind. Similarly, the condition of the mind affects the chi. Sometimes, when we first meet someone, we feel bad vibes, which come from unpleasant chi. However, we talk ourselves out of the impression, though first impressions are usually right. The kind of person we are is easily sensed by contact with the chi. The power of this



life force is all pervading. Not only is our physical self affected by it, but our temperament and personality are the results of the influence of the chi, as well as our future.

It would seem that teaming deep meditation with *T'ai Chi Chih* [practice] can help remake us. I am always surprised by the reluctance of people to change no matter how unhappy their lives might be. Just as death may be a change for the better, circulating and balancing the life force is the single greatest practice we can adopt. In real meditation, we attain the "turiya" state, the so-called fourth state of consciousness, which is really beyond consciousness, and the effect this has on the mind is to do away with the slavery of unpleasant habits and stain the mind with the joy of blissful reality. This bliss is our real heritage, ours for the taking.

These are a few of my thoughts on how we can live if we want to taste the real joy. It does not come from outside objects or entertainment, nor from rich food and constant recreation. Someone gives us a new car and we are happy for three or four days because a desire has been gratified, but that fake gratification soon fades.

Gratitude and ensuing compassion go hand in hand. The self-centered person isolates him or her self

and does not taste the beauty of life. When the English poet, John Donne, said: "Do not ask for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee," he expressed the state of mind of one who has attained the higher state of life, the sage who eventually becomes one with all things.

I hope this doesn't sound like preaching. Religion, as we know it, has not brought us to the stage of fulfillment. Religion is identification with all beings. The sufis say we are creatures of light. This means compassion. The future of *T'ai Chi Chih* [Joy Thru Movement] is to bring joy, lasting joy, to many people.

These are only my reactions and my opinions. Perhaps you can profit from them.

I wish for joy to be made available to all. That is the heavenly stage. We can all become caring sages.

Well, now you've heard this little lesson, it is your job to carry this great movement into the future, and make it successful as I know it is going to be.

I congratulate you all for being *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers, and I think it will bring great joy and health to you. And have a good time at the conference. Thank you.

It is wonderful to have this opportunity to connect with the larger *T'ai Chi Chih* community. I have been inspired through the conversations I have had with old friends and new. I have had an opportunity to deepen relationships, examine my practice and reflect on Justin's effect on all of us. Justin's absence was felt. However, the video shown at the conference of Justin's message to the teachers provided a much needed connection. Many thanks to all the organizers of this event!

- **Tamara Zujewskyj**  
Edmonton, AB  
CANADA

It has taken the Chi five years to get me to a TCC Teachers' Conference. One desire in my heart

was to move with Justin and all the wonderful Teachers — feeling the joy of Chi within my deepest self.

Part of this desire has been fulfilled. Some day I will meet the person who allowed a dream to flow freely into the hearts and bodies of so many in this magnificent Universe.

The Conference was a good experience. I am grateful to my Teacher, Mary Griffin, OSF, and all the wonderful people that share the joy and harmony of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement. Thank you Justin, Ed and All!

- **Meg Costello, SSJ**  
Philadelphia, PA  
(First-time Attendee)

The teachers and vendors are so friendly and willing to assist you.

The group practice Friday AM, outside, was very special and oh, so beautiful. I look forward to other conferences, when my first TCC instructor, Sr. Mary Reynolds, OP, will be able to attend. Gratefully,

- **Sr. Carletta LaCour, OP**  
Houston, TX  
(First-time Attendee)

**Springs  
Bubbling  
Deep Inside  
Spirit Changes  
Gratitude  
From My  
Heart**

THANK YOU!

- **Mary Griffin, OSF**  
Brookhaven, PA



# Teacher reports on "Building the Local TCC Community" Panel

By Margery Erickson

As part of the 2002 *T'ai Chi Chih* Conference, representatives from five regions shared their experiences on how they are working on building the community in their area.

## Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, presented by - Nancy Werner-Azarski

1. Quarterly meetings — *T'ai Chi Chih* practice and discussion.
2. Celebrate Justin's birthday (the date of "Day of Joy Thru Movement / Celebrating *T'ai Chi Chih* Practice" Day) and invite students to a group practice session.
3. After the annual conference they meet and review the conference.
4. Coordinate writing articles for the *Vital Force*.
5. Hold seminars and host retreats.
6. The process is not always smooth sailing.
7. Recent discussion — How to include devoted students who don't want to be teachers?

## St. Louis, MO, presented by - Kathy Albers

1. In the beginning there was one student — others became students and some became teachers and the community grew.
2. Do not have a regularly scheduled meeting time: Practice sessions, short meetings, no food, have an end to the meeting.
3. Share responsibilities.
4. Email to communicate meetings, events, etc.
5. Hold retreats and public demonstrations of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement.

## New Jersey/New York, presented by - Dan Pienciak

1. Hold *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher prep days once a month, six a year for any student and those preparing for teacher training. Teachers also attend. There has been a one-to-one ratio at recent sessions.
2. Gather to celebrate "Day of Joy Thru Movement / Celebrating *T'ai Chi Chih* Practice".
3. Held a teacher renewal in May at the beach.
4. No regularly scheduled meetings at this time.



Following the presentations by the representatives of five of the most active communities, teachers turned to the others at their table and discussed three proposed questions: "How have you been able to build community in your area?" "How do you keep your group of teachers together?" "What helps your students to feel part of the bigger picture, the TCC family?" Photo: Columbus Smith

## San Antonio (SARA), TX, presented by - Sophie Roland

1. They have a regular meeting place where they can hold meetings and teach classes.
2. Meet every 6-8 weeks to schedule classes. Students can take class from another teacher if their schedule differs.
3. Have presenters come to speak.
4. Ongoing practice sessions — teachers take turns leading these sessions.
5. Brochures are distributed to the community.

## Albuquerque, NM, presented by - Ann Rutherford

1. Started their center in 1994. Center is used for lectures and teaching.
2. Check out their website for: Bio's of teachers, schedule of classes, a link to the national page, and description of books related to *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement.

### Some responses from table discussions were:

- When you have creative ideas, come forward with them.
- Give each other responsibility for some aspect of a gathering.
- Provide free practice in a park weekly/bi-weekly/monthly
- Host a retreat, a teacher renewal, a teachers' conference and/or simple gatherings
- Arrange for newspaper coverage of a general practice or retreat
- Do a community service: free TCC classes for a grade school, retirement center.

- Alice Holden, CCVI



## Justin Stone's typed letter read at conference:

I HAVE TWO APPREHENSIONS ABOUT THE SO CALLED "TWO TIER" TEACHERS' TRAINING COURSES. I AGREE THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED AND THAT THE QUALITY OF THE NEW TEACHERS MUST BE IMPROVED. ~~AND~~, UNLESS YOU HAVE TAUGHT A TEACHERS' TRAINING COURSE YOU WILL NOT KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO TURN DOWN A SINCERE CANDIDATE. THE DEFERRED ACCREDITATION IS NO ANSWER.

MY ~~AND~~ QUESTIONS ARE THE FOLLOWING: WON'T IT MAKE THE WHOLE PROCESS TOO EXPENSIVE? IT COULD COST AS MUCH AS ~~\$\$\$~~ \$ 2000\* for a candidate to get thru two courses, and many could not afford that much, though they might make good teachers. T'AI CHI CHIH IS NOT A BUSINESS AND WE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING GOOD NEW TEACHERS THAN IN MAKING MONEY. PERHAPS A SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND COULD BE SET UP TO HELP CANDIDATES IF THE TWO TIER SYSTEM IS PUT INTO EFFECT.

MY SECOND APPREHENSION IS THIS: THERE IS A REAL DANGER THAT A CANDIDATE MIGHT DECIDE THE WHOLE THING IS TOO EXPENSIVE AND DECIDE TO GO OUT AND TEACH WITHOUT SEEKING ACCREDITATION.

IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THE VITAL FORCE SOMEONE SUGG~~ESTED~~ ESTED ~~THE~~ A TEACHER'S TRAINING CANDIDATE BEING RECOMMENDED BY TWO TEACHERS. HIS OR HER ORIGINAL TEACHER AND ONE WHO IS A RELATIVE STRANGER TO THE CANDIDATE. THE ORIGINAL TEACHER IS BOUND TO HAVE SOME ATTACHMENT TO THE CANDIDATE, BUT THE SECOND ONE WOULD BE COMPLETELY IMPARTIAL. THIS MIGHT BE THE BEST WAY TO CHECK ON A CANDIDATE TO SEE IF HE OR SHE IS GOOD ENOUGH TO BE ACCEPTED FOR THE COURSE. THIS METHOD IS USED IN JAPAN TO APPROVE THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF A MONK PREPARATORY TO HIS BECOMING A ZEN MASTER.

I AM IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH THE NEED FOR A CHANGE. BUT I DO HAVE THE ABOVE TWO CONCERNS ABOUT THE TWO TIER METHOD.

FROM A PERSONAL STANDPOINT, WITH TIMES BEING AS BAD AS THEY ARE, I WOULD RATHER SEE THE COST OF BECOMING A TEACHER LOWERED NOT RAISED. THE SUCCESS OF T'AI CHI CHIH IS BASED ON INTEGRITY, NOT BUSINESS ACUMEN.



# Discussion on deferred candidate issue occurs during conference

By Amy Hackenberg

**Author's Note:** Ed Altman requested that I take notes during the difficult but important discussions about teacher preparation at the 2002 *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers' Conference. What I present here is a summary of those notes. With the exception of Ed, Sandy McAllister, Justin Stone, and Pam Towne, I do not identify speakers by name but instead have made a list of concerns that I heard expressed. I have tried to be comprehensive, but I apologize if you feel your concern or comment is not well represented—or if you feel I have misrepresented any part of the presentation or discussion. In that event, please write to *The Vital Force* directly to make sure that your voice is heard.



Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman (standing) explains the issue to the group. Photo: Columbus Smith

During the 2002 *T'ai Chi Chih* conference, teachers met for four different sessions to hear Ed's presentation about challenges facing the *T'ai Chi Chih* community and to offer comments about various aspects of these challenges and options for addressing them. In the first session, on the afternoon of Friday August 2nd, Ed presented what he viewed as the problem: the 12% deferral rate at teacher accreditations is unacceptable. Furthermore, it is relatively "low" since it reflects experienced auditors working extensively with less prepared candidates. Ed stressed that deferral is painful to candidates and the course instructor, that it [often] takes 18-24 months for deferred candidates to complete their training, that siphoning off experienced teachers to work only with unprepared candidates is not the best use of resources, and that the burden on him in working with deferred candidates is excessive. Ed stated that deferrals can and should be eliminated because unprepared candidates should never attend the accreditation. He believes that this problem is the result of a process that

is flawed rather than the "fault" of any particular currently accredited teachers, because very good teachers have had students receive deferrals at accreditations.

Ed also reminded everyone that there are two purposes to the *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher accreditation process:

- A. Verify that every candidate is moving well.
- B. Teach candidates how to teach *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement.

Ed emphasized that right now we only get to the first goal. Part of the flaw in the current process is that we never get to the second goal, so many accredited teachers have a hard time identifying what to look for in preparing students, when students are ready to become teachers, and how to work with students who are experiencing difficulties in preparing for accreditation.

Ed listed four options for addressing the goal of eliminating deferrals:

- 1. Early assessment in accreditation as is. Assess students after two days of teacher training and dismiss



them if they are not ready. Ed said he doesn't have the heart to do that and it's not always possible to tell after two days—some people change greatly over the course of the accreditation. Ed stressed that the process cannot remain as it is.

**2. Video previewing.** Ed noted that discussion in recent issues of *The Vital Force* indicates a lack of support for this option. He feels it's hard to look at a video and see clearly how a student moves. Also, videos don't give students a chance for growth during the accreditation. Finally, if only a few people are reviewing tapes, the responsibility for referral is taken away from teachers and there is potential to slow down the accreditation process.

**3. Second look by another teacher.** Either another teacher or an experienced senior teacher reviews students before they go on to be accredited. Teachers might attend an optional recertification to become an experienced senior teacher for a particular area of the country. Ed believes that this option creates a hierarchy among teachers and he is not in favor of it. Most importantly, if there is a second look by another teacher, that teacher needs to know what she or he is doing. Ed has heard from teachers around the country at all experience levels that they are uncertain about what to look for in order to tell if a candidate is really prepared. Ed doesn't want to see the formation of an artificial layer of referring teachers and he also doesn't want to hand pick teachers to do this job.

**4. Two course process.** This option is based in part on other education programs such as nursing and Ed believes it will provide well for the long-term growth of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. In Phase I, students would spend four days working intensely on movements and philosophy—on how to move. Phase I would also be open to those *T'ai Chi Chih* practitioners who want to deepen their practice but do not necessarily want to become teachers, a population that right now the community does not serve well. All participants in Phase I courses who are not teachers would receive a letter stating whether they are cleared for a teachers training course (Phase II) in the next nine months. In Phase II, candidates would spend 5½ days focusing on philosophy, presentations, a deeper review of the movements, and

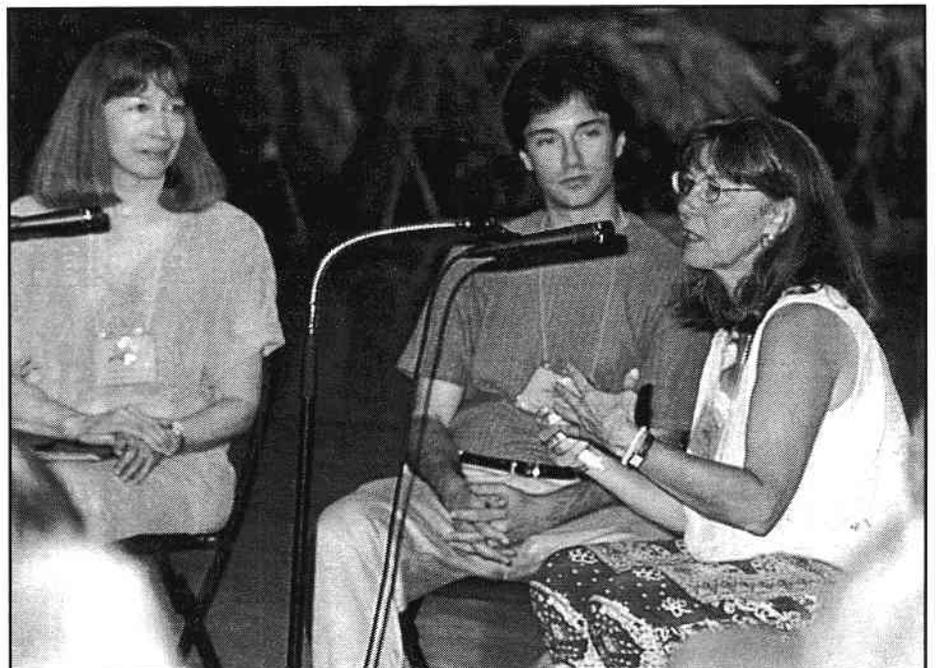
most especially, teaching skills. Phase II would essentially be the current teachers' training course, but the work done in Phase I would allow the focus in Phase II to be on meeting the second goal (B) of teachers' training courses.

Ann Rutherford read and made copies for all of Justin's letter about this subject (see p. 11 for the entire text of the letter.) Justin agreed that change is needed but expressed two concerns. The first was that the increased cost of the two-phase process would limit accessibility of *T'ai Chi Chih* accreditation to all who want to teach (in fact, he would rather see costs decrease.) The second concern was that if candidates felt the process was too expensive, they would simply teach without accreditation. Justin emphasized that *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* is not about business and suggested that a second look by another teacher (i.e., the third option above) might be the best way to proceed as long as the second teacher was "completely impartial," i.e., a stranger to the student and the student's teacher. Justin noted that a second look was often used to evaluate monks in Japan.

Ed responded to these reservations with the following comments:

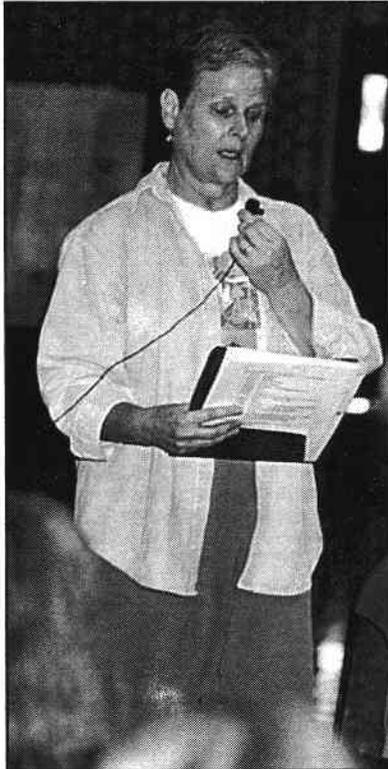
\* The two-phase process is more expensive but right now it's cheaper than any other accreditation process for any other spiritual/healing discipline;

*continued on page 14*



TCC Teacher Trainer Sandy McAlister (right) addresses the group with her concerns as fellow TCC Teacher Trainer Pam Towne and Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman look on.

Photo: Columbus Smith



Deedie Cote uses the microphone to let her views be heard by the group.  
Photo: Columbus Smith

- \* The two priorities of accessibility and high standards compete and we must choose one or the other as a higher priority;
- \* Right now the teaching of well prepared candidates suffers from attention given to less well prepared candidates;
- \* What happens in places where there is only one teacher?
- \* Another pair of eyes (i.e., option three) may not solve the problem of ending deferrals. Ed believes the two-course process would.

Both Pam and Sandy spoke as well, stating that the two-course process was

also their preference. They both felt that costs can be kept down creatively and depend on logistics. For example, people might not fly so far to attend Phase I but instead might wait until this part of the training comes to their area of the country. Pam did not feel that people teaching without accreditation was a large issue, because people attracted to *T'ai Chi Chih* practice won't do that. Sandy emphasized that even an increased fee was reasonable and that *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* is worth that cost.

Ed asked everyone to consider these ideas and options. He emphasized that he had not made a decision, but that it was up to him to do so—that is, this process was not democratic and we weren't going to vote. He also emphasized how much he wanted to hear

from teachers—that perhaps someone would come up with solutions that no one else has thought of yet. He informed everyone that course fees must increase slightly and brought up eliminating the \$50 “teacher kickback” as a possible way to keep costs down.<sup>1</sup> He asked everyone to think about these questions: What is in the best interests of keeping *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* vibrant? Can you use option three or two on all seven continents and/or in places where there is only one teacher? He stressed that the deferrals must end and that solutions must address this problem and be geared toward the exponential growth of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community.

The following comments were made by numerous teachers over the next three meeting sessions (literally in the morning, afternoon, and night) one day later, on Saturday, August 3rd.

Suggestions about and/or comments in support of option three:

- \* Second teacher must be a stranger to the student to achieve some objectivity
- \* Justin talks about keeping costs down for a reason and option three would keep costs down
- \* Our focus should be on what Justin wants: he has a vision to spread the TCC discipline to everyone
- \* Source of problems is in teachers not in accreditation: don't leave out those who are unprepared—need to bring them into the community as option three can do
- \* I have experienced this kind of second teacher sign-off and found it very helpful



Rick Cramer (standing) speaks for three minutes, just as the others to his left wait in line to do.

Photo: Columbus Smith

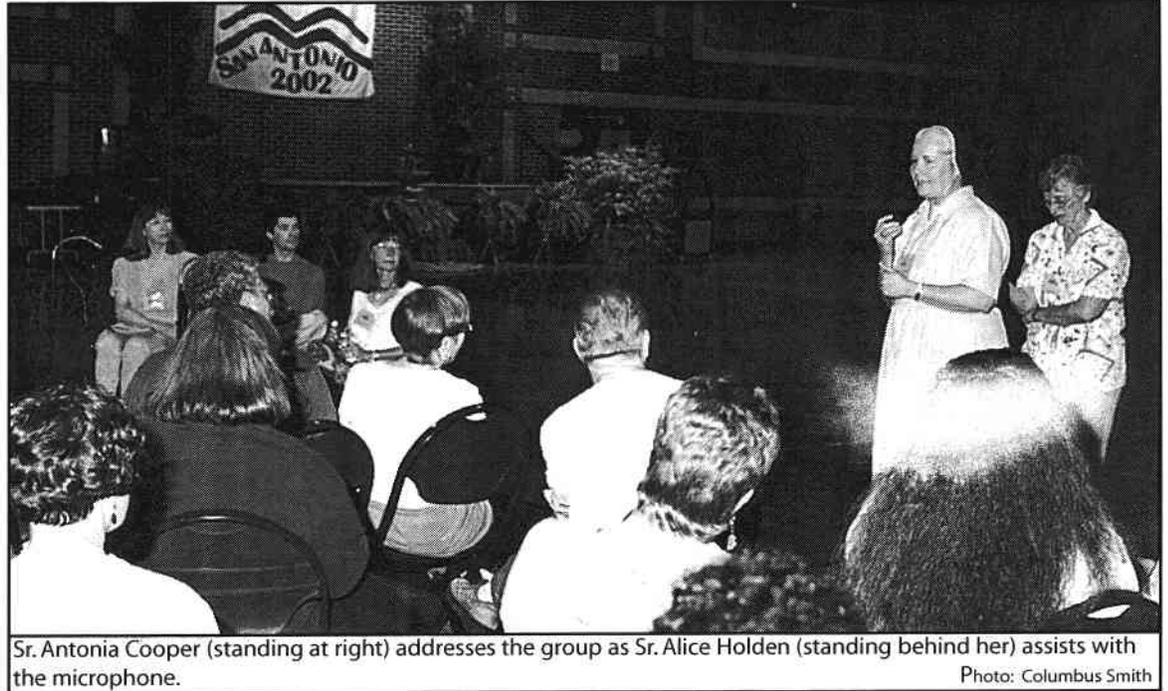


### Comments against option three:

- \* There may still be deferrals: second teacher may not be comfortable stating beliefs about student and/or may not know what to look for

### Suggestions about and/or comments in support of option four:

- \* Being alone is challenging in preparing students (there is no second teacher around)
- \* Expensive, but benefits all to have more grounded teachers
- \* There are ways to keep costs down—stay at people's homes, for example
- \* Accredited teachers could also benefit greatly from option four (both phases)
- \* Reframe phase I to be about an opportunity for continuing education—would enhance the whole community
- \* Affords more time to learn
- \* Hungry for exploration of what it means to teach the TCC movements—could start learning more about that in option four
- \* Relieves tremendous guilt of those who want to deepen practice without becoming a teacher (could just attend phase I courses)
- \* Might relieve recommending teachers to have phase I—they might not hold back so much for fear of deferral for a student
- \* I would have liked this process as a student and if necessary I would help my own students financially in order to attend the training
- \* Use a long weekend for phase I to cut down on time away from work
- \* Option four addresses teacher training more fully than option three, said a deferred teacher present who characterized the deferral process as growthful and painful
- \* Begin phase II with current teachers so we can improve
- \* Play with the number of days for phases—nothing is set in stone
- \* What about an optional Phase I?



Sr. Antonia Cooper (standing on right) addresses the group as Sr. Alice Holden (standing behind her) assists with the microphone. Photo: Columbus Smith

### Comments against option four:

- \* Option four could generate a hierarchy
- \* Option four would stifle or impede those with a lot of heartfelt sincerity
- \* We're growing an infrastructure with option four—sounds dangerous
- \* You cannot teach teachers how to teach in five days
- \* Justin speaks about having no organization and option four sounds like an organization
- \* Don't want financial barriers in students' ways
- \* I wouldn't have been able to afford accreditation if option four had been in place
- \* Might still have significant deferral rate with option four
- \* It will be a logistical nightmare to make a schedule for option four because must have many phase I's; phase II's must be also be offered regularly (within nine months)

### Comments about Ed, Justin, Sandy, Pam:

- \* Ed is overstating the problem and the solution he proposes is too much
- \* Trust Justin
- \* Ed's position is not easy and he's not trying to impose his point of view right now
- \* Ed, Sandy, and Pam are very sincere
- \* Look again at Justin's letter—listen to it very carefully
- \* We cannot be rubber stamps for Justin, and he wouldn't want that
- \* Justin isn't against option four; he said he has some concerns

*continued on page 16*



## Discussion at conference...

*continued from page 15*

- \* I'm very touched that Ed would share all of this with us
- \* Do what Justin wants: we must find a way
- \* We need to trust each other and not dichotomize: I trust Ed; I trust Justin
- \* Justin had a vision and Ed was part of it

### Comments about accreditation, deferrals, etc.:

- \* I felt I was missing something in my accreditation, though I was fairly well prepared (i.e. less well prepared candidates slowed down the learning process)
- \* Deferral is awful for the student
- \* It's very difficult to work with deferred candidates, said an experienced teacher who has worked with several
- \* Teachers should go with their students to accreditations
- \* I'm not opposed to deferrals, but communication (rather than blaming) is extremely important in this process
- \* What about recertification—it's valuable, though no one wants to hear that word
- \* With all due respect, I expect some people to pass their accreditation and some not to
- \* Need to include coaching in teacher training
- \* Question for Ed: Do all deferred candidates complete the process? (Ed said that in his six years of experience everyone except for one plans to.)
- \* Question for Ed: If you disregarded students who weren't ready, would you be able to do what you wanted to do (i.e. address goal B.)? (Ed said he couldn't say for sure.)
- \* Is TCC accreditation a high school course (cater to lower level students) or a college course (no catering—hold bar high and some fail)?

### Comments about T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement and overall purpose:

- \*The TCC discipline has a purpose in this world and this purpose is joy for everyone
- \* The only way the TCC practice can spread is through the sincerity of its teachers
- \* We all have a common goal of getting good new teachers
- \* Doing TCC movements and teaching TCC movements are not one and not two
- \* TCC practice is a discipline so I don't see why you wouldn't want to increase opportunities to know it more deeply
- \* Perhaps this has grown beyond what Justin wants
- \* What we need is renewal
- \* Dedicate this conference to seeds of a solution
- \* Must remember JOY through movement; I have only heard joy mentioned twice so far at this conference

- \* Change is difficult and this is about change; we must come from a place of compassion
- \* Need to make sure that in the end we all come together as a community—that's the best we have to offer to the world
- \* I went through "teacher" certification but what I got was "improvement on my movements" (valuable but not enough)
- \* The answer is not in words (listen to your heart)

### Other comments included:

- \* The checklist is good, with modifications
- \* Everyone here is the result of the current system, so it's done well so far
- \* All options will create issues
- \* Neither option is about making money
- \* You can't teach the TCC movements until you have reached certain levels
- \* This discussion is exciting
- \* I support anything that will raise skills
- \* Must have disagreements and tears and then you feel better later
- \* I have no opinion on this issue, but I know it's best to go to the source to solve problems
- \* The root of problem is us
- \* No, this discussion isn't comfortable, dammit!
- \* Feel your feet

The comments ended shortly before the traditional candlelight rededication ceremony on Saturday night. Ed proposed the following option for us to think about in the days to come:

5. Modification of options three and four. Consider a two-phase system where the first phase is optional. In order to attend teacher accreditation, a student would need two signatures from accredited teachers (one of which would likely come from the student's "main" teacher.) One way to obtain a second signature would be to attend a phase I type of course and get a signature there. Another way would be from any other accredited teacher in the students' area (as in option three.) Then the second phase would be the official accreditation course, with the focus on learning how to teach *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*.

**1 For those who don't know, currently it is the practice for referring teachers to receive \$50 for each of their students who successfully completes teacher accreditation. Not all referring teachers have received or know about this money.**



## Conference responses...

continued from page 9

Wonderful campus, gracious hosts and participants who worked hard on building community!

— **Roberta Taggart**  
Redondo Beach, CA

It was an awesome first time experience for me to be part of a large group practice. It was thrilling to witness so many people move so smoothly in unison and to share in their energy. The silence of the early morning outdoor practice added to the effect — harmony + peace joined to power and connected to nature.

Being taught by Ed once again was pure joy. His beautiful spirit combined with the insights he provided will be motivating factors in my continued practice.

I have so much confidence in the future of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community after being engaged in the long and laborious discussions surrounding teacher training issues. Everyone was heard and decisions will be based on the wisdom of the many rather than the will of the few. The Chi was alive and well in San Antonio 2002!

— **Mary Schapker**  
Galloway, NJ  
(First-time Attendee)

This is the third TCC Teacher Conference I've attended since my accreditation in April 2000 and I will continue to come to them as long as I am able. The growing fun of it is in reconnecting with people I've met at and since my accreditation; getting to know them better each time we're together.

At each conference I continue to learn the subtleties in the TCC

movements which not only helps my personal practice but makes me a better teacher. Hearing others share their experiences interacting with their communities and in teaching *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* to varied groups is also an important learning experience for me.

Also very important was the opportunity to be present — to see, hear, and feel firsthand the struggle within the TCC Community to keep the purity of Justin Stone's vision as the TCC discipline spreads throughout the world. It is heartwarming to be part of a community which can air very strong differences on how to do this and still continue to be a wholesome working unit. I know the dialogue will continue and "...without acrimony" as this is what Ed Altman stated and is his objective — as his actions demonstrate.

I enjoyed immensely Sr. Antonia's Candlelight Ceremony which gave a unifying ending to a wonderful Conference.

Thank you, everyone. Each of you will be in my thoughts until we meet again next year when I hope the many accredited teachers who couldn't make it this year will join us.

— **Lucia Veteran**  
Lake Winola, PA

Thank you to SARA, Ed, Sandy, Pam, Noel, and all the other volunteers for making the teacher's conference such an "expanding" experience. The opportunity to meet and talk to teachers from around the country enriched my feeling of belonging to the *T'ai Chi Chih* community. The discussion about teacher accreditation allowed me the opportunity to understand

the variety of experiences and opinions that exist within the community. The open discussion of these sensitive but important issues is extremely important and I commend Ed for encouraging and supporting this discussion. The opportunity to practice together and refine our moves was wonderful. That said, I hope that next year there are opportunities to learn more tools / techniques / and/or teaching skills.

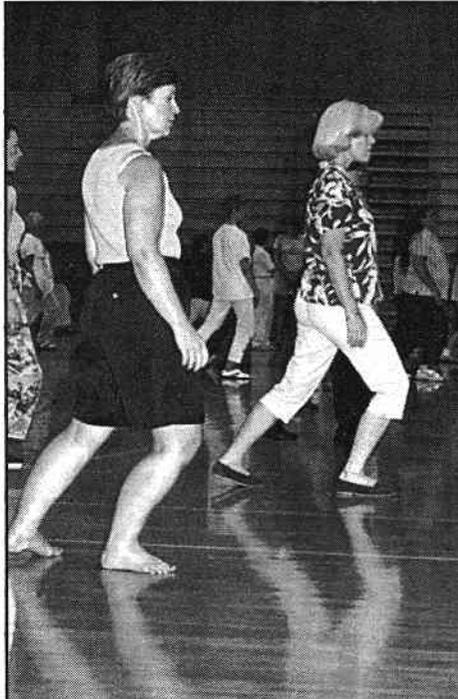
— **Cheryl Wild**  
Avon by the Sea, NJ  
(First-time Attendee)

As a member of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community, I felt it was important for me to give back to *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. I offered my help to Alice Holden knowing that the San Antonio Regional Association (S.A.R.A.) of TCC Teachers was shorthanded for the 2002 Conference.

— **Robert Montes de Oca**  
Albuquerque, NM



Conference Host Sr. Alice Holden smiles at the microphone. She "mc-ed" the conference this year. Photo Columbus Smith



**(L-R):** Nancy Adams and Lynne Blackford practice trying to find "the sweet spot" in the soles of the feet as Ed Altman instructs from the stage. Photo: Columbus Smith

The San Antonio TCC Conference was a memorable experience in that it was different because of Justin Stone's absence. Also for me personally because Hannah Hedrick was not here either, along with many other TCC teacher friends.

However, those of us here tried very hard to rededicate our teaching under the capable, sincere, compassionate efforts of our leaders, Ed, Pam, Sandy and Sr. Alice and her San Antonio assistants.

All in all, the TCC community benefited through unity, although there were differing points of view. I know I came away with a definite new commitment to improving my teaching and to help to gather together teachers from the Chicago Area to carry on our tradition.

Thank you!

**- Paula Weiner**  
Chicago, IL

My first conference, so forgive my naïvetè. Some of it was different from what I expected. The work on the movements was most helpful, but I had hoped for more spiritual offerings.

The greatest disappointment was the panel on changing the accreditation process. Speakers lined up and tended to babble on far too long and repetitively. Again, perhaps I found it so annoying because I'm so new at TCC practice. But it seems that their input would have been far better spent in a letter or e-mail, and our time far better spent on (for example) the spiritual talk by Ed. I am very willing to leave the process to the Chi — and to Ed.

One final thought for the organizers of next year's conference: San Antonio was a beautiful city, but if Alberta is as beautiful as their travel brochures depict, then the conference materials should include an application for Canadian citizenship!

Overall a wonderful welcoming experience. Thank you Justin, Ed, and SARA!

**- Rodney Anderson**  
Roseville, MN  
(First-time Attendee)

The food was fabulous, the discussion (about the accreditation process) was useful (although long and difficult), and I still did manage to get some insights into more ways to improve and deepen my *T'ai Chi Chih* practice.

Thank you to everyone who helped make all this possible.

**- Robin Kidd**  
Chicago, IL

### **T'ai Chi Chih. Joy Thru Movement: For the Common Man**

In the teacher Accred. process there is no sexism, ageism or other discrimination. If you can do the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements well, you can become a Teacher.

By creating a two-phase program, we are inviting discrimination based on economics, a potential danger. Many of our people receive no more than a two-week vacation per year. Many of our people have limited income; affording the extra cost of this plan may put them off from Teaching. Why eliminate this segment of our people?

Improving the quality of candidates coming to Teachers' Training is a goal. This is a need that must be addressed, by each active teacher. In sending our candidate to an additional session, we are removing our responsibility for training our student well. Teachers are accountable; we have the charge to completely orient our student if we choose the candidate well.

By walking the path of creating a two step process — optional or not — we are walking into a very real danger. We will eliminate a segment of our people who can add greatly to the early impetus of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. Can we afford to do this?

**- Connie Hyde**  
Cedar Crest, NM

### **So much input**

So much output  
and I walked with friends to the source of  
the river

**- Carla Grant**  
McKinney, TX



I was disappointed that we were not able to dedicate more of our time together to working on and enjoyment of TCC movements.

I know that all of the "behind the scenes" planning and spontaneous agenda changes can make the adherence to time constraints difficult. But I do feel that for future conferences that the hosting staff, presenters, and teachers need to be much more conscious of beginning and ending on time, as it seems that our time moving is always what suffers in the end. Sessions at this year's conference began as much as 20 minutes late. Announcements could perhaps also have been more succinct (not easily done).

I do appreciate greatly the evident efforts and hospitality of the 2002 conference staff. Thank you!

I also know that the matter of discussing the teacher-candidate

preparation process and accreditation needed to take precedence at this conference. The dedication and commitment to this process by the teachers present made me feel proud to be part of the TCC Community. I am very grateful to Ed, Sandy, and Pam for their wise leadership, and to Justin Stone for providing us with a strong and solid Head of the TCC Community for its present and future guidance.

- Dan Pienciak  
Ocean Grove, NJ

This is only my 2nd conference + I was amazed + humbled at the growth I have felt in one year within my TCC practice + within myself. At last year's conference, I felt very shy, self-conscious, not grounded + generally "klunky." I felt like I wanted to hide much of the time.

This year, I felt much more grounded + centered. I was more able to

focus on the soles of my feet as opposed to comparing my moves with everybody else's. I felt humbled with my improvement, while also being very cognizant of how little TCC experience I have under my belt (or T'an Tien!). And yet, I feel very inspired to dive even deeper into my TCC practice + very willing to let the chi guide me.

Another major difference between the two conferences was the amount of physical practice vs. discussion. Quite a bit of time was spent sharing views + discussing the dilemma of how to best prepare teachers + to better support + provide for the TCC community with its inevitable expansion + probable exponential growth. Just because there wasn't as much physical practice + movement, DOES NOT MEAN WE DID NOT MOVE! I believe a tremendous amount of movement occurred; perhaps it didn't happen the way we expected. Another obvious difference was the lack of Justin's physical presence. His body

may have been in Albuquerque, but his spirit + essence were very tangible throughout the conference.

Several of us laughed + joked on our visit to the River Walk when we found an ice cream parlor named Justin's! Imagine our further excitement when Sr. Meg Costello noticed a sign inside that read: ZEN YOGURT! It didn't take long for Meg to see the rest of the sign, which said: FROZEN YOGURT.

- April Leffler  
Prospect Park, PA



Attendees experiment with reaching too far, and not far enough as they play with the movement *Bass Drum* under Ed Altman's direction from the stage.

Photo: Columbus Smith



Sandy McAlister (far left) leads the 7:00am outside practice on Saturday morning

Photo: Columbus Smith

However, by the end of the conference, one could understand that much had to be said + discussed with regards to the Two Phase Teacher Training. Ed, Pam and Sandy have a lot on their shoulders and the decisions to be made will be done with much clarity, confidence and integrity in the end.

I am sure they have the support of all the TCC Community and Justin's blessings, and

whatever the end result, will be the right one.

P.S. Hopefully (the next committee) Canada will have learnt from this one eg. soap, hangers in closets, etc.! Nevermind, it was all handled very well by all + sundry!

- Ursula Smith  
Pleasant Hill, CA

Thank you to SARA of TCC Teachers for presenting such a seamless Conference. Your hospitality for a small (in numbers) group was outstanding. Thank you, Ed, for allowing Time for dialogue on the Teacher Prep. Process. This was important as it affects everyone — whether one is a teacher or a student. Sure there was less time for moving but when we did the "experimenting" on how to feel a movement, it was very worthwhile. I am looking forward to next year being in Canada and seeing even more teachers come.

- Nancy Jo Bleier  
Sitka, AK

During the conference Rick Cramer spoke about the importance of remembering the joy in *T'ai Chi Chih: Joy Thru Movement*. One of the most joy-filled moments of the conference for me was at the Inter-faith service in the chapel on Saturday night.

After the mass, Sister Alice was explaining to the priest what *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* is and how we move to understand and spread the "chi or prana or Holy Spirit. It's all the same thing," she said.

Sister Antonia nodded and then pointed to a large statue of Mary, whose hands were at chest height, palms facing, about 12 inches apart. "See," said Sister Antonia, "Mary is doing Bass Drum!"

The chapel rang out with our laughter! After a conference filled with intense debate and emotion it was a great moment of release and joy — a reminder of the eternal power of the chi.

- Laurie Jacobi  
Minneapolis, MN

1. Glad I came. Learned a lot of good things. In all, the Teacher Conference was very successful.

2. The students (new) and all of us are in process of learning how to move CHI. A task that will take us a lifetime.

Whether the accreditation is extended to 10, 15 or 25 days is irrelevant. To learn to move CHI takes years. The well choreographed moves do not impress me. They could be technically correct though the same moves look slightly different from person to person. But the CHI power emanating from all should be strong.

3. Thanks to Ed A. and the organizers of the conference. They did a fantastic job.

- Vida Wackerling  
Evanston, IL

The setting was wonderful! The committee was welcoming + very helpful. All round a very interesting but "political" conference. I felt not enough time was spent on movements + there was far too much free time.



It took a lot of courage to take the conference in a new direction of openness and sharing of individual ideas, opinions and strong feelings about our many options for improving the preparation of our teacher candidates.

Ed is no "Johnny come lately." He studied and "sat" for years with Justin in developing the Seijaku classes before he was assigned to the headship of the TCC community. Justin had a lot of time, opportunity and closeness to assess and choose his man.

The way Ed handled this conference demonstrated this maturity. His position of "not knowing" and openness to listening were the key to bringing us into a new strength of community.

**Questions:** Jean Katus volunteers huge amounts of time around this trademark. Who underwrites the cost? If it is Good Karma, do they make enough profit to cover the cost and still adequately pay salaries and other expenses of their business?

– Jan Arrott  
Las Vegas, NM

[Editor's Note: Jean Katus, publisher of Good Karma Publishing, answers Jan's questions with the following statement:

"Good Karma does, indeed, pay for the costs associated with the trademark. We were for-

unate that some teachers and the conference committee were very generous with donations to GKP at the conference. This additional money will help defray some of the expenses of printing and mailing the trademark license agreements to teachers not attending the conference. As pointed out in the presentation I made about the trademark process, it is work we do that really isn't strictly Good Karma business; it is T'ai Chi Chih business, but because there is no mechanism within the community for handling the matter, it falls in Good Karma's arena — for now."]

The problems Ed has experienced with teacher training got adequate airing at the Conference. A piece of the puzzle that needs attention is communication between Ed and all TCC teachers.

Ed seems frustrated by the quality of preparation. Teachers are hesi-

tant to send anyone to training because it is unclear what criteria a student is judged on/passed or failed on for accreditation as a teacher.

There needs to be another round of communication to teachers, with feedback from teachers to Ed. Include in *Vital Force* a "packet" for teachers who are preparing students for accreditation (i.e. checklist, video of Ed showing and saying what he expects, perhaps with shots of others demonstrating major flaws that would add up to failure to be accredited, forms required to register a student, all "policies" in effect—oral tradition or whatever. Also put all these on the website).

Ed might solicit comments by calling various teachers to discuss "packet."

– Sr. Jackie Kingsbury  
Thonotosassa, FL



Teachers follow Sandy McAlister from across the lawn as she leads the 7:00am Saturday practice.

Photo: Columbus Smith



# Responses following the conference...

I came home from the conference both frustrated and inspired. Like many other attendees, I was frustrated that so much of our time was taken by the teacher preparation discussion. Yet I was inspired and proud of the sincerity and caring shown by each person who spoke to the issue. I felt that each one truly wants the best for the *T'ai Chi Chih* community, and I trust the mighty power of the chi to inspire Ed, Pam and Sandy as they continue to work through the process.

Names I see in *Vital Force* became faces and personalities of loving, dedicated TCC teachers and friends. The members of SARA, the host committee, were outstanding. Our every need was quickly and lovingly addressed; from soap to water to rides. San Antonio did live up to its reputation as the sweatiest city, but we just drank more water and let it flow. My beautiful polished river stone will be a reminder of the joyous reunion at the "bubbling spring," and I'm already planning for next year's conference in Canada!

– **Toni Corrigan**  
Mesa, AZ

This Conference was unlike any I had ever attended before this date. There was much less physical movement than usual, but the emotional and spiritual movement was great and intense. I see this as a sign of growth. We are asked to consider the options available for improving and spreading the practice of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. I am now more convinced than ever that I must take responsibility for renewal of my own practice, and that of my students. There is one appointed leader of this beautiful moving medi-

tation. He needs the input of all members of the community. I submit my vision which is to promote an overall renewal of form for the currently certified teachers and at the same time to stop giving deferrals. After the first two days of Teacher Training, the Instructor needs to decide who is able to go ahead with TEACHING TECHNIQUES. Also, at future conferences there needs to be attention to TEACHING TECHNIQUES and the expectation that the moves are done correctly. A renewal of certified teachers will assure appropriate referrals. I commend the teachers at this year's conference for moving very well. I commend Ed Altman for the direction. I especially thank all our volunteers. Thanks to all who helped in any way.

– **Alice Holden, CCVI**  
San Antonio, TX

Once again, a wonderful group of *T'ai Chi Chih* instructors have put on an incredible conference. I especially liked the morning practice outside. My room was comfortable, the food was delicious & the staff was courteous and friendly. Every year I look forward to seeing my *T'ai Chi Chih* family, and to meeting the new teachers. The only complaint I have is that we didn't have enough time to move — even though I realize that we needed to talk about the teacher prep process. Thank you, SARA, for an enjoyable conference!

About the teachers prep process — I like the idea of a two step process, but that may be because I am not sure how to tell when someone is ready to be accredited. I am willing to take a "teaching a student to be a teacher" workshop. If we implement

the two step process, I would like to audit the first step when possible to stay updated — and to be with other instructors. Auditing the "second step" class would be good, too, since I was accredited in 1993 and it seems such a long time ago.

Thank you Ed and Noel for all your hard work. And thank you Ed for bringing this to the community so we can discuss it instead of just making the decision — even though this must have been very hard for you...

– **Tonya Setzke**  
Wyandotte, MI

## **Moving thru "very heavy air"...**

Warm Texas hospitality...  
Connecting with our TCC family...  
Bubbling spring fountain echoing the  
Bubbling Spring in the soles of the  
feet...  
Moving together, oh so softly...  
Feeling Justin's presence...  
Re-dedicating to *T'ai Chi Chih* practice...  
Laughing & crying together...  
Experiencing "growing pains" of our  
young community...  
Sharing our collective wisdom...  
Looking for solutions...  
Coming to a "graceful conclusion" in  
our final practice...  
Looking forward to next year in  
Banff!

**All  
Moving  
Together  
In a circle  
Gratitude  
Fills my  
Heart**

– **Pam Towne**  
Camarillo, CA



### **A Mirror**

At the recent *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers' Conference we looked into the future of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement and saw many paths. We believed there was a right path, a strongest path, a best path. While we pondered each pathway, a mirror was held up to us. Within the mirror we saw ourselves individually and as a group. Even those teachers not at the conference were held within the reflection of the mirror. Looking at ourselves we were asked to listen closely, find

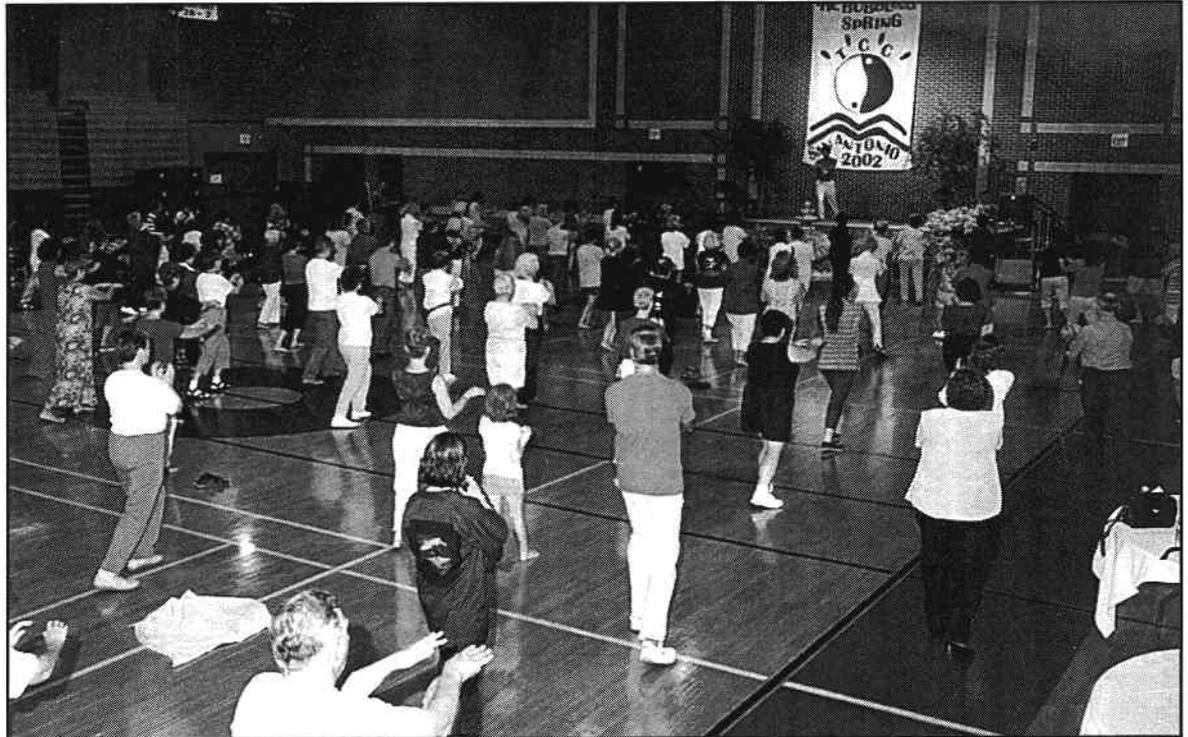
the tension and release it so that the chi could flow freely. Maybe the exercise was not to find the best path, but to look closely in the mirror — individually and as a group. Looking into the mirror we can see the tension clearly before us, in each one of us, and begin to let it go.

— Catherine Dalton  
White Bear Lake, MN

### **Positive/Negative - Joy/Sorrow — Always Present**

If you could picture an angel standing face front, arms at sides, palms front. Fully open. On one side of the angel is very dark (black). As your eyes flow right the angel's color gradually turns to "light." A bright light. Alongside the angel is the word: "Transformation."

*T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement is in this transformation. We are in the process of change. Change can be a



Ed Altman leads the group of attending teachers and local students in an "open practice" on Saturday afternoon, a longstanding teachers' conference tradition. Photo: Columbus Smith

good thing, when intentions are right. It's a cleansing....Maybe of fear, anger, resentment, control, jealousy, the unknown, etc....

I invite all of us to look deep within ourselves with truth and honesty, and ask: What am I to learn from this transition? Take inventory of who and what you truly are.

I'm excited to trust, let go, believe, and allow the chi to bring us "great light!"

To the TCC Community — United We Stand!!!

Blessings and peace to all as we heal and grow.

— Judy George  
Roseville, MN

Ed, your parting words to the *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers at the San Antonio conference literally left me

speechless! Your sincerity and best interest in the TCC discipline was never more evident than in this address. I cannot imagine anyone witnessing this event and not being comforted in knowing that you are the Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community.

I wish that someone had the foresight to have recorded your message. The words are a blur — The message clear. The ego not present....I witnessed Inherent Wisdom emanating from the sound of your voice and flowing from Mind to Mind! I know that Justin heard and must be grateful for his wisdom in choosing you as Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Spiritual Discipline.

As you completed your message and walked away know that you were not alone.

— Bitsy LeBlanc  
Lake Charles, LA



# Calendar of Events

<p><b>Oct. 18 thru 20, 2002</b></p> <p><b>SEIJAKU TEACHER TRAINING</b> w / ED ALTMAN</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ringwood, NJ</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Dan Pienciak P.O. Box 122 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756 Phone: (732) 988-5865 e-mail: wakeupdaniel@aol.com</p> <p>Seijaku Teacher Training Fee: \$300 Auditing Seijaku Teachers: \$20</p>	<p><b>Nov. 16, 2002</b></p> <p><b>TCC TEACHER RENEWAL (9am - 4pm)</b> w / PAM TOWNE</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Albuquerque, NM</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> For the NM TCC Center: Ann Rutherford 1534 Wagon Train SE Albuquerque, NM 87123 Ann's Phone: (505) 292-5114 e-mail: ruthergary@aol.com</p> <p>Attendance Fee: \$40</p>
<p><b>Oct. 22 thru 27, 2002</b></p> <p><b>TCC TEACHER TRAINING</b> w / ED ALTMAN</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ringwood, NJ</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Dan Pienciak P.O. Box 122 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756 Phone: (732) 988-5865 e-mail: wakeupdaniel@aol.com</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>	<p><b>Nov. 18 thru 23, 2002</b></p> <p><b>TCC TEACHER TRAINING</b> w / PAM TOWNE</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Albuquerque, NM</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> For the NM TCC Center Ann Rutherford 1534 Wagon Train SE Albuquerque, NM 87123 Ann's Phone: (505) 292-5114 e-mail: ruthergary@aol.com</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>
<p><b>Nov. 9</b></p> <p><b>TCC WORKSHOP (9am - 5pm)</b> w / PAM TOWNE</p>	<p><b>Nov. 20, 2002</b></p> <p><b>DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT" CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH PRACTICE</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> Worldwide</p> <p><i>(Teacher Aida Wilks initiated this annual celebration which falls on Justin Stone's birthday, Nov. 20)</i></p>
<p><b>Nov. 10, 2002</b></p> <p><b>TCC TEACHER PREP WORKSHOP (9:30am - 3pm)</b> w / PAM TOWNE</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Bethesda, MD (Wash. DC Area)</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Dale Buchanan 502-A 2nd st., SE Washington, DC 20003 Phone: (202) 546-3131 e-mail: dalebuchanan@aol.com</p> <p>TCC Workshop fee: \$65 TCC Teacher Prep fee: \$45 Discounted rate for <b>both</b> days: \$100</p> <p><i>(Note: Both events are open to students and teachers. Teachers are encouraged to attend with their candidates. Space is limited to only 35 attendees)</i></p>	<p><b>Jan. 3 thru 5, 2003</b></p> <p><b>"TEACHERS LEARNING HOW TO TEACH: T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Thru Movement"</b> Workshop w/ SANDY MCALISTER</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Elkins Park, PA (Philadephia area)</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Sr. Meg Costello 750 Ashbourne Rd. 1534 Wagon Train SE Elkins Park, PA 19027 Phone: (215) 782-8520, x. 180 e-mail: srmegdrh@yahoo.com</p> <p>Teacher Room/Board/Workshop Fee: \$170</p> <p><i>(Final date for \$50 deposit is December 3, 2002)</i></p>



<p><b>Feb. 21 thru 23, 2003</b></p> <p><b>TCC RETREAT</b> w / ED ALTMAN</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Victoria, BC CANADA</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Guadalupe Buchwald P.O. Box 1420 Victoria, BC Phone: (250) 385-6748 e-mail: gbuchwald@telus.net</p> <p>-or- Lynn Shaw-Ringham, (250) 592-9058 e-mail: lynshawringham@hotmail.com</p> <p><u>Student/Teacher Registration and Payment:</u> Before 11/30/012: \$145 U.S./\$225 CAN Between 12/1/02 - 1/31/03: \$160 U.S./\$250 CAN</p>	<p><b>June 12 thru 15, 2003</b></p> <p><b>TCC RETREAT</b> w / ED ALTMAN</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Kauai, HI</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Noel Altman P.O. Box 1420 Kapaa, HI 96746 Phone: (808) 822-9288 e-mail: joythrumovementkauai@earthlink.net</p> <p><u>Student/Teacher Registration and Payment:</u> Before 12/15/02: \$250 Between 12/16/02 - 3/15/03: \$275 After 3/15/03: \$300</p> <p>Non-U.S. Student/Teacher fee: \$250</p>
<p><b>Mar. 20 thru 23, 2003</b></p> <p><b>TCC TEACHERS' RETREAT</b> w / SANDY McALISTER</p> <p><b>Location:</b> St. Paul, MN</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Ron Barker 4512 Jefferson St. NE Columbia Heights, MN 55421-2355 Phone: (763) 572-1115 e-mail: RONBARKER@ATTBI.COM</p> <p><i>(Contact host for pricing information. Note: Space limited to 40 attendees)</i></p>	<p><b>Sept. 8 thru 13, 2003</b></p> <p><b>TCC TEACHER TRAINING</b> w / ED ALTMAN</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Gurnee, IL (Chicago Area)</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Donna McElhose 18160 Twin Lakes Blvd. Wildwood, IL 60030 Phone: (847) 223-6065 e-mail: Dmcelhosechi@aol.com</p> <p>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p> <p><i>(Registration and payment need to be completed by July 31)</i></p>
<p><b>April 3 thru 6, 2003</b></p> <p><b>TCC RETREAT</b> w / PAM TOWNE</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Sedona, AZ</p> <p><b>Contact:</b> Robin Spencer 88 Ocotillo Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85012 Phone: (602) 263-5013, ext. 107 e-mail: robin@furncphx.org</p> <p><i>(Contact host for pricing information.)</i></p>	<p><b>POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS:</b></p> <p>If interested in a <u>potential</u> event described below, contact the host.</p> <p><b>Feb.28 thru Mar. 2, 2003</b> <b>TCC TEACHERS' RETREAT</b> <b>Location:</b> Bay Area, CA. <b>Contact:</b> Athene Mantle: (510) 886-3829 e-mail: chigoddess@hotmail.com</p> <p><b>Late May 2003</b> <b>TCC INTENSIVE</b> <b>Location:</b> Gurnee, IL (Chicago Area) <b>Contact:</b> Donna McElhose: (847) 223-6065 e-mail: Dmcelhosechi@aol.com</p> <p><b>Nov. 2003</b> <b>SEDAKU TEACHER TRAINING</b> <b>Location:</b> Bay Area, CA <b>Contact:</b> Athene Mantle: (510) 886-3829 e-mail: chigoddess@hotmail.com</p>

**Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement**  
**Ed Altman is the Head of the T'ai Chi Chih Community**  
**Sandy McAlister and Pam Towne are T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Trainers**



# News Shorts

## Conference committee donates to TCC groups with leftover funds

Although the attendance was less than last year, the San Antonio Conference Committee, due to a very generous room and board rate (reduced by the University of the Incarnate Word in the 11th hour), had leftover proceeds following the conference and made generous donations to the following groups: The New Mexico *T'ai Chi Chih* Association, *The Vital Force*, Good Karma Publishing, as well as extremely generous donations to the 2003 Conference planning group and scholarship fund.

Many many thanks once again to the fine work done by the "San Antonio Six" (Sr. Alice Holden, Stella Jaidar, Sophie Roland, Renza Baker, Lucky Sikora and Sr. Eugenia Stell) in voluntarily hosting such a successful conference from start to finish!

– Noel Altman

## New workshop evolves from conference to address teacher request

One of the great joys of my *T'ai Chi Chih* practice is the continuous discoveries. Those "ah ha" moments keep coming if I stay present. Well, following some of the comments made during the discussion period at the conference, Sr. Meg Costello had an "ah ha" moment, too. She came up with the idea of a "Teachers Learning to Teach *T'ai Chi Chih*! Joy Thru Movement" Retreat.

This will be the first time a retreat format has been put together with the intent of teachers coming together to share and learn teaching techniques. (See "Calendar of Events for details).

By examining our own movements, working with each other, and sharing our teaching experiences, we will be better able to discern our students' needs and how to help them grasp a concept or feel a movement. I eagerly look forward to participating in, what I have no doubt will be, this enriching experience.

– Sandy McAlister

## First student/teacher retreat to be held on island of Kauai in June '03

Okay, y'all have asked, and now it's here! The first *T'ai Chi Chih* student/teacher retreat on the "garden isle" of Kauai will occur in June, 2003 for four days and three nights, with Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community Ed Altman leading. (See "Calendar of Events" for details).

Come immerse yourself in *T'ai Chi Chih* practice in a beautiful setting, close to Waimea Canyon, "the Grand Canyon of the Pacific." We'll be practicing in a huge open-air lanai (covered wooden deck) in a "summer camp" retreat setting of four acres located inside Kokee State Park. The accommodations are simple (to allow costs to be kept low), but the catered food will be delicious and healthy (mostly vegetarian).

Attendees should have completed at least a beginning course before arriving, as Ed's teaching can then be at a more subtle (and deeper) level as we each explore our *T'ai Chi Chih* practice.

The foliage is lush and tropical. The air is soft. The tradewinds blow. What better place to practice *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement? We LOVE it here on Kauai! Come share it with us! With aloha,

– Noel Altman

## Joel Andrews considers creating CD of *Emblissening Movement*

Teacher Roberta Taggart recently ran into Joel Andrews, the harpist who created the cassette tape *Emblissening Movement*, used by some TCC practitioners in teaching and practice. He told Roberta that he is considering offering the music on CD, but wants to find out if TCC teachers are interested. Good Karma Publishing has offered his cassette for many years, but has declined, for now, to begin offering his music in CD format. If you would like to let Joel know if you are interested in his proposed CD, you can contact him at: (707) 964-6740 or by e-mail at: goldenharp@jps.net.

– Noel Altman



# A Need for Trust

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I feel moved to respond in writing to the feelings of concern that arose at the Conference over the proposed ideas for changes in the Teacher Accreditation process. The following is what seemed to flow spontaneously through me as I opened my heart. The poem is one I wrote years ago, and seems a perfect way to begin.

"Go deep....to the river within you  
Become at one with its flow  
Yielding, move with its currents  
As it takes you where you need to go."

(B.Weil)

As T'ai Chi Chih teachers:

- \* If we truly believe in the power of Chi, and trust its wisdom.....
- \* If we truly know that Prajna will lead us.....
- \* If we know that the softness of water wears away the hardness of rock.....
- \* If we truly believe in our T'ai Chi Chih practice, and sink deeper into the Essence.....
- \* If we truly feel the "Growth of Certainty" within, and trust its infallibility.....
- \* If we truly align with the Cosmic Energy.....

\*\*\* THEN SURELY WE MUST KNOW THAT THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR FEAR.....

\*\* THE ANSWERS WE SEEK WILL COME FROM PRAJNA...AT THE RIGHT TIME...EMERGING FROM ESSENCE.

\*\* As T'ai Chi Chih teachers, WE NEED TO TRUST, AND LISTEN TO THE CHI...

\*\* Rather than getting caught in the worries and fears of small, limited mind, LET US EACH ASPIRE TO DEEPEN OUR OWN T'AI CHI CHIH PRACTICE, AND MAY THE POWER AND WISDOM OF OUR ACCUMULATED CHI MOVE US GENTLY THROUGH ANY OBSTACLES, BRINGING US INTO ALIGNMENT WITH THE FLOW OF COSMIC ENERGY, ALLOWING THE DARKNESS TO BE TRANSFORMED BY THE LIGHT OF UNIVERSAL MIND, ENABLING ALL DECISIONS TO COME FROM PRAJNA, AND ALLOWING US TO "COME TO A GRACEFUL CONCLUSION."

In gratitude and trust, may we remember Justin's words:

"When the individual energy (Chi) merges with the Universal Energy (Chi), something acts through one, and that something is infallible. This is Prajna, the Inherent Wisdom." (Justin Stone)

\*\* LET US TRUST IN TEH - THE POWER OF INNER SINCERETY — AND SURRENDER TO THE CHI.....

\*\* T'AI CHI CHIH! JOY THRU MOVEMENT WILL SHOW US THE WAY.

With love and trust,

**Beverly Weil**



# Two teachers discuss commitment

**Stephanie Bass and Lorraine Lepine shared the first leg of their journey home from the conference. This article is the distillation of that two-hour conversation.**

## **Stephanie Bass**

During the public practice this thought came to me: I need to decide if I am ready to commit to *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* at the level that is now required.

As we attempt to raise the level of competence of all teachers, it seems that more is required of all teachers.

More attention, more practice, more study, to improve our own practice, and produce good new teachers.

More is required of us to serve the organization as volunteers—to host conferences, workshops, meetings, do presentations and share administrative tasks. It will take more travel, more money, more time—time away from family and work.

More is required of us in sitting together, being present with each other, working on important issues.

So, am I ready to make that commitment?

Part of me says no—just do your practice. That's enough. You have to make a living. You have other responsibilities.

Part of me knows that, if I am not teaching, my practice falls away.

Part of me shrinks from the intensity—I just want to be comfortable.

Part of me says, what would you learn, without students to teach you?

## **Lorraine Lepine**

I was pointing out to Stephanie that what she was describing as her personal decision as regards her *T'ai Chi Chih* practice was like a microcosm, and the situation the TCC community is facing is the macrocosm.

It seems like the old shoes are no longer fitting.

Her awareness of the change within her own practice and the acceptance of *what is* are the two ele-

ments that are going to help her make a renewed commitment to her TCC practice and teaching.

She is no longer the student who was told to become a teacher — she is now the teacher who needs to decide what place *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* will take in her life, complying with the higher requirements that are expected from the Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman and from Justin Stone. Also to commit to support the TCC community in the expansion of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* in her city and perhaps beyond.

I said: I believe that your sharing about your own crisis may help bring awareness to the TCC community as a whole.

Yes, you can choose to say “No” and do your own practice for your own spiritual development. You can choose to face the challenge of the new expectation, raising the bar to challenge yourself and deepen your practice, which will inevitably have an influence on yourself and all of those around you.

You can choose to go further and help support the TCC community in getting stronger, better prepared students to become teachers, which will result in a great impact on the TCC community as a whole. This will also help support the vision of Justin of spreading *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* and protecting the purity and integrity of the TCC form. Asking yourself and the Chi the consequences of your choice will help you make the right decision.

## **Stephanie Bass**

This dialogue brought back to me a fear that beset me as a child. Growing up in the Southern Baptist Church, I used to be afraid that God would call me to be a missionary. I was afraid I would have to leave my home and family and go suffer in some foreign land among people who did not want me—who might even harm me.

I worried about this a lot—what would I do, if He called? Couldn't I make a bargain and just be really good?

Deep inside, I knew that wouldn't work. You can't hide, once you hear the Voice.

But I didn't get the call. And I forgot my fear. Now I remember it.



The Voice is not what I expected, and I can't describe it. Who can describe the Chi?

But since I attended this conference I have not been able to silence it, or to do any other work without hearing it. I have daydreams — of big public practices in the park, of children in the housing project forming a *T'ai Chi Chih* club, of maybe even our public leaders learning this form. Yet it seems too big, impossible.

**Lorraine Lepine**

I said: Have a big dream but do small, daily, on-going things towards the achievement of your dream. It will

manifest easily. Focus on your dream and it will come naturally and easily as you are doing the things that need to be done. Everything will start to flow, but like in TCC practice you need to start moving.

**Stephanie Bass**

So I have begun to do the small things, and I find that each one begets another.

Answering the call is not difficult, after all. It is much easier to answer it, than to work so hard at ignoring it.

## Teacher asks, where is time spent?

**B**ravo San Antonio! The 2002 conference was a great success! Our hosts provided us with an experience one could liken to a delightful gourmet Southwestern meal. It was as if quality ingredients were carefully prepared and then beautifully served although it was a little hot. Sandy McAlister and Pam Towne were welcome additions to the teaching team as they made their expertise readily available to us. Ed Altman demonstrated his skill as a leader as he led us through the challenges of transition and change.

While it seemed there was a common agreement on the need to improve the teachers' training process, the question put forth by Ed of how we might do this led to a lively and even charged discussion. If we carefully examine all of the options, it is clear that each requires an investment of more time spent at some level. The debate then becomes a matter of at what level is it most beneficial to the community as a whole to invest this expenditure of time? We presently ask well prepared teacher candidates to give up their teacher training time to those candidates who come poorly prepared. We ask Ed to focus a large part of his time and energy just on bringing candidates up to the basic required standards, not only at teachers' training but also for months and even years with the 12% of those applicants who are deferred. So time is already being spent -- but by whom? Where should the burden of responsibility lie? To the question raised of keeping costs down, we must realistically view time as money. Perhaps in the future, what may appear as an increase in costs will actually be more of a shift in who will be pay-

ing for the time that is already being spent. To improve the teachers' training process two good suggestions made were to provide more workshops and have a second teacher sign off for candidate approval. Unfortunately these will also require more time expended and therefore will increase costs. At what level will this inevitable expenditure of our time and money best insure the success of all candidates and future teachers as well as the improvement of the community as a whole?

As the TCC community continues to grow, and as a result the needs of the TCC teaching community change, we must be careful not to use band-aid therapy on the problems created by the training method we currently use. With an eye to the future and the expansion of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline we must attend carefully to the use of our leadership and the skills of our community.

One of the beauties of our *T'ai Chi Chih* conference is that we could come together with such diversity and varying opinions and finish in a final circle of friendship. Ed's standing ovation was well deserved. Under Ed's sincere and gentle yet firm leadership along with Sandy, Pam and the many dedicated *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers we can expand confidently into the future. I am grateful to be a part of it all.

Justin you were missed.

Gratefully,

***Athene Mantle***  
*Hayward, CA*



# Embrace or Abdicate?

By Kim Grant

As most teachers probably do, I still vividly remember the moment I decided to become a TCC teacher. I was having lunch with Justin in 1998 and he said out of the blue, "Do you think you'll ever become a *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher?" I responded with a heavy sigh, "I dunno know, Justin; teaching is such a big responsibility." Without hesitating a second he shot back, "Life is a big responsibility." It was decided. I would accept (and later grow to embrace) the responsibility.

It seems that this is one of the fundamental issues regarding the proposed two-tier teacher's training: accepting (or abdicating) the enormous responsibility of preparing candidates. The process takes a great deal of work; it takes even more wisdom. At the August San Antonio conference, a significant number of teachers sounded like they were afraid of or reticent about how to properly prepare candidates. They voiced being ill-equipped and unprepared for the tasks and challenges of bringing their students to the edge of the cliff. Certainly, no one wants their students to jump off the cliff and land with a thud. Teachers can and need to prepare students to soar. But with the bar for teacher quality raised, and with a number of candidates receiving deferred accreditation over the last few years, many teachers said they want someone (or something) else to prepare their students. In other words, it seems to me, they want the responsibility taken off their shoulders. Most teachers thought that the two tiered system was the best and easiest way to solve the problem of ill-prepared students. I think it's a cop out (for many reasons, only one of which is addressed here).

By sending our students off to two finishing schools — one to refine movements and another to learn how to teach — we are handing off our responsibility. I can hear the thought patterns developing: "This candidate will make a good teacher and does

pretty good TCC practice; I'm sure the 'master teachers' can whip them into shape." We should all strive towards the so-called 'master teacher' designation, whether or not we are ever anointed as such. The *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline is serious business. With a two-tiered system we are abdicating our work to others and letting ourselves off the hook. By not bringing our own students to the next level fully, we are not reaching the next level ourselves, in our own practice. We are ceasing to be students ourselves. (I think we all agree how much we learn about ourselves and our own practice when we teach.) With a two-tier system we would, in essence, give up digging deeper into our own practice.

There are teachers among us who require their teacher candidates to go through one or two lengthy teacher prep classes, to refine their movements even more, and to begin the life-long process of experiencing the depths of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement. They also teach their students how to teach. We, as a community, might move further toward this model. But first, we must really know something about the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline. I know one teacher (who also refers to herself as a student), Dora Derzon, who regularly audits her teacher's Teacher Prep, Beginning, Intermediate and Review classes. Dora gets a deeper understanding of herself as a student and teacher with each class audited. How many of us, given the opportunity, do this? I can hear many of you retorting, "Fine, but I don't have the opportunity to do this."

I understand that many teachers feel like they weren't prepared well enough and thus can't prepare their students well enough. But what about this simple solution: Why don't we offer existing teachers around the country small workshops in teaching students how to teach? Let's create the opportunity for teachers to better their skills at preparing candidates. As I believe someone at the conference said, it is not the teacher candidate's fault if they are not prepared; it is ours. Let's get to the root of the problem. The current Teacher's Training courses contain over 40 hours of instruction and talk (and there are lots of extra-help sessions in the morning and well into the evening). For properly prepared candidates, with whom teachers have worked with wisdom, this should be enough. We must not abdicate our responsibility; we must embrace it.



# Conference deemed "important"

The word I would use to describe this conference is **important**. Every conference has its own life and personality but this one was different for a number of reasons:

(1) Justin was not there (physically). I had previously spoken with him about his not attending and have come to accept his wisdom in this. I missed him. There had to be a first conference he did not attend and this was it. It was heartening for me that Ed opened and closed the conference with respectful references to Justin. I am also glad we got to see the video greeting from Justin (twice).

(2) The TCC community got to challenge itself on a topic of serious magnitude, i.e. proposed changes in the teacher accreditation process. Hearing the views of so many was both a privilege and at times difficult. The discussions gave us a tremendous opportunity to reassess and deepen our understanding and commitment to teaching the TCC discipline. Such sharing occurred because of the sacred space created by Ed's patience and genuine desire to hear from teachers as well as Alice's strong and humorous leadership. At such times laughter is especially powerful medicine. I felt sad and disappointed at some of the remarks made and defend everyone's right to their opinion. Such is the way towards inclusion. I acknowledge and thank those who shared. What a gift we all received though it may not have felt like it in the moment.

(3) This conference was marked by a seeming deficiency of movement time. The content and quality of the refinements, however, was right-on for me. I came away with some very concrete suggestions for improving my practice and these flowed into renewed inspiration and enthusiasm to strengthen my practice *teh*. I also look forward to teaching again (something I hadn't felt for months). Thank you to all who contributed to this weekend in your own unique ways.

For a spiritual discipline that gives us so much, one weekend to offer up for discussion and sitting with uncomfortable thoughts and feelings is **nothing** if it ultimately benefits *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* in its purpose and integrity. I believe such difficult times can be incredibly healthy and healing. There can be an abundance of lessons here for a still-young community learning about trust, following the Tao, and honest identification of clinging and resistance to change. I consider it a great privilege to be a *T'ai Chi Chih* student/teacher who attended this conference. I view the conference as an important milestone in the unfolding of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. And I am (already) very excited about next year's conference in Canada!

*Rhonda St. Martin*  
Albuquerque, NM

## Canadian student weighs in with her view

I read the July 2002 issue of the *Vital Force* and I felt compelled to write.

At the time that I am sending this to you, I am a month away from attending the Teacher Accreditation week in Edmonton. So it was with great interest that I read all the feedback about the accreditation process. Although I may be 'only' a student, I feel like I need to share my experience and thoughts.

While I was in my first TCC class, I knew that this form of meditation would be a permanent part of my life. I learned the movements quickly and I thought I moved well. Arrogant...oh yeah! I was offended by corrections and became defensive. I have never liked being criticized.

About four weeks into the first class, I began to really feel the Chi and started to see how some of the

TCC philosophy, especially letting go, applied not just to my practice but to my life. When I finished the first course, I began to seriously think about becoming a teacher. My friend (and my first TCC teacher) encouraged me to do so but also emphasized the need for me to get more exposure to the TCC practice. This past winter, I enrolled in another beginner's class with a

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## Forwarded Letter

August 15, 2002

*Between the conception,  
And the creation,  
Between the emotion,  
And the response,  
Falls the Shadow* – T.S. Eliot

Dear Justin,

The above poem, by T.S. Eliot, reflects the shadow of doubt I felt at the TCC conference in San Antonio this year.

You were missed at the conference this year. I thank you and Brock for making the video presentation, which everyone watched very intensely. Also, the copy of your speech that was made available to all attendees was very helpful.

Some of the issues expressed by teachers include:

- \* Ed is not following what you wish done for *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*
- \* Cost, in both time and money, came up a lot
- \* Candidates not getting accredited but teaching the TCC form anyway
- \* The two-signature idea
- \* That you do not want a two-phase accreditation
- \* Some do not seem to feel anything is wrong with the way things are now
- \* Others are worried that their students might get better training than they did, and come back and say so
- \* Integrity of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*

Justin, I am not a fast on my feet thinker. So, talking with some teachers, and gathering less emotional responses than those presented at the conference, I have some thoughts that may not have been brought up then.

First issue: Ed following what you want. I trust that you and Ed have talked a great deal about the need for a change in the accreditation for TCC candidates. Ed has always expressed the deepest respect for you and for *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. I know that Ed will lead the TCC community with the intention of the greatest good for *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*, always! He will do so even to the extent that it might be above his and Noel's highest good. By choosing Ed to be the Head of the TCC Community, you knew he would be the best choice to

lead the TCC community. In trusting your choice, Ed has my 100% support in doing what he finds necessary to preserve the integrity of the TCC accreditation process.

While you may support Ed, the discussions at the conference demonstrated serious divisions on what it is you wish. There was a large group that seemed to say Ed was going against your wishes. I hope that all instructors that love you and depend on your leadership will know that you support Ed in whatever he has to do for the integrity of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*.

Second issue: Cost in Time and Money. Everyone agrees that the cost should be kept down, if possible. There is concern that two phases of training would increase the cost. We all agree that no one should make money on accreditation training. The facilities are often very [expensive], as is airfare. But, the cost to candidates has to cover the expenses for the accreditation training, unless we change the approach to our organization and fund training in some other way.

There are many ways of handling the cost to put on the teacher training, either a one-phase or two-phase program. But, the reality is that the cost of the TCC accreditation course is much less than other mind, body spirit disciplines charge for similar programs. And, no matter how low the cost, it will always be too expensive for some candidates. If they are sincere, I am sure a way would be found to assist them.

In my opinion, cost should not be the primary consideration in fixing the problems of accreditation. Some may say that higher cost will keep people from being accredited. I do not think that will happen. The rate of accrediting instructors may slow down for a time, but that may be a good thing: it would provide an opportunity to put a system in place to strengthen the core of teachers we already have. When more teachers understand how to teach and prepare new candidates, the TCC community will have a firm foundation on which to build the future.

Justin, I believe you have told Ed many times to have faith in how the Universe works, faith that what is needed will be provided. Maybe all the funding and scholarship ideas will help. But what about the value of individuals learning about, cultivating and manifesting their highest potential for themselves? I have the impression from your work that this is something we should make space for and allow to happen. So, per-



haps we should allow the candidates to manifest from the Universe the time and money to become teachers.

**Third issue:** Teaching without accreditation. There are many people out there doing that already. Some seem to think they can change the names of the movements and say it is not *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. In addition, there are some accredited instructors that are changing the basics of the TCC form and presenting *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* their way. So, it's not just a matter of what non-accredited individuals might do. By exploring the Web, one can find TCC classes in various parts of the country, and the teacher's names are not in the Teachers' Directory. As for candidates doing this, I believe the number would be insignificant, especially compared to what's going on now.

**Fourth issue:** The idea of requiring two teachers to sign for a candidate. The problem with this is the state of our current teachers. In Japan where this method is used, I suspect the Zen Masters have more training than the main body of our present teachers. As an auditor in a training course, I saw the struggle of some of the candidates, and asked them what did they do to prepare for training.

They had studied long with their instructors, and had studied your video and book. Then they paid a great deal of money to be checked by a long-time instructor. He said they were ready after watching them for a short time. Teachers who either do not understand how to do the TCC movements, or do not know how to evaluate others, misled them. They got the approval from more than two teachers and thought they were ready. They were so far from ready that they had to rethink everything they were doing. They were sincere and had the approval of two teachers. It failed them.

Until we address the issue of how current teachers understand and do the movements, and how they evaluate candidates, having more signatures will not solve the problem of proper candidate preparedness.

**Fifth issue:** The impression that you do not want a two-phase training program. Your address did not say you do not like the idea, just that you have concerns about the cost. People did not hear or read it this way. So a lot [of] stress came from people saying you are against a two-phase course.

**Sixth issue:** Some teachers think nothing is wrong with

the present training. There is ample evidence that there is a problem. A case in point: I have been working on a checklist that incorporates the TCC web site checklist information. So to get feedback on the checklist, I showed it to several teachers at the conference. One statement—that the hands circle  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times in Bird Flaps Its Wings—caused quite a stir among some respected teachers who said that information was wrong. Some said it is 1 circle, others that it is  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . Few knew the answer, even though the textbook clearly says it is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  circles. I believe this small problem is the tip of the iceberg and a symptom of the problem: our teachers are not on the same page with regard to correctly doing or teaching the movements.

**Seventh issue:** Some teachers are concerned that candidates will come back better prepared than they are. Recommending teachers who feel this way should attend the training course as well as the candidate. The results would be a strengthening of the teacher base.

**Eighth issue:** The integrity of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. The integrity of the teaching of the TCC discipline is important to the present and future of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. Too few instructors take the opportunity to renew and to audit teacher training courses or to attend workshops, even when they are in their home area.

For the continued growth of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*, for the integrity of the practice, and for the integrity of the teacher training course we need to change how teachers are accredited, and we must improve our current teachers' understanding of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. The TCC community will continue [to] grow, but we need to provide the training needed to carry *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* into the next century.

How to move is extremely important. Some teachers are stuck in beginner's mode, and simply do not know how to move. After accreditation, many teachers never attend another workshop or training event—ever.

This places an incredible burden on the teacher accreditation process, as it is the only time anyone evaluates teachers. If there were mandatory renewal training every two to four years to keep accreditation, then many more teachers would renew their movements by auditing a training or workshop. But this is something almost impossible to do now.

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# Teacher acknowledges role of prajna

It was with great joy and gratitude that I attended my second TCC Teacher's conference. I came with no agenda or expectations, except to \*be\* with the community of teachers. As I experienced the ongoing discussions regarding teacher trainings, I watched our group go through an extensive process instead of having a decision just handed to us by Ed. There was vigorous conversation, some emotional, from many points of view. All who wanted to speak had the opportunity. Justin's voice was also heard via letter and video. Many concerns were expressed, and solutions and possibilities were offered.

It seemed as though many teachers struggled that we, as a community, were having such a spirited and lengthy discussion. I don't think the dialogue is done yet. I am convinced that the TCC community is exactly where it is supposed to be.

There are some spiritual applications to our process as well as a direct reflection into our TCC individual practice. In this discussion of change, there has been tension, and resistance to change. There has been pain. In my TCC practice, as I encounter areas of tension, I have learned to soften and let go of the resistance. I allow the chi to gently bring me into balance. The Chi never forces its way, just like I don't see Ed or Justin forcing a decision upon the teaching community. Instead there is a gentle process of discussion. It is effortless, if

we allow it to be.

I am part of another group that has no organization. That group also has no leader, except for the wisdom that comes as the collective wisdom of the community, a group consensus. No one person has the answer, but the community prajna has the answer. There is within us That Which Knows, Justin reminds us. I have confidence that Justin knew, and continues to know, what he was doing in selecting Ed Altman as the Head of our community. I am certain when the time is right (whenever that is) a direct reflection of our community prajna will be evident and that Ed will reiterate that choice for our community.

That which blocks our prajna is our habit energies, the way we think it "should be". I believe we need to "Let Go" of our ingrained ideas and old ways of doing things. Let's let go of the personalities, and focus on the spiritual principles involved. The unity of our community is vital to its survival, and ultimately it's growth since we are all interconnected. Let's bring our community into harmony and a graceful conclusion of this process.

The journey is the destination.

**Barbara Lippert**  
*Camarillo, California*

# Justin's absence acknowledged, mourned

Justin's physical absence from the conference this year was blinding. I experienced it as both a foreshadow of an inevitability and an echo of a loss I have experienced since my father passed away September 7, 2001, at 85 years of age. After my father passed on I felt starkly alone in the world and strangely afraid.

My father lived with me his last seven years affording me a closeness and familiarity in those final years not experienced by my siblings. It also brought a very harsh and unexpected pain, unshared by my sibs when that daily physical presence was no longer there. We all missed Justin's presence at the conference and no doubt at some level dealt with the eventual perma-

nence it suggested. I can imagine that for those who are fortunate enough to have frequent contact with him it will be acutely felt. This conference allowed us all to be touched by the significance of this eventuality and see how we might respond.

Perhaps I was not alone in the influence of these tumultuous emotions swirling about my being as I struggled with the question put before us regarding the preparation and accreditation of new teachers. I am grateful that room was made to accommodate the sharing of feelings, ideas and a few solutions. It was not what I came expecting but in retrospect it was necessary.

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# My Pledges

By Justin Stone

While I am alive I will attempt to see that *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* maintains certain idealistic standards. I believe it has a Divine Mission to help people, not necessarily make money.

There will be no 'superstructure', bureaucracy, or organization, and no salaried positions or change of high standards.

The 'bottom line' will not be the standard of thinking but the aim to help mankind will.

Several letters have suggested that the "two-tiered system" was a way to make more money. I hope we do not have such letters or the need for them in the future.

I will work to lower charges, not raise them. We are in difficult financial times and people are low on funds. When it was suggested that recommending teachers forfeit the \$50 reward for sending pupils to Teachers' Training Courses, I volunteered that I would also give up the \$50 honorarium I received as creator of the TCC discipline. I suggested that this \$100 per student—all of it—be placed in a scholarship fund

to help needy candidates receive teachers' training.

I have never appointed anyone "Spiritual Head" of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. Such a one would have had to have long years of spiritual training and be not in the least materialistic. I paid my dues, and he or she would have had to do likewise.

Popularity is not a good way to judge the sincerity of anyone. There are teachers who have worked long years helping me bring the TCC discipline up from nothing, and I pledge to see that their ideals are followed, not in words but in actions.

## New teacher prep requirements

By Ed Altman

This and the last issue of *The Vital Force* have included an ongoing discussion of the challenges that affect the *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher candidate preparation and training process. I've also held discussions at length about this matter with Justin Stone as well as Teacher Trainers Sandy McAlister and Pam Towne. We all agree that continuing to hand out deferrals to unprepared candidates is not a viable option for the future. I've also engaged teachers in the discussion at each of the events that I have led this year to seek input from the community, and have received numerous cards, letters and e-mail messages from teachers and students as well.

Recently, a thorough discussion on

the subject was held at the annual *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers' Conference in San Antonio. The problem was clearly defined and the spectrum of potential solutions was thoroughly discussed. An opinion by Justin Stone on how to solve the problem was also provided to every teacher, and all attendees were given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. As I had hoped, the discussion led to a new suggestion by several people, and I feel this will address the problem in the most productive way. As a result, the following changes will be made to the Teacher Training registration policy **beginning with all Teacher Training courses offered in 2003:**

1. All candidates who wish to attend a *T'ai Chi Chih* Teacher Training course will need to get **two** teachers to ver-

ify that they are well-prepared and sign a referral form. The first referral signature will come from the student's personal instructor, preferably after completing a thorough teacher candidate preparation course. The second (counter-signature) referral will come from any other accredited *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher after having reviewed the candidate's movements. This process is already being used with great success in many areas of the community.

2. Once both referral signatures have been received, candidates will have six months to attend a Teacher Training course. Candidates who do not attend a Teacher Training course during that timeframe will need to get another referral form signed (by two instructors) and the six-month

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## New requirements...

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countdown will start over again.

3. All courses will be offered on a "Pass / Fail" basis. No more deferrals will be handed out.

4. Candidates who are unable to pass the Teacher Training course will be able to retake the course as many times as necessary to receive their accreditation. However, no discounts will be available as course fees pay for space rental and compensate course hosts and instructors for their time. My hope is that a scholarship fund may one day be available for this purpose.

In addition, the *T'ai Chi Chih* community will begin offering *T'ai Chi Chih* Intensive courses to allow serious students and teacher candidates an opportunity to deepen their personal practice. These four-day courses will focus on making detailed refinements and discussing the underlying philosophy of the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements. The course instructors for these Intensives will be Teacher Trainers or the Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community. The course will be open to:

- \* *T'ai Chi Chih* Teacher Training candidates
- \* Advanced *T'ai Chi Chih* students who have practiced the movements for at least one year
- \* Accredited *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers may also audit as space permits

The *T'ai Chi Chih* Intensive course will not be required, but will be made available for those who wish to work closely with a Teacher Trainer or the Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community. In order to allow attendees to get the most from this intensive course, enrollment will be limited, and attendees will need to be recommended

by their teacher. This will help keep the focus on exploring the deeper aspects of the practice rather than on simply learning the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements as a beginner.

At the end of the intensive, the course instructor will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the attendees and will provide a second referral signature for those who are ready to proceed to a Teacher Training course. Students will be able to repeat this course as many times as desired.

The changes outlined above were designed to reduce the number of ill-prepared candidates coming to Teacher Training courses. Having another accredited teacher examine the candidate's movements should help identify those who need further time and instruction before attending a course. The cornerstone of the preparation process remains the referring teacher, and the best way teachers can make sure they understand these requirements is to renew their practice by attending or auditing events themselves. It is absolutely essential that accredited teachers understand what is expected of a well-prepared candidate as they are responsible to make sure the students they send are able to pass the course.

### Referral Fee No Longer In Effect

I also wanted to let all accredited teachers know that the referral stipend that is currently sent when a candidate becomes accredited will no longer be in effect beginning in 2003. Once two referring teachers are required, the process will be too complex, and nearly every teacher I've spoken with about it feels this fee should be eliminated.

The timing for this change is particularly noteworthy, as rising costs

for space rental have made it nearly impossible to offer Teacher Training courses in certain high-population areas. Unfortunately, these are the areas with a large number of students, and the community needs to be able to continue to offer courses there. At the beginning of 1998, course instruction time at teacher trainings was increased from 22 to nearly 35 hours, and maximum course size allowed has also been reduced as of January 2002 to make sure everyone receives personalized instruction from the Teacher Trainer. Though these changes were intended to make the course more valuable to candidates, they have also made it even more expensive to host a successful *T'ai Chi Chih* Teacher Training course.

As a result, the money that was previously allocated to the referral fee will now be used to address the rising costs of courses *without increasing* the *T'ai Chi Chih* Teacher Training course fees. I know it was particularly important to Justin that an increase in course fees be avoided if at all possible, and I'm pleased to be able to accommodate his request.

I want to thank all the *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers and students who have participated in this discussion. Your input and feedback have been invaluable to me in reaching what I feel is a balanced approach to the challenges we are facing. I also want to thank Justin Stone for his guidance and support. Lastly, I want to thank the teacher candidates themselves who are the future of our growing community. My goal as the Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community is to make sure you gain the most from the accreditation process, and that you are well-equipped as you begin teaching the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements to your own students.



## Canadian student weighs in...

*continued from page 31*

different teacher. At this point, I had tapped into two of three teachers in my province. In this class, I reviewed and refined movements but most importantly, I learned that the same discipline can have a very different focus depending on who teaches it.

While attending this second class, I also registered for the TCC Retreat in Sedona held this past April. I had read issues of the *VFJ* over the past year and had empathized with teacher candidates who had written articles about their accreditation experience and, for some, their deferral. I decided that I needed to go to the Retreat not only to learn more about my practice but also to find out just how scary this Ed guy was! Turns out, he is one of the most gentle souls I have ever met. At this point, Ed did not scare me anymore but the Retreat ended up being a profoundly humbling experience for me. I got to spend three days with teachers and students at varying levels of experience and I got "it": Being a TCC practitioner is not just about moving well (that is, having the mechanics of the movements down) but that TCC practice is a lifelong journey that involves the exploration of ever deepening layers of knowing. What a fabulous weekend! I left the retreat not as confident about my ability to be a teacher but with a greater commitment to trying. Most interestingly of all, I actually sought and welcomed corrections!

Since then, the Edmonton teachers who are hosting the accreditation in September have also organized three preparation workshops. I have attended two. We were able to work with a variety of teachers (sometimes one-on-one), learn about what to expect at accreditation and get videotaped individually. The time and energy these teachers have given us is immeasurable. In addition, my friend and TCC teacher, has gifted me with Justin Stone's videotape and book and has loaned me other resources. I purchased more material at the Retreat. I have used all of them in my preparation for accreditation.

About six months ago I would have said that I was 75% apprehensive and 25% excited about the accreditation process. Now, it is the reverse.

I chalk it up to:

1. Time. Really understanding how TCC practice is a life-long process takes time. Having said that, I know that I am just at the tip of the iceberg and I am not able to fathom the depth but at least I know it is deep!

2. Exposure. I needed to spend time with different teachers, if for no other reason than to find out that there is no one right way to teach the movements.

3. Humility. I have a work colleague who once told me about a competence scale. She said that as we learn about something we go through four stages:

- a) Unconsciously Incompetent = we are not even aware that we do not know
- b) Consciously Incompetent = we know we do not know
- c) Consciously Competent = we know we know
- d) Unconsciously Competent = we do not think about what we know, we just know

When it came to my TCC practice, the Retreat sent me sailing right to Consciously Incompetent. I am sure glad it came then, the first time, and not at the accreditation.

4. Trust in Teachers. I knew that all the teachers with whom I have spent time have attended TCC events in the last two years. Knowing that they continue to focus on their own practice gave me the confidence to trust in their teachings.

I guess I am sharing this because I wanted to emphasize that as teacher candidates, we need to take responsibility in ensuring that we are ready for accreditation too. It is not just the role of teachers. However, as much as I want to be a TCC teacher, I left it up to the teachers in Edmonton to tell me if they thought I was ready. If they had said no, I would have been disappointed but grateful. And even though I will be attending the accreditation, nothing is guaranteed. I am willing to go and experience and, when all is said and done, accept whatever the outcome.

Sincerely,

**Monique Beneteau**  
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan  
CANADA

**[Editor's Note: Monique was accredited at the Edmonton, AB, CANADA training in mid-September.]**



# Letter to Justin

*continued from page 32*

Having two-phase training is a gift for the candidates. The first phase is for checking on movements and noting refinement needed. Then, candidates have time to practice the changes and information that Ed offers before they are given their accreditation in the second phase. This does not seem too much to ask, given that most will never renew their movements.

At the second phase, progress can be checked and the candidates also will be more relaxed and can enjoy the accreditation. The accreditation course is not a military school where one should be terrified throughout the training. I believe the two-phase accreditation would provide a stronger core of teachers, and I would want my students to go through that process.

Having two phases for students to work through their accreditation would give candidates an opportunity to have instruction at a higher level, and would allow time to learn the basics of how to teach others and how to evaluate their own candidates in the future. Currently, so much time must be spent on the beginner level issues for ill-prepared candidates, that Ed cannot spend time on the higher level of information.

It is time to ensure that the instructors that are accredited really know the movements and how to teach *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. The more intense training should give the teachers more success in the their classes and more successful future candidates. This higher quality is our best chance to protect the integrity of the TCC discipline.

Last note: Some in our community are worried about creating different levels of teachers. Well, that exists right now. Those who pay the cost in time and money to attend workshops and teacher training courses are going to move better and be better teachers. There are teachers that have a great dedication to *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* and inner Teh. They refine and refine their movements and are the very core of the TCC community. They will be the ones to keep the integrity of the TCC discipline alive and well.

Justin if you feel this letter is of value, I would welcome your sharing it with the *Vital Force* so all teachers can see your comments. I welcome your comments also.

Sharing the Chi,

**Donna McElhose**  
*Wildwood, IL*

**[Editor's Note: This letter was modified to meet trademark law requirements, so is not exactly as Justin first read it.**

**Justin forwarded this letter to *The Vital Force* for publication but did not submit a response for publication.]**

# Justin's absence mourned

*continued from page 34*

I believe the extent to which *T'ai Chi Chih* practice spreads in the world will depend on how firmly we are rooted at the eternal Source. Justin is leaving an incredible gift and he has entrusted it to Ed Altman as head of the TCC community and to all of us as teachers. My concern is that its purity be preserved for all generations. It would seem that in order to assure its purity our teachers must be well grounded and consistent in the quality of the movements. We need also to make a space for those who wish to continue to deepen their practice without becoming teachers. I believe it is wise to address this issue now while we are relatively small in number. The question then is, how? Most likely there is more than one solution and no one remedy is likely to be perfect nor without the ability to be modified as needed.

As we continue to grow in numbers there will undoubtedly be many decisions to be made, decisions for which Justin will not be here to share his wisdom or concerns. I trust that just as we explored our weight shift during this conference, moving too far to one side or the other before we came to find the place of optimal balance and strength, so too that position will be found regarding this current question before us.

Now that we have had a chance to share, let us attempt to set aside our swirling, limited human thought and trust the Chi and Prana will guide the way now and in the future. May its wisdom guide our appointed Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community.

With utmost sincerity,

**Linda Riska Williams**  
*Camarillo, CA*



# Review of Important Points in Using Trademark

By Jean Katus

Following is a review of the main elements required to incorporate the trademark into your brochures, business cards, other materials relating to the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline:

1) The first time the phrase "T'ai Chi Chih" is mentioned, place a small-sized capital R after the words: for example, T'ai Chi Chih® Joy thru Movement.

2) Every time the phrase is mentioned, it needs to be followed by a noun or nouns; i.e., *T'ai Chi Chih practice*; *T'ai Chi Chih discipline*; *T'ai Chi Chih movements*; *T'ai Chi Chih community*; *T'ai Chi Chih teachers*, etc. (If you choose to abbreviate the term as TCC, you needn't follow any of the elements because TCC is not trademarked; only the full name needs to follow Trademark Office requirements.)

3) Place this notice on the brochure or flyer: **T'ai Chi Chih is a federally registered trademark.** (For those outside the U.S., the notice can say: **T'ai Chi Chih is a U.S. federally registered trademark.**) The notice can be done in a smaller size and can be placed anywhere on the flyer or brochure. It does not need to be used on business cards, bumper stickers, T-shirts.

Attorney clarification on questions that came up at the conference:

1) The phrase "moving meditation" can be used after "T'ai Chi Chih" as nouns following the term: for example, *T'ai Chi Chih moving meditation*. However, "a moving meditation" cannot be used because it becomes a descriptor and makes "T'ai Chi Chih" a noun.

2) Small items like pens, bumper stickers, T-shirts must include the small R in a circle following the term "T'ai Chi Chih". Ideally, the term should also be followed by a noun or nouns; however, if the design becomes too cluttered aesthetically, it is permissible to simply use the term with the small circled R, without adding a noun or nouns. *This refers to small items only.* Brochures and fly-

ers need to follow all three elements listed above.

If you are teaching for an agency (Continuing Education programs, Parks & Recreation departments, retreat centers that hire you to teach, etc.) which puts out a catalog or informational material about your classes, you can use the sample paragraph provided to let them know that the trademark registration regulations need to be adhered to in their announcements about your classes and workshops. Here is the sample:

**T'ai Chi Chih is a federally registered trademark. There are implications for legal enforcement and specific usage requirements. We would appreciate your help in making our course title trademark compliant.**

Be sure to also use the first two elements listed in the shaded area at the beginning of this article when titling your class or workshop. You can use the third element, if you wish, but most agencies will likely not be willing to print that statement. The agency's responsibility is simply to list your class or workshop correctly. You might offer to write your own course description and/or look at their catalog before it goes to press to make sure the trademark has been used appropriately.

*Personal note from Jean Katus: I regularly teach for a Continuing Education program. The organizers have been most cooperative in honoring my request to use the trademark information appropriately in their catalog listings.*

**[Reminders from VFJ: As noted in March 2002 VFJ, pg. 5, articles which are submitted without using "T'ai Chi Chih" as an adjective are modified by the editor before publication. Please make these changes yourself, before submitting, so the choice of noun(s) is yours. Thank you!]**

**Also stated in March VFJ: Although not required by trademark law, the editor also makes changes to usages of "TCC" so that it functions as an adjective, as well. This is to present a consistency of usage in the VFJ and avoid confusion (since "TCC" = "T'ai Chi Chih" in meaning.)]**



## Karmic Komments

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

### Appreciation

Many thanks to all who visited the Good Karma conference table and purchased materials; to those who volunteered their assistance at the table; to those who added donations to their orders or simply made donations without purchases; to all who turned in the trademark license agreement by the end of the conference; to Ted Fleischman and Donnis Minx for their work, respectively, on the web site and the new catalog/teacher tools CD. Donations have gone toward the expense of printing and mailing the license agreements to those who were not at the conference. A reminder: If you have not yet returned your signed agreement, please do so right away.

### Trademark Revisited

See p. 39 for a review of important points about using the trademark.

### Web

Look for GKP on the web at [www.goodkarmapublishing.com](http://www.goodkarmapublishing.com), per Ted Fleischman's efforts. As of this writing, the site is nearly complete and will soon be ready for on-line ordering, and the entire catalog will be available electronically. It's an exciting step forward for us. Accredited teachers who will receive the 40% discount on purchase of three or more items must still order the old-fashioned way via phone, mail or fax. The web site has no way of tracking customers who receive discounts.

### Catalog & new listings

We hope to enclose the new catalog with this issue of *VFJ*. If that is not possible, look for it in the next issue. Donnis Minx has redesigned it to be more student-focused so it's easier to see covers of the materials, read the descriptions, and order—either from you as a teacher or directly from GKP, without references to teacher and bookstore discounts. We'll still provide the discounted price teacher order form and the retail customer order form as we've done. We encourage teachers to order multiple copies (50 or more at a time) of the catalog to give out to your students. Whether you are selling materials in class or not, the catalog will be more useful to your students than it previously has been.

Two non-discounted items that were formerly not listed in the catalog now are: *Tentatively Forever*, Justin's wonderful art book that makes a great gift item—at \$32; and the *Seijaku* video for those who have taken the training in it and also for those who want to be introduced to it—for \$99.

### Tools for Teachers

Donnis Minx has put together some graphic tools for teachers that can be downloaded from the GKP web site for free and/or available on a CD for a nominal fee (to cover cost of CDs and shipping). They are scanned photos of the covers of the main items GKP produces and can be used in creating your own teacher flyers or brochures. Included in the CD are some generic group photos of people doing *T'ai Chi Chih* movements, also useful for getting information about this discipline into the public. These materials were collected to help make it easier for teachers to get the word out about *T'ai Chi Chih/Joy thru Movement*. For those who may not have access to a scanner, the tools are a boon for creating materials unique to you and your class/workshop offerings.

### Discount to Bookstores

A question we received from a teacher: does Good Karma get the same amount of profit if students buy materials in a bookstore (or on-line bookstore) instead of ordering directly from us? The answer is no. Bookstores generally receive the same discount from GKP that accredited teachers do (and even though our profit from sales made by teachers is less than direct ordering, we very much appreciate the endeavors of those teachers who choose to sell our materials to their students); therefore, you may want to encourage students to purchase either from you as a teacher or directly from GKP. Direct ordering is usually quicker than special ordering through a bookstore.



## Readers Respond...

*continued from page 3*

you noted, has no religious affiliation to it at all. The event photographed took place in a religious facility, as is the case with half or more of all TCC events held nationwide. (I'm not sure about Canada). I do not agree with you that the photo should not have been published for the sole reason you state, but will keep your opinion in mind as I plan future covers. Are there other readers who agree with Kim that it gives a misleading message?]

Noel, After much thought and reflection I feel compelled to write to you about your article, "Teacher recalls previous standards" in the last issue of the *Vital Force*.

I found your comments about Ed's predecessor offensive and demeaning not only to a fine teacher but to all those he certified over the years. You cast doubts on all our abilities and such negative comments are not in keeping with the Tai Chi spir-

it. I feel an apology, to him and to all of us lucky to be certified by him, is warranted.

**Ann Federspiel**  
*Cincinnati, OH*

*Vital Force*,  
"Community Response to Issue" July 2002 *Vital Force*, pg. 24. Stating this woman was accredited by Ed's predecessor not by Justin Stone.

Statements like these are not very positive or unifying and are not worthy of printing. Nor is it worthy of all the good teachers certified by Ed's predecessor. We all should use our positive energy to find a solution of the certification problem and from reading the July *Vital Force* it seems many good people have come forward with some workable solutions.

**Marlene Brown**  
*Cincinnati, OH*

[Editor's Note: I appreciate your viewpoint and agree with you that the focus should be on coming up with solutions to the problem.]

. . . I was strolling around the TCC website last night and I saw the checklist of moves. WOW! It's intense! I only read a few moves, because the computer needed to reboot for some anti-virus update, but from what I read, it was great! Thanks to all who put that together. There was obviously a lot of time spent on this. Well Done! I'll be looking forward to going back and checking the rest out. . . . Aloha (sorry, couldn't resist).

**Sharon Sirkis**  
*Columbia, MD*

[Editor's Note: Ed Altman, Sandy McAlister and Pam Towne created the first draft. Justin Stone added refinements. VFJ Webmaster Ted Fleischman installed it on the website.]

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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** 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 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.

<b>Issue Submission deadlines:</b>			
January Issue:	<b>October 10th of prior year</b>	July Issue:	<b>May 10th</b>
April Issue:	<b>February 10th</b>	October Issue:	<b>August 10th</b>
<b>Note:</b> 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 <b>The Vital Force</b> .			

**EDITING POLICY:**

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.

**Submissions using "T'ai Chi Chih" and "TCC" as nouns are converted to adjectives before publication.** This is required by U.S. Trademark law for the former, and done for consistency in usage to the latter (since "TCC" = "T'ai Chi Chih" in meaning). Other than those changes, when an addition or substitution for a word or words in the original text has been made, 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.

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**TCC TEACHERS' DIRECTORY:**

The <i>T'ai Chi Chih</i> Teachers' Directory is for referral and communication purposes among accredited <i>T'ai Chi Chih</i> teachers. <b>It is not to be used or sold as a mailing list.</b> Updates are published on insert pages in each issue of <b>The Vital Force</b> . Send your changes to the address on the opposite page.
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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!



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# The Lighter Side...

1. After a 25-hour TCC college course in which I said the name of the move "Rocking Motion" numerous times, one student told me her favorite move was "Rocking Horse!"

— Sharon Sirkis

2. After a presentation today, a little senior citizen lady hobbled her walker up to me, and squinting her eyes while looking at my name tag on my *T'ai Chi Chih* t-shirt, asked, "What did you say this stuff is.....Tiiiiii Chiiiiii Sher?!"

— Sher Dana

3. When practicing "Daughter on the Mountaintop" outside on a very hot sticky day, one college student maintained continuity by gently swatting the bugs away from her face every time she crossed her hands.

— Sharon Sirkis

4. One day at the retirement center it was cooler than normal in the room where we did our TCC practice. After trying to remedy the problem, I was told that the thermostat could not be adjusted, and I was therefore left to make the best of a sticky situation.

Trying to stay upbeat, I said, "Let's do our TCC practice. We'll probably warm up — there's no use in complaining. Let's put our focus on the moves. I'm not going to complain."

So after all of that, one of the ladies said with a disgruntled look on her face, "Well, then, can I complain?"

— Sharon Sirkis

5. Awhile back I encouraged a 30-something man to attend one of my free presentations.

"When's the last time you expanded your comfort zone and tried something new?" I asked.

"It's been years," he said, laughing.

I told him that I know some people are afraid of messing up or looking stupid.

He nodded and said, "Yes, especially us males."

I told him not to worry, that we'd have fun, and how sometimes it's about going with the flow.

Without missing a beat, he responded, "Yeah, but what if you come across a tsunami?"

— Sharon Sirkis

6. It's no surprise that I always try to put some humor into my TCC presentations. During a recent presentation, I told my story of how I used to be in chronic pain. Finding a way to identify with my audience, I asked for a show of hands relating to chronic pain.

"How many of you have pain in your back," I asked. "In your knees? In your neck? How many people tell you, you **are** a pain in the neck?"

As you might have guessed, the audience burst out with laughter.

— 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..."]**

# Haiku on T'ai Chi Chih Practice

*Softly, quietly,  
In the early morning light,  
I begin this day.*

*Circle, make it round  
Circulate and generate  
Invite Chi to stir.*

*Folding, enfolding  
Reaching to touch the divine  
All is circular.*

*Carry the ball soft  
With reverence and respect  
Gentleness prevails.*

*Don't push the river  
It will flow where it will flow  
Circles widening.*

*Breathe peace in and out,  
Like ocean waves on my shore,  
Being peace I smile.*

*I am being danced,  
By strong, loving energy.  
What joy filled knowledge.*

*Hands leaking stardust,  
Pulling In the Energy  
Of the farthest star.*

*Push, pull, push, pull, push  
T'an T'ien the director  
Orchestrating all.*

*Eyes fill with wonder,  
When effort is no effort  
My heart fills with joy.*

*Mind chatter quiets  
Until I am still inside,  
Graceful conclusion.*

- Becky B. Watkins  
Student of Betsy LeBlanc  
and Caroline Guilott