

The Vital Force



Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community

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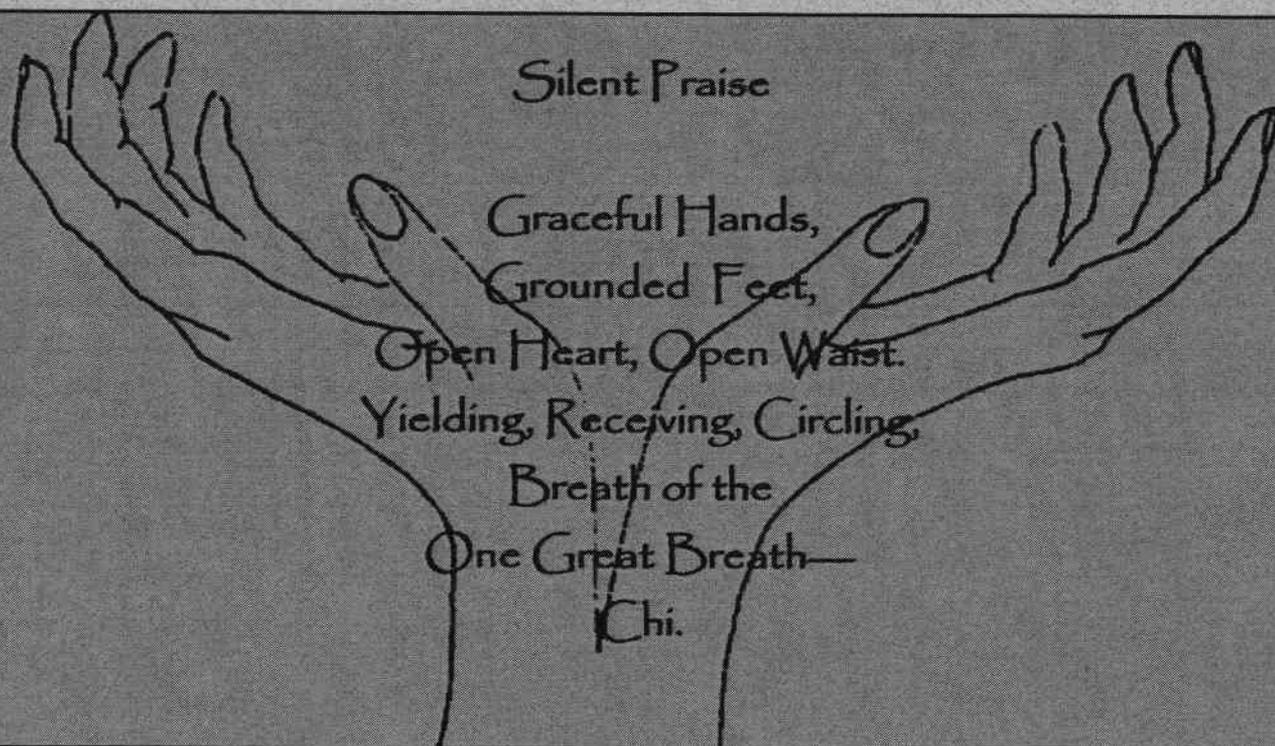




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Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement
Ed Altman is the Head of the T'ai Chi Chih Community



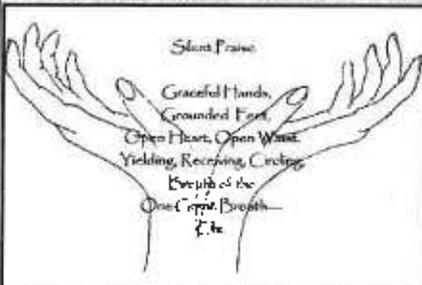
The Vital Force

Editor: Noel Altman
 Technical Advisor: Ed Altman
 Membership Services: Doug Harned
 Information / Outreach: Kathy Albers
 Webmaster: Ted Fleischman
 Mailing Coordination: Marjie Bassler

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:



Our cover features the work of a TCC student, Rosanne Santorelli-Barone, who combined her original poem with a graphic illustration. Another of her poems appears on our back cover, and feels particularly appropriate at this time. As Justin Stone has said more than once, "if enough people did T'ai Chi Chih [practice], we might have peace in this world."

Her work was submitted by her teacher, Sr. Antonia Cooper.

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

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Letter from the Editor

Congratulations to two VFJ staff members who welcomed new additions to their families within about a week of each other in February! Was this just coincidence or was the chi at work?! Kathy Albers (and her husband Steve, also a TCC teacher) are the first-time parents of a baby girl, Natalie. Doug Harned (and his wife Karin, a TCC student) have welcomed baby Joshua as a little brother to three-year-old sister Jennifer. We all offer our hearty congratulations, and will understand if their work for The Vital Force gets a little behind as schedules and lifestyles readjust in the coming months.

A very big thanks to Donnis Minx for her beautiful and very professional work in designing the brochure to entice teachers to attend the upcoming conference in stunning Banff, AB, CANADA. That brochure was included in the late January mailing of the 2003 Teacher Directory. In addition, the Canadian conference committee had the brochure mailed out to every TCC teacher for whom we had an address in the complete VFJ database (which includes active and non-active teachers who are not current VFJ members). It is assumed that some of those addresses are no longer valid. The Vital Force was used as the return address so that if undeliverable mail was returned, we would be able to update our database with the information the post office sometimes provides in such cases. The entire effort was paid for from teachers' conference funds that have accumulated due to the outstanding financial planning and management of the 2000, 2001 and 2002 teachers' conference hosts and committees. Donnis also redesigned the Good Karma Publishing brochure with input from Publisher Jean Katus, and that went out in the January issue of The Vital Force.

TO ALL VFJ READERS (TCC teachers and students):

Let it now be known, we're pretty well caught up with all back entries, and have the space to consider lots of new submissions in the coming quarters. So, write that article you've had in the back of your mind for quite awhile — about your insights into practice, how and what you've learned from your teacher and classmates, how teaching a particular type of student or class has been a challenge and/or a joy, how it's going preparing teacher candidates under the new requirement of getting two teachers to sign off on a student, or any other aspect of your practice or teaching.

Draw original artwork to be considered for a cover or as an inside graphic. (Think of what will come out well when reproduced in black and white. Bold designs with strong lines tend to come through best. Pen, ink or Chinese brush painting have worked well in the past).

Photograph peaceful and/or inspiring subject matter to be considered for a cover or an inside illustration. Or photograph a person or people practicing the T'ai Chi Chih form. One of my favorite covers of all time was the Sept. 2000 cover of TCC Teachers Deanne Hodgson and Judy Mirczak flowing smoothly during an outside practice at the 2000 Teachers' Conference in New Jersey. That volunteer conference photographer had a true gift because in that photograph, you could actually SEE the chi moving. It was incredible!

What do YOU have to contribute to this publication? I look forward to finding out!

Noel Altman, Editor



Readers Respond

Thank you for the wonderful layout you did in the [January '03] *Vital Force* of my article. I was very surprised and happy to find a picture included and I am honored to contribute to such a great publication. This is my "15 minutes of fame" and I will treasure showing this to my family. You must spend a lot of time and love in putting *The Vital Force* together and you should be very proud of your work. It is wonderful to read insights from others in the TCC community. My best,

Siobhan Hutchinson
New Egypt, NJ

[Editor's Note: Thanks for the nice note, Siobhan! I'm glad you enjoyed the layout. Yes, yours might be the first where I was able to include a photo not submitted by the writer. Dan Pienclak sent so many good ones from your training in October that I had leftovers to use!

That needn't be your "15 minutes of fame" — feel free to write in as you continue your journey as an accredited *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher and discover new insights in teaching, in your practice, in your students' practices, and on any other topic related to *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*.

You have reached one plateau, but there are more ahead, and plenty more to write about! Thanks for contributing!

. . . I have been working on the soft legs since the last *VFJ*, and some days it seems to work better than others (whats new?). When I do concentrate on softening the leg as

I shift the weight on to it, it is almost like pulling a vacuum on that leg. When softening the leg and flowing from the center, it is just like the body is being pulled into that vacuum with no effort. Seems that [Ed's] article and Justin's article were both beneficial to me this time.

I really look forward each quarter to getting the *VFJ*. This time when it arrived, I was preparing the house and food to have 12 ladies for Brunch the next morning. But it did not matter; I stopped for a couple of hours and read thru the journal. It is almost like unwrapping the biggest present on the birthday table as a child. . . . Love and Blessings,

Nancy Adams
Stewartstown, PA

I wonder if a "What's New" could be added to help find updates. I noticed that the website was updated . . . It would make it easy to locate what is new without going to each part.

Ann Marie Wyrsh
St. Louis, MO
Student of Kathy Albers

[*VFJ* Webmaster Ted Fleishman responds: "The idea of a 'What's New Page' is a good idea and one I have been toying around with for awhile but I never just 'sat down and did it'. Thanks to the writer's suggestion, it is now a reality. Your interest is appreciated."

He notes that the listing of changes will NOT include "housekeeping updates" like "trademark grammar

updates, deletion of workshops after expirations, etc." but will be of "updates that are of interest to the public."]

To All My Friends at *Vital Force*,

Keep up the wonderful job you are doing. I love reading the informative and enjoyable articles —

Often I find pertinent material to use in my various classes.

Thank you and . . . much joy & prosperity in 2003.

Enclosed is a donation to support your fine efforts. Love,

Sue Nugent-Reed
W. Nyack, NY

At long last I have finished one small article I've been intending to write. [See page 8]. I hope we can have a permanent section in the *VFJ* for teaching tips. . . .

Sandy McAlister
Hayward, CA

[Editor's Note: I am reluctant to commit to any new "permanent" sections on just about anything, unless I get a teacher who commits to providing material for me EVERY quarter (either writing it up him or herself, or soliciting it and forwarding it on). This is how "The Lighter Side" got started, with the commitment of Teacher Sharon Sirkis. I am, of course, open to the topic, but I don't

continued on page 31



Zen and the *T'ai Chi Chih* form

By Justin Stone

The *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline is true Zen practice. You don't have to reconcile Divinity with Emptiness (Void) and don't have to struggle to find your Self; indeed, there is no place for struggle, self-doubt, and intellectual conjecture in *T'ai Chi Chih* practice. Just do the movements correctly, without effort, and let the

effect happen. The results are always surprising when put into words, but there is no need for words. One who does not regularly practise the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements can never know, thru another's description, what the blissful feeling is that comes from the circulation and balancing of the CHI. East Indian philosophy deals a good deal with the "Life Force," also called the "Vital Force" and, sometimes "Intrinsic Energy." When this Cosmic Energy flows thru one, Truth is experienced, not described. All the self-doubt and egoistic remembrances sell countless numbers of books, but they do not bring rest or contentment. I would say that

three-quarters of the letters I receive from *T'ai Chi Chih* students throughout the world contain the same simple sentence: "*T'ai Chi Chih* practice has changed my life." Often there is reference to the writer's experience of leaving a sick bed after two years to resume a painting career. Or, if the writer has worked hard and received accreditation as a *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher—after suitable training—he/she now knows how to relax into the flow of daily practice and the state of the "effort of no effort." Then there might be a description of how the teacher's students have done away with migraine headaches, greatly improved their osteoporosis, or found surcease from much suffering with Parkinsons. These, however, do not touch on the true benefits of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, the spiritual depth-plumbing that brings joy to all who practise the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline regularly and well.

The thanks offered to me for sharing the form is not taken personally. My years in the Orient and painstaking search merely point to the necessary training for carrying out my mission. Indian philosophers and great Yogis often refer to the creative force (energy-wisdom) that is Prana (CHI). Long hours of practice had

led to "Let it be," not to defining it. To arise at 5 A.M., sleepy and feeling drowsy, only to have that transferred into an energetic being thru 30 minutes of practice, is much like the feeling I experienced at Eiheji, Dogen's monastery, in the mountains of northern Japan at 3:30 in the morning. No need to think. If you truly want to experience Mushin (no mind), do the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements correctly, don't sit with legs crossed, experiencing physical and mental anguish; just move from the center (the T'an T'ien), and flow effortlessly. It's not hard, but it's complete.

In Zen practice, the Master may have had 1000 monks, and only

two or three of them experience satisfaction after years of effort. Zen says: "Just eat when hungry and sleep when tired." If so, why do Masters always exhort: "try harder, harder" (that is not the "effort of no effort")? You do not have to "try harder" to experience the bliss of the CHI flowing thru you, balanced in Yin and Yang. After practising the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements for several years, one will probably have the feeling that "no-one is doing anything; *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement is doing *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement." This means you have gotten yourself out of the way; there is only the flowing CHI. You have entered the Cosmic Rhythm. Softness is there; not far behind is what I have called "the Growth of Certainty." Is not this "Growth of Certainty" what one struggles for in Zen practice?

Just . . . let the effect happen. The results are always surprising when put into words, but there is no need for words. One who does not regularly practise the T'ai Chi Chih movements can never know, thru another's description, what the blissful feeling is that comes from the circulation and balancing of the CHI. . . . When this Cosmic Energy flows thru one, Truth is experienced, not described.



Learning Opportunities

By Ed Altman

I would like to respond to Chery Ann Hoffmeyer's thought-provoking article from the January 2003 issue of *The Vital Force*. I applaud her for wanting to provide students with more opportunities to be included within the community, and I think many teachers share that opinion. I also appreciate her willingness to make her vision known to all.

I believe that the *T'ai Chi Chih* community is very inclusive. Countless local events are offered throughout the community, which are open to students. These include open practices, local workshops, teacher preparation days and the celebration of Justin Stone's birthday during the annual Day of Joy Thru Movement. The Teachers' Conference also encourages local students to experience the joy of an open practice with hundreds of other sincere students and teachers.

The Vital Force Calendar of Events lists workshops and retreats where students can work side-by-side with accredited teachers to learn more about the movements and underlying philosophy of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline. The Sedona *T'ai Chi Chih* retreat is always well attended, and will be offered for the third straight year for students and teachers from all over the international community. This year we are also beginning to offer *T'ai Chi Chih* Intensive courses to provide an even greater opportunity for students to deepen their practice over several days in an environment that is similar to a Teacher Training course.

Between Sandy, Pam and I, we can offer as many courses as the *T'ai Chi Chih* teaching community wants to host. There is no organization and we have no ruling or authoritative body in the *T'ai Chi Chih* community making these decisions. The community belongs to us all, not one person at the top. Sometimes we reach out and encourage teachers to think about offering an event, but the decision as to the type of course offered is made by the local teacher(s) based on the needs of the region. When there is enough committed interest in an area to support an event, it gets scheduled. This is why there are sometimes gaps in the community schedule,

and why some events are listed as "Possible Future Events" in *The Vital Force*.

During the last several years we've been able to offer workshops in new areas of the community where there haven't been many accredited teachers. This is how newer communities get "on the map". Aside from offering inspiration and instruction to individuals, these courses have also been instrumental in building new communities and strengthening regional ties between teachers.

I have a suggestion for teachers who want to include their students in the greater *T'ai Chi Chih* community: bring in your copy of *The Vital Force* and share it with your students. Read inspiring articles in class and highlight the events in the calendar that are open to students. Make copies of the membership form available and let them know that students are encouraged to become members. No one really knows how many *T'ai Chi Chih* students there are in our community, but by even conservative estimates it is well into the 100,000's and may even be in the millions. Yet students currently account for less than 25% of membership in The Vital Force Association. Experience has shown that inspired students continue to be active in classes and make more progress in their practice, and this is something all teachers would like to see. As more students are inspired and encouraged to attend community events, more can be scheduled to meet this additional demand. We are at the service of the community.

I believe that our community is very inclusive but cannot afford to be strictly inclusive. Teachers need time away from students to focus on improving their own practice. This allows teachers to return to being good students and to receive additional instruction from sincere, qualified senior teachers. That is why no fees are charged to accredited teachers who audit all or part of a *T'ai Chi Chih* Teacher Training course. This is also the primary motive behind attending the annual Teachers' Conference, and was the impetus behind offering the Teacher renewals and retreats that allow teachers to become rejuvenated without feeling the need to provide instruction for students.



Forwarded to *The Vital Force*

Teacher has questions about the TCC movements for Ed Altman

[Editor's Note: Although the following exchange took place over a year ago between a TCC teacher and the Head of the TCC Community, the questions and answers are still valuable to hear today.]

. . . I've just read the new teachers' manual and am especially taken with the addition of the "comments on chih"— intuitive knowledge! That has been my experience but I've never seen anything in print about it...ahhhhh...

It occurs to me that another good addition to the manual might be the idea of giving students a map of where they will be going in the next eight weeks by demonstrating that eight of the 19 movements use the same front to back motion, one bent leg and one straight leg... and that six of the movements use the same side to side movement — again, one bent leg and one straight leg... (Six Healing Sounds actually uses both)... This one change in my teaching seems to have made it possible for students to make a quantum leap in their ability to learn the form... I introduce the idea almost immediately in the first lesson as part of my introductory lecture... It seems to help them relax — and relaxed students learn faster!

Working with the ideas given me in teachers' renewal and training, a question arises. I was left with the idea that there is not so much up and down movement in the taffies, but rather it's preferable to sink down and stay down all the way through? Now I "git down and stay down" in the last wrist circle and my step to the side in Wrist Circle Variation — and teach it that way... but if I try to stay down all the way through all the Taffies, the chi seems to resist and say uh uh, nope, no way! Plus I think students would have a problem keeping their knees bent so much for so long... So am I laboring here under a false impression — that isn't what you meant after all?

Also, when my weight shifts onto the back leg, I feel it move through the sole of my foot into the heel — yet I thought I heard you say that the weight rests on the whole foot... Experimenting with this I find that tucking my bottom a bit achieves more of a uniform pressure on the sole of

the foot rather than just the heel — and also improves my alignment... interesting! I used to tuck and somewhere along the line I let that go... Tucking gives me more stability... aha! The question remains, though — weight flowing into heel or maintaining it along the entire sole of foot?

I've made a list of the principles and want to run it by you — am I leaving anything out or putting anything in that wouldn't be considered a principle? 1) alignment 2) stance 3) weight shift (yinning and yanging) 4) scanning for tension 5) flowing softly with continuity 6) swimming through heavy air 7) effort of no effort 8) loose pelvis and soft knees 9) concentration in soles of the feet 10) top of body light, hollow...

Any feedback you give me will be greatly appreciated!

Love,

Beverly [McFarland]

Ed Altman responds to questions

Hi Beverly,

Here are my responses to some of your questions.

I understand your concerns about the up-and-down aspects of the Taffy moves. I too had difficulty when Justin admonished me for going up and down. It



felt constraining to “keep it down there” when the Chi wanted to rise at the conclusion of the weight shift. Here’s my perspective: The plane of the movement is side to side so any energy spent rising and sinking is not productive. Of course, trying to *restrict* the movement in a specific way can also waste energy so there is a balance to be found. Personally, I’ve found it extremely helpful to explore the role of tension in the legs during the weight shift. As the weight shift reaches an extreme, tension often builds up, and the natural way to release this is to extend the leg which causes the body to rise. Therefore, as I shift the weight I consciously relax the substantial leg to invite the complete weight shift in that direction. When I do this, I find that I naturally stay within the plane of the movement without fighting with the tension.

With respect to the *feeling* of the weight shift in the sole of the foot, I feel that there is a “sweet spot” midway between the heel and the ball of the foot. I use this as a target for the weight shift. When shifting forward I feel the weight drift gradually forward until it comes to that spot at which point

everything is in balance (at least in *my* practice.) When I shift the weight back I’m also paying attention to that spot on the back foot. What I’ve found is that the information from the substantial foot is invaluable in helping me with my alignment. If I find that the weight is more on the ball of the front foot, I’m almost certainly leaning forward during the weight shift. Similarly, if the weight is more toward the heel of the back foot it reflects a backward lean of the spine. As I recall, you had a tendency to lean backward during your weight shifts, and this would seem to be the case from your own experiences with the heel vs. the “whole foot.”

The two additional “principles” you might want to include are circularity and polarity. As I’ve continued to practice I’ve found these subtle areas have a much larger effect on the movements than I originally realized.

Best Wishes!

Ed [Altman]

Progress occurs in teacher’s form

. . . Speaking of which! And speaking of wow! Those tips you gave me have brought incredible results...I started out struggling with the idea of “gittin’ down and stayin’ down” — while doing the Taffies...I shared my process with my continuing students — and one of them, a belly dancer, said: Look, this is easy... you shift over to a bent leg and then bring your other bent leg over to meet it... oh! Ahhhhhhh... I got it! And my body loves it... a whole area of tension (that i didn’t even realize was there) removed from my

practice...I’m suddenly allowing those Taffies to happen in a new way...

And this one shift opened up the concept of allowing to a new level all through my practice... Subtleties are revealing themselves to me... Circles within circles have come to life so that I feel that circle in Variaton of Around the Platter just rolling around inside the outer circle... just one of many such “aha’s”!

I think my alignment is better

now, too, after your reminder to tuck my butt — (my rear, as the dalaï lama would say) — something I’d let go of somehow... Tucking brings my weight more fully onto each foot — and what a difference that makes!

My students have all been benefiting, too, from these ideas and putting them to good use. . . .

Love,

Beverly [McFarland]



TCC teacher trainer offers movement tip

By Sandy McAlister

When students are using their shoulders to turn with and not the waist area, in side to side movements, try this technique:

Begin with holding hands behind the back. Shift the weight, yinning and yanging, without any waist turn. When a full weight shift is happening, allow the waist to begin to turn, integrating it with the weight shift. Continue moving for a while with the hands still behind the back. Then let the hands hang at the sides, continuing to practice the weight shift, focusing on letting the waist turn with the weight shift. Then, with

minimum effort, let the hands (not arms) begin a movement pattern, slightly smaller than usual, maintaining the focus at the tan t'ien. Keep bringing the focus to the weight shift and waist turning and de-emphasize the hands. Gradually let the hands and arms resume the fullness of the movement. If the shoulders begin to creep back in, drop the hands to the sides again and go back to just weight shift and waist turning for a while.

By taking the arms out of it, the student has the opportunity to feel the yinning and yanging and waist turning do the movement and the hands are as if an afterthought.

Question for *The Vital Force*

Student requests help in finding a teacher to prepare her for TCC teacher training

I recently moved from ["City A"] where I was working with [an accredited teacher] to ["City B"]. There are four teachers listed . . . Do you have any suggestions as to which of these people might best help me to continue on my path to becoming certified? Thanks in advance.

Anne O'Mara

Hi Anne,

Good question. Hard for us to know. One is a longtime and dedicated teacher. I audited at the accreditation of two others in 1997 — both moved well. I don't know the last one.

Since 1997, I have seen the most experienced teacher at one (or maybe two teacher conferences). She may have attended another one or two events as well. One of the two whose training I audited did attend both teacher conferences and other TCC events very consistently for about three or four years following accreditation, and then stopped coming. Because I have seen that person move most recently, I would probably start there.

The teachers who attend community-wide TCC events on a regular basis (led by the originator of the form, the head of the community or either of the teacher trainers) tend to be the ones who make the more subtle breakthroughs in their personal practice, and reach a higher level of understanding. But, this is a generality, and is not true in every case. What is paramount is that there is an attitude of discovery when practicing the form, so that new insights can be seen. Being in the presence of one who moves more proficiently will tend to open up the awareness.

We do not have any up-to-date information on any of these folks. The three I knew the best were all sincere. And sincerity is also something you should be looking for.



You will have to make this decision for yourself. Perhaps you could meet with each of them to see how they move and who you feel will push you. In other words, you interview them. The standards have gone up since each of them was accredited, and it would be doing you no favor if they didn't really push you to excel. However, even though you are interviewing them in the beginning to make your choice for a primary teacher to work with, after that, the process of determining your course of preparation should be turned over to the teacher you have chosen (and who is willing to work with you). There is no one way to prepare a student, and each teacher has his/her methods that work.

Do keep in mind that the only way you'll go to a teacher accreditation course is if a teacher feels you are ready to go and is willing to refer you and this is not something that can be bought. It is not something that can be rushed to fit a certain timeline. It is not something that can be guaranteed if you take a teacher prep course. This is a science and also an art, and the teacher will "know" when it is the right time (and when it is not — although you may not see why). It is the teachers' word and reputation when they sign the referral form.

They will only do it if they feel sure you will pass the course.

After you work with the first teacher you choose, a second teacher has to be consulted and worked with to some degree [however much he/she feels is necessary] for a second signature of approval. That is new this year. Since you subscribe to *The Vital Force*, I'm sure you have read how the "deferral" process has been cancelled as of this calendar year. From now on, teacher candidates attend on a pass/fail basis — all the more reason to be sure of your preparation before you go.

I hope you have both of Justin Stone's videotapes (the 1994 and the 2000 versions, which are entirely different tapes), the text by Justin and the audiotape "Justin Stone Speaks on *T'ai Chi Chih*." In my opinion, all are essential in preparing for teacher accreditation. All can be ordered through any *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher or directly from Good Karma Publishing .

Best wishes on your journey!

– Noel Altman

Teacher has suggestion for students preparing for *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher training

[Last year] at a teacher's prep class for teacher candidates being conducted by Dan Pienciak, a discussion was being held on the source materials for teacher candidates.

Dan mentioned that there are three key background material sources for *T'ai Chi Chih* practice: Justin's video tape, Justin's book and Justin's audio tape.

Past experience has shown that most student candidates had the video tape and book but neglect the audio tape. I mentioned to Dan

that most people (both candidates and teachers) don't pay much attention to the audio tape and that is too bad. To me the audio tape was invaluable and helped me greatly in my week of teacher training.

The audio tape is like the language book for *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. It provided the translation for terms and concepts used by Ed Altman during my week of teacher training.

As an analogy, most people, when visiting a foreign country, buy a sim-

ple language book to understand the basics of the language of that country. This is exactly what the audio tape did for me as it provided the language of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*.

I would recommend that all teacher candidates (and even teachers who don't have a copy) invest in the audio tape and your experience in *T'ai Chi Chih* practice will be much deeper and rewarding!

– Ron Heck



Teacher suggests further training for teachers before preparing students

[Editor's Note: At my request, the following writer, TCC Teacher Donna McElhose, has updated an article (a letter to Ed Altman with suggestions for future change relating to the elimination of the deferral process) which she submitted last spring. It was not published prior to this due to accidental error on my part! My apologies to Donna and the rest of the TCC community for the delay, and my error.]

Dear Ed,

As Noel asked, I have gone back over the article I sent you last spring. The old article really isn't that relevant now because of the discussions that took place during and after [last year's teachers'] conference.

One point I would like to repeat from that article is to suggest a course for teachers on Preparing Students for Teacher Training, a course that could be video taped, so a "home study" course would be available for purchase by those teachers who could not attend in person. This video would only be sold to teachers. Included with the video would be written instructions, a list of points for reference and a section with questions to be answered by the teacher. The teachers who completed this course, either in person or at home, would be part of the solution of sending well-prepared students to teacher training.

Kim Grant's article, "Embrace or Abdicate?" in the October 2002 issue of the *Vital Force* touched on the idea of this type of course. The proposed course could be taught in a couple of different locations each year for those ready and able to take it. The video would ensure access to this advanced training for teachers who want it but are unable to attend the course. Eventually, teachers who take the course could become the ones to check the answers sent in by those who do the course at home—teachers helping teachers in training.

The proposed course would be a guide for teachers, the next step for us as we grow and are ready for deeper guidance.

When we complete the 40+ hours of the Teachers Training course, it may mean for most of us

that we are now ready to find a deeper understanding of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement, as our students take us to a new level. As we understand, grow and discover parts of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline that we did not know about before, we realize it is time to take a deeper look at how to be a teacher. We attend Teacher Training Courses, workshops and retreats, but find most of what is covered at those events is still more for the beginner. Not a great deal of depth can be provided there.

Then, someone finds us who loves TCC practice as much as we do, and we want to share our deepest understanding of the TCC discipline with that person. But wait; there is no help here. How can we guide someone else to a level of training that we have not had? Now is when we are ready to receive more guidance—we have shed our coats and know we are ready for more. Now we can be taught to teach those students who seek to become teachers.

Monique Beneteau, in her article "Canadian student weighs in with her view," also in the October 2002 *Vital Force*, expresses this idea beautifully. Please reread her article, as there are many great points, especially the four stages.

So, perhaps some focus should be on the present teachers who wish more training. I realize some teachers and students are in very special places and have all this training at their doorstep. Many of us do not. I am one who does not, and I am one who would like more training. I am ready for it and I am not abdicating any part of my responsibility to my students by saying that.

Take off your coat, explore new concepts, and expand your awareness.

I invite comments from the community on this idea of a course for teacher advancement, to enhance our Journey of Discovery.

– Donna McElhose



T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement: Moving into our Center of Stillness

By Sr. Rita Jean DuBrey

The *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline continues to deepen within me the meaning of "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46, vs. 11). In Greek, to know is to experience. *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, for me, is an experience of stillness, of presence, of letting go, of resting in the present moment.

The *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline is all about being in the present moment. My early morning practice of the *T'ai Chi Chih* form has helped me to deepen my experience of stillness and letting go in Centering Prayer. Both are praying without words.

The *T'ai Chi Chih* form was originated by Justin Stone, a former *T'ai Chi Ch'uan* instructor. Justin, who recently celebrated his [86th] birthday recognized the difficulty students experienced in learning the 108 movements of *T'ai Chi Ch'uan*, with many never returning to complete the course. The 19 movements of the *T'ai Chi Chih* form with one final pose are gentle, take little coordination and can be done by people of any age group. In fact, the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements can be learned from a book or videotape. Due to a congenital condition, one of my students practiced the movements, while sitting, during all of the sessions.

The *T'ai Chi Chih* practice is joy through movement! It is translated as "knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate." The movements and names of movements came intuitively to Justin Stone. The forms of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline are the same all over the world. The purpose of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice is to circulate and balance the Chi or the Vital Energy in the body. The flow of energy in our bodies can be interfered with by stress, grief, and physical/emotional/spiritual illness. *T'ai Chi Chih* practice promotes harmony, balance and a sense of well being with the effects being cumulative.

Justin Stone notes:

"The student must not think of *T'ai Chi Chih* as exercise. In truth, it is the best exercise I know,

since it exercises the internal organs and does not tire one but tends to increase energy. However, it is all-important that *T'ai Chi Chih* be done *softly* without effort—"The effort of no effort." (1)

In 1974, Justin Stone published his first book on the *T'ai Chi Chih* form with the first Teachers' Training Class begun in August, 1975. In August, 2001, my week of teacher training in New Jersey was a deeply spiritual experience. The presence of Ed Altman, Head of the TCC Community, with his gentleness, centeredness, sense of humor and humility helped to move me toward completion of the teacher-training course with accreditation to teach the *T'ai Chi Chih* form. My ministry as a Sr. of St. Joseph of Carondelet has been greatly enhanced and I am deeply grateful to Justin Stone, Ed Altman and to all who have helped me on this phase of my journey!

In addition to teaching at an active Senior Citizen Center, teaching St. Mary's Hospital Club's 60 members and offering several community presentations, I have experienced the joy of offering three eight week sessions in our Center for Complementary Therapies, with one [last] session scheduled [in] 2002. A total of 55 participants in the past two eight week sessions reflect the eagerness of people to take time for self-care. The practice of the *T'ai Chi Chih* form affords the opportunity to minister to oneself and to enjoy some of the beneficial effects of relaxation, serenity, increased energy, self-discovery and strengthening of muscles.

Evaluation questionnaires completed at the conclusion of eight-week sessions offered the following responses to the question: What was of most value to you in this program?

- * "Meditative movement"
- * "All of it has helped me to learn the art of relaxation."
- * "Getting in touch with myself"
- * "Helped with balance"
- * "Learning control with relaxation — it is possible for

continued on page 31



Creativity

By Carmen Brocklehurst

Many levels of creativity are available as the *T'ai Chi Chih* teaching unfolds within us. It is important to become acquainted with all of them. The more we do our practice, the more we learn about the very significant benefit of creativity.

How often do we hear someone say, "I would love to do 'X' but I just don't know how to go about it?" For practitioners of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline, the solution would be simple. First we would do our practice. Then, during practice or soon afterward, an idea would come about how to proceed. Or a person with the 'know how' would come along to help us accomplish 'X.' (Notice I didn't say they do it for us. That might happen, but the original premise was that we would love to do something.)

This sounds very simple to *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers; for many it's a daily occurrence. It just depends on how mindful we are of staying true to the principles and how committed we are to our practice. (Do we practice every day, not just on the days we feel like it, or have time?) Many times as a practitioner goes within, the outside physical manifestation of the movements seems to become less and less important. This, however, is far from the truth. The outward manifestation tells much about what is actually going on inside. This is why at Tuesday morning *T'ai Chi Chih* practice in Albuquerque Justin often reminds us to not do the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements carelessly.

Some students become very minimal in their movements. This minimalism speaks volumes about not being open to sharing what's inside. (It's also an indication of a split between the inside and the outside.) If we remember that *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement is about integrity and balance, then the flow between inner and outer takes on a new meaning. What we know inside flows outside, making the interior world accessible to our everyday life. This understanding takes our practice and daily actions out of the superstitious realm (not knowing how something happened) and into what Justin calls 'the growth of certainty.'

We are fortunate to have the gift of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement; it brings creativity to new levels in our lives. Are we ready and open to participating in this

continued on page 31

Follow Your Dream

By Holly Davis

When I moved to the Coachella Valley (Palm Springs, CA) [two] year[s] ago I had great plans to teach the *T'ai Chi Chih* form. A friend of mine linked me up with a country club and we offered a couple of successful classes. What I really wanted to do was to teach at Eisenhower Memorial Hospital as an alternate form of treatment/exercise. That same friend who got me into the country club suggested I talk to a fitness trainer who taught at both the club and the hospital. Not only was he receptive, but he got on the phone and called the hospital while I stood there. I had an appointment that same afternoon. Sounds too good? It gets better. We negotiated a teaching agenda and then I heard nothing. I sent an e-mail to Carl, my contact, and received one back saying he needed three things: 1) a copy of my certification, 2) a current CPR card, and 3) Workman's Comp insurance.

Excuse me? Workman's Comp insurance? I don't think so. Having owned a business in Chicago, I knew how expensive the insurance was, and to teach a couple of classes it wasn't worth it. What to do? Call Pam Towne when things look bleak! I knew Pam was teaching at a hospital and she was a great help. First she reminded me that one should follow the path of teaching that they are led to and not all things are meant to be. Then she shared a liability waiver that had worked for her. She advised me to follow Pranja and let it be.

I called Carl back and told him 1) my certificate was in storage (true, since I was not moved into the new house) 2) I didn't have a CPR card, and 3) What was this about Workman's comp insurance, how about a waiver instead. He said 1) no problem about the certificate, 2) the hospital will pay for you to get a CPR card, and 3) a waiver would be just fine. Go figure!

[One] year later and I [was] teaching four classes a week at the hospital, had been invited to participate in the 30 year anniversary health fair, and possibly start a class for Parkinson patients. Yes, the hospital has made me a Per Diem employee so I also get free labs and even a free turkey at Thanksgiving. I have a lot to be thankful for, but most importantly to Pam Towne for her inspiring words.

So if you have a dream about sharing the *T'ai Chi Chih* form with the world—Go for it!!!!



Personal growth continues for teacher

By Dale Buchanan

[Editor's Note: Dale wrote this article almost a year ago. It has now been six years since he was accredited to teach.]

*What
we need
is to not
need, and all things
will be just
as they
are!*

I wrote this pyramid poem two years ago, and now I am starting to understand it's meaning. For the first time in my life, I recently went into a situation with absolutely no expectations of the outcome. During the beginning of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Workshop/Retreat hosted by Deanne Hodgson in Sedona, AZ on April 18-21 [2002], I was asked what I needed from this weekend. I had nothing to say except that I felt I needed nothing, wanted nothing, and expected nothing while I was there. I also noted that I was completely open to receive whatever the weekend was to bring with an open heart.

WOW! Being so open to the universe to provide for me without expecting an actual result or getting in the way. This was new to me and in the past I might have been scared to give up so much control, however this time I was at peace and felt very grounded. In fact during special ceremony on Saturday, I was asked what peace meant to me. I knew my answer without a hesitation; it meant "having no expectations and no fear."

How on earth did I arrive at this wonderful place in my life? I'm not exactly sure, however I feel that two things have contributed to being in this moment. First, my regular TCC practice has been very powerful this past year. I can tell this because my instincts, intuition, and energy have been at an all time high. This weekend workshop marked the five-year anniversary of me getting my teacher accreditation (April 19, 1997) and it marks a very incredible journey on my spiritual path.

Second, a recent personal experience with one of my students forced me to examine the level of high expectations I place on my life, TCC students, family, and friends. At that very moment, as I was forced to look inside, I decided it was time to let go of that, along with my need to control people, situations, and events. I knew at that moment that my life would most likely never be the same again.

That weekend in Sedona was one of the best times I have ever had. Not because of the beautiful Arizona desert or wonderful instruction of Ed Altman, but because I was ready to begin a new journey ... probably the most important one so far. I am grateful to the TCC discipline for bringing me to this place. As I told people during the workshop, TCC practice has allowed me to travel all over the country while meeting the most wonderful people on earth. I know of nothing else that can bring me such powerful life changing energy and the ability to lead such a joyous life at the same time. As I finish this article, I sit with a huge smile on my face and a gentle tear falling down my cheek. As I recall five years ago, I almost skipped out on my teachers training the very last minute. I'm glad I stuck with it and made it this far. More than ever, I look forward to my 10-year anniversary in 2007.

*I am still, but not stationary
Not thinking, but alert
Like water without ripples I flow and conform
Until all of me glides in a circle
Floating on track with the earth
Never expanding, Never contracting. Yet never constant.
Continuously changing to compliment the circle.
Shifting in accordance to the forces of balance.
I am not confined by the current, I am connected.
I am not restricted to the motions, but instead find liberty.
I am passive and voluntary.
I am formless and versatile.
I am connected yet independent.
I have found joy.*

Tim Leigh
Student of Donna McElhose



Jan. 3-5, 2003

Teachers meet on East Coast to share ways to teach the TCC movements

By Sr. Meg Costello
Course Host

Snow was the weather prediction for the East. This did not stop the CHI from bringing together 22 Teachers. It was the first workshop for Teachers Learning How to Teach TCC Joy Thru Movement. Sandy McAlister and Sr. Meg greeted each one on Friday afternoon, January 3, 2003. It was just the beginning of a smooth flowing weekend of learning new techniques.

By 5:00 PM Friday, enough eager teachers had arrived to get started, so Sandy led us in a practice before dinner. The chatter in the dining room bounced with excitement. Unpacking and settling in followed a good hot meal. By 7:15 PM we gathered to share stories that expressed our ups and downs with teaching TCC Joy Thru Movement.

Sandy began the process with her "Oh Good! Oh No!" story that gave everyone a laugh. Sr. Mary Griffin shared that teaching deaf children the TCC form, one must also introduce the TCC movements to the interpreter. How to handle corrections was a topic that raised many stories. To keep it light, Siobhan related how her marketing efforts began with getting her certificate framed. Suzanne connected us with the animals in her neighborhood. She had noticed that the dolphins came in as she practiced. Deer and even the chipmunk observed her movements in quiet assurance

when she was practicing in the woods. We ended the evening on that quiet note to reassure us of a good night's sleep.

Saturday morning came quickly and we had early practice before breakfast. The air was chilly but a few took the time for a quick walk around some of the beautiful 43 acres of the Center. Gathering for our 9:30 AM session, we came prepared with the topics for discussion. Alignment, stance and weight shift were the BIG THREE. Sandy showed us "hands on" waist and lower back to FEEL the opening and closing. As we tried this out, April showed us her technique that got us all on our feet and into two straight lines. We each held the person next to us to feel the movement, feel the shifting.

"New Technique #1" was a lot of fun. On to Rocking Motion and to help the students with "swing" not forced but allowing the movement. Sister Antonia spoke of a more wholistic approach to look not only at the height of the heels but why are the heels too high? Why are the toes too high? As we continued to work with each movement, we began to feel connections — heel to heel, palm to palm, finger tip to finger tip.

Sometimes we see something not just right but are unable to put words to it so Sandy showed us how she began to stand next to the student and try to do the movement as the student was doing it. This was giving Sandy the feel of what was

out of sorts. "Now I can put words to what I see," said Sandy. We continued to share our struggles and feelings with each movement until it was time for lunch.

The afternoon began at 1:45 PM with a discussion of Continuing Classes and side by side movements. We shared so many stories of how to, what works, what does not work within the various kinds of groups. Intermediate classes entered the topic list. Some teachers were using small cards with phrases that encouraged students to share the principles of TCC practice. These quotes may come from Justin's books, articles from the *Vital Force* and other materials the teachers may be using. In all this sharing, many of the teachers expressed that as they taught, their own movements deepened.

Valerie found herself in the park every Sunday morning for an open door practice and it was her way of sharing the peace and comfort of nature along with her TCC practice. By 4:00 PM we needed a break and decided to tour the larger mansion on the grounds. It was an experience shared by all. Returning to our House, we did a practice before dinner. The 7:15 PM gathering gave us the opportunity to discuss Practice Partners and other stories that encouraged each of us to continue to learn — to try and use whatever works. Sister Antonia did a closing meditation and light service as night came upon us.



Sunday morning found us again at early practice, breakfast and gathering. The routine was easy, full and never without learning. As we continued sharing, Joyous Breath took hold of our feelings — not in the shoulders, not in the arms, but in the feet with some tension in the palms; relax with the tension. Reviewing Passing Clouds caught a few learning that the arms move with the waist. The connecting in the Six Healing Sounds as one flowing movement rather than a harsh, pushing, bouncing aspiration was a good discussion. Coming to the end, Sandy invited us to do Rocking Motion with gratitude for the gift of the weekend. It drew us into a tight circle for a large hug. It is not the end, but the beginning of Teachers learning how to teach TCC Joy Thru Movement.

Here are a few words from Suzanne Herbers: "The Teachers Workshop was a gift to a newly accredited teacher. The years of wisdom and experience in a warm supportive environment was wonderful."

Carolyn Allenby wrote "Thank you Sr. Meg, Sandy and all the participants in this very special weekend. We learn so much about TCC practice by teaching. It was wonderful to hear and share wisdom, experience, techniques, challenging and inspirational moments."

Debbie Cole wrote: "Thanks again for making such a beautiful space possible. Everything flowed so well. I wanted to share the "peom" that was written at the workshop which was inspired by the comments from Mary Griffin and her quest to better understand Joyous Breath, Siobhan Hutchinson and how we share HEART, as well as the overall feeling from the other teachers."

More Attendee Response:

... Just returned from a wonderful weekend hosted by Sr. Meg at the Dominican Retreat House in Philadelphia. Sandy did an excellent job in all that was presented. I was especially grateful for a breakthrough after she demonstrated Pulling Taffy in allowing the waist opening to bring the left hand under the elbow which enabled the movement to flow with no effort. Not that I hadn't been doing that, but this insight helped me "feel it" as never before...Then in this morning's practice, I felt the very same opening during Passing Clouds with the lower hand being brought over to the side by the open waist. Feeling it makes all the difference in the world.

I also realized that in helping to prepare students for accreditation, that every correction is 'wholistic'...it is never a matter of trying to "fix" one part...it always stems from the whole. I can remember working with Neal Giacomelli in trying to get him to keep his back heel lower, and I reminded him about it...he worked on that heel...I even started saying: "Neal — Heel!" I was driving both of us crazy. This weekend it finally dawned on me, the heel is only one part of the whole. The heel was the symptom, but the source of the problem was in his hip. I know [Ed has] talked about this numerous times...but I finally got it! — another breakthrough! This is another example of how a student will only "get it" when s/he is ready.

It was good for Sandy to be with the 22 teachers just to get to know us and have a feel for the East Coast Teachers prior to the Accreditation in November. Everyone who attended got a lot out of these hours. The group was enthusiastic, as in all TCC teacher gatherings. . .

— Sr. Antonia Cooper

During this event, I found answers to many questions regarding teaching and renewed my love of teaching the Tai Chi Chih form! We analyzed movements and how to convey them to students, shared stories, and experienced the power and fun of community. Sandy put no limits on sharing her knowledge, enthusiasm, and love of teaching.

Last, but not least, we allowed ourselves to be pampered by Sister Meg's caring hospitality, ate good food, and enjoyed each other's company, surrounded by the beauty and comfort of the Dominican Retreat House.

— Viktoria Vercelletto

*transforming movements,
movements transforming
teachers caring and sharing
our common heart
our souls combining,
individuals refining
this practice that
we hold dear
our way to experience
the real, the ultimate
peace in every step.*

- Debbie Cole



Feb. 21-23, 2003

TCC retreat draws 40 in Victoria, BC

By Lynn Shaw-Ringham
Course Co-Host

Forty eager and enthusiastic participants, teachers and students alike, gathered recently in Victoria, the garden city of British Columbia, to celebrate a *T'ai Chi Chih* weekend with Ed Altman. The setting was Queenswood Retreat Centre, a wooded haven within the limits of this fair city. Canadians, averaging about 1/2 our numbers, gathered from Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Our American friends travelled from Illinois, North Dakota, Oregon, Washington and Ed, from Kauai, Hawaii. Laughter and light-hearted fun mixed well with serious practice and spiritual contemplation.

Ed focused on the importance of sensing our weight shift in the soles of the feet. He encouraged us to flow from our centre with softness, ease and continuous awareness. He invited all of us to deepen our practices by exploring our physical alignment, working with the ever changing rhythm of our Chi, and welcoming our internal signs that indicate personal need for re-balancing.

With Japanese plum trees in bloom and daffodils about to burst their heads, this was definitely a



T'ai Chi Chih students and teachers practice yinping and yangping as Course Instructor Ed Altman (at far left, top, of photo) gives one-on-one attention to an attendee.

Photo provided by Guadalupe Buchwald and Lynn Shaw-Ringham

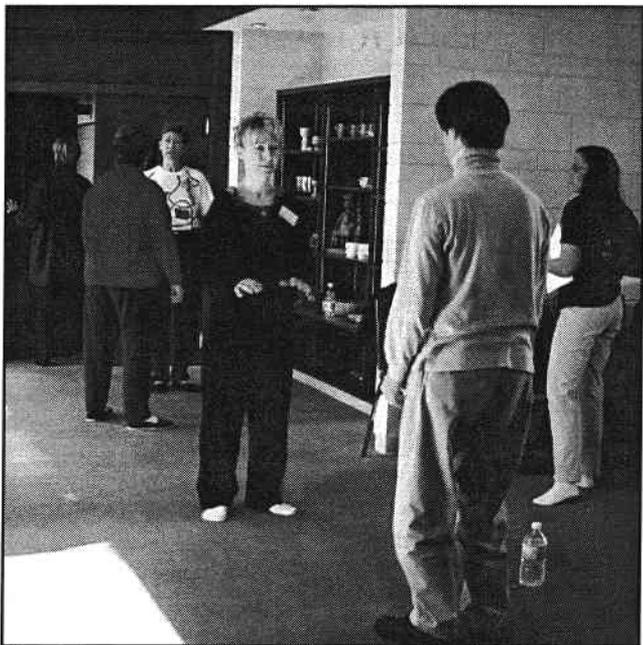
cross-border celebration of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice in a natural, early spring setting. It was, truly, a "west-coast event"! We wish to extend our heart-felt thanks to Jean Katus for her Good Karma representation, Chery Ann Hoffmeyer for her up-date of the 2003 TCC Conference in Banff, to Ed, for his continuous dedication to our growth and development and to Justin Stone for his gift of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement.

Practice, Refinement and Joy

As always Ed did a magnificent job in this Retreat! He continues to demonstrate his dedication to TCC Joy Thru Movement and its purity and integrity in his practice. His respect for the form is passed to teachers and students, while encouraging us to improve and purify our own form.

Justin gave us TCC practice as a tool for transformation; Ed is modelling this teaching with great impeccability. He never tells us what to do, but shares what he does in his practice. There is a consistent theme of how to "walk our talk" and integrate TCC principles into our daily lives. In this retreat, I often heard him saying "Let's not talk about the philosophy of TCC [practice], let's practice and in that way, let's incorporate the principles of TCC [practice], such as: joy, softness, continuity, fluidity of movement, proper shift of the weight, balance of tension and release, how TCC practice is done with the legs not with unnecessary arm movements, listening to your body, stillness, silence and.....Joy, Joy Thru Movement!" and Joy it was!

With my deepest gratitude to Justin, the originator of this Form,



Course Instructor Ed Altman (foreground, back facing) works on grounding with Ruth Isley, student of Margo Carpenter.
Photo provided by Guadalupe Buchwald and Lynn Shaw-Ringham

continuity, holding and releasing tension and allowing the Chi to direct not only my practise but also every other aspect of life. Thank you Ed for your gentle persistence, for modelling how to teach, for inviting us to explore our own bodies and directing our attention inward and ever deeper. Thankfully,

Sr. Viola Bens
Christopher Lake, SK
CANADA

knew they had caught the TCC bug. So much Joy and happiness. What a privilege to share it with others. All I can say is "Thank you Justin for giving us a new way of looking at and living life." And another thanks to you and Lynn for making it possible, Guadalupe.

Donna Aldous
Meadow Lake, SK CANADA

I found the workshop so helpful and enjoyable. The setting was delightful, peaceful and warm. Even though I've been doing TCC practice for almost 10 years and teaching it for nearly eight years, I discovered that I have much more to learn, and Ed's teaching was very clear and insightful. It was truly a weekend of "Joy Thru Movement" in a community of kindred spirits.

Karen Williamson
Sequim, WA

[Editor's Note: Responses from attendees continue on page 20.]

Ed the impeccable guardian of the Form and community builder, and to the TCC teachers and students practicing and supporting TCC Joy Thru Movement. My gratitude also goes to Lynn Shaw-Ringham for sharing in the organization of this Retreat.

Guadalupe Buchwald
Course Co-Host
Victoria, BC CANADA

Thanks!
I could hardly wait to get back to my classes to pass on the enthusiasm I brought back from Ed and fellow retreat partisans. A few people wondered how we could do TCC practice for over two and a half days. We told them how quickly time flew. Two of my students who attended were so animated at this week's class that you

Attendee Feedback

This was my first experience of a TCC Retreat and I know it won't be my last. Thanks to Lynn and Guadalupe's planning and organization we had the opportunity to give our full attention to learning and the inward journey. I am leaving here with new insights on softness and



Most of the attending TCC teachers and students sit for a group picture during the retreat weekend.
Photo provided by Guadalupe Buchwald and Lynn Shaw-Ringham



Calendar of Events

<p>May 2 thru 6, 2003</p> <p>TCC INTENSIVE w / PAM TOWNE</p> <p>Location: Ringwood, NJ Contact: Dan Pienciak P.O. Box 122 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756 Phone: (732) 988-5865 e-mail: wakeupdaniel@aol.com</p> <p>Student/Teacher Attendance Fee: \$200</p> <p><i>(Arrive on Friday evening, May 2. Course starts Saturday morning, May 3.)</i></p>	<p>June 28, 2003</p> <p>TCC WORKSHOP (8:30am - 5pm) w / SANDY McALISTER</p> <p>Location: Sitka, AK Contact: Nancy Jo Bleier 702 Biorka St. Sitka, AK 99835 Phone: (907) 747-5039 e-mail: tfnjb@hotmail.com</p> <p>Attendance Fee: \$45</p>									
<p>May 28 thru 31, 2003</p> <p>TCC INTENSIVE w / PAM TOWNE</p> <p>Location: Gurnee, IL (Chicago Area) Contact: Donna McElhose 18160 Twin Lakes Blvd. Wildwood, IL 60030 Phone: (847) 223-6065 e-mail: Dmcelhosechi@aol.com</p> <p>Student/Teacher Attendance Fee: \$200</p>	<p>Aug. 29 thru Sept. 1, 2003</p> <p>18TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHI' TEACHERS' CONFERENCE</p> <p>Location: Banff, Alberta, CANADA Contact: Chery Ann Hoffmeyer P.O. Box 57032 2020 Sherwood Drive Sherwood Park, Alberta CANADA, T8A5L7 Phone: (780) 467-8701 e-mail: chaiholichealth@shaw.ca</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Before 5/31/03</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>After 5/31/03</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resident fee:</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$535 CAN.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$560 CAN.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commuter fee:</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$335 CAN.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$360 CAN.</td> </tr> </table>		<u>Before 5/31/03</u>	<u>After 5/31/03</u>	Resident fee:	\$535 CAN.	\$560 CAN.	Commuter fee:	\$335 CAN.	\$360 CAN.
	<u>Before 5/31/03</u>	<u>After 5/31/03</u>								
Resident fee:	\$535 CAN.	\$560 CAN.								
Commuter fee:	\$335 CAN.	\$360 CAN.								
<p>June 12 thru 15, 2003</p> <p>TCC RETREAT w / ED ALTMAN</p> <p>Location: Kauai, HI Contact: Noel Altman P.O. Box 1420 Kapaa, HI 96746 Phone: (808) 822-9288 e mail: joythrumovementkauai@earthlink.net</p> <p>Student/Teacher Reg. and Payment: \$300 Non-U.S. Student/Teacher fee: \$250</p>	<p>Sept. 8 thru 13, 2003</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING w / ED ALTMAN</p> <p>Location: Gurnee, IL (Chicago Area) Contact: 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, 2003)</i></p>									



Nov. 15, 2003 **TCC TEACHER RENEWAL** (9am - 4pm)
w / ED ALTMAN
Location: Albuquerque, NM
Contact: 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

Attendance Fee: \$40

Nov. 17 thru 22, 2003 **TCC TEACHER TRAINING**
w / ED ALTMAN
Location: Albuquerque, NM
Contact: 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

TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450

Nov. 18 thru 23, 2003 **TCC TEACHER TRAINING**
w / SANDY McALISTER
Location: Ringwood, NJ
Contact: Dan Pienciak
P.O. Box 122
Ocean Grove, NJ 07756
Phone: (732) 988-5865
e-mail: wakeupdaniel@aol.com

TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450

Nov. 20, 2003 **DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT"**
CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH PRACTICE
Location: Worldwide

(Teacher Aida Wilks initiated this annual celebration which falls on Justin Stone's birthday, Nov. 20)

POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS:

If interested in a potential event described below, contact the host.

Jan./Feb. 2004 **SEJAKU TEACHER TRAINING**
Location: Bay Area, CA
Contact: Athene Mantle: (510) 886-3829
e-mail: chigoddess@hotmail.com

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



Event feedback

Older student praises TCC practice with increasing her stamina to attend retreat

By Maxine Flaherty
Student of Laurie Thomas

I was so pleased to be able to attend the recent *T'ai Chi Chih* Retreat in Victoria, BC, Canada. I was widowed in November of 2000 after 62 years of marriage. I was living in our 5th wheel in an RV Park in Rockport, WA at the time. I spent the Winter taking long walks and sitting working on my pine needle baskets. When Laurie Thomas started her *T'ai Chi Chih* classes in the Spring of 2001, Ingaborg Hightower and Maria Wilson who lived nearby asked me to come too. I did and it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

When we started I had trouble keeping up with the group. I had to sit down and rest during the classes. After a few weeks, I found it easier to keep up. I had scoliosis as a child so I have a very crooked spine. I have osteoporosis as well. I travel by myself, driving about 1,000 miles to visit friends and relatives in British Columbia. I usually stop every hour or so. I've found "Rocking Motion," "Daughter on the Mountaintop," "Daughter in the Valley" and "Working the Pulley" are great for removing the tension in my shoulders and body.

When I heard about the Retreat in Victoria, I knew I had to attend. I couldn't make it to the one in Sedona last year due to a prior commitment. I was afraid it would be too much for me to keep up with the younger women. This trip to Victoria proved my health is greatly improved by my two years of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice. I had no trouble with any of the travel, the stairs on the ferry or at the Retreat. I even attended the 7:00 AM practice both days. Sunday was challenging. I was tired at the end of the day but after a night's rest, I was up and ready to do *T'ai Chi Chih* practice the next morning at 7:00.

My thanks to Ed and everyone who worked so hard to make the Retreat a success. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I hope I can attend more in the future.

Newly-accredited teacher refines her TCC form

Between the February sunshine streaming through the windows, and the Chi being generated by the teachers and students, the conference room at the retreat heated beyond the comfort zone many times over the weekend. Doors and windows were opened to the cooler air. Victoria this time of year is rich with the energy of approaching spring. Daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops, camellias, rhododendrons, forsythia and plum trees are all in full bloom.

The retreat was very special for me for several reasons: It was my first retreat as an accredited *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher; it was an opportunity to reconnect with several of my accreditation classmates of last September in Edmonton; and the retreat was in British Columbia, my home province. For the past two months I have been spending part of each *T'ai Chi Chih* practice on balance and weight shift. In a delightful bit of synchronicity, that was the topic Ed had chosen to study with us for the weekend. I reached a new level of awareness during the retreat by having some of the things I had discovered affirmed, and by moving to a deeper focus and understanding of other points.

As always, Ed brought to us many insights, and much wisdom from Justin Stone. I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting Justin face to face, but listening to Ed speak of him with such respect and admiration is the next best thing.

Many thanks to Guadalupe Buchwald and Lynn Shaw-Ringham for their thorough work arranging this teacher's retreat, to Ed for sharing what he has learned from, and about, *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, and to Justin Stone for developing and sharing *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement with us all. May the Chi be with you.

- Anna Moncey



Experiencing the Power of Teh

By Chery Ann Hoffmeyer

Thanks to the organization and planning of Guadalupe Buchwald and Lynn Shaw-Ringham, 43 *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers and students from Canada and the United States had the wonderful opportunity to flow together with softness and continuity. What impressed me was the power of teh that permeated the weekend. The inner sincerity of Ed Altman, the head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community, was reflected as he shared with the group key principles of this transforming, moving meditation and also shared the challenges he has faced and challenges he is addressing in his own practice. Ed's humbleness and sincerity set the tone for the weekend. In response to Ed's lead, the group was focused and open, focused on the improvement of one's individual practice and open to feedback regarding how this practice could be improved. The sense of moving as a community was evident, a community with inner sincerity (teh) and dedication to one's practice.

Justin Stone (1992) in his presentation on pranja stated that "one has to be ready to be taught at a level where he or she can absorb what you're teaching...there must be a proper attitude" (p.4). An attitude of sincere receptivity permeated the weekend retreat. Experiences and challenges were shared by students and teachers alike as we moved in to the flow of the "Cosmic Rhythm" (Stone, 1995, p.51), a rhythm that was entered into and passed on through each participant in the group.

I was touched by the sincerity that I personally felt and that was expressed by the members of the group. I felt the inner sincerity as we were encouraged to listen to the messages our bodies were giving us, as we were encouraged to pay attention to the soles of the feet and, to feel and sense the messages that were being broadcast through our bodies about the shifting of the weight. I experienced and understood what Justin Stone meant when he said that "the cup has to be empty" (1992, p.5) for one to receive. During this retreat I felt my cup as empty and receptive, and, I and many others, have come away feeling filled. I feel blessed to have been part of this experience and want to thank Ed for his dedicated work in continuing to transmit the purity of the form of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* and for the sincerity with which he carries out his role as head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community. Ed serves as an excellent role model for the power of teh. I also want to thank Justin Stone for the wonderful gift he has given each of us, a gift that brought us together this weekend with the inner sincerity to learn and practice this form in the best way that it can be practiced.

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Don't Forget the Joy

By Mereline Griffith and
Ruth Isley
Students of Margo Carpenter

As newcomers to the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community, and having just returned from the TCC Queenswood Retreat on beautiful Vancouver Island, we would like to briefly share our impressions of this very special weekend.

First of all; Just leaving winter be-

hind for a few days was a rare treat. A quick one day visit to Salt Spring Island was an adventure and the Retreat was an inspiring experience which went by much too quickly. This being our first TCC Retreat we can not compare, however it was our feeling that the serenity of the Queenswood Retreat Centre definitely created the right atmosphere for the gentle practice of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. The natural beauty of the grounds was a special bonus which we enjoyed to the fullest.

A special thank you to Ed Altman for his extraordinary gift of teaching and for sharing his knowledge of TCC practice with us. We now include "a sense of listening in our practice," we will remember, "soft legs and no tension" and we will not forget, "The Joy" of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice.

Thank you so much to Guadalupe and Lynn. We did survive landing in Edmonton to a cool -32 degrees which went down to -38 degrees on the three hour drive home!!!



Feb. 28- Mar. 2, 2003

“Joy Among the Redwoods” is the theme of TCC Teachers’ Retreat in CA

By Athene Mantle
Course Co-Host

The Bay Area *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher's retreat was a great success. We headed into the Santa Cruz Mountains leaving the city and our daily cares behind. Our anticipation of a joyful and replenishing weekend grew as we wound our way through the redwoods and finally entered the Sequoia Seminar grounds. We found ourselves surrounded by majestic redwood trees and we could feel the magic of this very special place begin our transformation right away.

Our little three person cabins seemed to sprout right out of the forest floor and promised us a peaceful sleep for the next two nights. We gathered in Las Alas Lodge for our first practice on Friday afternoon. It was easy to match the feeling of tranquility in this moving space as we stood in front of the huge stone fireplace and gazed at the sweeping view of the forest through floor to ceiling windows. Some enthusiastic teachers brought in prayer flags, statues, Tibetan bowls, books, Zen cards, candles, pictures, pillows and blankets to further soothe the soul and claim this little part of the world as ours for the weekend. Even one of Justin Stone's paintings graced our walls. Now all that was needed was the deep and cohesive *T'ai Chi Chih* practice that followed and we were off on our inner adventure.



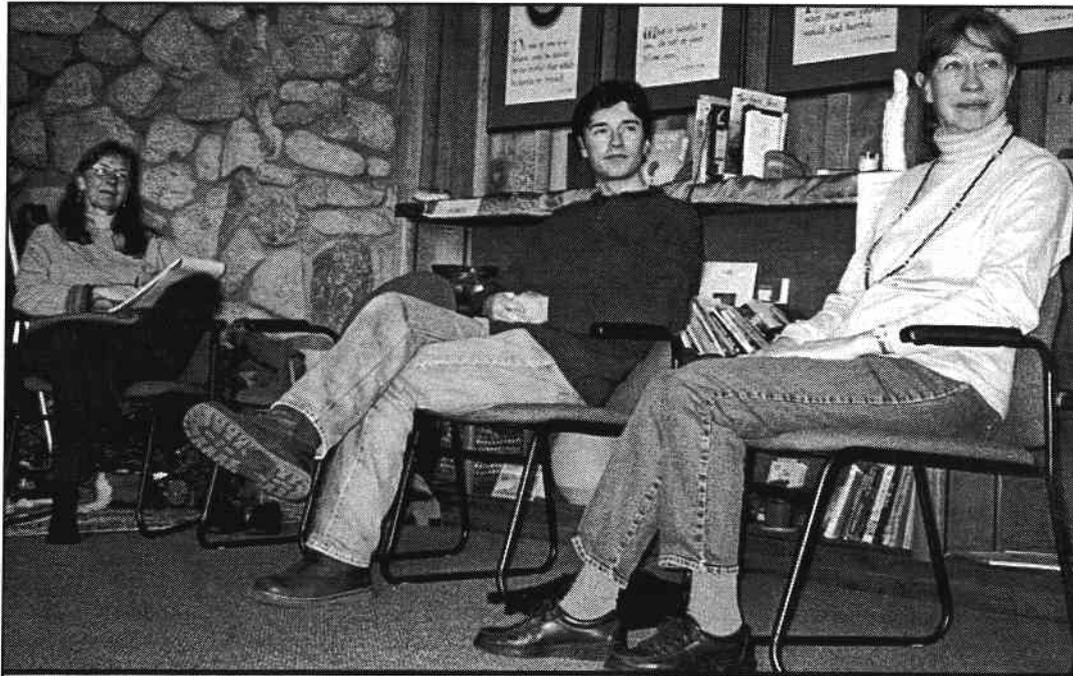
Attending TCC teachers practice in a clearing beside a redwood grove at the Bay Area Teachers' Retreat.

Photo provided by Athene Mantle

We shared this “all teachers” retreat with 31 of our fellow teachers from Northern and Southern California, Oregon, Arizona, of course Hawaii, and even Pennsylvania. Nancy Adams commented on how worthwhile it was for her to travel from the East Coast to the retreat not only for the information she received but also for meeting and becoming connected with teachers in another teaching community. It was our good fortune to have all three of our teacher trainers there with Ed Altman leading us and Sandy McAllister (also a Co-Host) and Pam Towne volunteering their assistance.

There was a gentle flow to the weekend as we exchanged teaching tips and experiences and some of our favorite quotes. We spent a lot of time on movements and made many refinements to our practices. Ed

helped us in developing a critical eye, answering our desire to improve our teaching skills. He showed us ways in which we and our students might further explore our practices. We did the *Jing*, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed learning “Joy Joy Healing through Joy”. It was made clear that the Movement Review Checklist is not intended for distribution to or the teaching of general students. Sandy discussed and demonstrated the use of the checklist as a tool for teachers to evaluate their teacher candidates in preparation for teacher training. When asked for a show of hands of those who thought the Movement Review Checklist was of value to them, nearly all of the teachers raised their hands. Pam spoke to Justin's concern that *how* we move is the most important part of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice with an emphasis on properly yinping and



Course Instructor Ed Altman (center) led the retreat with assistance from Teacher Trainers Sandy McAlister (left) and Pam Towne.

Photo provided by Athene Mantle

yanning, flowing from the center, and moving with softness. Justin's presence was acknowledged and felt by all as we knew he was the reason we were all here together.

We accomplished much but as Judith Schwartz put it, "Softness has been the keyword for this inspiring, deepening, expansive weekend." Ed led us through the movements, helping us to feel and understand greater levels of the flow of qi [chi]. He guided us into opening the pathways and making room for a freer flow of qi. He helped us find and let go of tension so that we could accommodate and feel the support of the qi. As the weekend progressed, it was apparent that we were learning this lesson as we moved to ever-greater levels of softness and letting go.

Sandy McAlister said, "The weekend retreat was such a lovely time of being with wonderful people who care about our T'ai Chi Chih practice. It was heartening to hear teachers comment that through Ed's guidance they were able to sense places of tension in

their bodies that they hadn't realized were there. And through awareness, they were able to let go of the tension, allowing the body and T'ai Chi Chih movement to flow in a way they had never experienced before. Ed's approach to finding tension and releasing it gives me another tool to use as a teacher to help my students, enabling them to flow effortlessly."

Commenting on the weekend, Bev Geiger said, "I'm surprised and grateful to find new softness and comfort in the legs and to feel it throughout the body." Pam Towne said, "A new level of softness became available in my practice!" And echoing most of our feelings, Elizabeth Tyler said, "I am leaving with a softer and more powerful practice."

Among the favorite quotations shared was one written by Hafiz:

*After all these years
The sun never tells the Earth
You owe me.
Imagine what a love like that can do.
It lights the whole sky.*

This sentiment seemed to be reflected in the light shining from the faces of the 31 dedicated and joyous participants in the room.

We gathered together in a clearing among the redwoods for our final practice. We encircled a large medicine wheel. A giant lone redwood stood towering over us within the clearing. It stood just to our side, almost a part of our circle. As we began to move we were engulfed by the silence and stillness. The vast rootedness of the forest surrounded us and drew us deep into the earth. The intense flow of qi from the gentle giants promised to sup-

port us. We had only to let go. As we sank further and further into our practice, a profound experience was available to us. As we let go, we were deeply connected at the soles of the feet and above we were floating effortlessly through the movements. We were filled with joy and gratitude.

[Editor's Note: Responses from attendees continue on page 26.]



(L-R): Course Co-Hosts Athene Mantle and Sandy McAlister ham it up on a break with attending ICC Teacher Roberta Taggart.

Photo provided by Athene Mantle



Mar. 20-23, 2003

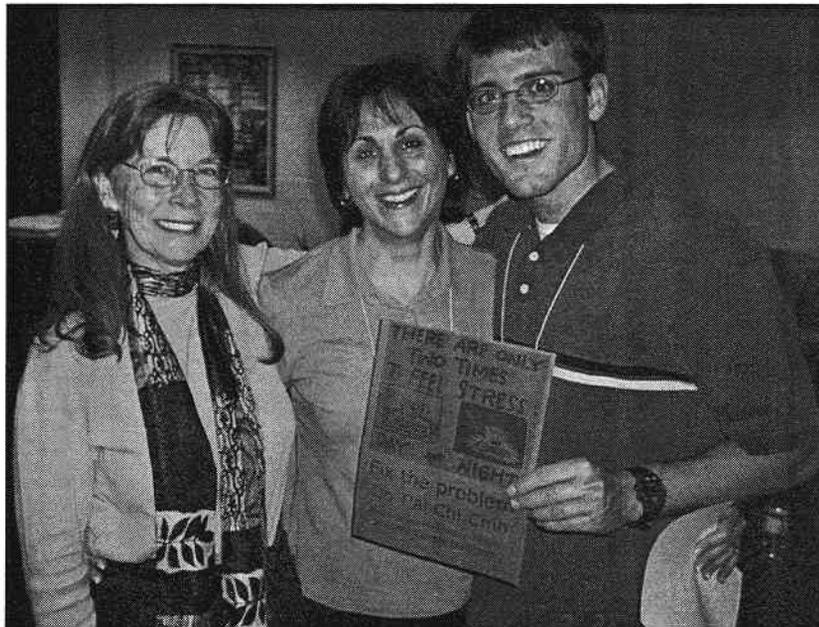
Minnesota teachers host TCC teachers' retreat for second year in a row

By Nancy Werner-Azarski

The retreat was held at the Benedictine Center, all day Friday and Saturday, ending after lunch on Sunday. Twenty teachers attended the weekend which was led by Sandy McAlister. Sandy encouraged the group to go deeper into their *T'ai Chi Chih* practice and to break away from incorrect habit patterns.

Judy George was the host for the event. We began each day with a practice before breakfast. When we came together again, Judy started our day out with an inspirational reading and a phrase for us to focus on throughout the day. During the retreat, we worked on our individual form, trying to include three complete practices a day. On Friday evening we held our quarterly meeting discussing the goals we wanted to accomplish for our local teachers and students. On Saturday evening, Judy hosted a time for telling our stories about our *T'ai Chi Chih* practice and then she led a re-dedication ceremony that she developed.

Sandy reviewed each *T'ai Chi Chih* move by the end of the retreat. Her emphasis was to review the practice below the waist—softening the legs, shifting the weight completely and being aware of the opening and closing up and down the legs that accompanies the weight shift. She also presented



(L-R): Course Instructor Sandy McAlister, Course Host Judy George and TCC Teacher Ned Branigan share a laugh over a flyer he designed for classes he holds on a college campus. It reads: "There are only two times I feel stress: Day... and Night...Fix the problem / Do T'ai Chi Chih [practice]"

Photo provided by Nancy Werner-Azarski.

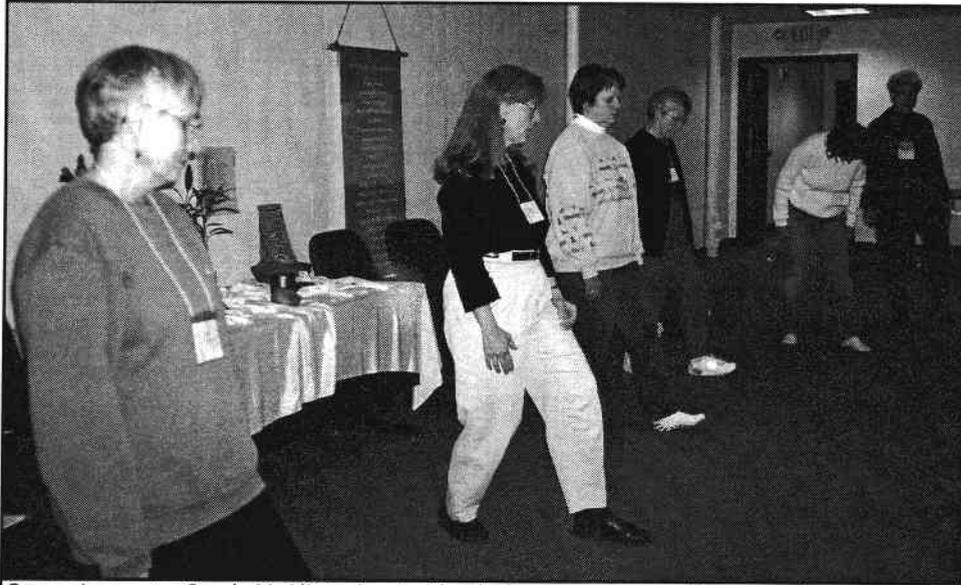
how to teach most of the moves, emphasizing how to teach beginner and advanced students and how to encourage both levels of students to practice. We looked at each move; Sandy would answer questions from the group and then give tips on how to teach that move. Many teachers present shared their tips on teaching and how they overcame various obstacles in their classes. Sister Rita Foster told the group that she had [initially] taken a T.C.C. class and did not practice it. Five years later she again took a T.C.C. class and this time knew she needed to be a teacher. Rita encouraged everyone to "plant seeds" in their classes and to know that one might not even see the results. Donna McElhose shared

and answer session. The students shared stories about their practice and then we did a practice with them. One of Laurie Jacobi's students told us how much her practice had helped her through some difficult times. Several students said they wanted to become teachers.

The weekend was filled with lots of learning and lots of humor. But the highlight came for the group on Sunday as we were closing—a great joy. Sandy made the announcement that a formerly deferred candidate [in attendance at the retreat] was no longer deferred but now a teacher. That person's teacher was there, along with many of the teachers who had been present at her teacher's training—it was pure joy

how she teaches beginner students the back and forth step. She had the students walk around in a circle and by slowing down the pace, got their focus into their feet. We tried it and it works.

On Saturday afternoon, we had 17 students join us for two and a half hours. Sandy led a question



Course Instructor Sandy McAlister (center) leads the group in practicing stepping out.

Photo provided by Nancy Werner-Azarski

for the group to celebrate her accomplishment.

Many of us left the retreat with new insights and are excited about incorporating them into our T.C.C. practice. In one of our discussions, we talked about how T.C.C. practice was a process—we are always learning more and the form, the chi, encourages us to go deeper. At the end of the retreat we were excited to get to the International Conference—we wanted more *T'ai Chi Chih* practice!

movements and doing them correctly, but was more about the inward journey we take when the movements are done *clearly* (intent) and *fully* (with feeling, flowing, and letting go).

Moving with clarity of purpose, doing the movements the way they were designed, without ego or desire of outcome, allows the mind to be present and open. Doing *T'ai Chi Chih* movements fully, by letting

go, allows the movements to flow without effort and we can feel the integration of all aspects of this practice—the stillness in moving, the firm supporting the soft, the lightness yet grounded.

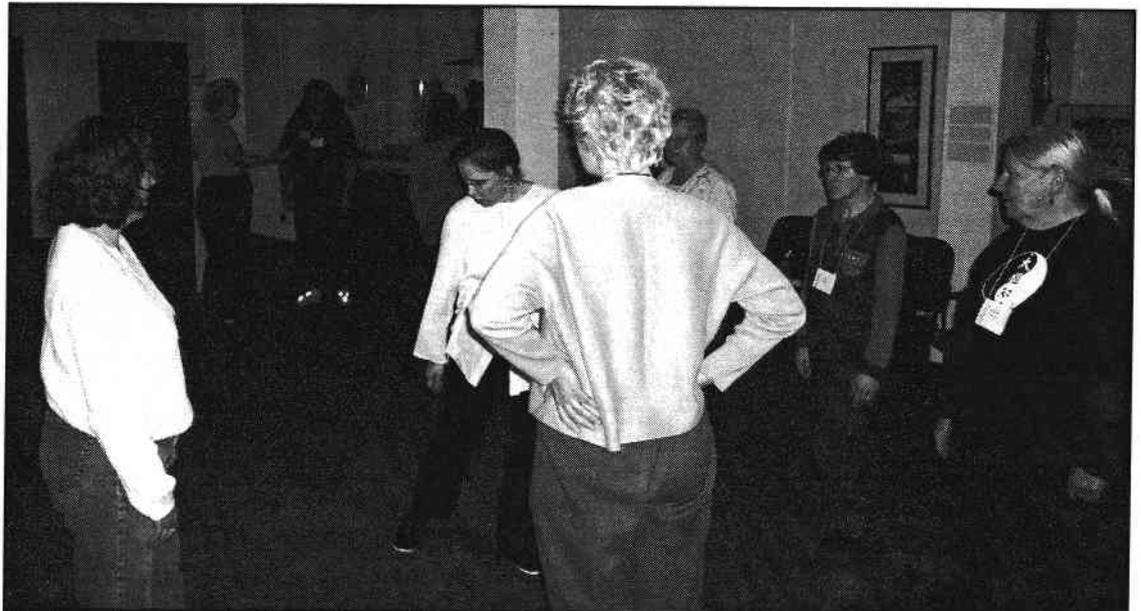
Those who prepared this retreat laid the ground work for us to sink deeply into our practice, to go beyond the physical. Judy George, as host, set the tone each time as we came together by reading thought-provoking passages taken from various sources, drawing us inward. I was impressed with the willingness of everyone present to allow themselves to let go and explore the *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, and their openness when sharing their experiences.

Being with these dedicated teachers, experiencing their love and openness, has allowed me to experience *T'ai Chi Chih*, Joy Thru Movement in a way I have never felt before, deep, to the core of my being.

– Sandy McAlister

Course Instructor's Final "Two Cents":

The ultimate result of doing the *T'ai Chi Chih* practice is to bring every aspect of our being back to wholeness. Never have I been more aware of that than at this teachers' retreat. The retreat was not so much about the outer, the



Teachers observe each other while working in small groups.

Photo provided by Nancy Werner-Azarski



Events feedback

Attendees respond to February retreat

Sequoia Seminar, Ben Lomand, CA: *What an auspicious place to hold the T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Retreat! The peace and tranquility of the grounds embraces you even before you reach your cabin. Tall redwoods, a multitude of birds and other small wildlife, beautiful views, a meditation lodge, all helped to renew the mind and the spirit.*

... Currently owned by the Foundation for Global Community, the land was originally owned by the Iroquois Six Nations. They considered it sacred land since it was the seventh hill from the ocean. The political group, Beyond War, held meetings and retreats on the grounds during the cold war to help bring peace to the world. And now T'ai Chi Chih teachers were using the facility to renew their practice, their teaching skills, their minds, and their bodies.

An icon near the main lodge provided inspiration throughout the retreat. Originally created by Dr. Frederick Frank, The Seven Generations illustrates the great law of the Iroquois Six Nations: "In all our deliberations we must be mindful of the impact of our

decisions on the wellbeing of the seven generations to follow ours."

As we studied better ways to teach a form that will remain constant throughout the ages, it seemed appropriate to remember that the way we teach the T'ai Chi Chih practice, our sincerity, our softness, our adherence to the TCC principles, will affect the next seven generations of TCC students and teachers.

– Lisa Thorburn

The whole weekend has been a terrific experience for beginning and long-time teachers. I recommend one for all teachers.

– Barbara Riley

This retreat is what I needed at this moment. Recently my life has been scattered, hectic, pulled in many directions and TCC practice has been neglected.

The peace and beauty of the Redwoods and mountains surrounded us. The sharing, practices, being with the wonderful people, enriched a great experi-

ence. Most of all I was doing my TCC practice. Ed is a wonderful, thoughtful teacher and TCC leader. He deepened my sense of the T'ai Chi Chih discipline. Thanks for a marvelous weekend.

– Adele Wenig

Really appreciated the focus on building a heartfelt community and the opportunity to go deeper in T'ai Chi Chih practice. I am leaving with a softer and more powerful practice. My heart is full and very grateful

– Elizabeth Tyler

This was my first TCC retreat and I felt so much joy. I had a chance to meet new friends, and spend time with old friends. I learned a lot from being with so many teachers.

– Maria Alvarez

I came tired and low, and am leaving uplifted and at peace. The surroundings couldn't be more wonderful . . .

– Pat Fisher

... Last year's teacher accreditation in October 2002 with Ed . . . was the first time that I was present to and aware of the intensity of Ed's concern and the weight of the burden he carries when teaching the training and making the decisions around accrediting students to become teachers. The most powerful hour of that week for me was the Friday (day four) mid-morning practice led by Ed. It was a silent practice and for me it was the most powerful practice I had ever experienced, the most intense experience of T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement. Words can not describe this better than the word gratitude, a word Justin uses often, and which is the feeling that continues to linger. I am writing mostly about Ed here but it was a true experience of the community gathering and working together, most inspiring.

– Viktoria Vercelletto

Teacher convinced after hosting course

By Victor Berg

I'll be honest. I have always had my doubts about T'ai Chi Chih Joy

Thru Movement. Even though I moved five and a half years ago to Albuquerque to study with Justin and traveled once a month from all

over the country to be with him two years prior to my move, I have never really believed in it. I believe in Justin as a tremendous, once in generation



teacher, but my heart has always been with meditation and *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* has always been of second importance to me.

But that has changed now. I volunteered to be the course host this [past] November [for the teacher training]. It is the first time I have been present through an entire teachers training and I watched 16 people *transform* before my eyes. When they arrived, I was only certain

about two of the 16 students. The rest were not moving well at all. With their own hard work, Pam's steady guidance and the help of the many auditors that were constantly present, the students started *moving* over the course of the week. As they *moved*, their attitudes changed. Stress, anger, unhappiness melted away and in it's place came joy and happiness. It was absolutely amazing to watch it happen and for some of the new teachers, this week may be the

deepest level of consciousness that they achieve in this life. Regardless, it was a beautiful thing to watch and at the end of the course, I couldn't contain my gratitude that I was allowed to participate in the process.

Needless to say, I am convinced. We have 16 new teachers. We had no deferrals, thanks to Pam and the auditors. We had a wonderful week together.

Building Community

Working With the Heart of the Universe

By Ann Rutherford

Justin Stone, the originator of [*T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* and] *Seijaku* [which he describes as "the advanced form"] offered the perfect balance to Carmen Brocklehurst's *Seijaku* review workshop on March 8th at the *T'ai Chi Chih* Center in Albuquerque. A deep blue sky punctuated by snow capped mountains looked down on local as well as international participants as we sank into the moves. Most of the following quotes come from Justin or Carmen:

"Hardness begins when weight shifts onto the front foot; softness begins as it shifts to the back foot"; "The power is in the close, where you allow the Yin and Yang to reunite. If you don't close, the Yin and Yang remain fragmented"; "Luxuriate in the movement as you come back"; (vs. springing back); "Heavy air slows down the spring back"; "Let out the mounted up kinesthetic energy at the very end of the forward movement just before evolving into the softness of coming back;" Exhale down into the T'an T'ien as you go

out"; "In *Seijaku* you are aware of your breath, (unlike *T'ai Chi Chih* practice)"; In *Platter Variation*: "almost more softness than hard,"; "If you're just going to be hard, you'll close the meridians"; *Bass Drum*: "You can still be hard and have the wrists rotate vertically"; *Carry the Ball*: "Can you feel the hand pushing hard on the lower arc? Is the waist taking the weight across?" *Taffies*: "Hard over first leg only, then let go and feel the stretching of the energy. Take the upper hand past the second leg, not perpendicular to the hip."

Regarding some people's close position in the front of the body: "The T'an Tien doesn't need protection, close out by the hip bones"; *Working the Pulley*: "Make sure the back hand is soft, only the forward hand is hard"; *Passing Clouds*: "Upper soft, lower hand hard but let go toward the end of the lower arc"; *Healing Sounds*: "Forward moves soft, side to sides hard";

It was recommended that the *Jing* be done three times within every practice. Even when bringing the *Chi* to the top of the head in the *Jing*, the attention is kept in the T'an Tien.

Carmen calls *Seijaku* a process of moving into the greater parts of the self and warned that this spelunking often creates aches and pains in the body. It reenforces the practice of consciously letting go and is likely to stir up unresolved business. Both Justin and Carmen describe *Seijaku* as learning to give form to energy. Justin said: "It is easy to get into the heart of energy, the heart of the universe by working with the *Chi*. It cleans out the storehouse of consciousness and changes your metabolism and personality." Why? "Universal consciousness is overcoming individual consciousness; the little you is out of the way."

How was the *Seijaku* workshop received? "We want this every year"; one participant said. Eric Imbody, visiting from Denver, said: "I am happy to be reacquainted with *Seijaku* and with the Center. I'm learning about the resonance between hardness and softness and the ability to explore my freedom by letting go. It was a treat to have spent a day with Justin Stone."



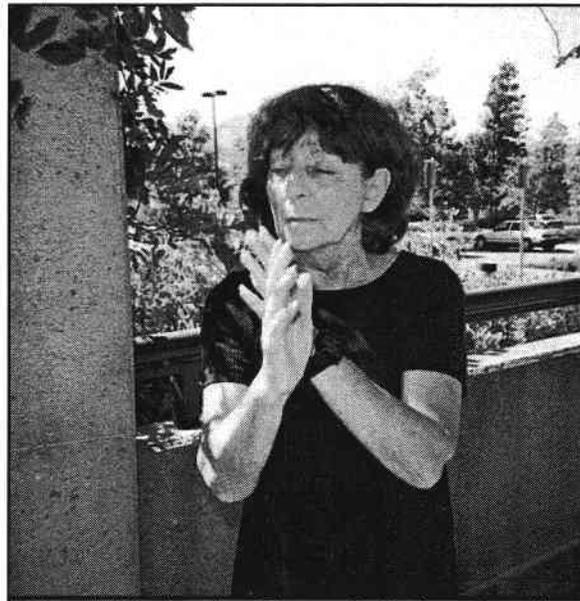
Blind student learns TCC movements

By Virginia Lee Cepeda

Justin has asked me to write about one of my students. Her name is Dimetra Stafford. Dimetra is blind. She came to my class about two months ago and has most certainly touched each one of our lives in a very special way.

I received a call from Dimetra asking if she could join my class. She said she was blind but if I could give her a few moves over the telephone she would let me know if she could handle it. I am always up for a challenge so we helped one another through Rocking Motion. Because I could not see her, I became blind on the other end of the telephone. It was really not as difficult as I first imagined. She told me that she would really like to try the class and I agreed to teach her.

Dimetra came early to her first class and I was pleasantly surprised to find out how well she had learned Rocking Motion. When class had assembled, Dimetra was introduced and we had a "get to know you" period. When it was time to stand and get in place for our movements the students all wanted to help her but this doesn't work too well. I put her directly in front of me so she could hear my voice loud and clear (I have a



Although blind, student Dimetra Stafford practices the TCC movement *Daughter on the Mountaintop*, after having learned the form from her teacher, Virginia Lee Cepeda. Photo: Virginia Lee Cepeda

soft voice). Most of my students have been with me for awhile so they do know the moves. So I tried concentrating on Dimetra's movements and she really overwhelmed me with her effort. She is very dedicated and puts a whole lot of determination into learning *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. I did find that if I closed my eyes I could give a better description of the move. I only do this when Dimetra has a difficult time with a certain part of the move, otherwise it would take away from my other students. I have to be aware of their movements and if they are doing them correctly. My students are something else. They help her in every way they can.

One student even gave her the *T'ai Chi Chih* video to "listen" to at home. This lady is going to learn *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*! The remarkable thing about this situation is that our group has really bonded because of Dimetra and we are certainly sharing the Chi.

I would certainly appreciate it if anyone could give me any information that might help in this journey.

I have learned this, that with *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, nothing is impossible. Thank-you again Justin for leading us all on the path.

Pain lessens, balance improves for grateful elderly *T'ai Chi Chih* student

I haven't been going to Sandy McAlister's *T'ai Chi Chih* class very long, and although I'm less than fond of exercise, I would rather miss my first cup of tea in the morning than miss her class. And being English and over 70, that's saying a lot.

I have osteoporosis, and after several compression fractures of my vertebrae, mobility was becoming quite a problem. After my first class, I felt as if I'd been run over by a truck. I got the message loud and clear: "use it or lose it."



Before I started *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, I used to be a little nervous and very careful about stepping into and using my shower. The walls are far apart and I'd cling to them as I'd turn around. I do have a grab bar but didn't feel inclined to install two more and make it look like a store display for grab bars.

After I started Sandy's class, I would go over in my mind something she had been saying each week: "Focus on the soles of your feet." "Be aware of where your weight is." "Soft Knees."

After a couple of weeks I not only noticed I no longer felt as if I'd had an appointment with a truck and needed an extra pain pill, but even more noticeable was that I no longer nervously clung to the shower walls.

To a healthy person this would hardly mean a thing, but to someone who has pain most of the time and has lost so much mobility, the sense of independence this has given me is wonderful. I still have relapses if I don't pay attention, but if I just tune in to Sandy's words about awareness on the soles of the feet, and softness, and evenness of movement, I can feel more like the me of the past.

The class looks so deceptively easy and low key, but the results are enormously beneficial.

I'm so very thankful that I found Sandy and her *T'ai Chi Chih* class. I have passed along the data to my osteoporosis doctor and just about anyone else I can pin down and warn of the perils ahead if one doesn't put something back instead of just taking one's health for granted.

Bernice Wilkinson

Student of Sandy McAlister

NOTE FROM HER TEACHER:

And I am so very thankful to be able to share the gift of *T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement*. For the "joy" truly does burst forth during movement and also in the realization of changes which are a direct result of practicing the *T'ai Chi Chih* form.

Sandy McAlister

Broken-hearted student regains emotional balance with *T'ai Chi Chih* practice

By Kimberly Davis
Student of Sharon Sirkis

Five months ago my life fell apart. The person I thought was my soulmate had left me soulless. The problem with living for another person is that somewhere along the way you lose yourself. When this relationship ended there was nothing left of me to be found. I started the process of rebuilding my life by beginning some intensive therapy and taking a *T'ai Chi Chih* class.

This class was not what I expected. I was ready for some intense martial arts training and was surprised by the slow "flowy" movements. Believing, however, that the universe puts us where we need to be, I stayed in the class and was not disappointed. The easy meditative movements of the *T'ai Chi Chih* form have helped me

immensely. I am beginning to find my center and an inner strength that I need to believe in myself.

It is not always easy. Finding the will to practice is often the most difficult task. It is easier to stay depressed and much easier to feel sorry for myself. But when I do practice, or when I am in class, I feel a strange calm come over me and I know that I have found something that is mine. I have found something that no one can take away from me, my sense of self.

My favorite moves are Pulling Taffy and Passing Clouds. As my hands flow around my body, I feel the energy, or Chi, swirl around me. This energy encircles me and I feel protected. My teacher says that the Chi is a healing energy and that it knows where to go. I can always feel my broken heart mending when I do these

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News Shorts

Teachers' Conference 2003: Relax, revitalize and renew

The plans for this year's conference at the Banff Centre in the beautiful Rockies are definitely supporting this year's theme of "Joy on the Mountaintop".

If you want to **revitalize** your skills in the practice of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*, then this year's conference is for you. There are practice sessions scheduled that will focus on the application of the principles of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice.

If you want to **renew** your teaching skills by applying basic education principles to specific teaching strategies, then this year's conference is for you.

If you want to **relax** into the flow of the cosmic rhythm and experience the **joy** of connecting with members of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community, then this year's conference will provide you with these opportunities.

The 2003 conference provides you with an idyllic setting in which to experience the flow of chi. We look forward to welcoming you to Alberta and to Canada. Come early or plan to stay after the conference to continue your commitment to relax, revitalize and renew. We hope you will join your Canadian colleagues as we host the first *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher's conference to be held outside the United States. See you in August in Banff.

– Chery Ann Hoffmeyer

Good Karma website is operational

The Good Karma Publishing, Inc. web site is "on the air" at www.goodkarmapublishing.com. The Materials page at www.taichichih.org has been revised to link to the new GKP site.

The next step in developing the new site is to incorporate "Shopping Cart" convenience of ordering on line and to add all of the GKP offerings on the catalog page. That page now pictures and describes a selected portion of what GKP has available. We chose not to include prices or shipping rates in the catalog descriptions because

that information is on the order form and shipping rates pages and will later be a part of the shopping cart page. However, if you hover your cursor over the photo of each item listed on the catalog page, you will see a price in a box.

As part of the new site, we've also provided a different email address than Jean Katus' personal one. Please use this address for any Good Karma communications, including placing orders: jkatus@goodkarmapublishing.com.

As with the former email address (which you can still use for Jean if you want to contact her personally), do NOT ever put a credit card number into an email message. It is not secure, but the shopping cart will definitely provide security for credit card transactions. Until the shopping cart is up, you can continue ordering via the web site by printing off the order form and faxing it or mailing it to Good Karma.

– Ted Fleischman

TCC Trademark Grammar Update

How many of you thought you'd be getting a grammar lesson to appropriately incorporate the trademark for the *T'ai Chi Chih* name? This part is the major aspect that teachers tend to leave out when they send brochure/ flyer samples to Good Karma for us to review for trademark compliance. Besides 1) using the small circled R the first time the term is mentioned and 2) including the notice: *T'ai Chi Chih is a U.S. federally registered trademark* on the material, it is also necessary to 3) use a noun or nouns following the name every time it is used.

Or looking at it another way, the *T'ai Chi Chih* term is always used as an adjective or descriptor so that another word or words always need to follow it. If you resist grammar and/or don't have a background in it, don't worry. Take a look at the variety of ways the name gets used in this issue (and previous ones since March 2002) of the *VFJ*; those choices can be your guide. If you're still unsure about phraseology, feel free to contact Good Karma with questions.

– Jean Katus



Readers Respond

continued from page 3

want to have to scramble to "force-fill" it each quarter.

One thing about the content of *The Vital Force* is that it really flows in on its own timing, WHEN people feel inspired to write. I watched the old staffs put out a teaching idea in a column and ask for responses, and then get only one or none to print the next quarter. What a disappointment for them and for the readers waiting to see some good ideas. So, that is why I am not willing to commit "permanent" space to this topic, unless I get a teacher who also commits to filling it. Articles on the topic of "teaching tips" can always be written up and submitted at any time, and I'll fit them in around the issue, or save them up to put in one issue.]

Moving into our Center

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us 'seniors' to do it"

- * "Toning of thigh muscles"
- * "Regaining my center of balance"
- * "Simplicity"
- * "The serenity I feel after"
- * "Learning to relax the hands and arms"
- * "Self-control"
- * Two students reported the need for less pain medication.

The *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline is not a religion. Each student brings her/his spiritual self to the practice. Practice for 15-20 minutes in the morning and again in the evening before dinner, becomes a gift to oneself, with *T'ai Chi Chih* practice causing the circulating, balancing and harmonizing of the energy. In St. Paul's letter to the Colossians (1:29) he writes "For this I work and struggle, impelled by that Energy of His which is so powerful a force within me." In practicing the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline, this Divine Energy moves within my body and brings me more deeply to my *Center of Stillness and Peace*. I am grateful to Justin Stone for the gift of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline. I feel privileged to serve as an accredited teacher to help others find greater peace and tranquility in the midst of a chaotic world.

* Stone, Justin. *T'ai Chi Chih: Joy Thru Movement* 1999, 4th Printing.

Creativity

continued from page 12

creativity? Many will say, "Oh, yes; I want to be more creative." But your life will change with this creativity. Are you ready for that? If we are truly open, this can be a wonderful and exciting time. Today is a great day to flow with the new, and to be creative. I wish you every success, as you love and share the chi.

Broken-hearted student

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moves. I feel strong enough to face another day of being single, and strong enough to keep moving forward, even when it would be easier to stop.

Apart from the actual physical side of our class, I have also gotten a lot from our meditations and discussions. As my teacher explains how to take these movements and incorporate the philosophies behind them into my own life, they become more of a way of life and less like an exercise class. I am learning to bend like the willow tree and not to let the smallest difficulties overtake my life. I am learning to stay calm when my first reaction is to scream and to fall apart. I am learning to let go of the pain and the suffering of the past and to live in the current moment.

I cannot change the past. I know that everything happens for a reason and that having my partner break up with me was what I needed to experience. It was the only way I was ever going to find my independent self. This is an ongoing journey, and I am sure I will take the wrong path from time to time. But down every road is a lesson to be learned, and on this road, I learned that I am stronger than I know. I have learned that I have the power within me to heal myself, and I have come to understand that I am the only one who can make myself happy.

While I am currently unable to "let go" of this past relationship, I know that given time and my continued practice of this art, I will eventually feel strong enough. I will stay centered in myself and not let this world crush me. My job has become easier, and my relationships with my friends have become stronger. I may still doubt myself from time to time, but I do not doubt that I will eventually pull my life back together, with the help of the lessons I have learned in this class.



Karmic Kommentts

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

Complementarity of Materials

We often get asked, as no doubt teachers do, whether a student should purchase the *T'ai Chi Chih* photo-textbook or the Justin Stone videotape. We offer some points to be made for each piece that might be helpful when approached with this question, or as general information to communicate to your students. Some teachers require one or both items in their classes. Reading portions of the text or showing pieces of the video in classes can interest students in wanting to have their own copies of these supportive materials. The decision about which one to buy may partially be influenced by the kind of learner the person new to *T'ai Chi Chih* practice is—a visual/auditory learner or one who relates more to the written word.

First and foremost, both the book and the video were written/instructed by Justin so students can read and view the words/voice and actions/teachings of the originator directly. Each piece differs from the other, but the two can certainly be seen as a "set" of materials that rounds out the study and practice of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline.

Often teachers do not have enough class time or the inclination to delve into the philosophy behind *T'ai Chi Chih / Joy thru Movement*. The photo-text contains a tremendous amount of information on the philosophy, history, and background of this discipline. Typical of Justin's skill, the writing is presented in lay terms, interesting and easy to understand, even by those who have no training or experience in this discipline or in Taoism in general. Included in the present edition are sections particularly useful for students, whether they have studied with an accredited teacher or on their own: important points about the overall features of the movements and specific reminders about each movement to help one practice successfully and reap the many benefits. The book is arranged with headings so that one can read small portions at a time if desired. The large number of photographs shot in sequence, with minimal written instruction (as Justin says, "A picture is worth a thousand words."), allows one to study the sequence and follow it, either as a review or as a beginning way of learning the movements. The book can travel with a person to places where a video player might not be available, and one still has the photos as references. The text also provides instruction in The Great Circle Meditation, a wonderful adjunct to *T'ai Chi Chih* practice.

The video provides verbal and demonstrated instruction, making it possible to see how the movements should look and the important aspects of performing them. Justin is precise and concise in his instruction, remarking on significant points so that both beginners and long-time students can return again and again to view how to improve their form. For people who may have motor memory difficulties, the video is crucial. Some have noted that using the video at home is like having class in one's living room whenever one wants. Especially when a student might not be able to attend all class sessions, the video is a most useful enhancement to learning the form with a teacher, as well as a reinforcement after the class has finished. It goes without saying that the practice segment offers great "partners" with whom to practice once a student feels comfortable in having learned the basics.

New Distributor in Canada

We are pleased to welcome Chery Ann Hoffmeyer as a teacher distributor for GKP materials. She is located



in Sherwood Park (Edmonton), Alberta. For teachers who live in the central and eastern parts of Canada, you will generally be able to get your materials more quickly by ordering through Chery Ann than going through Good Karma. Her phone number is 780/467-8701. As a reminder, Guadalupe Buchwald (250/385-6748), teacher distributor for western Canada, remains active in that capacity. A special boon to Canadian teachers and students is that we now duplicate the Justin Stone *T'ai Chi Chih* video in Canada, making it more easily accessible than previously! Ask the distributor nearest you about details.

Web Sites

By the time this issue of *The Vital Force* goes to press, the Good Karma web site will be at least partially up and running. Ted Fleischman, TCC teacher and *VFJ* webmaster, has spent a great deal of time working on it, and we are very grateful for his efforts. The site looks good, and, better yet, it's functional and will be more so as the remainder of the project is completed. Customers will eventually be able to order directly from the site. It is named www.goodkarmapublishing.com and is linked to and from the *T'ai Chi Chih* site, www.taichichih.org. We look forward to increasing our sales by being able to serve those who choose to order in this way. We still, of course, take mail, phone, and fax orders and will continue to do so. You can also now use this new email address for any communication with GKP: jkatus@goodkarmapublishing.com. However, do NOT put credit card numbers in an email message.

For those who have not yet seen or purchased Justin Stone's book of paintings, *Tentatively Forever*, distributed by Good Karma Publishing for the low price of \$32, you can now view a web site, created by TCC teacher Victor Berg, which gives information about this treasure. Look for it at www.justinstoneart.com.

Regional Distributors of Good Karma Publishing Materials

(listed alphabetically, by location)

Canada

AB, Sherwood Park	Chery Ann Hoffmeyer	(780) 467-8701
BC, Victoria	Guadalupe Buchwald	(250) 385-6748

United States

CA, Camarillo	Pamela Towne	(805) 987-3607
CA, El Cajon	Susan Haymaker	(858) 571-3705
CA, Hayward	Sandra McAlister	(510) 582-2238
CO, Denver	Margaret Manzanaras	(303) 494-5800
MN, Bemidji	Jeanne Engen-Duranske	(218) 751-3173
MN, St. Paul	Carol Mockovak	(651) 483-4440
MO, St. Louis	Kathy Vieth Albers	(314) 727-1983
ND, Fargo	Christeen McLain	(701) 232-5579
NM, Albuquerque	Carmen Brocklehurst	(505) 299-0562

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

**SUBMISSIONS:**

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

The Vital Force 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.

Issue Submission deadlines:

January Issue: **October 10th of prior year**
April Issue: **February 10th**

July Issue: **May 10th**
October Issue: **August 10th**

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

EDITING POLICY:

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.

MEMBERSHIPS:

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

TCC TEACHERS' DIRECTORY:

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

WHEN MOVING:

Please allow 8 weeks notice and provide complete old and new addresses. Because **The Vital Force** has "return service requested" with the U.S. Post Office, an undeliverable issue or Teachers' Directory is returned to us with a charge for the First Class cost to return it (approximately \$1.50 - \$3.50, 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 \$1.50 - \$3.50. Please help us avoid this unnecessary and wasteful expense—send in your change of address information early!



T'AI CHI CHIH (TCC) CONTACTS:

Justin Stone
Originator of T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement
P.O. Box 23212 Albuquerque, NM 87192-1212

Ed Altman
Head of the T'ai Chi Chih Community
P.O. Box 1420 Kapaa, HI 96746
(808) 822-9288

Pam Towne
TCC Teacher Trainer
107 Calle Vista
Camarillo, CA 93010-1711
(805) 987-3607

Sandy McAlister
TCC Teacher Trainer
24835 Second St.
Hayward, CA 94541
(510) 582-2238

T'AI CHI CHIH COMMUNITY WEBSITE:

www.taichichih.org

VITAL FORCE JOURNAL CONTACTS:

Send submissions by standard mail or e-mail to:

The Vital Force
P.O. Box 1420
Kapaa, HI 96746

VFJsubmissions@earthlink.net

Noel Altman
Editor
(808) 822-9288

For teacher referrals, general questions about T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement, or events:

Kathy Albers
Information/Outreach
(314) 727-1983
thevitalforce@yahoo.com

For all Membership Services questions, including: new or renewing memberships, updates or sign-ups for Website Teacher Referral List, updates for Teacher's Directory, ordering back issues:

The Vital Force
P.O. Box 23068
Albuquerque, NM
87192-1068

Doug Harned
Membership Services
(505) 797-8442
VFJmembership@yahoo.com

THE VITAL FORCE Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community

Please print clearly.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

1. Renewal New

2. Name _____ Phone (_____) _____ - _____

Address _____

_____ E-mail _____

_____ Zip _____ - _____

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

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

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

Student / Interested person _____ year(s) @ \$25.00 / yr = \$ _____

4. First Class Delivery in U.S. additional \$5.00 / yr = \$ _____

Out of U.S. Delivery additional \$10.00 / yr = \$ _____

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Make check or money order in U.S. dollars payable to:

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The Vital Force
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Members from outside the U.S.: Please don't handprint the words "U.S. Dollars" or "U.S. Funds" on a personal check as our bank won't honor the requested conversion.



The Lighter Side...

1. I have been a *T'ai Chi Chih* student for a year now and I am lucky to have a chi goddess for a teacher. I'd want to share a funny experience.

Just this morning, I had a friendly visit with my dentist. As he was having fun drilling and filling two cavities of mine, I was trying to block everything that was happening around me (from the numbness of my gums to the goosebumps from the drilling) and I had my eyes closed. This went on for about half an hour when my dentist asked me if I was sleeping on him. I told him no, that I was just focusing on the soles of my feet. He stared at me kind of weird like I was crazy. Little did he know he was "sort of" right because I am really "T'ai Chi Chih" crazy.

– *Pilar Triggs*
Student of Athene Mantle

2. One evening at the home of our instructor, Donna McElhose, several of us were sitting around her dining room table going over our notes and talking about [a recent] Workshop. Donna had given us a special gift for helping with the Workshop. One of the students thanked her from the bottom of his heart.

Whereupon one of the other students replied, "Thank you from the soles of my feet."

Then everyone chorused, "Thank you from the soles of our feet."

Now we have a very special "thank you" to offer to anyone involved in *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*.

– *Bobbie Weichman*
Student of Donna McElhose

4. One night I gave a TCC presentation after I finished teaching karate. Earlier that day I practiced the presentation many times in front of a mirror, and I could really start to feel the buildup of chi.

Knowing that part of a presentation is to talk about my own personal experience, I asked one of my students, Eric, to stick around after karate class to help me out.

First, I wanted to show the group how 20 years of fast, hard karate moves had taken a toll on my body, how I had cooked up a recipe for chronic pain. And second, how the soft, slow, TCC form, for me, was the antidote for this pain.

When I demonstrated the karate technique on Eric I was surprised at my explosive speed. I didn't strike any harder, but I did move faster. And I realized it was because I was much more relaxed due to the build up of chi.

After the presentation, Eric asked me: "Sensei (teacher), does your foot hurt?"

"No," I said, "why?"

"Well," he said grinning sheepishly, "because you just split my groin cup into three pieces!" *

* The first and only time that has ever happened in all my years of teaching karate!

P.S. By the way, he was OK!

– *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..."]

T'ai Chi Chih Practice - Joyous Movement

*T'ai Chi Chih practice, joyous movement
delighting the spirit, overflowing energy
deep within — without,*

*Circling motions intersecting, connecting
with ever widening circles of meditation
in the universe,*

*A silent prayer of grace and light —
spiraling and illuminating the chakras,
emptying, filling, yielding, receiving,*

No thought — One Spirit in sync.

- Rosanne Santorelli-Barone
Student of Sr. Antonia Cooper