

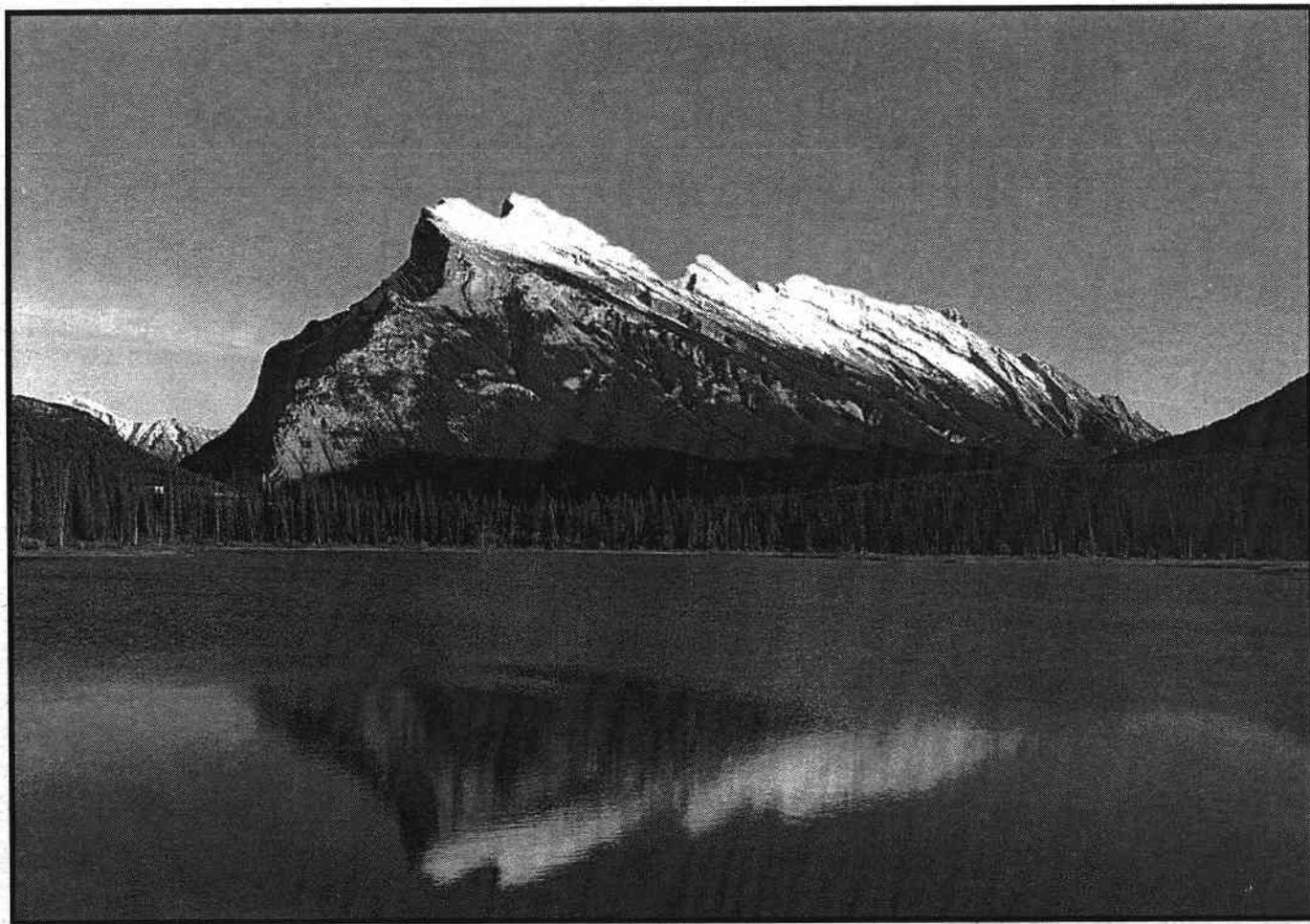
The Vital Force



Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community

Volume 20 , No. 4

October 2003



Serene majestic beauty surrounded us in Banff, AB, CANADA

at the

15th Annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference

Coverage begins on Page 9.



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Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement



Letter from the Editor

The Vital Force

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The Vital Force, Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community, is an unincorporated, non-profit association, serving T'ai Chi Chih practitioners worldwide. Membership in the Association includes four quarterly issues of The Vital Force and outreach services such as teacher referrals. Teacher memberships also include listing in and receipt of the annual Teachers' Directory.

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

Cover:



Our cover features the photographic work of longtime TCC teacher Guadalupe Buchwald, of Victoria, BC, Canada. Pictured is Mount Rundle, reflected in the Vermillion Lakes. This scene was just outside the town center of Banff, site of the 18th International TCC Teachers' Conference in September.

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The 18th International T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference actually went international this year, for the first time ever, in Banff, Alberta, Canada. What a stunning location we were in for those four days! So many attending teachers took full advantage of the opportunity and planned full vacations around the area before and/or after the conference, and many brought spouses along to enjoy it with them.

We owe a tremendous THANK YOU VERY MUCH to Conference Hosts **Chery Ann Hoffmeyer** and **Louise Bureau** and their conference committee, as well as Teacher Trainer **Sandy McAllister** who coordinates with every conference committee throughout what is often a two-years-or-more process. What a fabulous job! So many felt this was the best conference ever — but how many times have we heard that in recent years? It's wonderful how each group builds upon the efforts of the previous groups to refine this biggest-TCC-event-of-the-year and add their own special flavor to it. These folks have been at this task for YEARS now! I remember sitting at a restaurant table with Ed in California in the year 2000 as he slid a stunning photo of Banff across the table to me. "That's where the Canadians are thinking of hosting the conference," he said with a smile. I don't think they could have chosen a more stunning location, and what a power spot! Those gigantic, majestic mountains surrounding us on all sides emanated profound stillness.

The Banff Centre, where the conference was held, is a world-renowned retreat and conference center, and the accommodations were first class! This year's conference was run with grace and ease at thinking-on-the-spot, as numerous last-minute schedule changes occurred. Chery Ann was the "MC" throughout and she was consistently poised, gracious and focused. So many people commented on the content of this year's conference as being incredibly substantial, as many regional leaders were asked to share their knowledge on a wide range of aspects of teaching/practicing T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement. American attendees commented over and over at the graciousness of the Canadians. Many hoped aloud that this was the first Canadian conference of many to come!

Attending teachers numbered 116, with another 15 spouses along for the trip (who did other activities during the day, but joined us for meals). I counted up **26 U.S. states** represented by attending teachers, as well as **five Canadian provinces**. One other international country was represented, New Zealand, by longtime TCC teacher Theda Gillespie.

The T'ai Chi Chih Community is in flux at this time. At the conference, Ed and I and Jean Katus announced our retirements from our positions of leadership. This issue contains our conference announcements and others' reactions to these announcements. Justin announces new leadership in his article.

I've greatly enjoyed editing this journal each quarter for the last five years, and encourage all of you to continue contributing your focus, creativity, ideas and opinions by submitting articles, poems, artwork and photography for publication. Kathy Grassel of Albuquerque, NM will be the new editor, and you can find her contact information in the back of this issue.

My best wishes to all of you in your TCC practice and teaching! Take care.

Noel Altman, Editor



Readers Respond

The latest issue of *The Vital Force* just arrived and two things noticed all too quickly are still penetrating. I always read the poem on the back first. I was swimming along in the joy of it ... and then the fourth to the last word struck a chord and I am still not sure if it was meant to be a "k" or an "f". Either way works. Spell check does not help here.

Then delved randomly in and found the statement in which Ed Altman quotes Justin Stone saying at Folsom prison, "From the Eastern point of view we are all living the same life".

These will take time to percolate.

Leslie Keith
St. Paul, AB
CANADA

(So now I shall be here pondering awhile and waiting for another reading time. Except that I had understood the planned Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (the letters spell out as a tank chews) session was to be a Seijaku experience for those new to that discipline and can find no others on the list. When will there be a Seijaku opportunity?)

[Editor's Note: Hi Leslie! The answer to your first question is that the poem was submitted to me the way you saw it printed on the back of the last issue. One of the edit checks I do each issue is a comparison, word for word, of the original submitted to me and what is appearing in my layout (in case I have introduced any errors during the layout process).

In answer to your second inquiry, the only Seijaku opportunity that I have been informed is a definite is the Seijaku Teacher Accreditation course scheduled for January in the Bay Area, CA. (See "Calendar of Events" for details).

The Seijaku accreditation courses are very different from the TCC teacher accreditation courses in that many attendees do not even know how to do Seijaku before they attend. That course is designed to teach it to them as well as accredit them, all in the same weekend. (Later, many decide to audit these courses for the nominal \$20 auditing fee, so they can deepen their understanding each time.)

These courses are only open to accredited TCC teachers, such as yourself.

Justin Stone decreed long ago that no TCC teacher can learn Seijaku from another teacher. Therefore, for someone like you, who did not learn it prior to becoming accredited to teach TCC Joy Thru Movement, the only place to learn it is at a Seijaku accreditation course.

For a long time Justin was the only one teaching Seijaku accreditation courses. In late 1992, he asked Ed Altman to begin apprenticing to teach those courses. After several years of doing so alongside Justin, Ed began teaching those courses, the only teacher ever asked to. With Ed's retirement from the position of Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community, he is also retiring from teaching Seijaku courses. The course in January was scheduled before he decided to retire, and will be his last.

Other events offering Seijaku are generally open to those teachers who are already accredited to teach it, or who already learned it when they were students. They are often open to students who already know Seijaku, as well, but, for clarification, it would be best to contact the course hosts of such events.]

CLARIFICATION

Hi Noel.

Thanks for fitting in my article on seeking peace in this month's *Vital Force*. That was nice to see. I'm actually writing to you in response to the article written by Debbie Cole in which she mentions a yinling/yanging technique/idea that I use. Although it's a wonderful tool that I use to help students FEEL what it is like "flowing from the center", I cannot take credit for it as being my idea. I actually heard someone talk about this at last year's conference in San Antonio. I don't remember who the person was but I'd like to properly give credit where it's due. So if the person who uses this approach is reading this, I thank you for an excellent idea. I simply passed it on at the Philadelphia TCC weekend in Jan. 2003.

Thanks, Noel.

Peace,

April Leffler
Prospect Park, PA



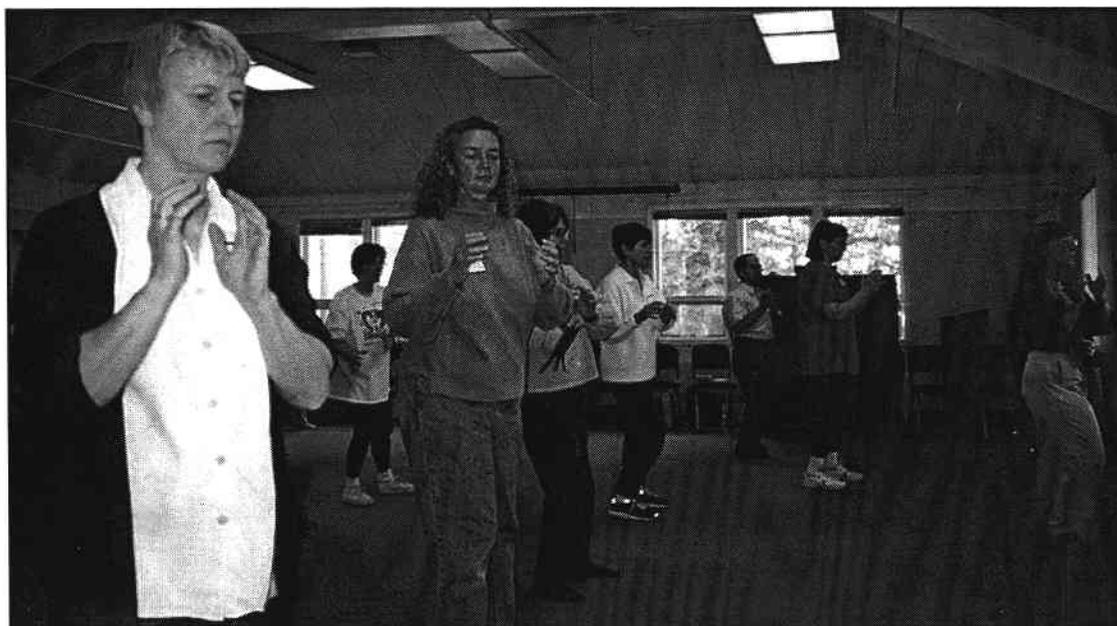
June 28, 2003

First TCC event in Sitka, AK draws 21 eager students from all over the state

By Nancy Jo Bleier
Course Host

Course Instructor Sandy McAlister came to rainy Sitka from sunny Hayward, California. Her first words at the Sitka airport were, "It is so green!"

On Saturday, June 28, 2003, at 8:30 AM, 21 Sitkans gathered at the SEARHC Community Health Services building in Sitka to learn more about *T'ai*



Alaskan students and teachers follow Course Instructor Sandy McAlister's lead (far right) in *Carry the Ball to the Side*.

Photo: Nancy Jo Bleier



(L-R): Students Dotty Johnson and Jean Moulton of Sitka, AK speak with Student Ruth Sandvik of Petersburg, AK, who had traveled 14 hours by ferry to attend the workshop.

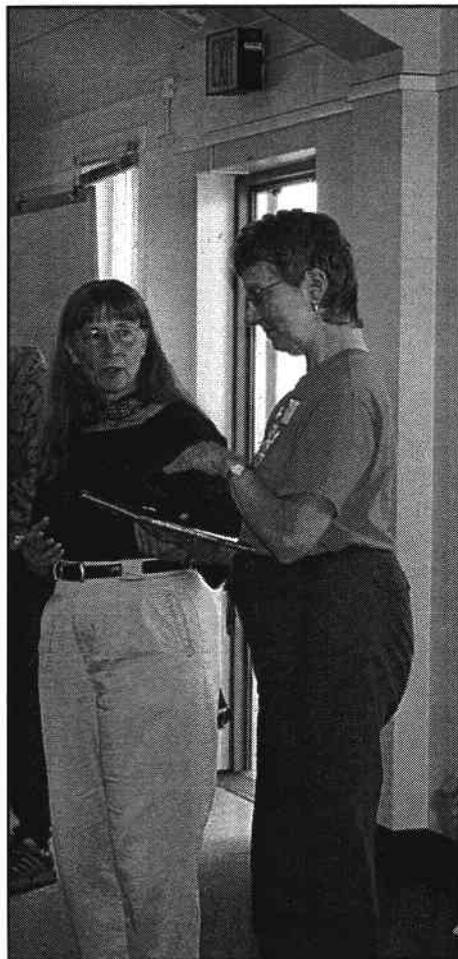
Photo: Nancy Jo Bleier

Chi Chih practice. They were joined by five more people from Petersburg, Alaska who traveled 14 hours by ferry boat. Besides Sandy, we had three teachers and one teacher candidate.

At the end of the day, most participants said they received plenty of information and "tools" that they could absorb at their own level. They mentioned coming away with new ways of understanding how to move. Comments reflected the diversity of experience in the group. Student Lois Chambers said it was "her first" TCC workshop. Teacher Martina Kurzer wrote: "Sandy gave insight and advice to further deepen my practice. I learned and even had to reevalu-

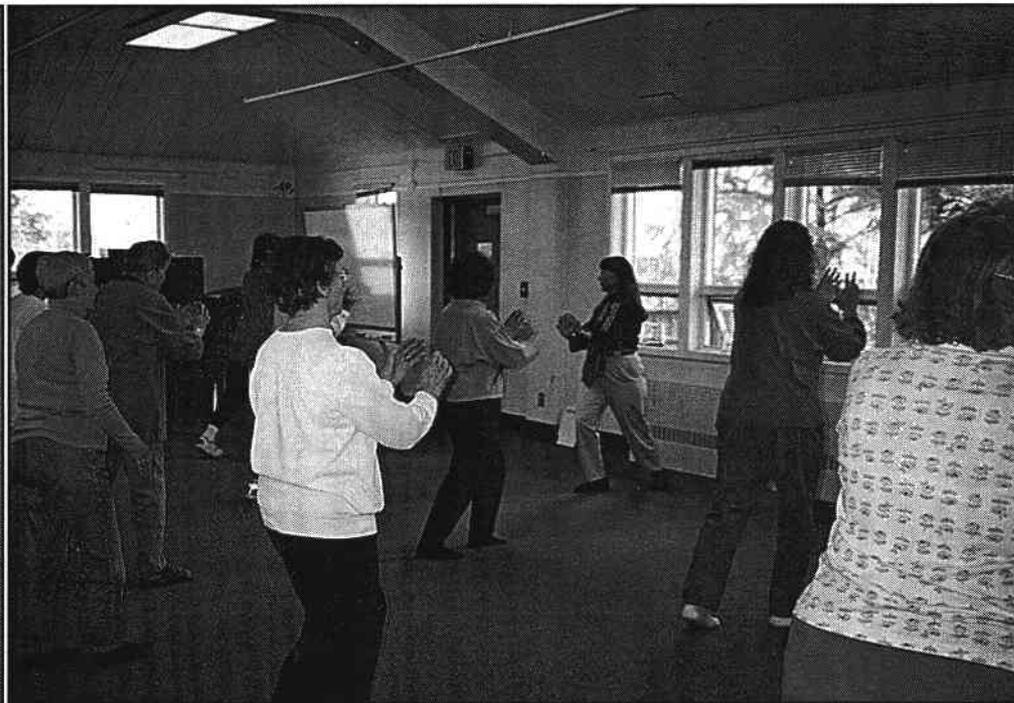
ate an entire movement." Student Joann Torgeson "liked the theme of introducing tools that we could use at home to encourage flow in our *T'ai Chi Chih* practice." Student Laura Ramp said, "It's great to practice with a large group. Even though the information is basically the same, it's nice to hear it a different way."

When asked if there was enough or not enough time spent on TCC practice, Student Kathy Ingallinera felt, "It is nice to start the day with a brief practice to loosen us up and so Sandy could see what she was up against. I liked breaking down each move and working the individual parts before 'perfecting'



Course Instructor Sandy McAlister (left) consults with Course Host Nancy Jo Bleier during the workshop.

Photo provided by Nancy Jo Bleier



Course Instructor Sandy McAlister (center, facing group) scans the group for suggestions to make as she leads them in *Daughter on the Mountaintop*. Photo: Nancy Jo Bleier

the move." Teacher Steve Morse experienced "a day full of valuable instruction and several surprises." He went on to reflect, "What a great *T'ai Chi Chih* community (we have) in Southeast Alaska." Student Polly Lee "especially appreciated the time and demos on correct posture while doing the *T'ai Chi (Chih)* leg movements." Student Doris Smith wrote, "Actually I learned meaningful things that hadn't gotten thru to me in 10 years."

For myself, I made more progress toward "flowing from the center." I took home a

greater appreciation of the importance of going back to the base — the stance — with the knees being bent or soft, but always moving.

Comments on Sandy's teaching style were very positive. Frequent remarks were: "Very respectful", "She listened" and "She used gentle guidance." Student Anne Lewis felt Sandy was "very easy to understand."

Lunch was catered with soup and bread with wonderful salads brought by a few participants. It was nice to not break up the group at mid-day.

At the end of the afternoon, the sun came out (first time in several days). We had a full, wonderful practice.

A Teacher's Prep class was held Saturday evening and early Sunday morning for four people. Each told me later that the individual attention Sandy gave them was very valuable. They also said that it was invaluable to learn in greater detail about the process of becoming a teacher. We talked about how "going out" (of Alaska) for intensive training and/or a retreat is very important for those of us in remote areas.

I believe that workshops and retreats, plus going to Teacher's Conference, are necessary to my going deeper in my understanding or feeling of TCC movements. As Student Joyce Krohn said at the Teacher's Prep class, "Why do any other form when this has all the necessary elements to move (circulate) the energy?"



Sept. 8 - 13, 2003

Last TCC teacher training course led by Ed Altman held in Gurnee, Illinois

By Donna McElhose
Course Host

How awesome this week was!

This Teacher Training Course was filled with many firsts:

First time a Teacher Training Course was offered where the majority of the candidates had taken the Intensive Course beforehand. First time that a course was offered with the Pass/No Pass—no longer any deferrals. My first time presenting candidates, seven, for certification and my first time hosting a teacher training course. First time a Teacher Training Course was ever held here in Lake County, Illinois. Another first for our area was we held a Teacher Renewal here before the Teacher Training Course. There were 11 teachers in attendance for the Teacher Renewal.

My wish was to make everyone comfortable from first contact, to have a place for each candidate to feel welcomed and comfortable to carry out the inner work they would need to do without the distractions of their outer needs.

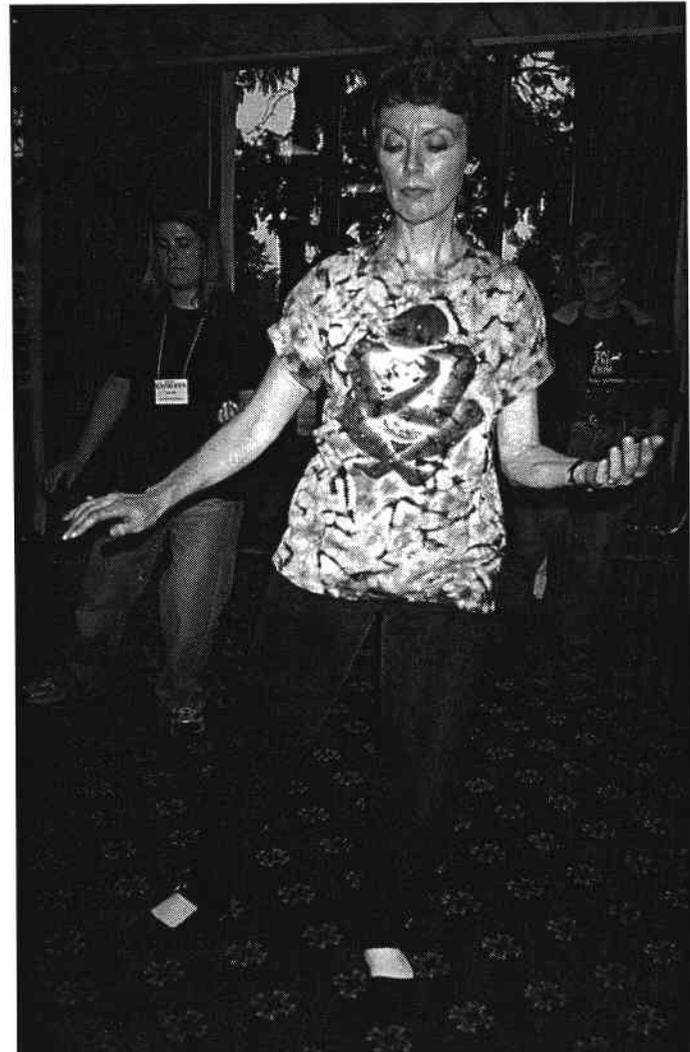
Ed Altman then continued with this safe space, and encouraged the candidates to relax. The stage was set. What flowed through the week was the inner work for each candidate.

Day by day, watching the candidates' transformation was inspiring. Ed guided, encouraged, pushed to the edge, whatever the candidate

needed to explore deeper into the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline. The candidates worked very hard and made great progress in their own practices. Candidates and auditing teachers had the opportunity to go deeper in understanding their own practice. Alignment, stance, weight shift—the basic building blocks of one's practice—were emphasized. How to check these elements of one's practice and bring them into balance each time one does their practice, was covered, teaching each to check their movements and to flow fully.

During the week, Ed announced that a deferred candidate, auditing at the training, had reached the level of full accreditation. Several auditing teachers from the original class were there to welcome another new teacher.

A very special part of this training course was the auditing teachers. It is impossible to express how wonderful the auditors at this training were! They were in abundance, in



(L-R): Candidates Kate Squire and Vicki Webb, as well as auditing TCC Teacher Athene Mantle concentrate on flow during the pull to the side in *Pulling Taffy*. Photo: Donna McElhose

number, in spirit, in all the gifts they offered to the candidates, to each other, to me, to Ed. They filled the space with their passion for all of what the *T'ai Chi Chih* practice means to them. A thank you of deep gratitude is given to each and every one of you. You were traveling from Vermont and California, Missouri, Indiana, Wisconsin, Maryland and Florida, all for the love



of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*.

Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman led our course. He reflected and embodied the essence of the deep sincerity of the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline. Everyone was very appreciative they had the opportunity to have their training and renewal with Ed as the teacher trainer. Candidates and auditing teachers alike expressed this appreciation.

Contraction, deeper into the depth of our *T'ai Chi Chih* practice, and Expansion, outward to all the distant locations: there are now 10 new teachers in our *T'ai Chi Chih* community. Most are in Lake County, Illinois. But this class produced teachers for Minnesota, Florida, Wisconsin, and Georgia, as well.

Diana Durkin, auditing teacher, expressed it well for each of us. "These few days have been a marvelous experience for me. One which will hopefully spill and flow into all areas of being."

Candidate Response:

I thought I might tell the community as a newly accredited teacher what helped me get to & through this process. Making a video with small groups of other students & later alone & getting feedback was very valuable. Also, don't forget that fast forward/backwards were major eye-openers for slippery spots. As students we gathered at the park & took turns leading moves &

stating a few points to remember about each move as well as trying to mirror for the first time. My teacher also encouraged us to try the T.C.C. movements in various public places. Much to my surprise, people's reactions did not cause me to melt & many respected my

space. These things helped immensely in going through the process.

Thanks to Donna McElhose for starting/supporting a strong local T.C.C. community. What a gift.

— Andrea Skillman

Dear Ed, Donna, auditors, and fellow students,

Thank you for this enriching experience. This was not easy. Each



Congratulations to these new TCC Teachers! *Back row, (L-R):* Course Instructor Ed Altman, Ahura Finstad, Vicki Webb, James Davies, Andrea Skillman, Course Host Donna McElhose; *Middle row, (L-R):* Nancy Lecraw, Bobbie Weichman, Kate Squire, Lisa Jacobs; *Front row, (L-R):* Jeanné Lohfink, Alla Meerson.

Photo provided by Donna McElhose

person came to their own precipice, needing to choose whether to play it safe or to leap into the atmosphere, relying on the support of the chi. We really embodied the yin/yang symbol of opposites — much tension and frustration opposed by great releases and laughter; movement and stillness; intense observation outward and inward; learning and the beginning hints of teaching.

We've emerged on the other side — trusting a little more, moving tremendously more smoothly. Each person contributed to a life-memorable experience. Thank you, each of you, for your trust, support, friendship, chi and blessings. May those gifts continue to shine through you.

— Jeanné Lohfink

Letting go, letting go of old habits, of trying so hard, of self. The training for me was inspiring, but at the same time, humbling. We worked hard, but



Candidate Ahura Finstad (far right) leads a small group through *Pulling in the Energy*. Following her are (L-R): Candidates James Davies and Nancy Lecraw, as well as auditing TCC Teacher Sharon Sirkis.

Photo: Donna McElhose

continued on page 8



Continued from page 7

laughed a lot, at least after the first few days.

My gratitude to Ed, Donna, and all the auditing teachers that cared so much for T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement and for us during these five days.

– Nancy Lecraw

What a wonderful experience! This week we became members of the TCC teaching community. More importantly, I feel like I have merged with the flow of TCC Joy Thru Movement itself.

With the help of many terrific auditing teachers, Ed took us all to deeper levels, not only physically, in the movements themselves, but also into new levels of emotional commitment and spiritual connection. He helped

us feel the flow and find the places where we were getting in its way. He has empowered us, and equipped us for our journey into the All That Is.

– Vicki Webb

My T'ai Chi Chih teacher training experience was amazing. I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn from and build relationships with Ed, Donna, the auditing teachers and my fellow candidates. I feel that the experience has greatly enriched the quality of my T'ai Chi Chih practice and of my life. I am very excited to go back home and put the knowledge into practice!

My advice for future teacher candidates — NO FEAR! Be willing to put yourself out there and take some risks. Trust in the sincerity of the instructors and

auditors who want to see you succeed. This is truly an experience where you get out of it what you put into it.

– Kate Squire

Thank you to Ed Altman for sharing his understanding of the T'ai Chi Chih movements, for his gentleness in nudging us to go beyond ourselves and to yield to the Chi. Thank you to all the auditing teachers for working with us early mornings, evenings and in between.

And THANK YOU to Donna McElhose for sponsoring and working so hard to have everything so organized. And, last but not least, I want to thank my fellow candidates for their support.

– Bobbie Weichman

Gratitude and Joy

By Vicki Webb

As a newly accredited teacher, I want to thank the community for the wonderful process that has evolved for preparing potential teachers. I learned T'ai Chi Chih Joy thru Movement in an area of the country where I didn't have access to many teachers or advanced classes. So I really appreciate the opportunity that the "Intensive" gave me to refine my practice and focus on improving my form. Because of that excellent preparation and the insights gained, I was better able to focus on the inner journey at the teacher's training.

I feel like it is very important for us to maintain high standards among TCC teachers. Let me share a story. In my business life, I managed a busy information desk. Frequently, when associates were running low on maps or other information, they would quickly grab a copy from the information rack and run to the copy machine. The next time, they would make a copy of that copy. Later in the week, they would make a copy of the copy of the copy, and so on. Eventually the maps became fuzzy and distorted. Perhaps the first copy had a little smudge. The next would reproduce that smudge, and perhaps be a little off-center. The third generation

of copies would have all the imperfections of the first two, and perhaps add a little streak of toner down one edge. Needless to say, within a few months the maps hardly resembled the "originals" I kept on file in the office. As a matter of fact the difference was so striking, that the associates quickly realized the value of taking the few extra steps to get the original when they needed to reproduce materials.

I think the same applies to teaching TCC Joy thru Movement. If we become too relaxed about the standards we hold for those who teach, eventually their idiosyncrasies show up in their students, who in turn add their own unique flourishes. Eventually the form could become, like the maps, a fuzzy distortion of the original. I really appreciate the commitment of all the teachers who wouldn't let me settle for less. Many thanks to my teacher Linda Olney and to Amy Hackenberg for her coaching. I truly appreciate Sandy McAlister and Pam Towne for helping me integrate the movements into a whole. I will be forever grateful to Ed Altman for challenging me to discover the "so much more" inherent in the practice, and to Justin for making this remarkable journey possible. I look forward to a lifetime of learning and growing as a student and as a teacher.



JOY ON THE MOUNTAINTOP

18th INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHI TEACHER'S CONFERENCE
AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2003

The Banff Centre
Banff, Alberta, CANADA

[Editor's Note: This year, once again, the inflow of response to the conference was such that I needed to go to our biggest issue size, 44 pages, to get it all in. Once again, I was able to get all of the responses received during and after the conference into this issue.

During this year's conference, a change in leadership in the TCC Community was announced during retirement speeches by Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman, Publisher of Good Karma Publishing, Inc. Jean Katus, and myself as Editor of *The Vital Force*. All three of us felt that doing this in person was the most honorable way of conveying this news. We did plan the timing of the announcements such that there would be time afterwards for all of us to process the news, and then move on, back to the task at hand, which was to enjoy the conference. We refined our TCC practices, learned new teaching strategies, networked with new and old TCC friends and were awed all weekend by the stunning scenery all around us.

The coverage in this issue, as was done with last year's conference issue, is presented in chronological order so that it will make the most sense.

I would like to call attention to one Canadian TCC teacher

who sacrificed some of her own participation in the activities of the conference to perform the role of VFJ Conference Photographer. That person is Margo Carpenter. We are sincerely grateful to her for her generous contribution, so that all who could not attend may have an idea of what happened, and all who could attend can remember.

We all owe deepest gratitude to the following TCC Teachers who worked selflessly, literally for years, to put on this conference:

Co-Hosts: Chery Ann Hoffmeyer and Louise Bureau
Committee Members: Margo Carpenter, Yvette Bowman, Tamara Zujewskyj

Sub-Committee Members: Janine Pidruchny, Maureen Purves

Other Volunteers: Lynn Shaw-Ringham, Guadalupe Buchwald, Rhonda & Byron Gill, Lorraine Lepine, Nancy Vermond, Monique Beneteau, Nancy Beck, April Leffler, Blair Laden, Denise Cirino, Sr. Mary Smith, Donna Aldous

In addition, thanks are offered to those who are not named, but who helped out spontaneously throughout the weekend!



Most of the 116 attending TCC Teachers pose for the group photo in the field on The Banff Centre grounds where the first and last full TCC practices of the Conference were held.

Photo: Margo Carpenter



What a privilege it has been to have experienced my first international TCC Conference in beautiful Banff. In this magnificent setting (wrapped in the chi of gigantic mountains), I experienced a heightened awareness of what I have long believed: that we are all swimming in what our hearts are thirsting for: inner/outer peace, joy & beauty.



Conference Co-Host Louise Bureau gracefully arranges items at the registration table on Saturday, the first full day of the conference. Photo: Margo Carpenter

I found it here through a loving & helpful TCC Community (such presence &

attentiveness especially from the Conference Committee).

The presentations from passionate teachers & the practice sessions have inspired me to keep refining my practice & teaching — to keep discovering a world of mystery & possibility flowing within & around. Yes. May the Joy of the Mountain flow into all the nooks & crannies of our daily lives. Gratefully,

— *Sr. Mary Smith*
Portland, OR
(First-time Attendee)

Surrounded by the Smajesty and beauty of the Canadian Rockies

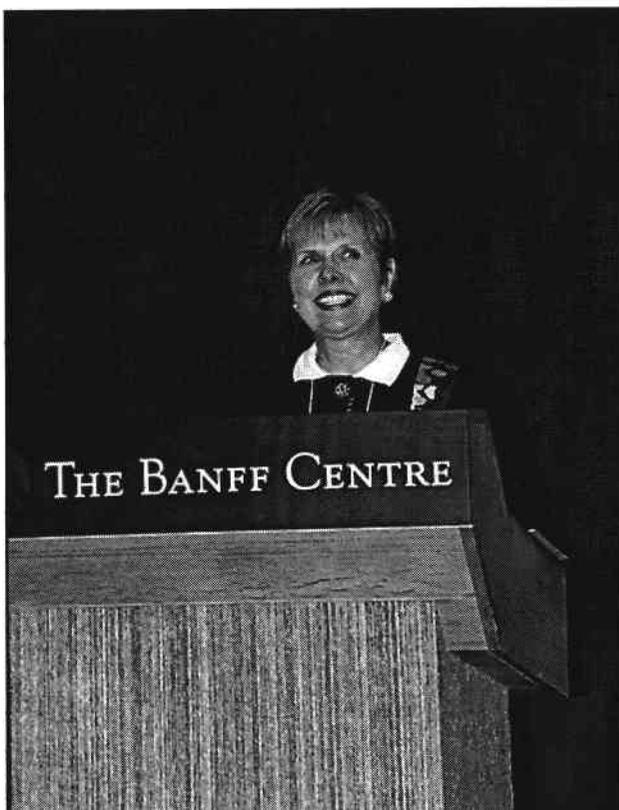
was the frosting on the cake to the Banff *T'ai Chi Chih* Conference. What beauty and the energy of the mountains circled and supported us in our learning and deepening of our movements. I was very appreciative of the breakout groups and presentations. They focused on and helped me to deepen my awareness & knowledge of groundedness, softness & continuity and flowing from the center.

The whole conference flowed cohesively around these themes. I took them to my TCC practice and into my life.

I am so glad I was able to attend this superb conference. Thank you Chery Ann & Louise and your team.

— *Judy Mirczak*
Hadley, NY

I wrote this poem during the journaling workshop!



Conference Co-Host and "MC" Chery Ann Hoffmeyer beams with joy as she welcomes the attending teachers on Saturday morning. Photo: Margo Carpenter



Posing in front of stunning Moraine Lake, surrounded by the striking Wenkchemna (the Stoney Indian word for *Ten*) Peaks is Ann-Marie Buchwald, daughter and student of TCC Teacher Guadalupe Buchwald. This lake is one of many within Banff National Park, and within driving distance of the conference site.

Photo: Guadalupe Buchwald

DAUGHTER IN THE MOUNTAIN TOP

You welcomed me with open arms.
My chest beamed with your presence –
cheery and kind.

Rooted deep below, I trusted
the ever opening above –
My Heart responding
JOY.

Such richness within touched
inside me. A subtle
profound sharing.

A mountain, a daughter
become one.
Which am I?

– **Diana Bahn**
New York, NY
(First-time Attendee)

My first *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers' conference! Recharged and renewed — it was priceless being around so many inspiring teachers, sharing insights and ideas. I feel as though I'm about to go home and teach my very first class ever — full of enthusiasm and passion, full of new ideas. Coming here has confirmed the importance of a community and I look forward to the conferences to come, and my feet look forward to being told how much they're loved far more often! Thank you to all the wonderful people who put so much of their love and energy into making this conference such a success!

– **Shilo Crawford**
Invermere, BC, CANADA
(First-time Attendee)

The conference was just awesomely glorious. The softness experienced while moving from the centre just takes one's breath away. To be aware of the stillness that has always been there... Joy has truly been experienced on the mountaintop. To take one's practise from the exterior and into the interior of oneself has truly been a long, but very rewarding journey that has only just begun to begin.

Thank you one and all to those who have contributed to make this conference simply the best. Love in chi.

– **Byron Gill**
Christopher Lake, SK, CANADA
(First-time Attendee)



(L-R): Posing for a picture on the Banff Centre campus are Canadian teachers Janine Pidruchney, Yvette Bowman, Tamara Zujewsky, Margo Carpenter (who served as VFJ Conference Photographer), Monique Beneteau, Nancy Vermond, and TCC student Amelia Kaminski, who later performed a violin solo during the Rededication Ceremony. Photo provided by Margo Carpenter

Conference. I experienced bonding and a newness. I am deeply grateful to Justin for sharing the gift of TCC Joy Thru Movement. I heard about the TCC Conference, but to be part of it was something I'd never dreamed of. I wish to acknowledge and to thank all my TCC teachers who supported me in my desire to become a TCC teacher. This is only the beginning. I willingly choose to be a learner. I want to remain open and to yield to TCC Joy Thru Movement.

- Sr. Cecile St. Remy
Broken Arrow, OK
(First-time Attendee)

This year's conference was powerful! A time for reflection and journaling, movement, friendship & great food! This year the committee outdid themselves. It was well thought out. I'm grateful.

Always a student open to learn, I will

A wonderful gathering of the Chi in a gorgeous location on the Mountaintop. To gather with fellow teachers is a blessing.

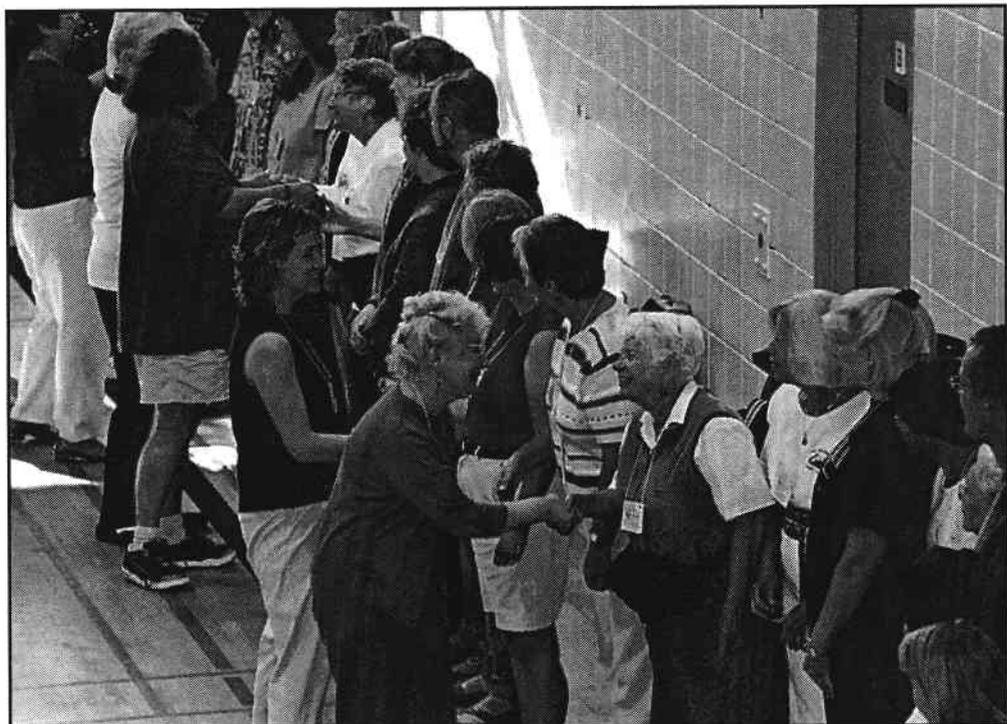
- Nancy Beck
Lubbock, TX
(First-time Attendee)

It was such a joy to be part of the 2003 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers'

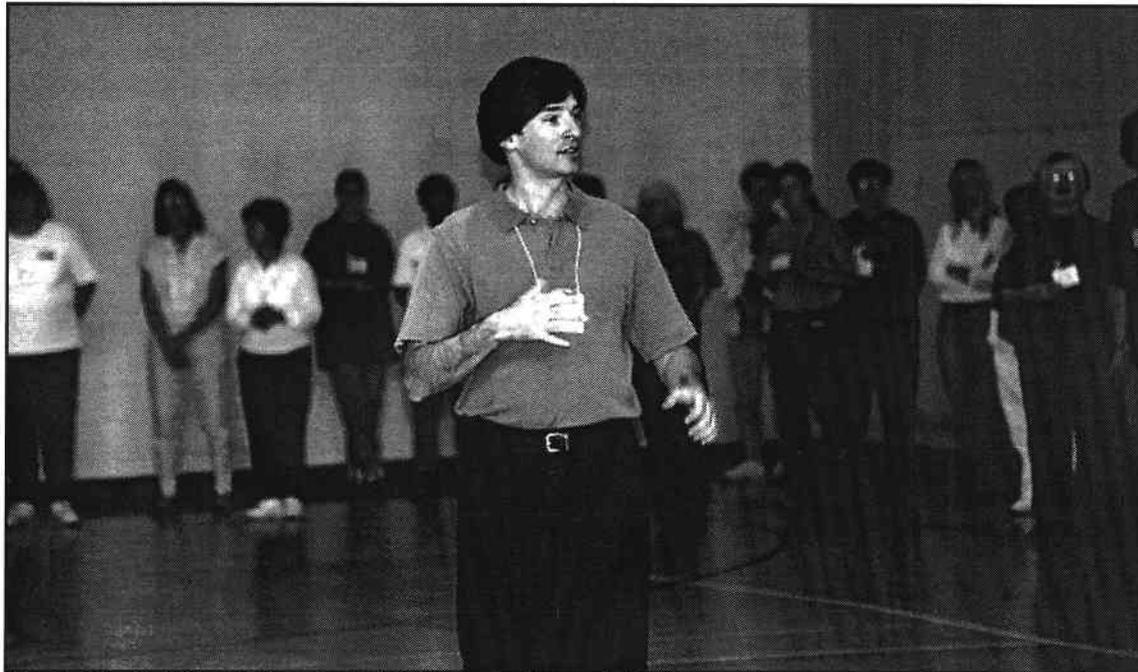
In this BETTER THAN BEST conference I have learned to respect my practice, respect my self, and respect the entire T'ai Chi Chih Community. I spell respect:

- Relaxation
- Expect nothing
- Softness - continuity
- Perfect alignment
- Essential movement only
- Centered
- Total surrender

- Holly Davis
Rancho Mirage, CA



Attending teachers introduce themselves to one another, moving in opposite lines through an activity called the "Traditional Handshake". Photo: Margo Carpenter



Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community Ed Altman makes a point before moving together on Saturday morning.

Photo: Margo Carpenter

Justin's video was helpful. Three things he invited us to work on: 1) Circularity 2) Polarity 3) Weight Shift.

Needless to say, I have much to work on. I am recommitted & excited to work on my movements.

Thank you, Ed & Noel. Thank you, Chery Ann & committee. Love and peace to all. The only way to true peace, acceptance and great power is through STILLNESS.

- Judy George
Roseville, MN

be working on all my movements, applying all I heard. Let me share some notes:

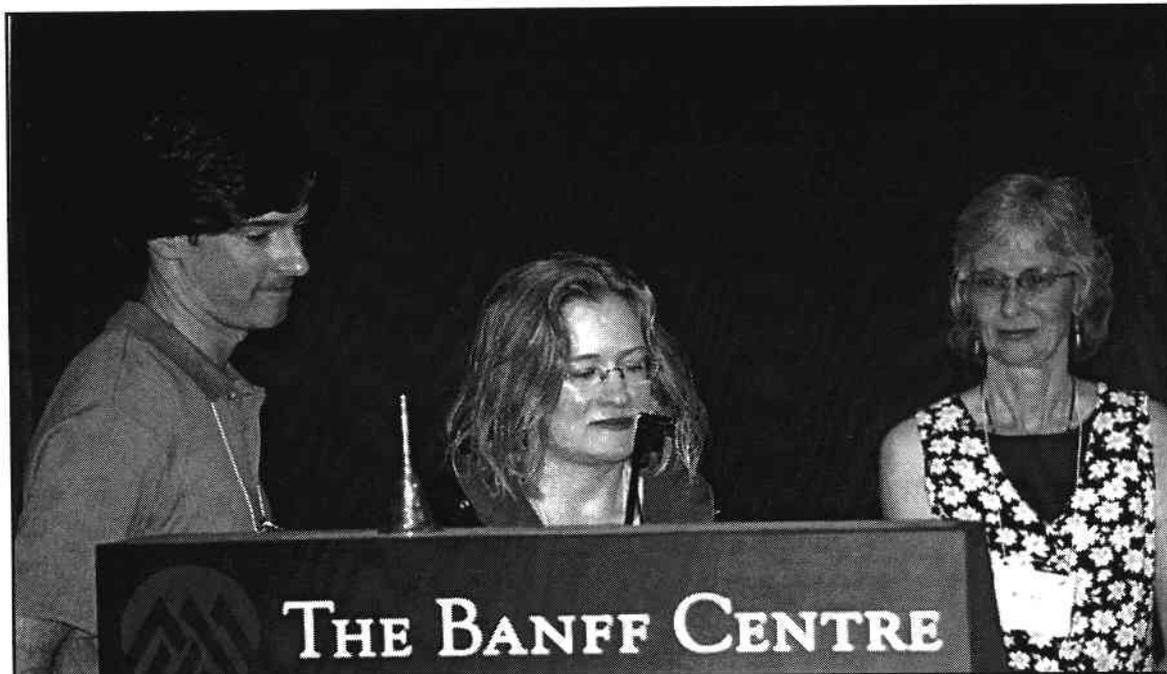
- * It's a solo journey.
- * Let go & the universe will show you the way.
- * Integrity is the basis for joy.

- * What does it mean to flow? Yield.
- * When you feel tension, yield. Water yields.
- * Do less, not more.
- * Move like a lava lamp. Visualize.
- * If you want to move softly, start with your legs.
- * Have a hunger that fuels my enthusiasm.
- * Power of inner sincerity cannot be taught.



Originator of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement Justin Stone addresses the attendees via a videotaped message.

Photo: Margo Carpenter



VFJ Editor Noel Altman (center) concludes announcing her retirement from the position on Saturday afternoon, which succeeded the retirement announcement of Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman. Jean Katus, publisher of Good Karma Publishing, Inc., was next to announce her retirement. Photo: Margo Carpenter

Thank-you so much to the conference committee for making my first conference such a wonderful experience in an amazing setting.

Our "Joy on the Mountaintop" however, was marred by the surprising & saddening announcements by Ed, Noel & Jean.

Justin will have a hard time finding a person with the dedication, the commitment & the selflessness of Ed to carry forth TCC Joy Thru Movement in a pure form.

I wish to thank Ed, Noel & Jean for their tireless work on behalf of the TCC Community, and to wish them all happy chi on their journey onward.

- Terri Manuck
Salt Spring Island, BC
CANADA
(First-time Attendee)

This Banff Conference for TCC Teachers has been magnificent — not only the scenery, but the joy of being in the midst of wonderful teachers. There was lots of tension — learning to "yield" as Ed said. Letting the emotion run — release — coming back to "What is my pur-

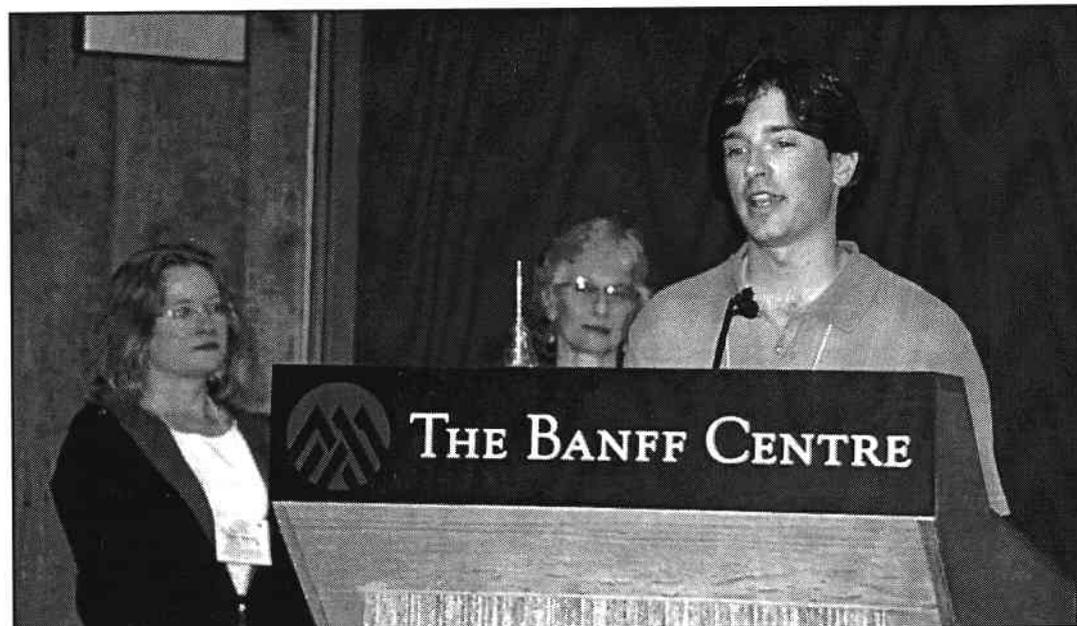
pose and what do I need to do next?"

As always, the food was too good. The individual breakouts were great — journaling for my practice was a new and great experience; partner practice was new as it is about "me," not the person I was working with.

Thank you to Ed, Noel and Jean for all the work they have done for the TCC Community. I know they are not gone, but I will miss their presence in the capacity each held.

Justin's video was good to see twice.

- Nancy Jo Bleier
Sitka, AK



Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman wraps up the retirement announcements for the teachers in attendance. Photo: Margo Carpenter



Following the announcements of the retirements, three journals, one for each of the retirees, were placed out on the registration table for attending teachers to sign if they so desired. (L-R): Teachers Cathy Brochu and Debbie Cole sign a book, while Teacher Blair Laden waits for her turn.

Photo: Margo Carpenter

The conference committee did a great job — they kept us grounded and provided a supportive atmosphere for our *T'ai Chi Chih* practice. I want to thank Ed & Noel for being great role models for me as they have truly allowed their *T'ai Chi Chih* practice to spill out into their daily lives. I thank Ed for teaching me about my *T'ai Chi Chih* practice and sincerity. No fear. Trust.

– Nancy Werner-Azarski
Minneapolis, MN

Presentations by diverse, excellent teachers made this conference program especially rich and helpful.

The bombshell was Ed's announcement of his retirement, followed by Noel's, and by Jean's retirements. At first I had to lie down on the grass under the aspen trees to get centered again. But overnight I found a sense of calmness and continuity in the community. I hope we will be

able to build on the structures and systems that these leaders have developed, so our organization can grow. Over my years of experience

I've come to appreciate the sheltering, nurturing capability of structure.

I trust our community to keep nurturing joy. As we yield to the Tao, and make ourselves soft, we will find more energy and love. In peace,

– Stephanie Bass
Raleigh, NC

I'm very proud to be a part of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community, that we could experience such sorrow at our great loss and yet such joy in our unity. From my heart, thank you Ed. Thank you Noel. Thank you Jean.

– Athene Mantle
Hayward, CA



(L-R): On the concluding day of the conference, Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman and Editor of *The Vital Force* Noel Altman listen to Conference Co-Host Chery Ann Hoffmeyer from the podium as Conference Co-Host Louise Bureau gives GKP Publisher Jean Katus a parting hug and THANK YOU for her 15 years of dedicated service to the TCC Community. Louise and Chery Ann presented a journal to each of the three retirees, filled with well-wishes from attending teachers.

Photo: Margo Carpenter



TCC leaders announce their retirements during teachers' conference

[Editor's Note: On Saturday afternoon of the teachers' conference, Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman, Editor of *The Vital Force* Noel Altman and President of Good Karma Publishing, Inc. Jean Katus, each took the podium in turn and announced their imminent retirements from their positions of leadership within the TCC Community. The text of their announcements follow, although Ed added quite a bit to his announcement when he was actually at the podium. Therefore, his letter below is not his complete speech. All of the speeches were videotaped for the archives.]

To the Accredited Teachers of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community,

I am writing this letter to let you know that I have chosen to retire from my current position as Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community. This change will take effect on September 30th, 2003, and I am making arrangements to return all responsibilities of the position back to Justin Stone, the Originator of *T'ai Chi Chih*, Joy Thru Movement. In an effort to create the smoothest possible transition, I will honor my event commitments and lead all courses I have been scheduled to teach through January, 2004 unless Justin chooses to have someone else lead them.

I was very flattered in 1996 when Justin asked me to take this position. In essence, he was asking me to do him a favor, and since I cared for him and for our community I accepted his offer. I had no idea at that time how much work the job would eventually entail, nor how much satisfaction I would receive from working with all of you. I have grown and found moments of incredible inspiration and truth, and I am grateful.

The last year of my life has brought many changes, and I've done a lot of re-examining of my choices and priorities. While I've enjoyed this position and gained a great deal from it, I have also felt a lack of balance in my personal and professional life. No one asked me to make sacrifices in these areas, but I did what I felt was necessary to serve the highest needs of the community. I now realize that I am unwilling to continue making those sacrifices in the future, and see that I cannot serve the needs of the community without them.

I also acknowledge that the original need for taking this job no longer applies. It has become increasingly clear from Justin's personal letters and published articles that he is uncomfortable with the direction I am

leading our community. I do not agree with his perspective, but as the Originator of *T'ai Chi Chih*, Joy Thru Movement, he has his own concerns and opinions. Justin has never formally asked me to step down, but his lack of support is a confirming sign that it is time for me to leave the title behind.

As Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community, I have emphasized the importance of teaching and living with sincerity, balance and integrity. I have also worked to develop unity and respect within the community and know that by doing so I have served you to the best of my abilities.

I wish to thank Justin for the opportunity to serve the community, and to express my gratitude to all the course hosts I have worked with to offer events. I would also like to express my tremendous thanks to my wife Noel for her support through these years. She has shared my passion for the community and worked with me every step of the way since the day I agreed to Justin's request to lead the community. She has been generous with her time and input, and respectful of Justin's demand that I make decisions alone. She has helped me explore many options when facing tough choices and always encouraged me to make them based solely on what was best for the community. I know that I would not have been nearly as successful without her help and support, and I am forever grateful that she stuck with me through these years.

I look forward to having more time to devote to my personal practice, and to teaching *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement on Kauai. I wish you all well in your practice and send my best wishes to your students as well.

[Editor's Note: Justin has approved Ed's January courses.]



Fellow *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers,

I am announcing my retirement from my position as the editor of *The Vital Force*, effective after the publication of the next issue in October of this year.

I want to thank the many wonderful people I've had the pleasure to get to know on a more intimate basis over the last five years — since I've held this position. Every person who reached down inside and pulled out their personal story, and then put pen to paper to share it — I salute each of you for stretching yourselves, and absolutely giving something back to this community.

Now in its 20th year of publication, I believe the quality of this enduring journal has very definitely improved due to the efforts of those who have submitted articles in recent years. As even one of you fully applied yourself, others read your writing and became inspired to push themselves as well — to examine how they felt about a topic and then send in their comments, or story, or to try your idea in their classes or practice.

The whole point of *The Vital Force* is to provide a connecting link for the entire world community of *T'ai Chi Chih* practitioners, a means for all of you to connect with one another, to educate, inform and inspire one another — at least that's the way I see its purpose, and have worked to promote.

Thank you all for your past support of this worthy endeavor. I hope that you will continue to support it as it moves forward once again into new hands.

It's very definitely time now for me to move on as a very distinct phase of my life comes to an end. I am an accredited *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher, and I greatly value my own practice as well as acknowledge the great good that this practice can effect in people's lives. Those are

unchanging facts. My outward expression of gratitude for *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement — my method of "giving back" — is what is changing.

I cannot end without expressing my deep thanks to *The Vital Force* staff: to Ed, who from Day One has been absolutely critical to the success of getting an issue out each quarter, on time. He's had his hand in so many functions over the last five years — technical advice and repair, database entry and management, website design and maintenance, production of the annual Teachers' Directory each year, training of other *VFJ* staff members, scanning and doctoring photos for every issue, even a final proofreading of recent issues, following my own proofreading. He's been absolutely essential! Thank you, Ed!

Doug Harned has been a committed staff member whose duties have increased over the four years he's been involved. We've greatly appreciated his efforts. Thank you, Doug!

Kathy Albers, Ted Fleischman and Marjie Bassler have each served in their positions with a selfless attitude of service to the community, and each took pressure off of Ed & I at critical times by assuming their respective roles. We acknowledge and value their efforts! Thank you Kathy, Ted, and Marjie!

Lastly, thanks to both sets of *VFJ* Volunteers with whom I've worked over the last five years: in both the Bay Area, CA & in Albuquerque, NM. They volunteer each quarter in assembling the issues for mailing, and play an important role in helping keep costs down. Thank you, *VFJ* Volunteers!

And, once again, to the entire TCC teaching and student community: Thank you all for your support of *The Vital Force*!

After serving the *T'ai Chi Chih* community for over 15 years as the head of Good Karma Publishing, I have decided to retire. One of my greatest joys in promoting Justin's work is the unique relationships I have had with many of you teachers here and others who are not here today. I intend to remain involved in *T'ai Chi Chih* activities and with my fellow teachers. Thank you for your support.



Bouquets of gratitude, love and joy to Chery Ann and the planning committee of this 18th TCC Teachers' Conference. Every aspect of our stay was marvelous. It was truly Joy on the Mountain Top!

I've attended most of the conferences over the past 10 years and they get better and better. I especially enjoyed the tips to better practice and to more effective teaching of the TCC form (Applying TCC Principles, Teaching & Learning Strategies, and Partner Practice).

What could have been depressing turned into an opportunity for joy in expectation. News of the retirement of Jean Katus from Good Karma, Noel Altman from *The Vital Force* and Ed Altman from the position of the Head of the TCC Community, was delivered with clarity, compassion and conviction that all will be well. Since we trust the movement of the CHI in our practice, we trust its movement in our community. All of the above is a great tribute to the teachings of one Justin Stone to whom I am most grateful.

- Sr. Alice Holden
San Antonio, TX

This year's conference was exceptionally well-planned. And even though we unexpectedly learned from Ed of his retirement as Head of the T.C.C. Community, the sense of community prevailed and our personal sadness seemed to be cushioned by larger commitment to T.C.C. Joy Thru Movement that

each person exhibited. I also attribute the containment of personal reactions to that announcement to the manner in which Ed handled his retiring as well as to the fact that the conference was so well organized. I am grateful that Ed & Noel will continue to be part of the T.C.C. Community.

My personal thanks to Chery Ann Hoffmeyer & Louise Bureau and their committee for making this year's conference so enjoyable.

- Lucia Veteran
Lake Winola, PA

How can every year's conference just keep getting better & better? The organization, presentation & beauty the Canadian teachers offered was exemplary.

As was true last year, I appreciate the openness and availability to all of us of planned changes, discussions and issues. Did you notice the peace & acceptance of our commu-

nity when it was done that way — without the whispering and the closed doors of the past? Thank you, Ed, for that gift.

- Jan Arrott
Las Vegas, NM

I am very saddened by Ed's, Noel's & Jean's retirements. Although I am happy for them, it is deeply troubling to me to witness events leading up to this. How can such a homogenous group (educated, mostly middle-class people working on our spiritual growth) foster a bitter, insidious, small-minded group of individuals who displayed such unprofessional and unloving thoughts publicly? Their thoughts and actions worked as a poison in the community. Instead of lifting us all & supporting our leaders, they have helped dismantle "new" growth. Afraid of change and letting go? I ask the community to deeply consider how we can handle future disputes and visions in a better fashion. It is now time to



(L-R): Teachers Ron Barker, Nancy Werner-Azarski and Donna McElhose share friendship and a conversation. Photo: Margo Carpenter



regroup, rebuild & pull together as a whole. Let us not rip apart each other, but build on our individual strengths. Ed and Noel's leadership will be missed on so many levels. Thank you, Ed, for having us recognize our personal responsibility for our own practice, our own growth, and for giving us the freedom to do so. You have led us, but not dictated to us. Thank you for all the gifts & personal sacrifice you, Noel, and Jean, have given us. Love you,

– Siobhan Hutchinson
New Egypt, NJ
(First-time Attendee)

The 2003 Conference was unique in many ways. The creative format was productive, enjoyable and enriching. It took a gifted committee to present such in-depth sessions and to afford us physical comfort with unprecedented aplomb. Of course, the retirement of Ed Altman, Noel Altman and Jean Katus leaves a void as their contribution to the TCC Community is inestimable. The unanimous support manifested for them is history-making. We are gratified to know they will always be loyal, enthusiastic members of the TCC family.

– Sr. Margaret O'Connor, S.C.
Wayne, NJ

Banff, Alberta, Canada,

What a beautiful setting for our 18th Annual *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers' Conference. The Canadian organizers, Chery Ann Hoffmeyer and Louise Bureau, Conference Co-Chairs, did such a superb job in making us feel so much at home. This made our stay so enjoyable. My thanks to the two of them and to all the others who helped, and the entire community. My profound thanks also go to Ed, Pam, and

Sandy, some of the very best *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers. I also want to acknowledge my sadness at the announcement of Ed's retirement, as well as Noel's and Jean's, from the roles they had; I just hope and wish they will always be part of our *T'ai Chi Chih* community.

As Pam said, let there be "healing and unity, letting go, moving through."

– Renza Baker
San Antonio, TX

Lessons from the conference in Banff:

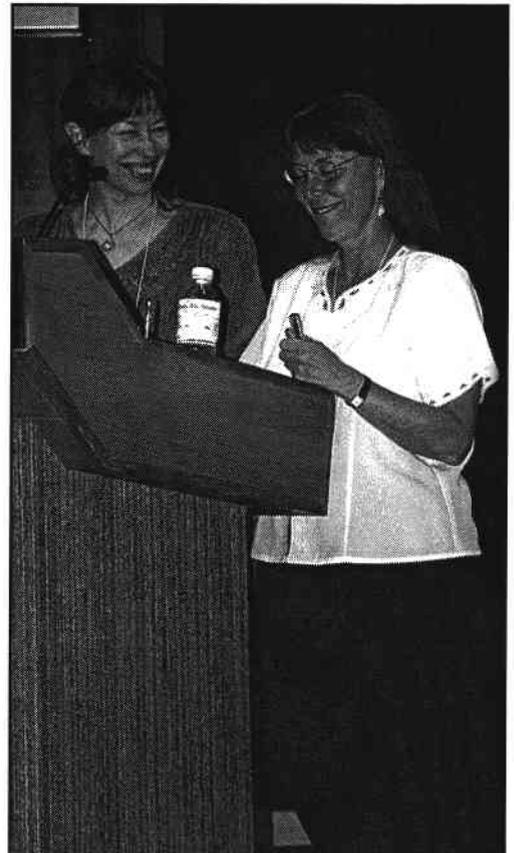
*yield
control,
surrender
expectations,
discover
embrace
chi*

My first conference as a newly-accredited TCC teacher was Ed's first as head of the TCC Community. I have observed the TCC Community at these conferences every year since and every year I have witnessed our movements becoming more as one. As a member of the TCC Community, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to Ed for his dedication, and the insights & gentle direction he provided as head of the TCC Community.

My practice is deeper, richer, fuller in large part due to his urgings to "feel this...sense this...notice this..." As a teacher, I, in turn, invite my students to do the same.

Thank you, Justin, for the gift of TCC Joy Thru Movement and to Ed for helping our community to keep it pure & embrace it.

– Linda R. Williams
Camarillo, CA



(L-R): Pam Towne, Sandy McAlister, TCC teacher trainers, share the podium. Photo: Margo Carpenter

The "Joy on the Mountaintop" conference evoked beauty, grace and love. The scenery was majestic, the conference center beautiful and the Canadian hosts most gracious. Thought was given to each detail and presented with love. This atmosphere and especially the times for reflection contributed to a deepening of my *T'ai Chi Chih* practice in ways I didn't anticipate.

I appreciated the openness and integrity of the "retirement" announcements of Ed, Noel and Jean. We had time to process, accept and then return to our practice with joy.

With a grateful and open heart I send love to all the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community.

– Linda Meyer
Oakland, CA



TCC Teacher Trainer Sandy McAlister (top, center, on stage) makes her points about moving well to the group.

Photo: Margo Carpenter

I was so moved by the practices we went through that we will try and do just as good, if not better, in St. Louis next year. The Chi flows through me as I've never experienced before.

were all appreciated.

All the presenters were well-prepared and interesting. The vendors were well-organized and well-supplied.

The mountains, the buildings, the food are superb! The mountain air was an experience to behold!

The Canadian brothers & sisters are the most generous in making our stay a most wonderful stay — we love you Canadian brothers & sisters!

— **Andy Anderson**
Highland, IL

A wonderful, loving, Chi-filled conference.

Everything went off so smoothly. The facilities were excellent. Meals — delicious, and a delicious variety. The TCC Bags — filled with goodies — and the hand-painted stones —

The sad part came when Ed & Noel Altman and Jean Katus announced their retirements. It was a shock — and disappointment for all of us. We appreciate all that they've done for the TCC Community over the years. Everyone wishes the three of them all the best in their future plans. They'll still be an important part of the TCC Community. THANK YOU.

Justin's presence was strongly felt — with his video, the rededication ceremony, etc.

All in all we had four informative, chi-filled days. THANK YOU.

— **Maureen Purves**
Morinville, AB, CANADA



TCC Teacher Sr. Meg Costello enthuses her teaching to TCC student Amelia Kaminski during the "Open Practice" on Sunday afternoon.

Photo: Margo Carpenter



(L-R): TCC Teacher Trainer Pam Towne, Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman and TCC Teacher Trainer Sandy McAlister share the stage in leading the group through a full practice.

Photo: Margo Carpenter

While doing Perpetual Motion Taffy, I noticed that the right wrist was stiff and I held my hand at an angle. So my question was WHAT IS SOFT WRIST? It was suggested that I do a move where I experienced soft wrists to see how it felt in the body. I practiced Push Pull and experienced my wrist area as space through which water flowed. I returned to Perpetual Motion Taffy and imaged my wrists as space through which water flowed out through my hands and there was no tension and my hand had no angle.

I have applied this image all day Sunday & my whole body was softer as I moved with freer flowing energy.

- Sr. Margot Fish
Toronto, ON
CANADA
(First-time Attendee)

1 Justin's video touched me deeply. My gratitude for this joyous movement that has set my spirit free.

2. Learning and applying Ed's, Pam's & Sandy's insights to going deeper created a

new flow — releasing tension that I may be feeling.

3. Saturday's afternoon session had a gentle flow of energy from each group of teachers. It was fun, "effortless effort" in learning how to go deeper into yinning and yanging, flowing from the Center, moving with softness and continuity. It was a peaceful element of the weekend.

- Sr. Meg Costello
Philadelphia, PA

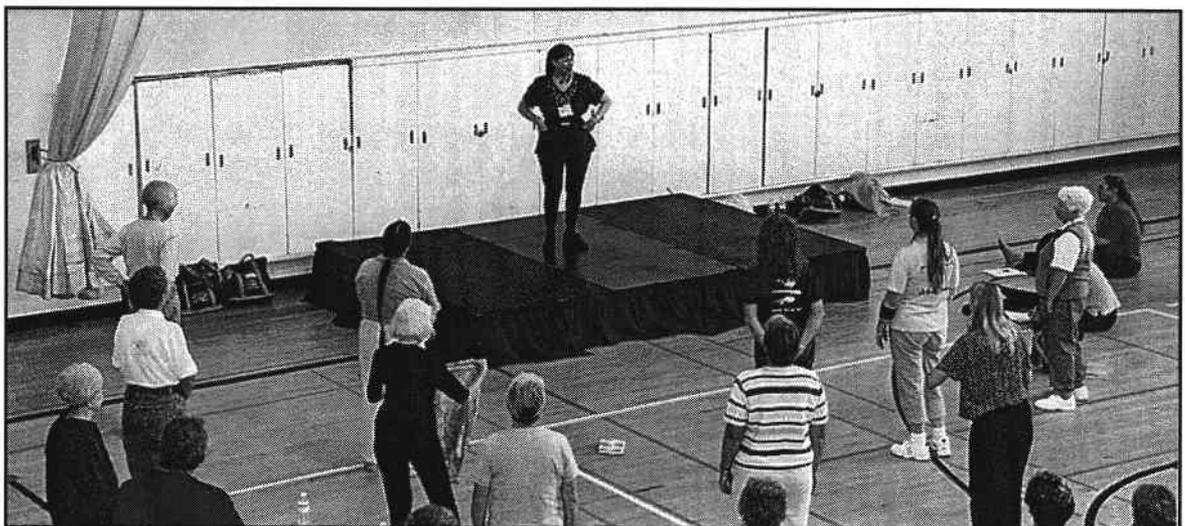
I experienced many new learnings at this conference. My practice was broken apart where it was stuck and put back together at a new level, thanks to loving corrections by fellow teachers. I learned the true deep meaning of honesty and integrity from Ed and Noel who have given me insights to explore in my own life. Thanks to all of you who brought us together on the mountaintop.

- Carol Houtkooper
Yankton, SD

A big thank you to the Canadian teachers for organizing a truly wonderful Conference in the most spectacular environment. Everything was perfect and in my last practice, I experienced such a feeling of love and connection to the TCC Community, but also a feeling of sadness at the retirements of Ed, Noel & Jean. We will miss their generous efforts and contributions and send them our best wishes for the future. Hopefully there will be many more Canadian Conferences in the future! I can't wait to come back.

- Carolyn Perkins
New York, NY

continued on page 24



TCC Teacher Trainer Pam Towne makes a point about turning from the waist during the applicable movements.

Photo: Margo Carpenter



News Shorts

UCLA researchers report TCC form boosts immunity in older adults

UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute researchers report that older adults in a 15-week *T'ai Chi Chih* class saw immunity factors that suppress shingles soar 50 percent. In addition, participants showed significant improvement in their physical health and ability to move through their day.

Appearing in the September edition of the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*, findings of the randomized, controlled clinical trial are the first to demonstrate a positive, virus-specific immune response to a behavioral intervention.

"Our findings offer a unique and exciting example of mind over matter," said Dr. Michael R. Irwin, a professor at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute and director of the Institute's Cousin's Center for Psychoneuroimmunology. "A large body of research shows how behavior can negatively affect the immune system and health, but ours is the first randomized, controlled study to demonstrate that behavior can have a positive effect on immunity that protects against shingles. The findings are particularly noteworthy as the *T'ai Chi Chih* form or "meditation with movement" increased immunity in older adults who are at risk for herpes zoster.

"The improvements in both immunity and physical functioning were significant by widely accepted measures of each, and all with no surgery, no drugs and no side effects," Irwin said. "We were particularly struck by improvements in what subjects were able to accomplish physically as a result of participating in these classes. In fact, older adults who had more impairment present at the start of the study showed the greatest improvement and benefit at the end."

The varicella zoster virus, or shingles, can cause a painful skin rash with intermittent pain that can last for months or years. Even when the rash subsides, skin in the affected area can remain extremely painful to the touch.

The virus lurks in the nerves of virtually everyone who has had chicken pox, but the immune system typically prevents outbreaks. This cell-mediated immunity to the virus declines with age, however, leaving older adults particularly susceptible to the painful condi-

tion. The greater the decline, the greater the risk. No vaccination against shingles exists.

The study randomly assigned 36 men and women age 60 or older to a 15-week program of three 45-minute *T'ai Chi Chih* classes a week or to a wait list. To qualify, each volunteer had to show immunity to varicella zoster virus, but could not have had a history of shingles. They also had to be able to walk. Three class members dropped out before the study ended due to transportation issues. One member of the control group dropped out.

Varicella zoster virus-specific cell-mediated immunity was measured before the program began and one week after the program ended. Doctors used the Medical Outcome scale to assess physical functioning before the program began; at five, 10 and 15 weeks during the program; and one week after the program ended.

The study was funded by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, a unit of the National Institutes of Health.

Co-authors of the study were Jennifer L. Pike and Jason C. Cole of the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute and Department of Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, and Dr. Michael N. Oxman of the University of California at San Diego and the San Diego Veterans Affairs Healthcare System.

The UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute is an interdisciplinary research and education institute devoted to the understanding of complex human behavior, including the genetic, biological, behavioral and sociocultural underpinnings of normal behavior, and the causes and consequences of neuropsychiatric disorders.

– Dan Page

[Editor's Note: TCC Teacher Roberta Taggart, one of the two teachers who has worked on this project, reports, "The pilot study uses the same design as the current four-year NIH-funded study underway at UCLA. The study is entering its fourth year; results are expected to be published within the next year or so."

She presented at the 2003 teachers' conference on her participation in the study, and the write-up above is the "soon to be released" press release she alluded to than.]



Calendar of Events

<p>Nov. 18 thru 23, 2003</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING w/ <i>SANDY McALISTER</i></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>TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>	<p>April 22 thru 25, 2004</p> <p>TCC INTENSIVE w/ <i>SANDY McALISTER</i></p> <p>Location: Houston, TX Contact: Sr. Carletta LaCour, OP 6505 Alameda Road Houston, TX 77021 Phone: (713) 741-8298 - or - E-mail Caroline Gullott: rcsgullott@aol.com</p> <p>Student/Teacher Attendance Fee: \$200</p>						
<p>Nov. 20, 2003</p> <p>DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT" CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH PRACTICE</p> <p>Location: Worldwide</p> <p><i>(Teacher Aida Wilks initiated this annual celebration which falls on Justin Stone's birthday, Nov. 20)</i></p>	<p>July 15 thru 18, 2004</p> <p>19TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE</p> <p>Location: St. Louis, MO Contact: Deedie Cote 6615 Arsenal St. St. Louis, MO 63139 Phone: (314) 645-6978 e-mail: galeportman@sbcglobal.net</p> <p>Registration and payment deadlines for <i>double occupancy room & board</i>:</p> <table data-bbox="1006 1186 1469 1291"> <tr> <td>by Dec. 30, 2003:</td> <td>\$325</td> </tr> <tr> <td>by May 1, 2004:</td> <td>\$350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>by July 15, 2004:</td> <td>\$375</td> </tr> </table> <p>Non-U.S. Teachers' fee: \$325</p> <p><i>(See flyer insert to register.)</i></p>	by Dec. 30, 2003:	\$325	by May 1, 2004:	\$350	by July 15, 2004:	\$375
by Dec. 30, 2003:	\$325						
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by July 15, 2004:	\$375						
<p>Jan. 23 thru 25, 2004</p> <p>SEIJAKU TEACHER TRAINING w/ <i>ED ALTMAN</i></p> <p>Location: San Francisco Bay Area, CA Contact: Athene Mantle 1717 "D" St. Hayward, CA 94541 Phone: (510) 886-3829 e-mail: chigoddess@hotmail.com</p> <p>Seijaku Teacher Training Fee: \$300 Auditing Seijaku Teachers: \$20</p>	<p>POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS:</p> <p>If interested in a <u>potential</u> event described below, please contact the host.</p> <table data-bbox="836 1680 1469 1942"> <tr> <td>Spring 2004</td> <td>SEIJAKU RETREAT Location: New Jersey Shore Contact: Janet Oussaty: (908) 359-1380 e-mail: jousaty@earthlink.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sept. 2004</td> <td>TCC RETREAT Location: Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA Contact: Donna Aldous: (306) 236-4610 e-mail: aldous.home@sasktel.net</td> </tr> </table>	Spring 2004	SEIJAKU RETREAT Location: New Jersey Shore Contact: Janet Oussaty: (908) 359-1380 e-mail: jousaty@earthlink.net	Sept. 2004	TCC RETREAT Location: Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA Contact: Donna Aldous: (306) 236-4610 e-mail: aldous.home@sasktel.net		
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<p>Jan. 27 thru 30, 2004</p> <p>TCC INTENSIVE w/ <i>ED ALTMAN</i></p> <p>Location: Santa Barbara, CA Contact: Pam Towne 107 Calle Vista Camarillo, CA 93010-1711 Phone: (805) 987-3607 e-mail: ptowne@inreach.com</p> <p>Student/Teacher Attendance Fee: \$200</p>							

Continued from page 21

The site was awe-inspiring. I arrived three days earlier to ingest the atmosphere of Canadian Rockies. I'd never been in this area. I dared to start sketching on my tours & found the TCC concepts helped — less is more, start from your center (T'an T'ien). At the workshops I can't express how there could be so much learning in so short a time — in the TCC movements, journaling, teaching techniques, etc. We will miss your leadership, Ed & Noel, but your presence will always be here. Love,

– Blair Laden
Evanston, IL

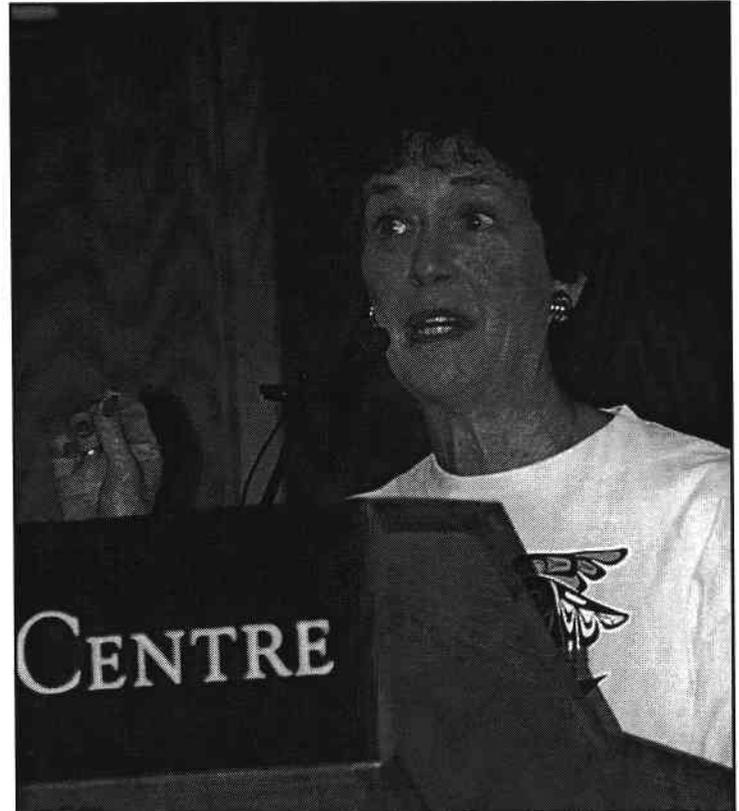
Wonderful conference! It is difficult to narrow down a comment or to capture the spirit of these days. I was attending the Breakout Session on Journaling by Chery Ann Hoffmeyer; after listening to her all-encompassing input, we were invited to find a space, do a move & journal. I found a space outside, facing one of the mountains & stood in the rest pose. Not knowing which movement to do, "Daughter on the Mountaintop" began to emerge.

Coming back into the rest pose, I was very aware of a deep sense of gratitude for being in the grandeur of the Banff Rocky Mountains. I noticed being firmly grounded & rooted. I was aware in my movement — my timing of leg shift & arm flow was "off." I shifted forward & came to a stop as my arms were still moving — only for a split second — hardly noticeable. In this awareness, I slowed the shift, allowing my arms to follow the leg movements. I

felt the unity of movement & the connection with all of creation.



TCC Teacher Carmen Brocklehurst makes a point during a presentation entitled "Moving with Softness & Continuity" which she made with fellow teacher Vic Berg.
Photo: Margo Carpenter



TCC Teacher Linda Braga offered her knowledge of applying education principles when teaching the TCC movements. Later, she offered workshops entitled "Partner Practice."
Photo: Margo Carpenter



TCC Teacher Roberta Taggart presented an update of the research being conducted on health benefits of the TCC Movements. A study is being conducted in conjunction with the NIH (National Institute of Health). See "News Shorts" for the UCLA press release on the first phase of the study.
Photo: Margo Carpenter



TCC Teacher Vic Berg makes a point about "Moving with Softness & Continuity" during a presentation he made with fellow teacher Carmen Brocklehurst. Photo: Margo Carpenter

Journaling is another tool in deepening the awareness of my form.

- Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF
North Plainfield, NJ

Congratulations to the Canadian *T'ai Chi Chih* teachers for a fantastic teachers' conference! The weather was beautiful, the scenery fabulous, the food and lodging exceptional, the programs very interesting and educational, and there was great fellowship with old and new *T'ai Chi Chih* friends. It was the best teachers' conference that I have ever attended. The only sad part was the retirement



(L-R): TCC Teacher Roberta Taggart listens as Conference Co-Host Chery Ann Hoffmeyer leads a session of her workshop in which she taught how to use journaling to enhance personal TCC practice and teaching. Photo: Margo Carpenter

of Ed, Noel, and Jean. They will be sorely missed in their past positions but I look forward to seeing them at the St. Louis *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers' conference in 2004.

- **Bobbie Anderson**
Highland, IL

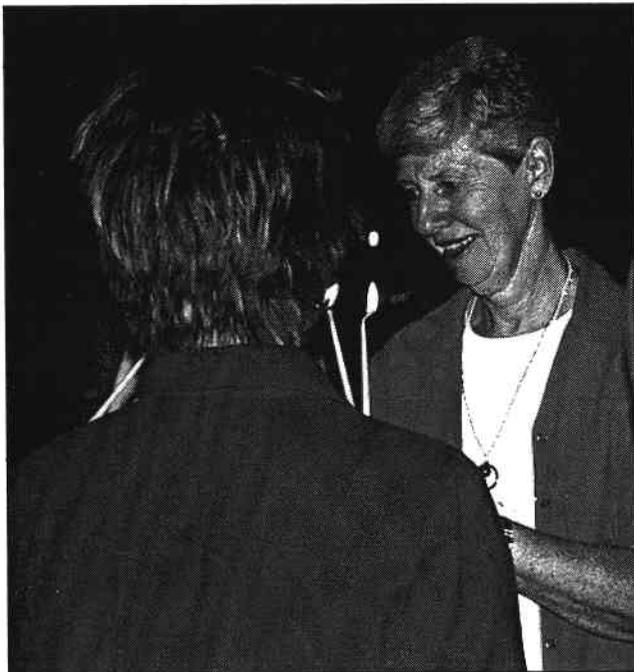
Louise and the rest of the committee. I really enjoyed the "Applying TCC Principles" presentations. I learned a lot from them and was moved by the insights of the presenters. I also enjoyed the journaling workshop led by Chery Ann. It was inspiring. Thank you.

- **Janine Pidruchney**
Edmonton, AB, CANADA
(First-time Attendee)

What an excellent conference! Thanks to Chery Ann and



(L-R): TCC Teachers Ron Barker and Judy George bow to each other in deep respect and gratitude as they conclude the movement portion of their presentation on "Yinning and Yanging." Photo: Margo Carpenter



TCC Teacher Mary Schapker turns around to light the candle of the person behind her during the Candlelight Rededication Ceremony, led by Sr. Antonia Cooper. Photo: Margo Carpenter

teaching, and the peace and serenity that were created in the closing candlelight ceremony. And the one sad note, symbolized so poignantly by the violin solo played at the closing, will remain as well, stirring gratitude in me to Ed, Noel and Jean for all they have done for the *T'ai Chi Chih*



NFF CENTRE
 Above and both at right: TCC Teacher Sr. Antonia Cooper conveys joy during her presentation to the attendees on "Flowing from the Center." Photos: Margo Carpenter

Except for the very sad news that Ed and Noel Altman and Jean Katus were retiring from their respective positions in the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community, the 2003 International Teachers Conference realized its theme — "Joy on the Mountain Top" — to the fullest. As always, a gathering of TCC teachers is cause for joy, but in Banff, the presence of the mountains rising above us from every viewpoint made for a true "Rocky Mountain High"! What will I take with me when I come down from the mountain top? Remembrances of the practices where the Chi flowed freely, the improvement from refining the practice with Ed and other experienced teachers, Ed's spiritual messages filled with wisdom and love, new ideas for

Community and for me personally. That sadness will turn to joy as they take on their new roles in the TCC Community and continue to bless us with their wisdom and dedication.

— **Mary Schapker**
 Galloway, NJ

There is an absolute Divine Moment in a full group practice as all are "one" in motion. This was also so in the Rededication Ceremony. I am deeply grateful to have been part of this joyous experience.

— **Faye Mohr**
 Calgary, AB, CANADA
 (First-time Attendee)



Attending teachers move in a spiraling direction during the Rededication Ceremony. Photo: Margo Carpenter



What an honor it has been to share this space with so many sincere "students." This kind of love and support reminds me of how important this community really is (or can be) to all of us. May we flow from the center as we unfold and develop in this time of transition, trusting our instincts and leaving ego behind.

With that said, I want to especially thank Linda Braga for the wonderful partner practice session and teaching ideas. I would like to see some form of the partner practice become a regular part of the annual

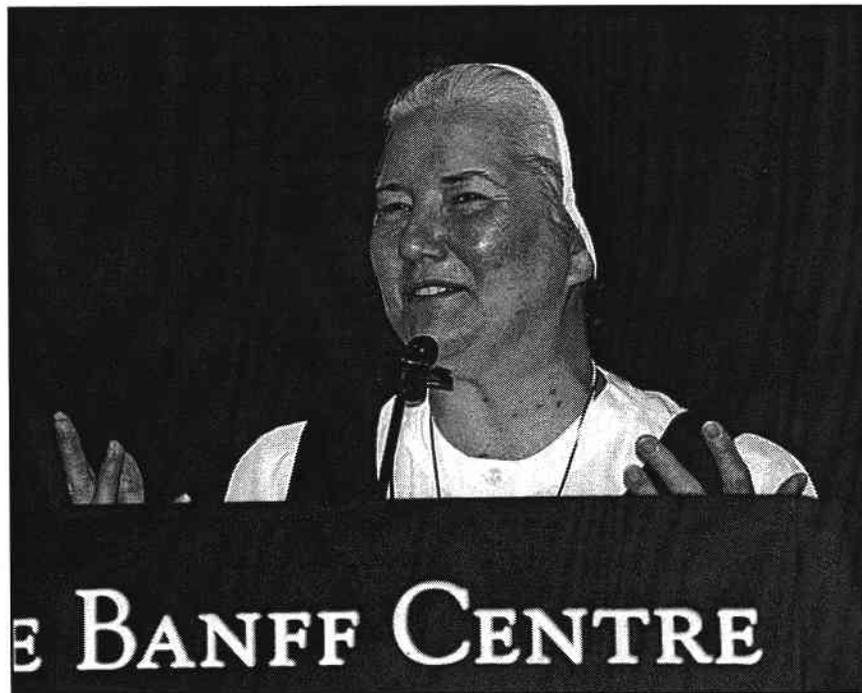
MORE THAN EVER....A NEED FOR TRUST

*More than ever, we must trust, and know within our heart
That Prajna works in wondrous ways, of which we are a part
And just as mountain meets the sky, reflecting Eternal Light
So must we, with spirit strong, trust that all is right*

*T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement is Joy....and Love....and this Intrinsic Force
Will sustain and nourish us, as we surrender to its course
So, may we rest in stillness and in deepest clarity
As we align within this Light....let go....and let it be.*

With love and gratitude,

Beverly Weil
Brewster, NY



conference. This conference has been especially packed with opportunities to deepen TCC practice.

– **Debbie Cole**
Severn, MD

Except for the thunderbolt from Kauai (and Fort Yates), this was a wonderful experience. Even the thunderbolt (once I got over the shock) was positive—Ed and Noel

are retiring to Kauai—who could feel bad for them?

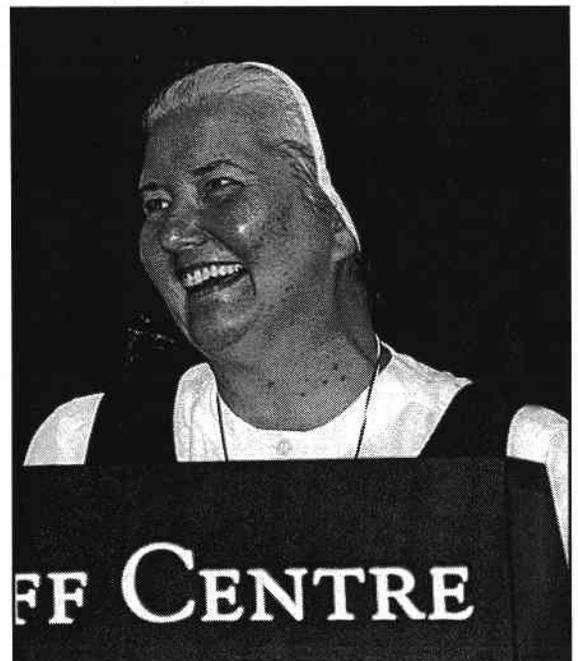
Conference setting was a slice of heaven, and meals were so good that I wearied of good food.

Wonderful content, well-presented, yet full of poignancy. Very spiritual. The Chi was overflowing the mountaintop. One of the best things was

fellowship, as usual. We accidentally fell in with a troupe of chanteuses Canadiennes, and these talented ladies even let Ron Barker and me sing bass! And I've always been told Canadians are boring! Silly me!!

Wonderful time, marvelous conference, even better people. Best of luck to Ed, Noel, and Jean. Meet me in St. Louis!

– **Rodney Anderson**
Roseville, MN





[Editor's Note: TCC Teacher Guadalupe Buchwald had intended to read aloud the following at the teachers' conference, but decided instead to submit them for print in *The Vital Force*.

Ed

Ed, I honour your growing and blooming in seven meteoric years, from an incredibly dedicated TCC teacher, to an absolutely competent and dedicated head of our TCC Community.

You have brought together a very rigorous personal training with Justin Stone and your devotion to TCC Joy Thru Movement, with your very own personal touch and Spirituality. You have joyfully led by example, and guided us to embody and express the purity, honesty and integrity that you demand of yourself and that Justin requests of every TCC practitioner.

I honour your commitment to dedicating these years to TCC Joy Thru Movement, for sacrificing personal life to the benefit of all of us, and for making TCC Joy Thru Movement a priority in your life in such a generous way.

Ed, I personally want to express my immense gratitude for taking on your duties as head of the TCC Community at a time when we desperately needed organization, integration and a stand for high standards and uniformity in the accreditation process.

You gave us the prerequisites for this by creating a system in which you implemented changes to that end. And then, with infinite patience, firmness, and, at the same time, extreme gentleness, you encouraged us to raise our own personal bar. You, as the head of the

TCC Community, raised the Community bar, leading us by example and implementing these ideas and ideals that Justin often talked about.

Nowadays, many teachers embrace and support these ideals, and, as a result of your hard work, we now have the best trained people becoming accredited TCC teachers — those with a level of proficiency, understanding, dedication to meet those high standards.

Those of us who have been around for a long time have benefited greatly from your vision and efforts. We go to teacher's training and accreditation to be inspired, to check and refine our form, correct mistakes, and become fired up again with the newness of our TCC practice to then go back to our students and share all this joy, beauty and goodness.

Our gratitude goes to you, Ed, for leaving us with two very able, dedicated, and qualified Teacher Trainers so your legacy can be continued for the benefit of our TCC Community; I need to express my gratitude and appreciation, and, hopefully, the thanks and appreciation of all of us for taking this leap of faith. We will miss you as the able, honest, and impeccable head of the TCC Community.

From the centre of my being, I travel to my heart and the goodness in me recognizes the divine and goodness in you. Namaste!

Noel

As we all know, behind every successful man is a very loving and powerful woman!

Today, I want to honour and recognize such a woman, Noel Altman. Noel expresses her love, commitment, and dedication to TCC Joy Thru Movement in her practice and in her teaching.

Noel has supported Ed by staying home and keeping the home fires burning while he whirled around the USA and Canada, training, accrediting and creating a better TCC Community. Noel supports Ed, and loves TCC Joy Thru Movement, too, by loving him enough so that he can perform and fulfill his duties as head of the discipline, sometimes sacrificing family life for our benefit.

If this were not enough, Noel has taken on the responsibility of being the editor of our *Vital Force*. She spends countless hours giving her energy, knowledge, creativity, and resourcefulness to coordinate and produce this publication four times a year. We have seen this magazine transform, modify, and blossom into the present art form, in spite of crunching deadlines, mountains of material, and people's requests to accommodate articles, photos and course material.

Thank you, Noel, for your love, dedication, and contribution to TCC Joy Thru Movement in your different roles while wearing different hats, and for sharing and sacrificing your personal life for the benefit of the TCC Community.

Jean



Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Love, work, and dedication of another person we have retiring after more than 15 years of devoted service.

As a Good Karma Representative, I would like to thank you, Jean, for all the help, patience, and support you gave me and the teachers in Canada. I take the liberty of speaking on behalf of all the teachers of Canada, and I dare say, of all the teachers in the USA and abroad, when I express our most sincere thanks and gratitude to you, Jean Katus, for your labour of love to the TCC Community.

I have worked with Jean from the time she took over the work of Satori Resources from Corinn Codye (when that company folded and the materials being sold through it were transferred over to Good Karma Publishing, Inc.). I can attest to the countless hours Jean puts in for the smooth functioning of Good Karma.

Here are some of the unheard-of duties of Good

Karma (a.k.a. Jean Katus).

In any given day she is: preparing materials, ordering books, tapes and videos, preparing material to be printed, cataloguing, filing, labelling and mailing orders, invoicing, promoting, training representatives, organizing teacher's training materials, as well as materials for the Good Karma table at the Conference. She could also be talking to Good Karma Board members, attending Good Karma Board meetings, implementing decisions made there, etc....Get the picture?

Dear Jean, your baby is now a full-fledged teenager; you have raised a wonderful being!

We honour your work, your dedication, your love for Justin, but most of all, your Love and commitment to Good Karma and to TCC Joy Thru Movement. Thank you, Jean, from the bottom of our hearts. Good luck in your new endeavors!

- Guadalupe Buchwald
Victoria, BC, CANADA



(L-R): TCC Teachers Rodney Anderson, Guadalupe Buchwald, Ed Altman, Noel Altman, Jean Katus, Nancy Bordley Hall, and April Leffler stand shoulder to shoulder during the Candlelight Rededication Ceremony conducted by TCC Teacher Sr. Antonia Cooper. Most attendees find this a highlight at every conference.

Photo: Margo Carpenter

IN GRATITUDE

by Debbie Cole

You have been an inspiration to us all up to this point.
We can feel it in our bodies, with every breath, through every joint.
You stretched our comfort zone. You made us laugh. You made us think.
More than once I thought you might have pushed too far, but it was only to the brink.

A man who can speak from the stillness within,
It's not where you're going, but where you begin.
Go back to your roots. Go back to the source.
This is whence comes that great Vital Force,
The quiet that speaks louder than words,
The stillness that moves mountains like birds.
May that radiant stillness forever be heard.

[Editor's Note: Author Debbie Cole prefaced the poem to the right with this statement, "This . . . poem was inspired by Ed at the Chicago teacher training [in Sept. 2003] for all he's given to the community and for being an Inspired conduit of this knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate."]



Photo at left: Attending teachers and students perform *Around the Platter* during the "Open Practice."
Photo below, (L-R): TCC Teacher Lynne Blackford hugs old friend and long-time TCC Teacher Theda Gillespie, who traveled all the way from New Zealand to attend. **Photo at bottom:** TCC Teacher Linda Braga (far left) speaks to attendees at one of her workshops entitled "Partner Practice."

Photos: Margo Carpenter



TCC Teacher Lynn Shaw-Ringham poses with her stained glass artwork. Lynn donated the piece to a raffle to raise money for future Conference scholarships. On the piece was inscribed Lynn's poem:

*Three cranes, attending to the intended,
 A gift of contemplation:
 Their attending and our own.*

Photo: Margo Carpenter





Photo at top left, (L-R): TCC Teacher Dan Pienciak leads the singing as TCC Teacher Trainers Pam Towne & Sandy McAlister, along with Head of the TCC Community Ed Altman, lead the attendees through the movements to "Joy, Joy, Healing Thru Joy." **Photo at top right, (L-R):** Ed Altman, Pam Towne and Sandy McAlister share a smile as they listen to Conference Co-Host Chery Ann Hoffmeyer from the podium. **Photo at bottom right:** Attending teachers and visiting students perform *Bass Drum* during the "Open Practice" on Sunday afternoon.

Photos: Margo Carpenter



Post-Conference

This afternoon, four days after the Banff conference ended, I was putting cedar shakes on a roof. There is a certain rhythm to the procedure that reminded me of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* and the conference. Selecting the right shake is like seeking and finding the right stance; setting it into position and making adjustments is like the weight shift; shaving the edges off to make a cleaner fit is like paring down the arm movements to make each one just what is needed and not a sliver more.

The Banff conference built on all those principles, layer upon layer, just like the cedar shake roof. The speakers presented us with topics filled with insight, wisdom, experience, joy and plenty of wit. The conference committee can be congratulated for organizing a wonderful four days in a beautiful location. It really was a joy on the mountaintop.

The sad note of the conference, the retirements of Ed, Noel and Jean, will bring enormous changes to our community. I think it will be difficult to find replace-

ments who will be willing to commit as much time and energy, as much of their lives, as these three have done. Thank you to them all for their devotion. I especially thank Ed. His gift to the *T'ai Chi Chih* community is...ALL OF US—well trained teachers who are committed to deepening our practice and to maintaining the pure form of *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*. I am grateful to have entered into the *T'ai Chi Chih* community at a time when I could benefit from the wisdom and experience of these three people. They have provided a soft, continuous flow of energy through their positions in our community and a respectful knowledge of Justin Stone's vision and wisdom. It is up to each of us to carry forward what we have been taught, to independently grow within our personal practice and with our students. It is just like that roof I am working on—layer upon layer of shakes compared to layer upon layer of learning, of listening, of yielding, of letting go, of sinking in, of welcoming the chi.

— Anna Moncey
Black Creek, BC, CANADA



Post-Conference

I am the daring soul who suggested that a model for the slight pelvic movement in the side to side moves of the *T'ai Chi Chih* form could correspond to a flattened "Figure Eight" or an infinity symbol. I spoke with Carmen Brocklehurst after her conference session, as she suggested, and learned that she teaches mainly beginners and it is to them that she suggests, "Stick your bum out."

In order to approximate the movement pattern which Ed Altman and Sandy McAlister were presenting

last September at my accreditation in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada — I finally did have to picture my hips as dangling from very flexible strings from my shoulders and tracing in the air a flattened "Figure Eight" in the air...the figure is horizontal to my shoulders and my knees and my shoulders move hardly at all when things are going well.

My criterion to measure this in my own practice is the tremendously greater rush of chi flow from the T'an T'ien in all directions at once.

There is no problem about the centre of the infinity symbol because the movement flows from the T'an T'ien which IS the centre and the source of all the movements.

There is no problem here — and for us visual thinkers who need an image in the mind to approximate with the delicious flowing of *T'ai Chi Chih* movement, I have found this to be a useful teaching tool with some students.

— **Leslie Keith**
St. Paul, AB, CANADA

Post-Conference

After reviewing my notes, hand outs and reflections on my experience at the 2003 TCC Teachers' Conference, I would like to share my comments, thoughts. This was an excellent conference, thanks to Chery Ann Hoffmeyer, Louise Bureau and the organizing committee.

* A well thought out, planned conference where not a single element to make us feel safe and at home had been left out. We were provided with a smooth ride on our learning and internal journey. The content of lecture was inspiring and guided us to a higher level of competence and of consciousness.

* Chery Ann said that she had simply listened to the comments & wishes of the participants from last year's conference and manifested them. This tells me, from the quality and depth of the teaching, that the TCC community is maturing and is self-learning. Teachers are eager to bring the quality of TCC experience for themselves and others to a higher level.

* I was particularly inspired by the closing remark of Ed Altman where he said that TCC Joy Thru Movement did not belong to anyone. Justin brought it to the world to serve humanity and each and every one of us is continuing this rebirth process each time we teach the TCC movements. As Sandy said, we are each responsible to bring our TCC discipline to its highest level to support this transmission of the essence and excellence of the TCC discipline. I would even go as far as saying that our words, our teaching, do not belong to us, but need to be shared with humanity. This inspires me to go further in the maturation of my practice in order to do a better job.

* I was also very sad to hear that Ed, Noël & Jean were retiring from their positions, but I also took it with calm and faith that Justin Stone and the TCC community will find what is needed to continue the wonderful work that Ed Altman had started to bring the infrastructure of this community to such a level that anyone could take over the management of the ever-growing TCC community. But who will take the spiritual and the teaching leadership of the TCC community?

* I was very pleased to hear the research at UCLA presented by Roberta Taggart. This research is of the utmost importance in the recognition of the effectiveness of the practice of the TCC form, but those results are and will remain true only if the quality of teaching is excellent. This means that the TCC teachers need to commit to life-long learning and growth, with the goal to reach excellence in their practice and in their teaching skills. This concept was well presented by Linda Braga.

* Thank you, Justin, for your video and especially for reminding us of the importance of moving well, the importance of how to move to get the maximum out of TCC practice and teaching, which is the only way to sink into the essence of the TCC discipline and to be at the service of TCC Joy Thru Movement, who is our true master, and who will guide us with sincerity and integrity if we listen.

* "Yielding": The TCC community is facing major challenges but will need to practice the concept that Ed has developed of "yielding", of letting go of tension, of past patterns, past stories, in order to let the Chi flow, in order



Post-Conference

to reach the inner wisdom that is within each of us and therefore within the TCC community, so we can continue to serve humanity in harmony and peace.

* Great Conference! I got what I needed in improvement of some movements and much more — the connection with many TCC Teachers, which was delightful. Thank you, all for this wonderful conference!

— **Lorraine Lepine**
Overland Park, KS

Post-Conference

The Canadian Hosting Committee matched the grandness of the mountains and sky around us, held us in this wonderful strength. A huge thank you to each person present or unable to attend. Your sense of community blessed us all.

Each conference is a grace to the teachers. An opportunity to be students, learn from other teachers, sharing our experiences and taking home new approaches to try and share with our students.

I was accredited in 1998; my first conference was in 1999. I guess I was very innocent about my ideas of how well other teachers would be moving. Well, I was really shocked. It seemed there was a lot of very poor movements. So in the last five years I saw it at each conference — a growing of skill, flowing from center, relaxed, better understanding of HOW TO MOVE. The practice today with teachers and students was a delight. The participants followed Ed, Sandy, Pam in flowing Yinning and Yanging, quiet and softness. What a change! It was a delightful feeling to be part of this wonderful transformation over the last five years... Being in this time frame of growth for *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*, I was very fortunate to have the Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih Community*, Ed Altman, leading our community. His example of leadership and community concern has benefited each teacher opened to the instruction. Thank you, Ed, for the gifts you brought.

Movement is the only law of the universe. Sometimes after planting a garden and watching it bloom, there is no choice but to leave it behind.

— **Donna McElhose**
Wildwood, IL

Post-Conference

Teaching Tips

By Christeen McLain
September 1, 2003

When teaching *T'ai Chi Chih* classes, one has the opportunity to meet a myriad of individuals. As one becomes more seasoned with presenting and transmitting this self-evolutionary discipline, you 'learn' how to 'hold the energy' during the class, 'sense what is to be said to encourage students,' and 'not take it personally' when a student is not ripe to embrace the teachings and training that *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* offers.

A tradition that I was introduced to in the 1970's has been of benefit to me. I would like to share it with you. "Place principles above personalities"

This tradition can assist when there is conflict within a class, a personal or work relationship, or any life situation where one is tempted to "throw the bathtub out with the bathwater".

The principles of truth that we are introduced to in *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement* have the ability to bring peace to this planet. No matter what personal or ego concept you may embrace during your teaching career, be mindful before jumping to a conclusion. Pause, breathe, and remember not to take what others say personally. Each of us is in charge of our thoughts. We are the only ones who do think in our heads. What we think affects our perceptions. We perceive from our own limited view. As we open into the cosmos of teachings that the *T'ai Chi Chih* discipline introduces us to, we are like neophytes swimming in a huge pool of consciousness.

Justin Stone has stressed the importance of honoring and respecting the teacher who taught you. The *T'ai Chi Chih* lineage was one way we would introduce ourselves at the first *T'ai Chi Chih* Conferences in California. We'd give our name, our teacher's name, their teacher's name, and so on to the originator—Justin Stone. This practice assists us with remaining alert to how we came to who we are now and how we are constantly being changed in *T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement*.

I write this to you, as there may come a time when you experience conflict with your teacher, or with one of

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Continued from page 33

your students. Remember the lineage. Remember that you are in the process of becoming all you were meant to be through this discipline. Remember the power of your own thoughts and actions. Breathe between thoughts. Allow the gap space to take you back to the pause between the movements. Let the waves settle and the chi teach and heal as you move through this one precious moment in life.

The sea of consciousness we move in together as we practice the *T'ai Chi Chih* movements heals discord

and misunderstanding. Focusing on the soles of the feet, we connect with all souls who practice the form. The force that granted us life knows the journey and the solution. If we let go, remain in the flow, have no involvement with the outcome yet trust the process, the solution will present itself.

Keep heart and faith. *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement, nearly 30 years old now, is ripening into adulthood. Growing challenges have entered each developmental stage.

Soon the teachings will be in

strong demand. I encourage you to keep yourself refreshed daily with the practice so your own developmental process will be congruent with the evolution of *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement.

As the Native American Medicine Wisdom teaches: at 40 years of age one can finally speak: by 50 one learns what to say: at 60 The Crone Teacher Emerges. The teacher fully bloomed and energized, dancing smoothly with this life journey.

Post-Conference

VFJ Information Coordinator retires

As my inner life continues to flow, I become more keenly aware of physical and spiritual shifts in my external world. I have chosen to be a full time mother to a beautiful baby girl and my husband Steve and I continue to say we have met our greatest teacher. The challenge to be in the moment has taken on real meaning. I have enjoyed working as a volunteer for *The Vital Force* as Information/Outreach/General Information Coordinator for the past few years, but as many other things in my life are changing, so too is this. I have decided to retire from this position for a couple of reasons. Ever since Natalie was born, I have wondered if I need to let this position go to spend the extra time with her. In my professional career, I have given up much of my work and my office of nine years.

I have read several articles in *T'ai Chi Chih* publications that have been disrespectful towards Ed Altman. These articles seem less than spiritual in a community that was founded in nonattachment, the effort of no effort, and letting go of the concept of ego. The second reason for my retirement from the *Vital Force* staff is centered in my sorrow and disappointment at what I believe has transpired over the last couple years and especially in the last year in certain pockets of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community. I believe it is our spiritual duty to have and show respect in this community. Ed Altman

has shown me ways to deepen my form which has taken me to new levels in my *T'ai Chi Chih* practice. What Ed has shown me is that when my alignment improves, so does the flow of Chi. For this I am grateful. Ed has demonstrated what impeccability and integrity in *T'ai Chi Chih* practice mean.

Noel trained me for my *Vital Force* position with patience and expertise. She was always willing to listen and provide valuable feedback for my questions and concerns. *The Vital Force* is an excellent publication and I am pleased to have worked with such a dedicated and professional staff.

I am grateful for the love and support Noel and Ed have given me. Their enthusiasm for the *T'ai Chi Chih* form has been contagious for not only me but for the vast majority of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community. I believe that Ed and Noel each retiring from their positions are a huge loss for the *T'ai Chi Chih* community. I trust that although the *T'ai Chi Chih* community might be shaken up by all the change, the core of the teachers will realize that this is a community founded in the spirit of Chi and must stay that way to grow and prosper.

Kathy Albers



Post-Conference

VFJ Webmaster submits his resignation

Ted Fleischman
3521 North Kenwood Ave.
Kansas City, Missouri. 64116

September 10, 2003

A letter to Justin Stone and the TCC Community:

I am very disappointed to hear that Ed Altman has "retired" as head of *T'ai Chi Chih*, Joy Thru Movement. This is a tremendous and preventable loss to the TCC community, in my opinion, and will be felt for a long time.

The purpose of this letter is twofold:

1: To express that it could have easily been different had there been cooperation and support for Ed instead of the actions/inactions I have observed for the past year or more. I believe with discussion and sharing these problems could have been resolved, but instead Ed has been increasingly excluded in various writings and communications. Most noticeably, when modifications to the accreditation process were suggested, the problem was met with resistance to any change and accusation, rather than working together for consensus.

2: To submit my resignation as Webmaster of www.taichichih.org /www.goodkarmapublishing.com effective October 1, 2003. I do not choose to serve in this position any longer, given the present circumstances.

I want to state publicly that I support Ed in all he has done. I find him very honorable and with the highest integrity. Creating the best *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers has always been foremost in his thoughts and actions. I have never heard one word of the slightest disrespect from him. Why he isn't supported is absolutely beyond me.

I want to express my appreciation to Noel for her untiring work as editor of *The Vital Force Journal*. She has been very efficient and easy to work with in my role as Webmaster. I believe *The Vital Force Journal* has been a superb publication under her care. Her work will be hard to match and impossible to beat. This is again a preventable loss to the TCC Community.

I thank Jean Katus for her patience as we began developing an online shopping cart for Good Karma Publishing. I will sorely miss her attention to detail and friendship through our e-mail exchanges. The TCC Community will miss her expertise and devotion.

My wish for the TCC Community is that we can all go on our way, 'sadder but wiser', knowing that *T'ai Chi Chih* Practice is a valuable tool for use along the way of our spirit journey, but not an end in itself. May we all learn to share control and cooperate with one another and to let go of excess ego for the good of all.

Ted Fleischman

[Editor's Note: VFJ Mailing Coordinator Marjie Bassler has also left her position, following her managing of the the publication and distribution of this issue.

I offer my heartiest and deepest thanks to these three staff members, as well as to Ed, who is also leaving *The Vital Force*, for their selfless and greatly appreciated efforts on behalf of the TCC Community. I hope you will do the same.]



Post-Conference

TCC Originator responds to leadership retirements

My Reaction

The day before the beginning of the recent Conference I received a letter from Ed. Altman saying he was resigning as Head of T'ai Chi Chih, effective September 30th. I was surprised and sorry to hear it, though I can understand that working a full-time job and heading TCC would be difficult to do, particularly when one lives in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, requiring frequent long and expensive flights to the mainland.

Here is the first paragraph of Ed's resignation letter to me:

Dear Justin.

"Thank you for the teachings I have learned over the years I studied with you. They have been invaluable in helping me examine and transcend many of the fears and insecurities that have held me back in life. I am grateful to you for the opportunity to develop spiritually and for the lessons I have received while serving the T'ai Chi Chih community."

Ed. took over TCC at a very difficult time, with little advance notice. We discussed the fact that there was really no way he could earn a living at the job, and that he might face some hostility from followers of the previous Head man. These he surmounted in admirable fashion and established himself firmly in his new position. We got along fine and consulted on most activities. Eventually, however, a difference in our views ~~of~~ the philosophy of TCC, and some distasteful personal incidents interrupted our relationship.

Ed. made many friends in TCC and will be missed, and Noel Altman is to be congratulated on the excellent job she did with the Vital Force. I wish them both luck in whatever they undertake in this life.

Since Jean Katus resigned as head of "Good Karma pub. inc." at the same time, we are now faced with finding a new editor for the "Vital Force" and a new CEO for Good Karma. We also must determine whether TCC needs an active head since trainers Pam Towne and Sandy McAlister so ably preside over Teachers' Training Courses, Intensives, Reviews, etc. They will be the people to contact in regard to being a teachers' candidate or hosting the various groups that come together for study. It is to be hoped that the number of Courses and workshops will now pick up and TCC ~~will~~ begin to spread anew.

In ~~my~~ answer to many questions, I do not receive any income of any sort from TCC, but have the great satisfaction of knowing the good that TCC is doing for so many people. I believe TCC was Divinely inspired and is Divinely protected because of stories such as the following:

Recently TCC teacher Liz Humphrey startled me by saying that she had had Asthma all her life until she began to practice TCC, after which the asthma disappeared. Since we hear the same thing about Migraine headache, osteoporosis, Parkinsons, etc., which medicine cannot touch, we have good reason to believe that the medical profession will eventually actively make use of the blessing of TCC. Apparently they already know about it--The American Medical Association wrote me a letter of commendation for TCC as an alternative means of treatment, the United Nations invited me to speak about TCC at the Hammersjold auditorium in New York, and the Mayo Clinic recommended my Videotape in its Journal that goes to thousands of Doctors around the country. TCC is destined to do great things in the future and I look forward to the day when TCC teachers find themselves in great demand. Keep the faith and think of TCC as a Service to Mankind.

I want to thank Ed for taking the job on such short notice and pulling the TCC Community together, and I want to thank Noel for the splendid job she did. Kathy Grassel, a very experienced editor, will take over the Vital Force and I have great confidence in her ability. All elements of T'ai Chi Chih will continue to grow, I am sure.

Justin Stone



Post-Conference

TCC Teacher Trainers fly to Albuquerque after conference to meet with Justin Stone

The 18th Annual *T'ai Chi Chih* Teachers' Conference was a success. The planning committee's attentiveness to detail in preparing for the conference ensured that our needs were taken care of and the conference flowed smoothly. CheryAnn Hoffmeyer and Louise Bureau, as co-chairpersons, did a wonderful job setting the tone at the conference. Their poise and gracious demeanor gently lead us through the conference, keeping us on track, enabling us to stay present to receive the full benefit of what was being offered.

A highlight for me was having many teachers presenting. Our community is full of teachers rich in experience. The more we all share our knowledge and teaching experiences, the richer we all become.

I was proud of the *T'ai Chi Chih* community for the way they faced the announcement of Ed, Noel, and Jean's retirement. There were a variety of emotions expressed by the teachers, but underlying it all seemed to be the acceptance of the inevitability of change. It is the process of letting go of the known and facing the uncertainty of the future that makes change emotionally difficult.

Ed Altman, as Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community, Noel Altman, as Editor of *The Vital Force*, and Jean Katus, Publisher of Good Karma Publishing, Inc., have each given years of service to the *T'ai Chi Chih* community. I celebrate their many accomplishments and acknowledge their hours and hours of work for all of our benefit. I have delighted in seeing their personal growth as they faced challenges in their work. I thank them for their integrity with which they performed their jobs.

I would especially like to acknowledge and thank Ed. Ed has been a cherished mentor to me. When he asked me to take on the position of teacher trainer, he listened to my concerns and insecurities and then encouraged me to go beyond my comfort level. Working with Ed these past two years has been a lesson in balancing softness with strength — softness in not forcing or demanding a direction or choice, and strength in knowing what you feel is right and holding your center. While working together the past two years we have developed a close and lasting friendship for which I am grateful.

Justin has asked Pam Towne and myself to continue in our capacity as teacher trainers, leading workshops, retreats, intensives, and teacher training courses. Ed, Pam, and I have worked closely together in the past two years to ensure consistency in the courses offered. That cooperative closeness will not change as Pam and I continue to work together, bringing continuity to the community. I thank the community and Justin for the support I receive which allows me to continue to serve.

— Sandy McAlister

The Banff Conference was a wonderful time of deepening our practice...renewing our commitment to TCC Joy Thru Movement...connecting with our TCC family. It also gave us the announcement of a change in leadership. Like many teachers, I felt shocked...yet not surprised...at Ed's retirement as "head" of the TCC Community. Having worked closely with him, I know better than most how much caring, time & energy he put into leadership.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Ed & all those who have been of such great service to our community...especially to Noel for her excellent editing of the *VFJ*...to Jean Katus for running Good Karma Publishing for 15 years...to Kathy Albers for taking on the job of Information/Outreach Coordinator...to Ted Fleischman for webmastering ...to Marjie Bassler for her work on the *VFJ*.

Each of these dear ones will be greatly missed! Yet *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement will go on. Others will step forward to fill the volunteer positions vacated. If you feel led to be of service in a greater way, consider volunteering as Information Services coordinator...or webmaster ...or whatever you see needs to be done.

This is a time for us to unite as a community...to let go of whatever emotions we may be experiencing...to focus on principles above personalities...and to let our TCC practice show up in our lives as Joy thru Movement. That's what I intend to do...and to continue working as a Teacher Trainer.

With Love & Blessings to each of you,

Pam Towne



The Last of the Deferred

By Michael S. Isaacs

In the course of becoming an accredited *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher (as of November 11, 2002), I have the distinction of holding two records.

The first distinction is a dubious one. I was not the last of the Mohicans, but I was the last of the deferred.

At the October 2002 accreditation weekend in Ringwood, New Jersey, I was the only candidate to be deferred. No other candidate was deferred locally and nationally thereafter because of the new policy concerning deferred status.

As we know, it had been determined by the *T'ai Chi Chih* community that deferred status was undesirable. It proved to be burdensome to administer as well as too anxiety-provoking and frustrating for the deferred.

The second distinction is a more heartening one. Fifteen days after, November 11, 2002, I became accredited!

How did this happen?

Prior to my accreditation training in October, I had registered to participate in an early November weekend workshop in Washington, D.C. for both teachers and candidates. It was led by Pam Towne, one of the two newly appointed teacher trainers.

Saturday morning was the opening of the workshop. Pam, having heard about my freshly deferred status, offered to give me special attention in the group and individually. My mind was then boggled when she told me that if I learned how to move better it might be possible for her to recommend accreditation by the end of the weekend!

I was truly excited about the unexpected possibility of achieving accreditation on the spot. But, on the

other hand, I wondered how I found myself so suddenly thrust into another challenging time of being closely evaluated so soon after the accreditation week. After all, I had resigned myself to "deferredhood" and a lengthy testing period. I had come to Washington, after all, merely to relax and enjoy the serenity of movement. Suppose I didn't make it? Could I handle two disappointments within such a short period of time?

Pam, having heard about my freshly deferred status, offered to give me special attention in the group and individually. My mind was then boggled when she told me that if I learned how to move better it might be possible for her to recommend accreditation by the end of the weekend!

In any event, at the end of the weekend, Pam had decided to recommend my accreditation, which was finally approved by Ed.

I heaved a sigh of relief, which soon turned to joy. Aha! I finally had a glimpse of the true joy of movement!

Was my swift transition from the scarlet letter of deferred status to the prize of accreditation purely accidental and circumstantial?

Or was it the accumulation, circulation, balance of the chi energy, together with my *teh* that dictated the flow of events? Who knows? All I know is that in January of 2003 I began teaching my first class. Now I am teaching three classes and love it.

I greatly appreciate the love, support, and guidance from various teachers who each helped me on my path in their own unique way. Thank you, Justin, Ed, Noel, Pam, Paula, Dan, Antonia, Valerie, Nancy, Lucia, April, and Sharon.

[Editor's Note: Although Michael was the last person to receive a deferred accreditation, in October, 2002 — which, as he said, he has now completed — there are six more people still of deferred status, according to Ed Altman, retiring Head of the *T'ai Chi Chih* Community.

Ed addressed this fact during his retirement announcement at the teachers' conference in Banff.

He will be passing on all of the pertinent information to TCC Teacher Trainers Pam Towne and Sandy McAlister, and it will be up to them to determine how the accreditations should be completed.]



Peace Amongst the Chaos:

What Has *T'ai Chi Chih* Practice Done for me?

By Karen Silva

I am able to hear so many of my friends and clients who are undergoing those tough times when life seems to be so hard. I am able to lend a sympathetic ear and a shoulder to lean on and yet be strong enough to rise the next day and know the world will be okay.

I have weathered the emotional break-up of two major relationships in my life. Times when I agonized over what is wrong with me — why can't I make things work better? Yet

finding my center, being able to s-l-o-w-w down, I can understand that the sun will still rise tomorrow, I will be able to move on, I will build another strength within my life; it will be okay.

I can watch the news of the war in Iraq and feel the pain of those people who are losing their homes, their lives and in many instances their basic belief structures. War is so cruel — how can we allow it to happen within our world? How can I right the injustices that have befallen them? Very simply, I can't.

But I can try to live life from my very core; I can go deep within myself and remember the things that are good. I can do my practice quietly and with intention and I can hear the birds chirping and feel the flowers growing; I can believe there is a guiding hand out there and maybe everything really will be okay.

I have been practicing *T'ai Chi Chih* Joy Thru Movement for 15 years now and I think I am finally being able to understand how much it has given to me.

Spontaneous Chi and the Awakening of Faith

By Richard Brier

By the grace of God, this moment. And this.

By the grace of God, Justin. And all else.

By the grace of God, the radiant jewel called T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement. Joy, joy, joyous joy.

Each moment is a new creation. A gift. Can we live with such an exquisite awareness? Can we live without it?

I've had the privilege of practicing and teaching Joy Thru Movement since Justin certified me in Mill Valley, CA in December 1980. I've taught over 4000 students of all ages and temperaments. It is a great joy to share these simple and beautiful movements. Those who really practice, the faithful 10%, get great benefits. The rest perhaps have seeds planted for another time when they are ready to commit to this gentle discipline. Or another. As Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions."

All the while, the precious moment awaits our return, like a lover.

I have found in my practices (daily for 23 years) that each session, each movement, is new, fresh, an exploration, a silent adventure. Everything changes; everything is in a constant state of transformation. So it is spontaneous chi unfolding.

And I've also sensed a great and powerful awakening of faith as I've joined the millions of practitioners of Tai Chi and Chi Kung who have sought union with Reality throughout the centuries.

I've found that non-duality already is and practice is the way to purify consciousness so that it can actually stand in and function out of the white heat of this union.

By the grace of God, this moment. Our heartbeat. Joy. Humor. Love. Peace. And enormous Grace, forever available to each and all.



Karmic Komment

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

Retirement

At the conference, I made my retirement announcement, the text of which you can see on p.17. I have experienced a tremendous amount of learning by being the first head of the company that publishes and markets Justin's and others' works. I have come to appreciate the countless life teachings Justin has given me and for his and the community's belief in my abilities to lead GKP. There has been much personal growth in acknowledging the role of *T'ai Chi Chih* practice—for which I am daily grateful—in the creative process as the materials are readied for publication and in carrying out other duties the job entails. I have also immensely appreciated the acquaintance, assistance, gratitude, and love of teachers with whom I would not have had such special contact without this work. It is with a certain amount of nostalgia that I leave this position but also with the trust that those with whom I have formed lasting friendships will continue the communication, albeit in a different way.

Kim Grant is the new head of Good Karma Publishing. She comes to the position with a great deal of relevant experience and skills. Your persistent confidence under her leadership will help the company to continue to flourish and succeed. Because Kim is unable to assume the duties of CEO until January or February, an interim person or persons assigned to fill orders will take over. As of VFJ press time, that person has not yet been engaged or trained. *You can continue to use the same telephone, mail, fax, and email contacts (jkatus@westriv.com) as previously. When the interim worker(s) is/are established, all ordering information will be forwarded from GKP.*

Teacher Distributors

Carol Mockovak has resigned as distributor for the Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN area. We thank her for her dedicated services. As of press time, there has been no replacement. Twin Cities teachers who may be interested in the position should contact Kim Grant as soon as possible.

Susan Haymaker and Guadalupe Buchwald have also chosen to step away from their teacher distributorships. Pam Towne will cover Susan's area, and Chery Ann Hoffmeyer will now serve all of Canada in this capacity. Our heartfelt gratitude to these women who have given many years of service, most especially to Guadalupe for "pioneering" Good Karma's efforts in the international arena and all the hurdles she overcame to make materials available to teachers and students in Canada.

Thanks

Thank you to those who helped at the GKP table during the conference and for all who perused and purchased materials at that time. You serve the community by supporting Good Karma Publishing, just as the offerings we provide serve you in your classes.

Spiritual Odyssey

We recently reprinted *Spiritual Odyssey* and have added, on the title page, Lois Mahaney's name as editing consultation. Her name was erroneously omitted in the initial printing, and we wanted to recognize her contributions to this very popular volume of some of Justin's writings.



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	July Issue:	May 10th
April Issue:	February 10th	October Issue:	August 10th
Note: It <u>may</u> be possible to submit timely news for publication later than the deadline, and it is <u>usually</u> 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!



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Doug Harned
Membership Services
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THE VITAL FORCE Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community Please print clearly. **MEMBERSHIP FORM**

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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 = \$ _____

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Make check or money order in U.S. dollars payable to: TOTAL = \$ _____

The Vital Force
P.O. Box 23068
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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. One day a student decided to practice with her husband. She put on nice soothing music that had the sound of a waterfall. Unfortunately, her husband became agitated with the music. Turns out he didn't find the sound of running water soothing at all. He's a plumber.

– Sharon Sirkis

2. In the first *T'ai Chi Chih* class I taught many years ago, two of my students were great punsters who liked to give the movements nicknames based on the use of the word "chi." One of the most memorable was the renaming of "Passing Clouds" to "Past-your-eyes-chis."

– Jean Katus

3. Early in the class series I was "quizzing" the students about the T'an T'ien. I said "Does anyone remember that special place below the navel, the motor for the movements? What is it called?"

I had to further prompt and said something like, "It is an important motivator for all the movements."

One older student said, "Ah, you mean the bowels."

– Debbie Cole

4. During the last day of teacher training at lunch, exhausted [auditing] TCC teacher Athene Mantle had trouble getting the words she wanted to say out of her mouth. It was just coming out babble. Looking to me for some kind of help, I said, laughing, "It's not the bubbling spring, it's the babbling spring!"

– Sharon Sirkis

5. One thing I like to do when I audit a teacher training course, is to bring enough of my TCC brochures for the teacher candidates to each have one. One teacher candidate, Alla, of Russian descent, handed my brochure back to me.

"Can I have your autograph?", she asked.

Somewhat puzzled, I took pen in hand and honored her request. Apparently she thought my puzzled look was something else.

"Don't worry," she said, "I won't turn you over to the KGB."

– Sharon Sirkis

6. Recently, when I taught at the retirement community, I asked one lady in her late 80's, "What keeps you going? What do you look forward to? What makes you get out of bed in the morning?"

She quickly responded, "What makes me get out of the bed every morning is so I don't wet the bed!"

– 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..."]

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GREAT CHI

**SMOKE AND HAZE OBSCURED THE VIEW
AS PHANTOM MOUNTAINS ROSE BESIDE
THUNDERING WATERFALLS,
THEN DISAPPEARED.
ROCK GORGES OPENED AND CLOSED
LIKE FISH MOUTHING WORDLESS HYMNS.
THE OPAL MOON TURNED RUBY RED AND CRIED.
YET,
WE ALL HELD FAST TO CENTER,
ANCHORED IN THE EXQUISITE BENEFITS
OF OUR INDIVIDUAL TAI CHI CHIH PRACTICE,
TRUSTING IN THE FLOW OF THE GREAT RIVER TO CARRY,
SUPPORT AND NOURISH US,
AND GATHER US BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.
WITH OPEN HANDS AND OPEN HEARTS,
SEAMLESSLY, WE FLOWED TOGETHER,
THEN OUTWARD
AND UPWARD TO JOY.**

**THERE WERE NO SMALL GURUS AT THIS TAI CHI CHIH CONFERENCE.
EACH ONE THERE WAS A MIGHTY ONE, BESTOWING GIFTS
OF WISDOM, INTEGRITY AND HONOUR,
GOODNESS, COMPASSION, AND JOY,
TRUSTING AND ACCEPTING WHAT WAS,
WHAT IS,
AND WHAT WILL BE.**

- Linda Braga
Sept. 2003