

The Vital Force

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

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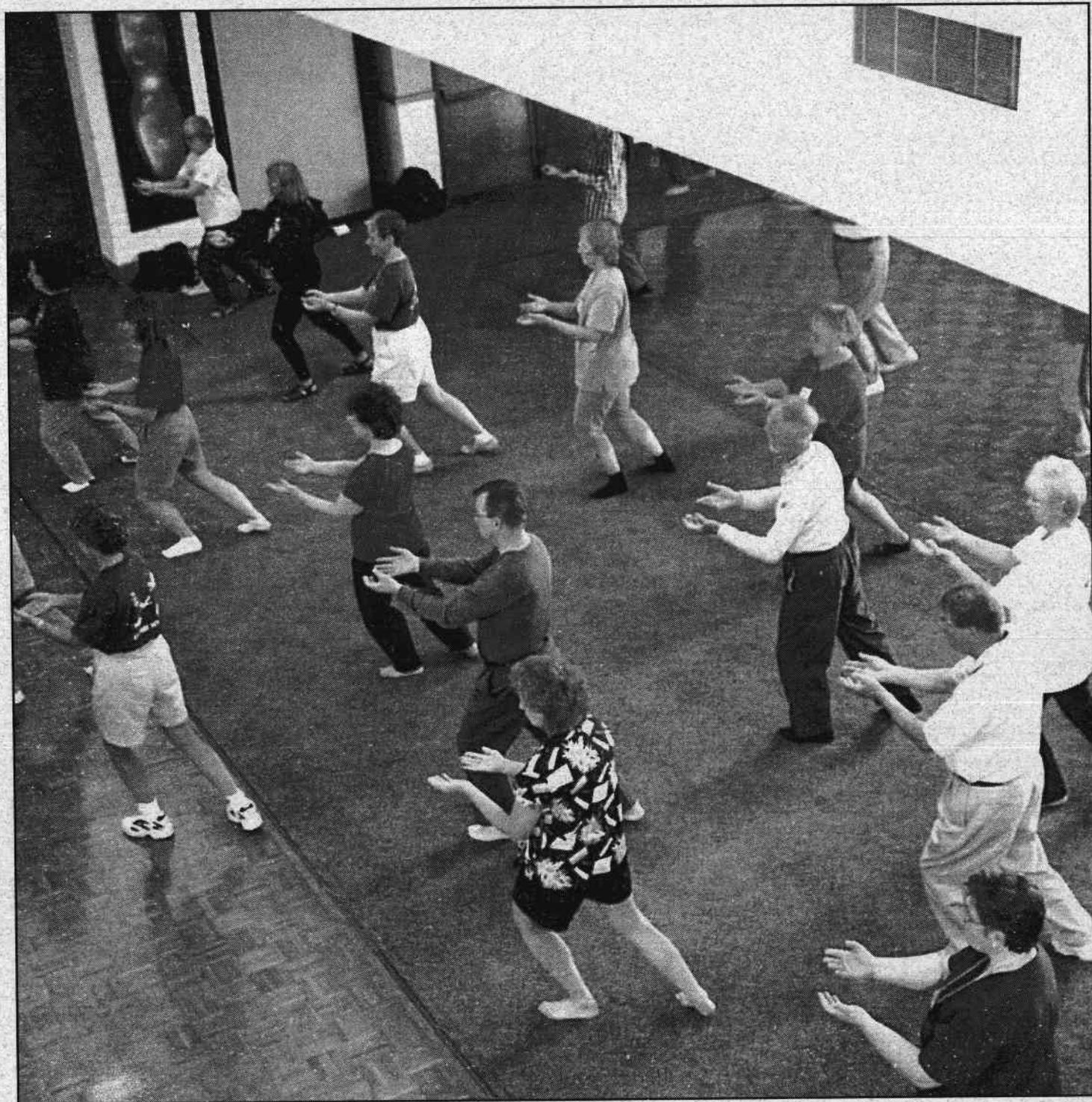




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**Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih.
Ed Altman is the Head of T'ai Chi Chih.**



The Vital Force

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The Vital Force, Journal of T'ai Chi Chih, is an unincorporated, non-profit association, serving T'ai Chi Chih practitioners worldwide. Membership in the Association includes four quarterly issues of The Vital Force, listing in and receipt of the annual Teachers' Directory (to teachers only), and outreach activities, such as teacher referrals. The annual membership fee is \$30 for teachers, \$25 for interested persons / students. Addresses outside the U.S. require an additional \$10 per year. First Class delivery within the U.S. is an additional \$5 per year.

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

Covers:



Front: Shown are some of the 176 attending teachers practicing during the 16th Annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference in Moraga, CA.



Back: Justin Stone and Ed Altman confer during a break at the conference.

Both cover photos and all inside were captured by amateur photographer Alice Maisel, a student of T'ai Chi Chih teachers Barbara Riley and Wendy Helms. Alice, who has been studying photography for the last four years and is exploring the possibility of becoming a "part-time professional", has had her work displayed at the Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek, CA.

Alice donated her time and talents over the long weekend to document our conference and we sincerely thank her for her efforts!

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

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Letter from the Editor

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU to the Bay Area Teachers who hosted this year's fantastic (and largest ever) T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference. (Full coverage begins on page 18). The total attendance count came out to 176! Conference Host **Sandy McAlister** kept saying all year long that she held the number "175" in her mind, and planned for it accordingly! It appears that after hovering between the low 140's to the low 150's for the last five years, our Teacher Conference attendance has made the next leap. Our hosts next year, the San Antonio, TX teachers, are planning for 175 - 200.

*This increase in attendance by teachers, some of whom had not attended a conference in years, is wonderful! In addition, there was a very good showing of the newest teachers (those accredited in the last year). One of those trainings, the May, 2001 training in Fullerton, CA had a 100% showing — in addition to the host teacher, **Pam Towne**, every candidate who attended that training (**Lois Arrigotti, Marilyn DeVine, Pat Fisher, Bev Geiger, Sr. Corita Keane, Barbara Lippert, Linden Royce, and Sandra Smail**) chose to also attend the Teachers' Conference just three months after finishing their accreditation course. What inspiring commitment!*

I overheard many of the newest teachers comment that they were "so glad" they had decided to come because the wealth of ideas shared in how to teach more effectively was absolutely invaluable to them as they begin to set up their first classes. In addition, they met seasoned teachers and made connections with them which they planned to follow up with as they run into challenges and need advice in the future.

*Many, many teachers commented that a highlight for them was to reconnect with their fellow candidates-now-teachers from their teacher training course, however long ago that was! They always seem surprised, too, when they first discover that the larger T'ai Chi Chih community is composed of people just as wonderful as the ones from their training. In fact, the overall character of this group of people, the T'ai Chi Chih Teaching Community, was something that brand new teachers commented about over and over. How grateful they felt to realize they were joining a community like this one. Over the years, I have heard more than one new teacher comment that this was something they had searched for all their lives! Justin Stone, the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih, has always commented that "**The jewel of T'ai Chi Chih is in its teachers.**"*

Over the years, as I've met more and more teachers from more and more places all over the world when I either audit at their teacher training or meet them at the annual Teachers' Conference for the first time, and as I read what they've written from their hearts (in their submissions to The Vital Force), I realize the absolute truth in Justin's statement.

Teachers: I encourage you to take the opportunity to find this out for yourself. Connect with teachers from your area of the world, certainly, to build your local community, but also consider traveling to another part of the world to audit a teacher training or attend another TCC event. Or, easiest of all, plan to attend the annual Teachers' Conference every year. It's a wonderful experience to see that no matter which part of the world a T'ai Chi Chih teacher is from, there is a commonality in those who are drawn to teach T'ai Chi Chih. Justin calls it teh, "the power of inner sincerity."

Noel Altman, Editor



Readers Respond

Hello, dear fellow T'ai Chi Chiers! . . . Just received the most recent & as always, the best issue yet of *The Vital Force*! I devour every word as soon as it arrives.

Thank you for using my contribution to "The Lighter Side..." However, there was one minor typo that I feel causes the readers to miss the main crux of the story. The last line should have read:

Finally, on the last morning, she joined our circle, but as we finished the Rocking Motion, Don, her seven-year-old cousin, said, "Grandma, Lea did not come to a graceful confusion!"

The story in *TVF* reads 'conclusion,' instead of 'confusion,' which kinda changes things a little!

Sher Dano
Surprise, AZ

[Thank you for the correction and clarification, Sher! I apologize for the error on my part!]

. . . Great work on the latest *VF* issue. I have sent excerpts of some helpful things to the candidates [for the Mahwah, NJ training in late August]. . . .

Dan Pienciak
Ocean Grove, NJ

Noel: Thank you for all the work you put into making the *Vital Force* so wonderful. We have Justin's thoughts, international news, Ed's thoughts, funny stories, healing stories, students' stories, poetry, person-

al stories. We have so much from so many teachers far and wide. Realizing TCC is so far-reaching is amazing, considering its "small" beginning in Albuquerque, NM. But its rate of growth has not been small and from the articles in the *Vital Force*, we can see that it has been very meaningful. Thank you for pulling the *Vital Force* together quarterly, year in and year out. It is much appreciated and valued. While I'm sure it gives your life meaning, it also gives the community an incredible gift. Thank you,

Carmen Brocklehurst
Albuquerque, NM

This is a gift for one of my students. [Student membership form and check enclosed.]

Margery Erickson
Hanover, PA

Hello Noel . . . Last week (on Thursday June 7th to be exact), I received the new issue of *The Vital Force*. WOW!! It is always with great expectation that I open the envelope. And little by little I devour every word, every article. We are so proud to be a part of it.

One of our students (from North Louisiana) sent us an e-mail right away saying that she "squealed" when she saw the article about the "green house" and that her husband really enjoyed the pictures, making it more real for him to envision where his wife is going for days at a time. She is a very dedicated stu-

dent. One day you will meet her — there is no doubt in my mind. Tomorrow morning, Bitsy [LeBlanc] is having knee surgery. Keep her in mind during your practice. Yesterday, we had our last class with Mickey [White] before he goes on to his training in Minneapolis. It was quite nice, emotional but nice. The practice just a rhythm — no words. . . .

Caroline Guillott
Lake Charles, LA

Type too large, please fit more stories in and less accolades — articles re: philosophy, the art, meaning, application to life issues.

Judy Tretheway
Sacramento, CA

What a WONDERFUL source of communication.....sharing.....inspirationelevation.....And more! Thank you!

Beverly Weil
North Salem, NY

The Vital Force continues to be a "must read right away" journal when it arrives in the mail. The *VFJ* contains so much essence that is nurturing for the body, mind and spirit. Many thanks to all the persons who have labored generously over the years to create and publish the *VFJ* and directory, and to the new staff who continue to do this immense service for us.

Sr. Marian Massman, FSPA
La Crosse, WI

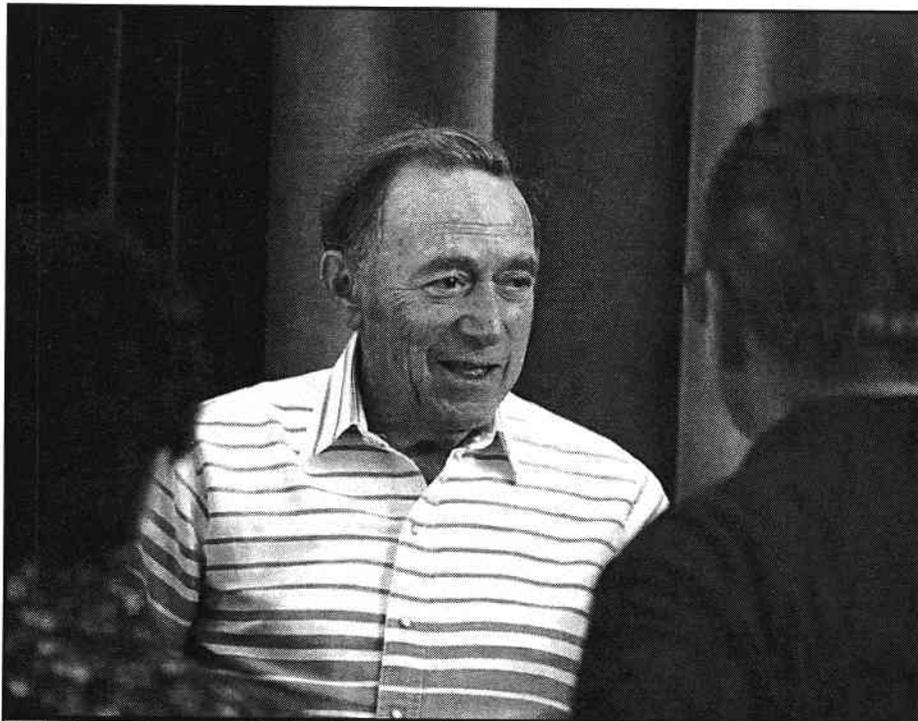


Do TCC Properly for Maximum Benefits

By Justin Stone

How you do the movements of T'ai Chi Chih is all important. Not for academic reasons or to please the teacher, but because the amount of benefit you get from practice depends on the way you move. If you are using muscles to move your arms, while, at the same time, shuffling your legs, you will not get full benefit. All important is having you move from the center, the T'an T'ien, with no effort from the shoulders or the arms. It is easy for the teacher to tell if the student is moving to the maximum of his or her capacity. If the feeling is floating and flowing, the movements are being done correctly. Flowing effortlessly from the center, while effortlessly pushing the arms thru very heavy air, is the desired method and the one that brings results.

Watching a student is not like putting him thru an exam, to be graded by what he or she has written on paper. The great results felt from proper practice cannot be put into words. Sages of India equate the Chi with Consciousness itself, and, when the Chi (prana) leaves the body, you are dead. Therefore, causing the Chi to flow, while balancing the Yin Chi and the Yang Chi, will, in the minds of the Chinese wise men, bring longer life and better health. T'ai Chi Chih students also write that it changes their lives. We have seen how favorably it affects hardened criminals in prisons, and we have had reports of great benefits for those suffering from Osteoporosis and Migraine Headaches, for which medicine has no relief. All this depends on



Following an "open practice" on Saturday afternoon during the 2001 TCC Teachers' Conference in Moraga, CA in August, Justin Stone meets students of Bay Area teachers and answers their questions about practice.

Photo: Alice Maisel

the student doing the movements well. It is hard to get the idea of effort out of students' minds, and it is only natural, in the beginning, for the student to feel the harder he or she tries, the better will be the results. But that's all wrong! Softly and effortlessly is the correct way. And, of course, the student must do correct yinning and yanging, as well as accenting one side or the other when called for.

On my latest Video-tape, the practice session is being led by Suni McHenry, followed by the other three teachers, in a stifling studio with no air coming into the room; yet it all appears effortless and joyous. Following the teachers on this practice session, strive for the feeling of serenity that comes from doing the form properly. Don't do it well to please me but to please you.



Sheer Mimicry

By Ed Altman

In T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training courses, candidates are encouraged to question every assumption about their practice, and to release all fixed concepts about the movements to discover the essence of T'ai Chi Chih. This process is sometimes disconcerting for candidates, and they often state that they thought they "knew" T'ai Chi Chih but now feel that they understand very little about the practice. One recent candidate said of her experience during the week, "It was like dying!" When asked to explain this dramatic statement, she said that a large part of her ego had fallen away during the course of the week, and that there was now a simplicity to the movements and depth of feeling in her practice that she had never known before.

Many new teachers express a great feeling of freedom when they realize that there are very few fixed concepts or "right" answers about how the T'ai Chi Chih movements must be done. Each person does them slightly differently based on the size and shape of the body, age and personal temperament. However, the principles are the same for everyone, and when questions are brought forward, *how the movements are performed* is always emphasized over where the arms or legs should be placed. It isn't just a matter of the height of the hands that must be remembered, but the amount of tension or effort exerted must also be considered. Rather than trying to "create" a certain shape or dimension in the movements, why not abandon fixed concepts and discover *how is the movement being created* by the Chi? This eternal life force is present in every aspect of our practice, but it can only be felt when we have an open attitude and rely on our feelings, not intellectual effort.

T'ai Chi Chih is a *living art* that we embody moment by moment. In order to realize this in our practice, it is of great importance that we focus on

the interior aspect of T'ai Chi Chih. Without this internal dimension, the practice is hollow and becomes nothing more than a copy of someone else's movements. While this may be appropriate for beginning students, it is sheer mimicry, and reflects a lack of depth in the practice. If teachers and students do not progress beyond this point they may become uninspired and find it difficult to experience the deepest benefits from their practice. As teachers, we must examine ourselves and our students to ensure this inferior attitude is not present in the practice of T'ai Chi Chih.

T'ai Chi Chih is very circular, and it doesn't convey its lessons only once. Experienced teachers often speak about learning the same lessons over and over again at progressively deeper levels. These *levels of understanding* can be discovered and explored in our T'ai Chi Chih practice, but it is essential to not allow ourselves to become stuck in habitual concepts or ways of moving. Especially if those concepts came from someone else! We must come together as a community and go beyond what we've been taught or thought we "knew." This is why I moved to live closer to Justin, and why teachers are encouraged to audit Teacher Training courses and attend the Annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference. If we are open, the depth of exploration at these events leads us to discover previously hidden aspects of the T'ai Chi Chih movements, and brings with it a deep wisdom that transcends our daily practice. This wisdom helps us recognize *who and what we are*, enables our T'ai Chi Chih community to flourish, and allows sincere teachers to assist students in realizing the deepest benefits from this profound spiritual practice.



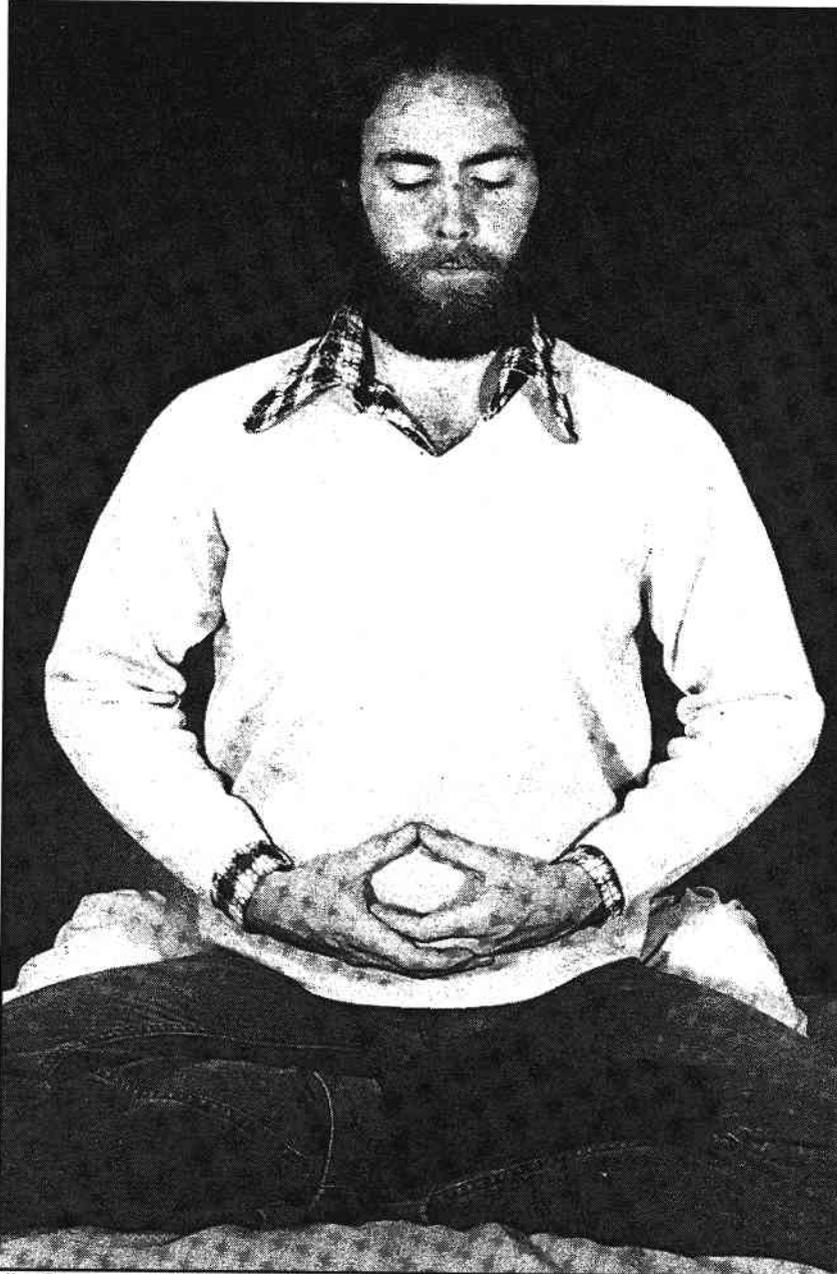
Jim Burns, the “first student of T’ai Chi Chih,” recalls beginnings

By Noel Altman

T’ai Chi Chih was first taught to classes in 1974 by Justin Stone, the Originator of the form. But before it was taught to classes, Justin taught it to a sincere student who had been studying T’ai Chi Ch’uan and Zen meditation with him for a couple of years. Jim Burns, the “first student of T’ai Chi Chih,” (according to Justin), visited Albuquerque in early June this year after acting on an “urgent” feeling to find out what had happened to Justin in the 27 years since they had last seen each other.

Jim recounted with The Vital Force his studies with Justin, both before and during the origination of T’ai Chi Chih, and his perspective now.

A 19-year-old college student at the University of New Mexico in “1970 or 1971,” Jim was taking a class in Eastern Religions when Justin substituted for the regular professor one day. Justin’s lecture was on



Jim Burns, a meditation student in his early 20’s at the time, was Justin Stone’s choice for a “model” in his book, *Zen Meditation*, published in 1975.

Photo reproduced with permission from Good Karma Publishing

Taoism, but he also mentioned that he was a teacher of T’ai Chi Ch’uan and Zen meditation. The very next day, Jim showed up at Justin’s apartment for instruction.

What compelled him to do this? “[Justin] was — I don’t know how to put this — but the only American teaching Asian techniques in a sea of Indians. So he seemed very accessible. He was very down-to-earth. I liked his manner. I liked his stories,” Jim explained. “You gotta roll way back. This is the ‘pre-T’ai Chi Chih’ Justin. He must have been in his mid-50’s and had just come to Albuquerque, I think. The way he began was by teaching T’ai Chi Ch’uan, that he learned from Wen Shan Huang.”

At that time, Jim had been studying Kempo karate. Pretty quickly into his studies with Justin, he was

told, “You know you’re going to have to make a choice — between karate and T’ai Chi Ch’uan — because your



karate has ruined your softness.” This infuriated Jim “so much that I became a very good T’ai Chi Ch’uan student!”

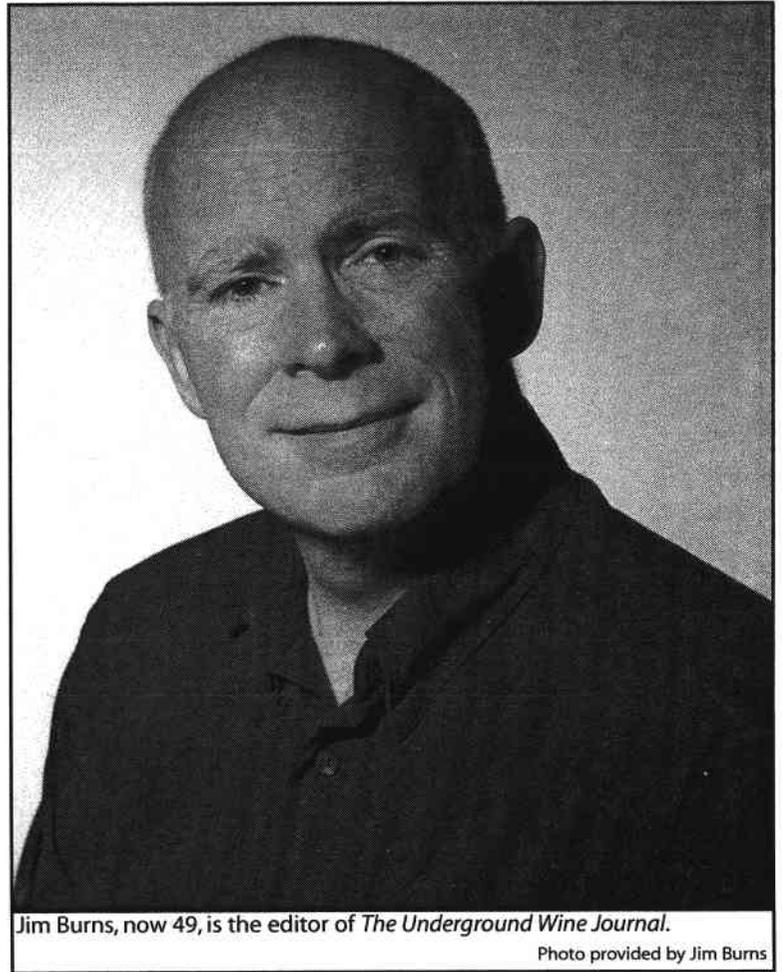
The way Jim remembers it, after “a year or two” Justin began showing him some new movements, first three that resembled *Around the Platter*, *Bass Drum* and the no-longer-included *Circles Within Circles*. He remembers Justin saying that these had been shown to him by Wen Shan Huang. Then Justin began to develop the other movements which became T’ai Chi Chih.

“He would ask me, ‘I’m working on this. What do you think about it?’ He told me he was developing this whole set, based on these three motions,” Jim explained, elaborating, “I was the sounding board — and I don’t mean on all of the movements — but on some of them. And Justin was very excited about T’ai Chi Chih because it was something he was creating basically from scratch.”

Later, Justin asked Jim if he knew a photographer, and there happened to be one living in his apartment complex. That man, Michael Spiller, took all the photos for the original text. Ou Mie Shu did the artwork. Skip Whitson did the publishing of the first textbook on T’ai Chi Chih in 1974. It was a yellow-covered hardcover book published by Skip’s company, Sun Publishing.

Jim was accredited to teach T’ai Chi Chih in the first teacher training course, which was held in Los Angeles in 1975. After that, he moved around for awhile, teaching T’ai Chi Chih in different locations. He taught in Boulder at the Naropa Institute where he taught Steve Ridley, the former Head of T’ai Chi Chih. He taught in Phoenix. He “sold [TCC] books on the road in Chicago” and “gave a presentation at Lake Forest College, north of Chicago, but couldn’t get enough students at the time to have a class there.” He also taught Skip Whitson.

At Naropa, he had taught outside on the lawn because he had wanted to teach “right away” but had been told that his class would first need to be advertised in their brochure. So, he had put up flyers, which had resulted in a small class of about three or four students. “Five or six months later, my class had filled up at Naropa, but by then I had just gotten accepted into an MBA program in Phoenix, and didn’t end up teaching



Jim Burns, now 49, is the editor of *The Underground Wine Journal*.

Photo provided by Jim Burns

that class.”

The last time Jim saw Justin was at a class Justin was giving in Sedona, AZ. “I drove up and saw him one last time — then went off to grad school.”

After trying to put together one more class after advertising in his new college newspaper, but finding that it didn’t fill up, Jim gave up teaching T’ai Chi Chih. But he continued to practice four of the movements. “They’ve been with me for 30 years,” he said.

Why did he leave behind the teaching? “I wasn’t ready at the time to accept that T’ai Chi Chih had healing properties for people — I didn’t believe it. [Justin] said it, but I didn’t believe it...And now I do,” he said.

What changed his mind? “My wife is an acupuncturist,” he answered, and he has seen firsthand how balancing the chi to flow through the meridians can improve people’s health.

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It's Never too Late... to Teach Your First Class

By Kim Grant

Justin's words rang in my ears for 18 months after I completed the teacher accreditation course in June 1999: "It's best to get started teaching right away, even if it is only a small friendly class given in your house. You will know later, dear, that I am right." What was he seeing that I couldn't see? (Well, lots, of course. But that's another story.) Was my first class going to be filled with intellectual smart-allecks from Cambridge and Harvard? Were they going to chew me up and spit me out? As the months wore on, fear crept in like morning fog. Still, Justin's words weren't enough to motivate me. No, it took a trip to the other side of the globe to get me to teach my first class.

When I returned from a long trip to Australia and New Zealand in December 2000, and friends asked me to single out the highlight of the trip, they were surprised by my response. But I wasn't and Justin certainly wasn't. I taught my first T'ai Chi Chih class 20,000 miles from home and it couldn't have worked out more perfectly or naturally. It was even more satisfying than walking on glaciers, watching the world's smallest and rarest penguin colonies, observing even more rare albatrosses, hiking in the wilderness, and generally being awestruck by Nature every waking moment.

This is how it came about: I attended a conference for Lonely Planet travel guide authors and mentioned it to a group of fellow writers that I was an accredited TCC teacher and that I practiced every morning. I suggested that if they wanted to join me, I'd be happy to teach them. To my delight, all of them showed up. Why? I had hooked them in by talking about my own experience: I told them that while working on my most recent book, I had done TCC daily, sometimes twice daily, during

the long researching and writing process. I shared my conclusion that my new-found focus and ease during the writing process could only be attributed to an increased flow of chi. I explained that hordes of perfectly turned phrases had tumbled through my fingers. Adjectives and adverbs I hadn't used in years popped into my head at just the right moment. It was an easy sell to other writers who often struggle with their work.

The eight-day class went exceedingly well and I never had to confess to them that they were my first students. (I had been afraid to be exposed as a novice.) Word quickly circulated among the 300 Lonely Planet employees that this world-wide group of authors was different from the rest. Authors invited to this annual conference are usually rebellious by day and inebriated by night. Not us. Our merry band was waking at the crack of dawn to do something good for ourselves. By the end of the conference, plenty of employees were clamoring for what the authors were clearly enjoying. TCC had been introduced to the Australian continent!

Upon my return, I decided to take an unusual approach to organizing classes since I travel frequently. When someone asks for a class, I decided to respond, "If you wouldn't mind getting another seven or eight people together and finding a place and setting a time, I'd be thrilled to teach."

A class of 22, organized by my mother, got started that way in March. Another friend organized a class of ten. Then lo and behold, a health club facility in the metro Boston area called and asked if we (Lisa Otero, the only other TCC teacher in Boston, and I) would like to teach at their 30 clubs. They had found us on the web site and were particularly impressed by the accreditation process.

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Teaching T'ai Chi Chih: Part 2

By Dale Buchanan

It's 4:30pm on a Wednesday evening as I leave my house in Herndon, VA for a T'ai Chi Chih presentation in Washington, DC, which starts at 6:30pm. It's rush hour and I know I have to give myself plenty of time to get there since it's over 30 miles from my house. I like to be early so I can set up the space with music, flyers, handouts, and give myself time to do a few TCC movements before the people arrive.

Traffic is not too bad until I get on Route 66 where there seems to be an accident.

Surprisingly, I stay centered and calm, focusing on my breath and T'an T'ien. It's now 5:15 and I finally make it to the Memorial Bridge, which takes me into DC. As I drive over the bridge I can see the Washington Monument

in the distance. What a wonderful sight that is. My heart starts to race and my energy increases just looking at the sights of this wonderful city. I manage to stay very centered and grounded during the most hectic traffic, including accidents on both sides of me. I roll down my windows to enjoy the sounds of the cars and people. I love the action of this town because so much is always going on...It forces me to stay balanced and calm.

Driving down Pennsylvania Avenue, I pass the White House on my left. I smile from ear to ear as I think of someday teaching classes to the President and Vice President of the United States of America. Feelings of joy fill my body as I realize that I have been blessed with a gift to help people better their lives and that I live in an area where people need what I have to offer.

The fact that I live so close to Washington, DC, the city that literally runs the country, is something I never took advantage of before I received a phone call by an artist by the name of Michael Sprouse. After doing a search on the Internet, Michael came across my web site and signed up for my weekly email newsletter. The next day I sent out the newsletter with a blurb about seeking new places to teach classes. He called me right away and told me about his art gallery in downtown

Washington, DC. The next day I went to see the space which ended up being the perfect location, size, and atmosphere to teach TCC classes. Now I am teaching four classes per week at the gallery and my students include high-ranking government employ-

ees, artists, actors, musicians, lawyers, and many others.

If I still had my studio, none of this would have happened. I would have been resistant to this "flow" that the universe is bringing to me right now. Next week I will be teaching my first class at AOL (America On Line) whose headquarters of 4000 employees is three miles from my house. I never DREAMED of teaching at this level...How amazing it is to be in a position to affect so many people's lives.

The fact that I live so close to Washington, DC, the city that literally runs the country, is something I never took advantage of . . . If I still had my studio, none of this would have happened. I would have been resistant to this "flow" that the universe is bringing to me right now.

[Editor's Note: Dale wrote in the last issue about what he had learned from running his own T'ai Chi Chih studio for two years before closing its doors in 1999.]



When *not* trying, student feels chi

By Saralyn Garcia
Student of Sharon Sirkis

In the beginning, I was somewhat skeptical about this Chi thing, I was not sure what it was or how it worked but I was trying to keep an open mind. The first couple of classes were difficult for me, I kept trying to feel this Chi but I always left dissatisfied because I felt like it was kind of a hoax. I never practiced at home because I felt really stupid. I knew I wasn't doing the moves correctly and even when I thought that I did it right it did not feel relaxing, it felt awkward. Then one day I decided to give up trying, I knew that I would never get it. I thought to myself that I would just go through the motions in class and pretend that I was practicing at home and get my PE credit.

The next class was a moment that I will never forget. We had just started learning Daughter in the Valley and I was not putting too much effort into doing it right, and I felt it. I felt this surge of energy flow throughout my body. From the bottoms of my feet to the top of my head, I felt heat and tingling, something that I had never felt before. I was amazed; words do not really express the feeling that had come over me. So, I think that I have figured out the secret, and that is to not care what you look like or how stupid you feel, but to just go with it. That has been something that I have always had problems with, letting go.

Before I began T'ai Chi Chih I was an extremely stressed out, overworked, lethargic, person. I prided myself on keeping as busy as possible because that prevented me from dealing with the issues in my life that I could avoid. I used to work from 8-4:30, go home to change and then go to my night job from 5-2am, weekends was when I would work doubles and make the most money. After getting into T'ai Chi Chih I realized that the only sunlight that I saw was from my car. Maybe it was timing or maybe T'ai Chi Chih was the reason, but I decided that I was not taking care of what was most important for me in this world, me and my happiness, my life needed to change and it has. Now, I work three days and three nights a week, on my days

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State of mind, physical symptoms greatly eased

By Susan Roth
Student of Sharon Sirkis

I am 49 years old and have been through the worst year of my life: a whole series of flareups of chronic pain problems, a seriously deteriorating marriage, the loss of a much loved stepfather, a seriously ill mother 1,000 miles away, several serious drug reactions, surgery, suicidal thoughts, and at the base of it all, the most dreaded of all changes in a woman's life - MENOPAUSE! And you can take it from me: Menopause [stinks]. I was seeing an excellent team of a dentist, a behavioral psychologist, an acupuncturist, and several medical doctors — but I needed much more — I needed to find my old happy self, my spirit, the joy in life that had always kept me going.

My answer came in the local newspaper one day: an advertisement for a T'AI CHI CHIH class taught by Sharon Sirkis at my local village center. With nothing to lose and everything to gain, I signed up and began the odyssey that has led me to a different plane in my life. T'AI CHI CHIH has given me a less painful life, a way of coping with the surging emotions that most women experience in Menopause, hope, joy, and a renewed faith in God. I had a dream in which our local mall was filled with people doing T'AI CHI CHIH. When Sharon's class ended, I signed up myself, my best friend, and my husband for her next class. Everyday practice is now as much a part of my life as breathing. Even when I reached a crisis one day — trying to do too much, missing my psychologist appointment — my husband came to my rescue: while driving me to lunch, he put our favorite practice music on the car CD player and told me to close my eyes and practice in my mind. I felt so much better by the time we reached the restaurant that my hands tingled.

All the pieces of my health problems are gradually falling in place and my relations with my husband of almost 28 years have taken on a new and stronger bond. Although this chronicle is serious, I have come to realize that T'AI CHI CHIH IS TRUELY JOY THRU MOVEMENT. I have expressed a desire to Sharon to become a teacher and help others as she has helped me. So everyone — one, two, three — T'AI CHI CHIH cha-cha-cha together!



T'ai Chi Chih Materials: How to Use Them in Class

By Dale Buchanan

Photo-Text Book:

This is the main teaching tool for my beginner's class. Many students comment that they will buy the photo-text book but don't know how to effectively use it at home. Each beginner class I always pull out the photo-text and read something aloud to the students to demonstrate how to get the most from their investment. After that we all talk about what I read and what they got from it. I always encourage my students to purchase the photo-text and read it at home. Often times I will use the photos to demonstrate proper form of the movements and read the instruction written by Justin. My favorite part of this book is "Notes on Movements Just Learned". I often use the book at the end of class and read from that section [about] some of the movements we had gone over during that class.

Justin Instruction and Practice Video:

The second tool I always recommend is Justin's New Instruction Video. During the first class of the beginner's course, I always bring my 13" TV/VCR combo and play the introduction of this video for my students. They get the idea, right from the start and directly from the originator, on how to move correctly. Justin also explains some of the principles and three confirming signs of TCC. My student's responses to that are always the same with "I want to be able to do TCC mentally". I tell them they can eventually achieve that over a period of time by coming to class each week and do what Justin says, "Practice when you feel like it and practice when you don't feel like it."

Another way I use this video is to suggest my students purchase one for themselves and work with Justin each day with the movements that we did that week in class. Once they are familiar with that week's lesson, I will then suggest they practice with the four teachers at the end of the tape. Finally, I have them sit down and watch each of the four teachers "flow" through each movement and [see] how effortless it

can become. This usually helps them with their own practice.

Justin Speaks on TCC:

In my opinion, this is one tool that is usually overlooked by teachers and students. I use this cassette during all of my intermediate classes. I will play a section of it during the middle of class and then one by one each student will discuss what they learned. I encourage students to purchase a tape for themselves and use it at home. The information on this cassette is so valuable and always brings up great discussions on the principles and philosophy of TCC.

Carmen Brocklehurst or Pam Towne Practice Video:

Since I usually teach about 8-10 classes per week, it's challenging for me to constantly move with my students. I will use either Pam or Carmen's practice video for the students to follow while I go around and work with them individually. Each video is nice since all of the counting, guidance, and important points are made during the video. This gives me the opportunity to really see what's going on with each student and what he or she need to work on with their movements. Also, I usually sell several at the end of each class for students to bring home and practice with (but only after they have purchased Justin's Instruction/Practice Video). I recommend that students use one of these videos a couple times per week, in conjunction with silent practice, Justin's video, and weekly class.

Interview Video with Justin and Carmen:

If there were one TCC resource I wish students would take advantage of, this would be it. When I have my TV/VCR with me, I will always show one or two of the segments to my students. Watching Justin speak about each one of the 13 topics is such a gift. After we all watch, I will follow with a discussion. This usually brings a new focus and gratitude for TCC that was not previously with the students. They begin to realize there are many deep levels of TCC to explore and it is more than just doing movements.



The Key to Successful Teaching

By Rosalind L. Braga

Teaching T'ai Chi Chih can be rewarding and challenging. Many adults come to T'ai Chi Chih class with hidden physical / medical problems. Some come with attitudes from childhood school experiences of failure: "I can't...., I've never been good at...., I'm uncoordinated...., I've always been a tense person...." Still others come carrying a great deal of tension from high-stress jobs, family or financial problems, or grief and depression. If you took a survey at your first class, you might be surprised at the variety of "problems" your students are experiencing.

Of course T'ai Chi Chih offers a golden opportunity to begin to change these conditions. If you have been teaching T'ai Chi Chih for several years, you have probably discovered that students generally fall into two categories. The first is a passive learner. They enroll for class with no goal in mind. They don't say much, rarely ask questions or request correction, may arrive late or miss classes, stand in the back, and rarely practice at home.

The other type is an active learner. These students come to class regularly, often arriving early. They are friendly to other students, stand in the front of the class, ask questions and request correction, call if they have to miss a class and ask for makeup time, and practice at home.

As a good teacher, you want ALL your students to be active learners but wishing and hoping are not enough. You need to use teaching methods that will ensure that all your students, even the introverted ones, become active learners.

Every T'ai Chi Chih instructor should be familiar with the principles of learning that will best engage the learner and promote optimal participation in the learning process. An important one is the principle of **how we learn**.

Dr. William Glasser, psychiatrist, author, educator, and researcher, arrived at this noteworthy conclusion after working with children and adults for many years:

WE LEARN AND REMEMBER

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we discuss with others
- 80% of what we experience personally
- 95% of what we teach someone else

If we want to maximize student learning, we must incorporate **students teaching students** into our lesson plans, along with **group instruction and practice**, and **interactive discussion and sharing**.

Partner practice is one effective way to get students involved. Some TCC teachers already ask their students to pair up and explore a movement. The key is movement, not standing and talking. Noticing and checking posture, alignment, and foot position take on new meaning when working with a partner. Allowing the knees to bend and the weight to shift become an experienced reality rather than a concept spoken by the teacher.

Questions arise naturally. Awareness of improper foot positions, etc. emerge without embarrassment. Partners can encourage and compliment and critique each other without feeling self-conscious. The result is that everyone becomes empowered to improve their own movement and not just "go through the motions." This helps them go deeper into their own practice.

After partner practice, students will say, "We were wondering about _____. Is this right?"



They feel confident enough to demonstrate in front of the class! This offers a great “teachable moment” when you can say, “Yes, the question of _____ has come up for many students tonight and they have discovered _____. One student noticed that _____. Several people really were able to let go of tension and they noticed that _____.”

This type of comment really empowers the student and makes them take charge of their own learning. It makes them want to do partner practice again. It also builds a sense of community and support from their classmates and their teacher.

If we allow beginning students to work with other students right from the start, as they are

learning, we will be promoting optimal opportunities for learning, at the 95% level of effectiveness. We will be creating active learners who are motivated by their own discoveries and improvement. We will be ensuring that everyone can learn, a belief that is held by every teacher in education today. Many of these active learners may be future T'ai Chi Chih teachers. They will already have had lots of experience working with others, exploring what they know and what they don't know. They will be better observers of TCC movements and the flow of chi. They will be more aware of the limitations of their own form and how to improve it. They will be active learners and teachers of T'ai Chi Chih!

New teacher offers her version of a press release for others to use

Hi Ed —

My offering of a “press release”...if it can be of use. It, of course, can be edited or changed in any way. When I am ready to advertise for classes locally, I may use it — or a version of it — here. I haven't totally ruled out more “presentations”, but this kind of presenting, along with a free session, may better serve me.

Last week [during the training] was powerful! I will be processing, integrating, incorporating for a long while.

Because of how you presented, with and about FEELING, I could relate to a lot, both in my practice of T'ai Chi Chih, and more importantly in my practice of living.

The gentle image of ripples and “splashes” have already been put into use — in my practice and in my life.

Thank you.

Lois Arrigotti

REDUCE STRESS WITH T'AI CHI CHIH

After learning and practicing T'ai Chi Chih for _____ years, _____ attended an intensive week of training to become a certified teacher of Tai Chi Chih.

T'ai Chi Chih is a moving meditation that consists of 19 movements and one pose. A westerner, Justin Stone, invented this Chi Kung form after having taught T'ai Chi Ch'uan for many years. It is based on ancient principles, its main purpose being to circulate and balance the internal chi (energy). This form can be performed by most people and can be learned in an eight week class session.

The benefits of practicing T'ai Chi Chih are equivalent to those who practice the longer form. Many who practice the simple, graceful, fluid movements a half hour a day find that they are able to greatly reduce the tension in their lives. This is of major consequence as chronic tension leads to much other serious disease. Other benefits are improved balance, more fluidity of movement, lower blood pressure, etc.

For more information about classes, contact _____.



Entering a New Way

By Carmen Brocklehurst

Permitting ourselves to grow often involves allowing ourselves to be influenced by other people in the beginning. Then, we are on to a greater influence as St. John of the Cross says, "On this road (life path), to abandon one's own way is to enter into the true way, to pass onwards to the goal; to forsake one's own way is to enter that which has none, namely Infinite Life." How do we allow ourselves to enter this influence? Through T'ai Chi Chih! How simple it appears, to rise daily and do our practice, deeply.

During a Teachers Training, another teacher and I were discussing how many T'ai Chi Chih teachers don't understand the depths of what they practice until they glimpse it at their Teachers Training. This leaves them eager for more. This happens to many of us. But when we go home, give our first presentation, and offer our first class, things don't seem like

they were at Teachers Training. The energy in a beginning class is different. What happened? The truth is that the energy we experienced during Teachers Training is still there, deep inside, deep inside every student in the class. We must realize it's still there and we must remember how to access it.

As classes unfold we find beautiful things beginning to unfold for everyone. But still, we don't feel like we did at Teachers Training. Yes, Teachers Training is a unique and wonderful experience, one which will unfold for the rest of our lives. It has made us conscious, beyond intellectually, about the chi. There is more to chi than we think, more than we have read about, and more than we experience daily. Justin has said, "A person doesn't know about the chi until they know what it is (from the inside out) and what it does." He also says that it

is no accident that we are here as part of the T'ai Chi Chih family. We have a wonderful opportunity — to find out about the chi through T'ai Chi Chih. Our family and our desire to know are two wonderful gifts. It is up to us to decide how deeply to go with them. Keeping this in mind, I look forward to being with each of you at the annual summer conference, at a T'ai Chi Chih retreat, at a Seijaku Teachers Training, or at a T'ai Chi Chih Review with Ed. We have many opportunities to go more deeply. Are we wise enough to do it?

One great monk admonished himself every morning, "Don't be misled by others." It is up to us not to be misled by others (looking first at ourselves) and realize that going deeply is the only way we will find answers we have always been looking for.

The beginning, of an incredible journey...

T'ai Chi Chih training was eight months away. I don't think I've anticipated anything as much and for so long. It was like waiting to go on a trip to a far off place I'd never seen before. I didn't expect the journey to begin the moment I walked into the first pre-accreditation class.

I think there were 16 candidates. Accredited TCC instructors in the Twin Cities and surrounding area sponsored the class. They embraced us with so much to share. They helped us refine our movements, listened to our feelings, watched and critiqued. And, with hugs and kisses they sent us on our way to practice, practice and practice.

In April we were welcome again. There was more practice, teaching hints and suggestions. We spoke about what would be expected of us in June. We learned TCC etiquette, watched a sample presentation and spoke about Justin and Ed. And once again, with hugs and kisses

they sent us on our way to practice, practice and practice.

The first day of training I was a bit overwhelmed by the intensity of the whole experience. But, when Tuesday morning arrived I couldn't wait to go. My excitement was almost more than I could bear. I knew my community of teachers would be with me throughout the week. When I became uncertain or fearful I would look around the room and they were there. When I doubted myself during my presentation I looked up and they smiled and I was grateful knowing this was a journey I would never be taking alone.

Thank you all! Again and again and again...

Wendy Howard

Accredited Tai Chi Chih Instructor (June 2001)



Minnesota teachers come together to prepare students for accreditation

By Judy George
and Marie Dotts

Minnesota teachers came together as a community to prepare students for the T'ai Chi Chih teacher accreditation that was held in June 2001. Teachers gathered to discuss the format and focus of student preparation. To best prepare students, two sessions were created. The focus of each follows:

Focus of Session I: Before a candidate can be accredited he/she must know how to move properly as outlined in the *TCC Teacher Preparation Guidelines*. In this session, teachers worked closely with students to help them understand the guidelines and to refine their movements.

To prepare for the sessions, six Minnesota teachers got together one afternoon to practice and share. The teachers examined each movement to ensure continuity. Concerns and questions were noted and Ed Altman was contacted for clarification prior to the first session. The teachers gained a lot from sharing with each other.

Focus of Session II: In this session students continued to deepen into their movements. The movements were examined from a teacher's perspective, with an opportunity for each student to lead/teach the movements. Also, as part of the teacher accreditation process each student is required to deliver a 12 to 15 minute presentation. To help the candidates prepare, the criteria for the presentation was explained and then Mary Taylor offered a sample presentation. Thanks Mary!

In the sessions, students broke up into small groups that rotated between six teachers. This gave them a chance to get feedback from a variety of teachers. Students reported that they greatly appreciated the different perspectives, yet by the end of the day their cups were full.

The sessions were scheduled to allow students time to integrate teacher input and to refine their individual movements. The first session was held in February and the second in April; both sessions ran from 9 am till 4 pm.

To prepare for the sessions, six Minnesota teachers got together one afternoon to practice and share. The teachers examined each movement to ensure continuity. Concerns and questions were noted and Ed Altman was contacted for clarification prior to the first session. The teachers gained a lot from sharing with each other.

In the sessions, students broke up into small groups that rotated between six teachers. This gave them a chance to get feedback from a variety of teachers. Students reported that they greatly appreciated the different perspectives, yet by the end of the day their cups were full.

One of the most important benefits of having a preparation class is the opportunity for candidates and teachers to come together and learn from one another. Our community was strengthened by the support of all those involved. T'ai Chi Chih is about sharing the chi and helping each other grow!

Thanks to all of you who made this a success!



June 18-23, 2001

Eighteen auditors attend all week at Minneapolis training with candidates

By Dick Detert

- * "Softness means letting go"
- * "T'ai Chi Chih doesn't cultivate physical strength but internal strength"
- * "It is possible to sense all of it without holding on to any of it"
- * "Why are you in a hurry not to be patient?"
- * "It's going to be hard — that's what makes it (T'ai Chi Chih) so great!"
- * "Every part of the body needs to be fluid"
- * "T'ai Chi Chih is very simple, but if we are willing to really work hard at it, it can become complex"
- * "Making corrections in your practice is a matter of NOT adding something but examining it and REMOVING something"

Eighteen teacher candidates and 23 auditing teachers (18 of whom came every day) heard these and other insightful phrases during the



(L-R): Candidates Roberta Gelatt, Holly Sanders, Karyl Belknap, Jeanne, Murphy, Sally Ehlinger, Bonnie Sokolov, Ted Fleischman, Rodney Anderson follow Course Instructor Ed Altman in *Rocking Motion*.
Photo provided by Sr. Rita Foster

week-long teacher accreditation in Minneapolis. At any given time during the week the ratio of teacher candidate to auditor was 1:1. Teacher candidates were surrounded by chi the entire week. Pam Towne, Sandy McAlister, Sister

strong chi, strong memories, and strong relationships. We were grateful to have Ed Altman enhance our movement, provide insights, and share reflections.

Eleanor Stockert and Connie Mack brought it from the west (California and North Dakota); Kathy Albers, Robin Kidd, and Bill Mishler brought it from the south (Missouri, Illinois and Ohio); and the rest brought it from the Twin Cities area where the chi flows freely. It was a week of



(L-R): Candidates Jeanne Murphy, Theresa May and Wendy Howard practice *Pulling Taffy* in a small group.
Photo provided by Sr. Rita Foster

The first two and one-half days were spent in examining the 19 movements according to the three



(L-R): Candidates Mary Wichmann, Roberta George, Carolyn Glenz, Auditor Kathy Albers and Candidates Ned Branigan, Frank Taylor and Holly Sanders practice.
Photo provided by Sr. Rita Foster



basic principles of proper alignment, stance, and shifting the weight fully on each leg. As teacher candidates focused on these principles, their "comfort" with many of the movements diminished. Several felt disintegrated. Most noticed a freer movement with less tension or awkwardness in their movements. By Thursday morning most candidates "sensed" a new and more fluid movement, or as Ed says "a diminished splash," as they once again experienced a flowing from the center of the body with softness and continuity. Teacher candidate and auditors alike were grateful for the opportunity to delve deeper into the movements and their practice. And although we use teacher candidate and auditor to identify accredited teachers from those seeking accreditation, we all experienced the same week. We really got to know one another, make new friendships, and renew old ones. As one teacher candidate stated, "it was awesome."



(L-R): Candidates Mary Wichmann and Rodney Anderson, and Auditor Bill Mishler follow Auditor Sandy McAlister's instruction regarding *Wrist Circle Taffy* during small group work. Photo provided by Sr. Rita Foster

Among the many highlights of the week were the intense, gripping, and sometimes humorous presentations. Each personal experience with T'ai Chi Chih reminded all of us of the wonderful gift that Justin has afforded us. We became more aware of the awesome responsibility of being an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher, to practice and teach with integrity, so

that those we teach might experience their own benefits. The laughter among the tears was special in that it provided a nice balance, yin-yang if you will, a reminder of what our lives are really like, and that we need not get too attached to either.

Many individuals contributed to the success of this teacher accreditation. The T'ai Chi Chih community in the Twin Cities was most helpful in special preparation days for the candidates, and in working with Sister Rita Foster, course host, on the many details before and during the accreditation process. Thanks to the auditors who gave of their time, especially those who traveled some distance. Congratulations to the 16 newly accredited teachers and to the two who were deferred. We were all richly blessed by our experiences in Minneapolis.



Graduates of the course! **Back row, (L-R):** Frank Taylor, Ted Fleischman, Rodney Anderson, Ned Branigan, Roberta George, Mary Wichmann, Course Instructor Ed Altman; **Middle row, (L-R):** Carolyn Glenz, Roberta Gelatt, Laurie Jacobi, Jeanne Murphy, Holly Sanders, Bonnie Sokolov, Course Host Sr. Rita Foster; **Front row, (L-R):** Theresa May, Sally Ehlinger, Wendy Howard, Kim Hocking, Mickey White, Karyl Belknap.

Photo provided by Sr. Rita Foster

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BALANCING THE CHI

16th INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHER'S CONFERENCE
AUGUST 2 - 5, 2001

Saint Mary's College of California
Moraga, CA

Wow! What an incredible experience. As a new teacher, not only is this my first conference, but by being on the planning committee I had the special privilege of watching Sandy McAlister and many other very talented Bay Area teachers build the structure and vitality of this phenomenal happening. I have

been warmly welcomed into the Bay Area T'ai Chi Chih family and now into the World T'ai Chi Chih family. Teachers' Conference feels like being hugged by an angel. This is truly a unique and very special group of people.

— **Athene Mantle**
Hayward, CA
(First-time Attendee)



Conference Committee member Pat Huseby shares a hug with Justin Stone. Photo: Alice Maisel

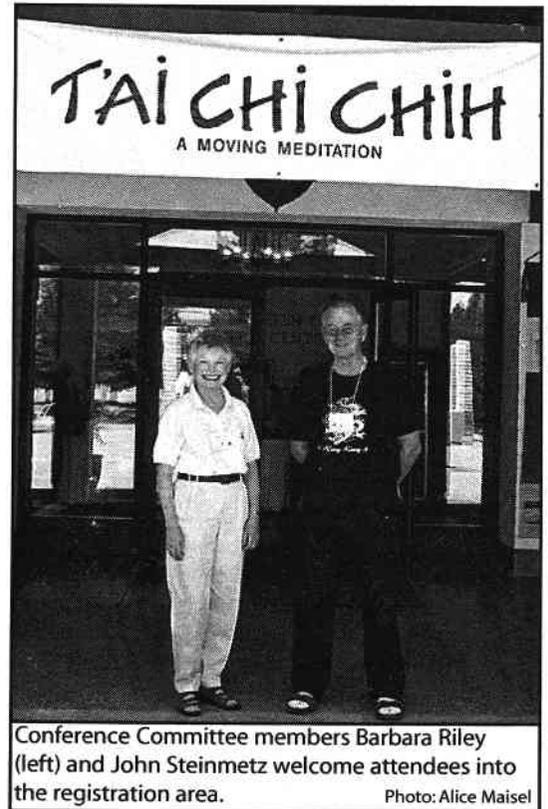
Such a wonderful, relaxing and informative Conference. I can truly appreciate all the effort that goes into making it flow after having co-hosted last year's Conference. It just went by far too quickly!!

Ed's emphasis on alignment was so useful and Sandy's input on the correct weight transfer when moving the waist was very helpful.

Each time I come to a Teachers' Conference I realize how much I need to be there every year. It's going to be a lifetime of improvements!

Seeing Justin again and listening to his talks is a very special part of each Conference — which all new teachers should experience.

A big thank you to Sandy and all the local teachers who



Conference Committee members Barbara Riley (left) and John Steinmetz welcome attendees into the registration area. Photo: Alice Maisel

helped to make this Conference so memorable.

— **Carolyn Perkins**
New York, NY

Justin & Ed's wisdom and humor kindled a new level of commitment to my TCC practice and the "big picture:" to be truthful to myself (change habit energies) and to make the most of each moment — to learn to let go and bend like the bamboo — there was lots of love here.

— **Linda Robinson**
Seattle, WA



It is such a joy to come to the conference and reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. The TCC community is a unique group of people and I feel truly blessed to be a part of it.

It always amazes me how much I learn at each TCC event I attend. The lessons for life and for my TCC practice and teaching have been invaluable.

Thank you to the Bay Area teachers for organizing such a warm, welcoming and wonderful conference!!

– **Jackie Williamson**
Moose Jaw, SK
CANADA



(L-R): Marie Dotts, Judy George, Tonya Setzke, Linda Prosche, Joanna Woodrow share a hug in the dining hall. Photo: Alice Maisel

own practice. I also appreciate all the wisdom and ideas and suggestions from everyone that I can use to enhance my own teaching, so as to bring greater benefits to my students.

– **Diane See**
Daly City, CA
(First-time Attendee)

I will always remember my first T'ai Chi Chih Conference. It was just as wonderful as I had anticipated. Everything went so smoothly, it had to be the chi. It was great to be

It is really sweet to be part of such a dedicated and loving community as the T'ai Chi Chih teachers. The more I see and hear and practice, the more respect I gain for the form, and for Ed's teachings, and for Justin Stone's wisdom. Especially I respect

the integrity and generous spirit in which T'ai Chi Chih is shared. I'm sure that is partly responsible for its rapid growth. There is a true spiritual motive behind the teaching as well as the form, and that is beautiful and rare. This was my first teachers' conference and my only regret is not having enjoyed one sooner. Not only for the new friends and connections, but because of how it has deepened my commitment to my

with an ocean of dedicated TCC teachers. I feel renewed, invigorated and refreshed. I felt honored to meet Justin Stone in person as well as reconnect with Ed Altman and my companions from the May 2001 Teacher Training.

GRATITUDE
ALMOST EIGHTY-FIVE
T'AI CHI CHIH MASTER, JUSTIN
CHI FLOWING FREELY
LIKE THE SEA

– **Sr. Corita Keane**
Sacramento, CA
(First-time Attendee)

Lovely mellow quality — of both the inner and the outer landscape . . . Teachers' presentations on Sunday, especially Linda [Robinson's] about bereavement, were excellent. Loved the sense of personal-ness. And then loved Justin's response, bringing us back from the medical to the balancing-of-the-chi.

– **Anne Perkins**
St. Louis, MO

continued on page 22



Part of the 2001 Conference Committee pauses for a pose at the registration table. **Back row, (L-R):** Pat Huseby, Wendy Helms, Karen Silva; **Front row, (L-R):** Denise Clark, Ursula Smith, Barbara Buckley. Other Committee members who worked throughout the year to ensure the Conference's success were: Conference Host Sandy McAlister and Committee Members David Schulberg, Barbara Riley, John Steinmetz, Linda Braga, Linda Meyer, Athene Mantel, Lois Mahaney. Other helpers included: Dianne Krueger, Pat Bourne, Roberta Taggart, Barbara Dinehart, and Joanna Woodrow.

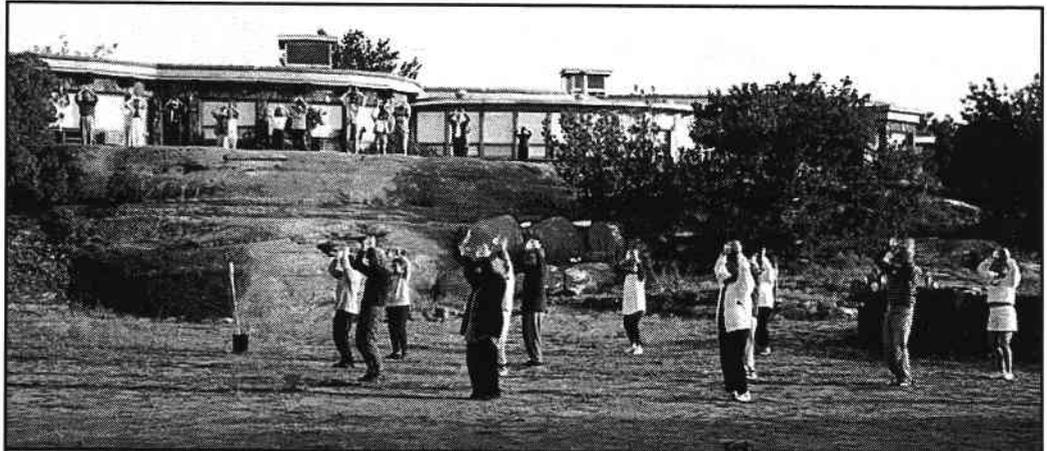
Photo: Alice Maisel



Highly-successful TCC retreat will be offered again next spring in Sedona

By Deanne Hodgson

Last year's T'ai Chi Chih retreat was such a success, we've decided to offer it again, only this time, at the request of many participants, a fourth day has been added, along with shorter and more frequent workshops and more time to enjoy the serenity and majesty of this beautiful retreat center. A 20-minute ride over an unpaved roadway brings you to an unspoiled serene retreat setting. (This time you will be supplied with better directions!) You will stay in buildings tucked into the mountainside, designed by a student of Frank Lloyd Wright. Each evening, after a bonfire under the stars with singing and storytelling about our T'ai Chi Chih adventures, you can retire to your spacious room and relax by the warm light of a candle.



Some of the 70 attendees at the March, 2001 TCC retreat in Sedona, AZ are shown (front and rear, on plateau) practicing the form at sunrise. Photo: Karen Silva

The focus of the retreat will be workshops with Ed Altman and outdoor T'ai Chi Chih practices at sunrise and sunset. There will be time built in for hiking, meditation, walks, use of the pool and hot tub, private massage and healing sessions (available at special participant rates from the retreat center).

This retreat is for T'ai Chi Chih teachers, students of every level, and even folks who just want to relax and renew themselves in this exquisitely beautiful and tranquil red rock country.

Since the cost of four days might be prohibitive to some, the option to attend for three days will be offered. Registration fees range from \$260 for triple deluxe room for 3 days to \$435 for a single standard room for 4 days if you register by November 30, 2001. Rates increase after that. Registration includes workshops, accommodations, meals and snacks.

If you would like more information, please contact Deanne Hodgson and she will send you a brochure

and registration details along with travel information. Phone: 602-789-7415; Email: deanne@blueribbon.com

Even with 70 attendees, we had a waiting list of 17 people for the last retreat, and this retreat will have limited registration again, so be sure to register early.

COMMENTS FROM ATTENDEES AT MARCH, 2001 RETREAT

Loved it all from food to room, and especially the sessions with Ed. It was very well-organized and flowed nicely. Learned a lot, loved meeting new people and am happy that you are considering repeating the event next year. The following day I had the opportunity to walk/hike around a bit, surrounded by the silence of the desert, interrupted only by the sound of the wind and an occasional bird. That's when I realized what was missing during the weekend: the time to just be, or walk around and take in the profound beauty of the place. My suggestion is that such "non-activity" be scheduled, in such a way that we wouldn't miss any of the sessions with Ed.

- Viktoria Vercelletto

Loved this retreat! Sorry to leave! Thanks Deanne and to everyone who helped put this together! . . . Don't want to go back to Maryland.

- Sharon Sirkis

Wish it was longer. Liked the flow of this week-end. . . . What a gift! Thank you Deanne for all your time in putting this retreat together.

- Caroline Guilott



Calendar of Events

<p>Sept. 20 thru 23, 2001</p> <p>MEDITATION RETREAT W/ JUSTIN STONE Location: Albuquerque, NM Contact: For the NM TCC Center: Marjie Bassler P.O. Box 53034 Albuquerque, NM 87153 Marjie's Phone: (505) 823-1817</p> <p>Commuter Fee: \$145 Resident Fee: \$202.50</p> <p><i>(Full — Waiting list only)</i></p>	<p>May</p> <p>TCC HALF-DAY TEACHER RENEWAL (TBA)</p> <p>May, 2002</p> <p>SEIJAKU TEACHER TRAINING Location: St. Louis, MO Contact: Kathy Albers 6046 Hartford St. St. Louis, MO 63139 Phone: (314) 727-1983 e-mail: Kayessence@earthling.net</p> <p>TCC Teacher Renewal Fee: TBA Seijaku Teacher Training Fee: \$300</p> <p><i>(NOTE — Exact dates to be announced. Contact host for details.)</i></p>
<p>Nov. 3</p> <p>TCC TEACHER RENEWAL (10am-4pm)</p> <p>Nov. 5 thru 10, 2001</p> <p>TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Albuquerque, NM Contact: For the NM TCC Center: Uly Messier 103 McKnight Place Belen, NM 87002 Phone: (505) 864-3946</p> <p>TCC Teacher Renewal Fee: \$40 TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450</p>	<p>Aug. 1 thru 4, 2002</p> <p>17TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE Location: San Antonio, TX Contact: Stella Jaidar c/o The Center for Spirituality & the Arts 4707 Broadway San Antonio, TX 78209 Stella's Phone: (210) 349-7597 e-mail: Sjaidar@stic.net</p>
<p>Nov. 20, 2001</p> <p>DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT" CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH Location: Worldwide</p>	<p>Registration by Jan. 10, 2002: \$270 by April 1, 2002: \$300 by June 1, 2002: \$330 by Aug. 1, 2002: \$360</p> <p>Non-U.S. Teachers' fee: \$270</p>
<p>April 19 thru 21, 2002</p> <p>TCC RETREAT Location: Sedona, AZ Contact: Deanne Hodgson 233 E. Angela Drive Phoenix, AZ 85022-1812 Phone: (602) 789-7415 e-mail: deanne@blueribbon.com</p> <p><i>(Contact host for pricing information.)</i></p> <p><i>(NOTE — These dates had to be changed for the above event and are different than those published in the June 2001 "Calendar of Events.")</i></p>	<p><i>(See flyer insert to register.)</i></p>

Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih.

Ed Altman is the Head of T'ai Chi Chih.

All hosted events led by Ed Altman unless otherwise indicated.



Conference Host Sandy McAlister makes a point at the podium. Photo: Alice Maisel

another level. Thank you for your continued commitment and support.

— **Linda Siebeck Prosche**
San Rafael, CA

The conference was beautifully planned to the finest detail. Clearly the caring & hospitality was primary. The great amount of work involved can only begin to be appreciated. The only thing I can think of that I need would have been a little more down time — to integrate & even to socialize — although meals were a fabulous time for that. For me, I require a little more sleep & was torn between missing anything planned & having enough rest to function well. I kept having to remind myself that this is a conference — not a retreat! It was a very “classy” conference — Thank you!

— **Pat Fisher**
West Linn, OR
(First-time Attendee)

As usual, the conference committee stood on the shoulders of those who came before and put together a conference that was bigger and better than ever. Having limited contact with other teachers during the year, it was extremely rewarding to receive corrections



Jerry Granok (left) and Mary Schieferecke, both of Colorado, share ideas during the “Regional Areas” lunch on Saturday. Photo: Alice Maisel

from and practice refinements with Justin, Ed, and my fellow teachers. I recognize I have just begun to plumb the depths of T'ai Chi Chih.

— **Jerry Granok**
Pagosa Springs, CO

Peer break out groups were excellent — my peers are great teachers. Although the lunch room was great it was difficult to hear each other to promote discussion and community. . . . As a “recommitted” TCC teacher and student I am blown away by the level of maturity in the students and of Ed’s teaching. Having been away from the conferences for several years, I am acutely aware that the TCC community has expanded to



Teachers share their ideas on particular topics in group discussion on Friday.

Photo: Alice Maisel



I continue to be filled with gratitude for the gift of T'ai Chi Chih in my life. The new friends I have made are a treasure of great richness in my experiences. T'ai Chi Chih continues to evolve my life in new and fascinating ways that amaze me. As a new teacher I have attempted to set up three different classes, and each has been roadblocked at the last minute. Although I don't understand this, I accept that this is the way things are supposed to be occurring. During the conference, through the lunch roundtable topic discussions I was able to discover, acknowledge & let go of some fears that have blocked presenting/offering classes at the local drug & alcohol rehab. hospital. Working with other teachers, through their love & encouragement, in the flow with the chi, I am energized to move forward in the Cosmic Rhythm, wherever it takes me.

– **Barbara Lippert**
Camarillo, CA
(First-time Attendee)

To me, Justin's and Ed's talks are worth the price of admission — they always move me and my "practice gets bigger on the inside," just by listening. My respect and appreciation of Ed grows as he so willingly shares his vulnerabilities



Teachers who already teach in a prison or juvenile detention setting, or are interested in doing so, share ideas and experiences during the "Roundtable" lunch on Friday. (L-R): Judy Tretheway, Deedie Cote, Kathy Grassel, Lucy Ann Fleischman, Bev Geiger.

Photo: Alice Maisel

without hiding behind an outward picture of himself.

Being in the presence of other committed practitioners is inspiring and

I loved the sharing of stories, formally and informally.

– **Jan Arrott**
Las Vegas, NM



Southern California teachers meet at the "regional lunch" to discuss their community; (L-R): Sandra Smail, Christina Tillotson, Linden Royce, Corine Reeber, Linda Williams.

Photo: Alice Maisel



**Alignment, stance, weight shift
Alignment, stance, weight shift**

Release the tension
Release again, again
Sinking into the stillness
Moving in the stillness
Resting in the stillness

Thank you Ed & Justin and fellow
TCC teachers.

- Linda Williams
Camarillo, CA

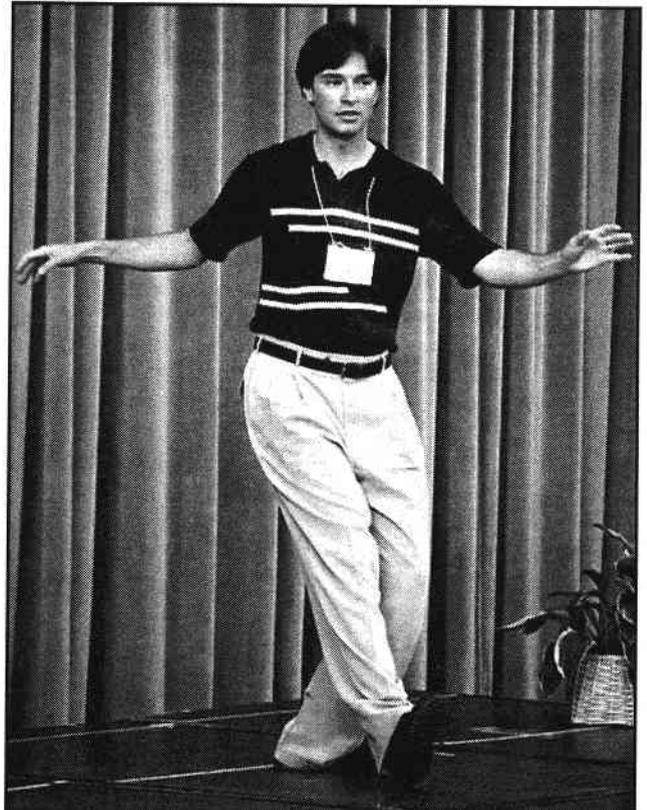
If you understand, T'ai Chi Chih is
just the same.
If you do not understand, T'ai Chi
Chih is just the same.

Going to conference always adds to
my understanding of T.C.C. But, it's
reassuring to me, that even if I do
not understand, T.C.C. is just there,
the same — for us all.

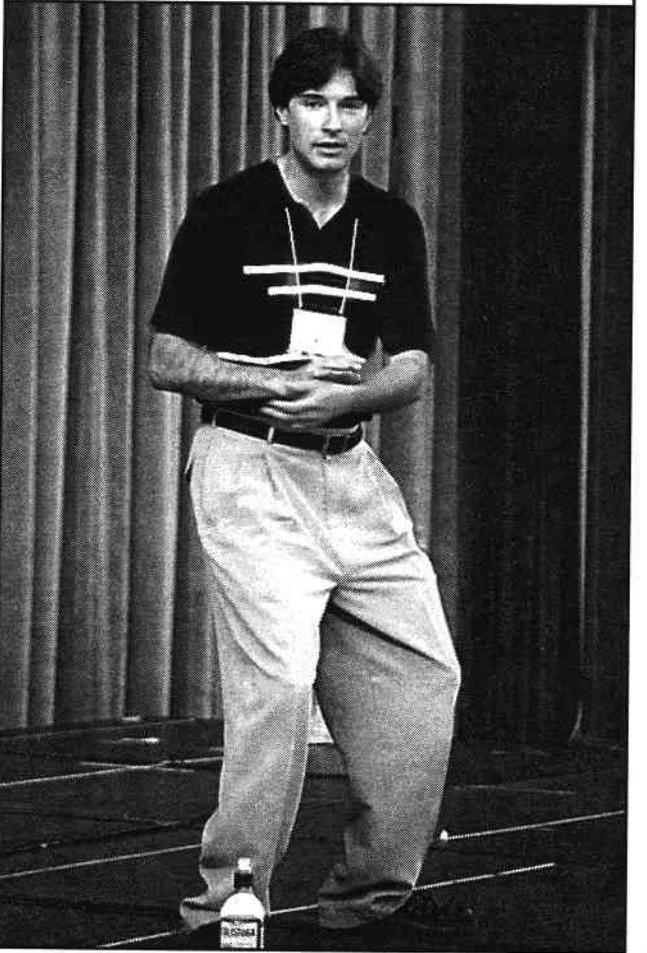
- Nancy Werner-Azarski
Minneapolis, MN

A whole new move!
Pivoting from the
hips. "Understanding"
and "feeling" pivoting
from the hip is what I'll
be working on. The
integration of balancing
the artist & scientist
. . . I could flow fine,
but I've deepened my
practice by "yielding"
and letting go of my
mechanics. Thinking
versus flowing. . . . The
conference was my sec-
ond, but first one away
from MN. Let's just say
— I will not miss future
conferences! Thank
you, Thank you, Thank
you JUSTIN — Ed &
Noel — Sandy & crew!
It was awesome and
well done! Gratefully,
with blessings & peace,

- Judy George
Roseville, MN

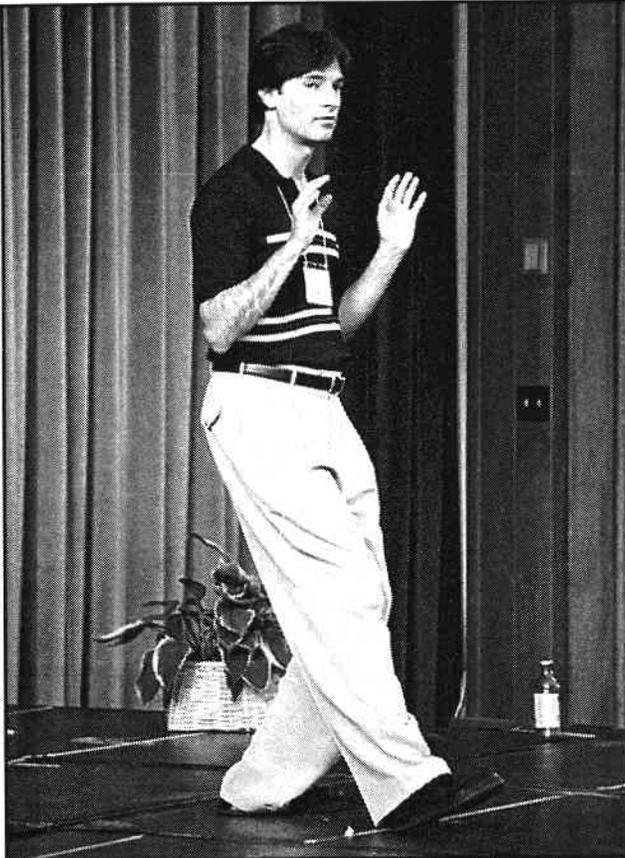


(Above) Head of T'ai Chi Chih Ed Altman demonstrates *Working the Pulley* and (below) *Pulling Taffy*. Photo: Alice Maisel

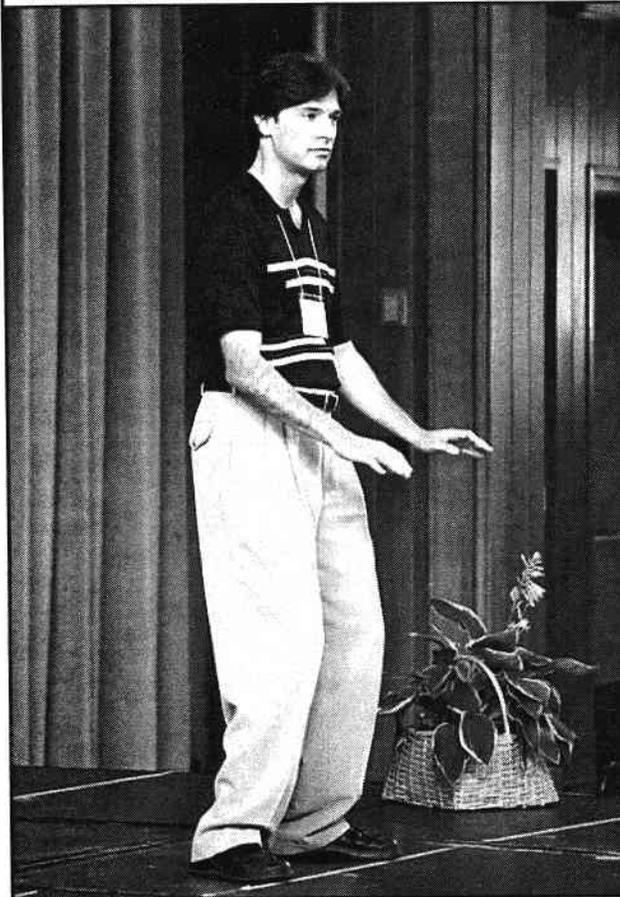


(L-R): Ron Barker, Chery Ann Hoffmeyer (behind), April Leffler, Hope Spangler, Sharon Sloper work on *Carry the Ball to the Side* during small group sessions.

Photo: Alice Maisel



(Above) Ed Altman demonstrates *Push Pull* and (below) comes to a graceful conclusion. Photo: Alice Maisel



The Conference has taught me the movements in greater detail. Particularly the principle of alignment helped me to improve all movements. I thoroughly enjoyed the silent group practice. To me it is a superb form of meditation. The moving meditation that TCC is comes alive in this practice as nowhere else.

– **Jan Linthorst**
Orange, CA
(First-time Attendee)

What a terrific opportunity to put faces with names, deepen old relationships and forge new ones. I have become very close to people I just met here. Everyone is so open — so real. I would challenge anyone to find a more genuine group. I truly

feel like I have friends (family?) all over the country now. I found great warmth & genuine caring all around me. It (being here) has also helped me accept the deeper side of my practice. I've come away with some outstanding ideas on how to share more of the essence of TCC w/ my students. Most importantly I'm coming away with the courage to take my TCC practice to a deeper level, get out of my head and *feel* the moves more. That is more meaningful because I feel I have the support of the whole TCC community. . . .

– **Deborah Cole**
Severn, MD
(First-time Attendee)

. . . I feel a much clearer awareness of how I am moving, of how my body's alignment actually works. It will take awhile for me to break old habits, to get out of the way, and to allow an improved alignment to flow. Homework! Ah yes, that's why I came.

– **Joanna Woodrow**
San Jose, CA



Teachers practice *Daughter on the Mountaintop* in small groups to help each other refine the movement. Photo: Alice Maisel



I sincerely thank the conference organizers for a wonderful T'ai Chi Chih experience in a beautiful setting.

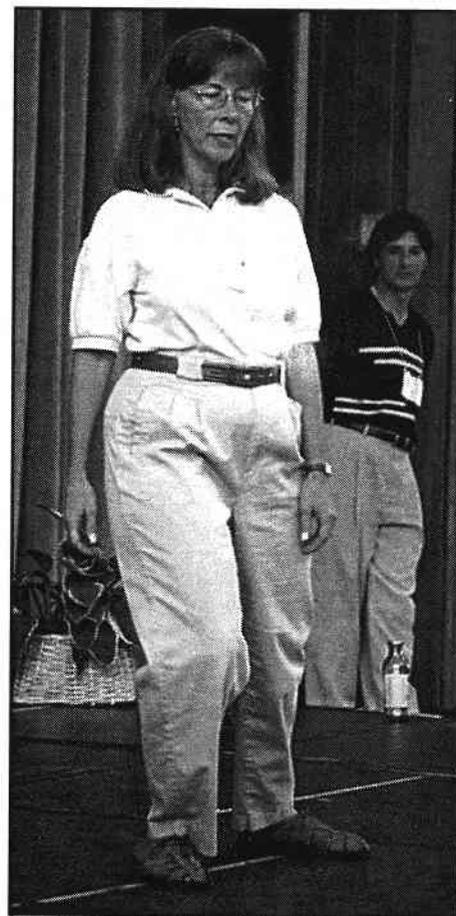
My "a ha" experience at this conference came when Sandy McAlister showed us the difference between turning the waist and shifting the weight — allowing the waist to move, in "Carry the Ball to the Side." I had been shifting the weight side to side, but had also been too diligent in turning my waist, thus causing my right knee to shift out of alignment, and create pain in my hip joint. So thank you Sandy. I am enjoying allowing the chi to move me.

I am grateful for Justin's words of wisdom, his willingness to share & play the "Devil's Advocate."

Thank you, Ed, for your gentle example of how the "teacher is also the student." You exemplified that many times during the conference & I appreciate that in you as a leader.

- Trisha Jewellen Hargaden
New York, NY

I rejoice at the feeling of sensitivity and love at this conference! I was especially moved when Ed stepped aside inviting Sandy McAlister and later, Pam Towne, to the platform to explain technical features of two T'ai Chi Chih movements. Whatever caused my emotional response was strong enough to draw me to Ed while he spoke outside to Sandy. I heard my thoughts begin to form as I said, "It was important to see you both share in teaching that side to side step. You work so well together." While Pam assisted in explaining and leading us in the Pulley, more emotions surged to the surface, and I wonder if I am alone in appreciation for this acknowledgment, yet needing more significant leadership in teaching training and other empowering roles for women in the TCC organization. I applaud the current emerging structure of openness, equality, and non-hierarchical and participatory leadership. Ed gives respectful responses to us all. I wonder if Justin and Ed need to hear what we would like in the evolution of the TCC leadership. I wonder whether I was the only one deeply touched today by Ed's will-



Conference Host Sandy McAlister demonstrates the difference between turning from the waist and shifting the weight while Ed Altman looks on. Photo: Alice Maisel

ingness to incorporate at least two of TCC's most talented and generous women into the conference training. Am I alone in hoping that this may be a beginning?

- Daryl Isenberg
Chicago, IL



Ed Altman leads the group in *Bird Flaps Its Wings* from the stage.

Photo: Alice Maisel

T'ai Chi Chih Conference 2001 — a MOSAIC of color and light, woven together by love, nourishing the soul, uplifting the mind, and touching the heart. For here, under the spacious blue of California sky, bathed in



golden sunlight, we came together, bonded by one common goal — to strengthen our practice of T'ai Chi Chih.....to deepen.....to immerse ourselves.....to open.....to let go.....to allowto discover.....to connect more deeply to the ESSENCE....And as the weekend unfolded, we shared and touched spirits, each of us in our own unique way, adding to the GREAT POOL of flowing CHI of which we are all a part. And through the unerring guidance of Justin's crystal clear words of Truth and great wisdom, we were led even deeper along our path of Purification, deeply opening doors within, focusing us again and again on our inner vision — reminding us that we are not here by accident, and inspiring us to be constantly aware that the CHI is our own inner teacher — we only need to feel it and it will always do what it needs to do, if we just get out of the way. And, of course, Ed's truly outstanding ability to clarify the deepest steps of awareness moment by moment that will guide us ever deeper into our practice, was so valuable. . . .

--Beverly Weil
North Salem, NY

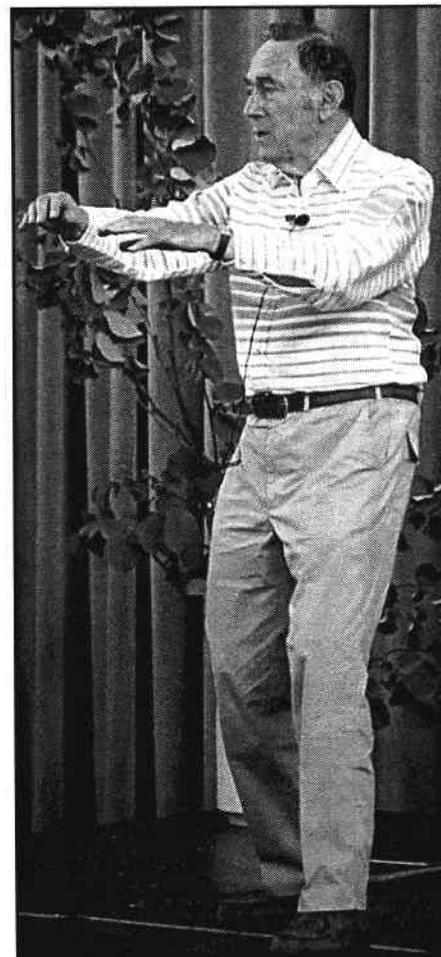
EVERY YEAR MORE LIGHT

So many wonderful people — how would we know them without T'ai Chi Chih? Not only old friends, but the new teachers (friends) also. This year the highlight was the candlelight ceremony and realizing that we are growing not only in numbers but also in depth. Sr. Antonia commented on how easily everyone was able to flow with the program. Have we always flowed that easily? I know I didn't. I also know how grateful I am to Justin, T'ai Chi Chih and all of you. I am grateful — I give Thanks. Thank you to the California Teachers (angels) for all the Love and work and especially Sandy — whose great heart made it easy and graceful for us to come together and have a fantastic Conference.

– Carmen Brocklehurst
Albuquerque, NM

. . . Justin's talk on Vashanas was excellent. During the candle lighting ceremony I had this image of the Vashanas melting away as the wax rolled down the candle. If only it were that easy!

– Sharon Sirkis
Columbia, MD



Justin Stone makes a point about flowing softly while demonstrating Around the Platter. Photo: Alice Maisel

HOW TO REMEMBER MORAGA

- M** is for Masterful Planning
- O** is for Outstanding inspirational talks and instructions by Justin and Ed
- R** is for Reverence and Appreciation for the beauty of the Campus
- A** is for Commitment to TCC
- G** is for Graciousness of everyone
- A** is for Alignment within and without

Put them together and they spell TCC Conference 2001 — Moraga. Thank you.

– Sr. Margaret O'Connor
Wayne, NJ



Teachers focus while practicing Working the Pulley.

Photo: Alice Maisel



Noel Altman, editor of *The Vital Force*, addresses the group.

Photo: Alice Maisel



Teachers stand and listen to points Ed Altman makes about alignment from the stage.

Photo: Alice Maisel



Ten teachers from Canada made the trip to the States to attend the conference, then volunteered to host it in 2003!

Photo: Alice Maisel



Sr. Antonia Cooper instructs the group in performing the candlelighting rededication ceremony on Saturday night.

Photo: Alice Maisel



Justin Stone plays the piano while Amy Hackenberg looks on.

Photo: Alice Maisel



(L-R): Florence Germain-Robin and Catherine Briessel, both from France, made the trip to the States to attend the Conference.

Photo: Alice Maisel



Some of the 176 attending teachers are shown performing the Candlelighting Rededication Ceremony, led by Sr. Antonia Cooper.

Photo: Alice Maisel



Pyramid Poetry

This form of poetry was originated by Justin Stone and is described in detail in his book, Climb the Joyous Mountain.

*Breathe
because
it is life,
open within
and behold
sacred
space*

– April Leffler

*Each
cycle
must pulsate
so figure 8's
amplify
thought's true
source.*

– Bonnie Simons

*Sounds
Echo
Through my mind
Never knowing
How it feels
To be
Real*

– Terri Lease
Student of Donna
McElhose

*Thoughts
Be like
Passing Clouds
And do not stay
To block the
Light of
Chi*

– Sally McLaughlin

**GROUP
PRACTICE**
*Move as one,
separately.
Leaves us all
full of
Chi*

– Eddie Roberts



*pain
forgets
to fill me
as T'ai Chi Chih
empties me
with joy
breath*

– Karen S. Williamson

*Chi
teaching
how to move
softly, gently.
Letting go
of whom?
I*

– Caroline Guillott

*God
is the
ultimate
Chi, flowing in
around, through
between
all*

– Cary Fellman

*Peace
unfolds
within me
expectantly
gratefully
release
fear*

– April Leffler

*Hark,
observe
all around.
Ultimately
perceiving,
profound
truth.*

– Eddie Roberts



*Some
people
make judgements
that compare us,
forgetting
who they
are.*

– Melissa Seefeld
Student of Richard Detert

*Fear
unwrapped
Reveals the
treasure disguised
Look deeper
Find the
gem!*

– Sharon Sirkis

*Each
Person
Affecting
All in the World
The Greatest
Power
Love*

– Jan Kirch
Student of Donna
McElhose

*Light
at the
end of the
tunnel is the
brightest light
sometimes
seen*

– Sharon Sirkis

*Soft
Peaceful
Like a dove
Wrapped around me
Filled with Love
Time stands
Still*

– Terri Lease
Student of Donna
McElhose



*Oh,
darn fly
in my ear
doing practice
I'll drown you
in the
chi*

– Jan Linthorst

*On
life's beach
of wisdom
I am barely
just a grain
of sand
Eeeek!*

– Sharon Sirkis

*tree
stands tall
roots sink deep
life force grounded
circles round
birth through
death*

– Lisa Thorburn
Student of Sandy
McAlister

*Hands
So soft
Breath so soft
Baby Phoebe
Lets go and
Takes a
Nap*

– Ann Sollars

*WIND
WHISPERS
WHEN LEAVES FALL
MOTHER NATURE
DOES HER WORK
AUTUMN'S
HERE*

– Ed Uemura
Student of Sharon Sirkis



Poetry Pages

A Thank You to Our Teacher Karen Roewade

T'ai Chi Chih for types like me
 And Linda Joy who does agree
 Is now the very finest way
 For us to start afresh each day
 Our sleeping souls we first enhance
 By deepening breath, mid-distance glance
 Then, next to calm corporeal commotion
 Our bodies sway with Rocking Motion
 Both light and clear Bird Flaps Its Wings
 And on we go to other things
 As every time Around the Platter
 We Gather in much Energy matter
 With quiet mind our Chi does rally
 Daughters on Mountain Tops and Valley
 The Taffy movements ebb and flow
 In silence and to music slow
 No daily cares intrude to sully
 Healing Sounds or Working the Pulley
 Eyes closed, ears listen to the loud
 Celestial sighs of Passing Cloud
 This hour so good and clear and true
 Is many lessons learned from you!
 Oh dearest Karen, most gratefully
 We tender thoughtful thanks to thee

– **Loretta Schaeffer & Linda Joy**
Students of Karen Roewade Houser

Regardless of shape,
 size or degree of clarity,
 each mirror reflects
 the boundless sky

– **Ed Altman**

Chi

Raise a hand and gently let it fall

Softly gather heart and mind and body
 Blend them into one, twist them into
 Complicated patterns so simply done
 This is living — a plain thing
 Done in one breath with one release
 Upon another and back again
 Grasp the hard, the rough, the sharp
 Manipulate like clay
 Shape them into light and dark,
 Shape them into sea and sky and self
 Until all are one and one is all

And then remember...
 To raise a hand and gently let it fall

– **NJ Carroll**
Student of Vida Wackerling

The breeze quietly whispers
 to the dozing trees
 Secrets of far away lands
 and the gossip of birds.

– **Hannah Pysto**
Student of Donna McElhose

This is a poem written by a young woman from Ireland who fell in love with T'ai Chi Chih practice after only four classes. She was so moved spiritually and expressed it in the words above.

– **Vida Wackerling**



"Almost" Pyramid Poems

With
softness
gentleness
continuity
T'ai Chi Chih
melts the
heart

– *Jan Linthorst*

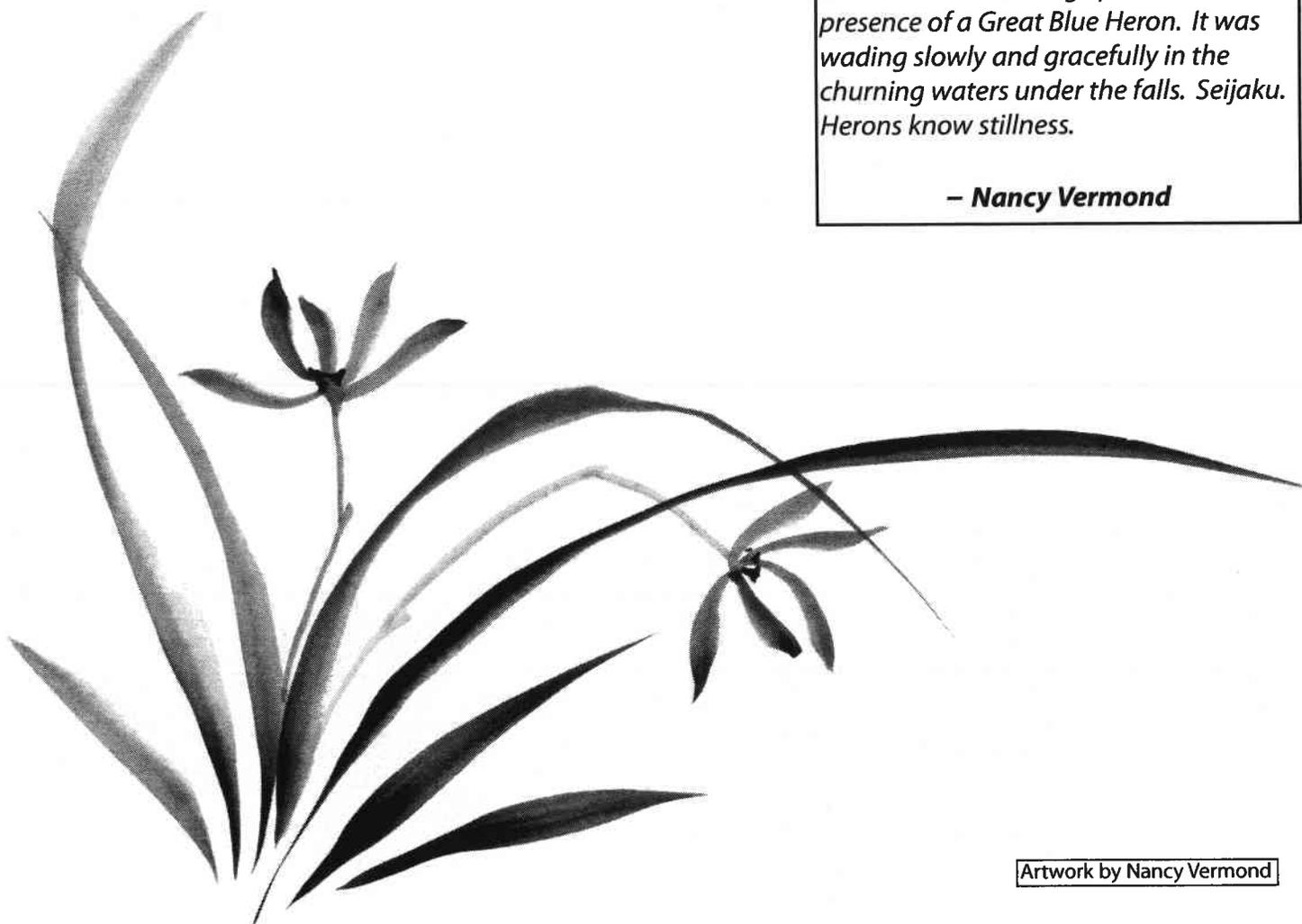
Now
after
the deluge,
one last rivulet
finds its way
downhill...
splash!

– *Robin Parker*
Student of Dale
Buchanan

The Great Blue Heron

On Sunday mornings, I sometimes practice T'ai Chi Chih near the Little Falls of the Thames River here in St. Marys, Ontario. One morning I practiced in the presence of a Great Blue Heron. It was wading slowly and gracefully in the churning waters under the falls. Seijaku. Herons know stillness.

– *Nancy Vermond*



Artwork by Nancy Vermond



First Student of TCC

continued from page 7

"What I call 'energy medicine' has exploded. It was super duper woo-woo — as far out as you could get [in the early 1970's]. That's what I think makes Justin's achievement incredible — he was so far ahead of the curve, so far ahead." When Jim decided to get onto the internet to try to find Justin, he "thought T'ai Chi Chih was something that wasn't even around — a flash in the pan."

When he went onto the internet and, using search engines, located "teachers all over the place," after coming across their individual websites, he was very surprised. He contacted one who informed him that Justin was alive and well in Albuquerque. He also was told about the T'ai Chi Chih community website, (www.taichichih.org) and about Teacher Carmen Brocklehurst who starred in the 13-part PBS series on T'ai Chi Chih in 1994.

With the perspective of a 49-year-old man — now the editor of a monthly wine magazine, *The Underground Wine Journal*, married, and with a 17-year-old son just entering college — does Jim feel that Justin Stone affected his life, and if so, in what way?

"Justin gave me my core spiritual practice, but he was more like a father to me. I've been a professional journalist my whole life. Justin set up my very first journalism job — reviewing *The Fundamentals of Tai Chi Ch'uan* by Wen Shan Huang for *The Sun*, an Albuquerque alternative newspaper. Justin encouraged my career. He saw I was a good writer before I knew it. He gave me support and he gave me my spiritual practice," Jim explained.

He continued, "Justin once said to me [in Albuquerque], 'I came here to teach you.' And I thought at the time, 'No, you came here to do this or that, something else,' Jim recalled. [Justin has said before that he had been living in Taos, and one day knew he needed to go to Albuquerque. He went that day and ended up staying.]

Why did Jim suddenly make a trek from Southern California to Albuquerque, NM to see Justin Stone after a 27-year hiatus? "I had no idea, and I still have no idea...It's like I told Justin — I am so happy for him, happy

for the TCC teachers, and happy for the people whose lives they touch. I mean nobody could have been more pleasantly surprised than I when I found out what had happened [with T'ai Chi Chih] 27 years later. Because, how often do you get to get in on the beginning?"

"My whole life has gone in a circle. I didn't study martial arts for 25 years. Then I began practicing kick-boxing, and then Wing Chun" in recent years, Jim explained. Much of his four-day visit was spent refining his T'ai Chi Chih practice in one-on-one instruction with his original teacher, Justin Stone. He confided, "He says my Wing Chun has totally wrecked my T'ai Chi Chih, so I'm sort of right back where I started in 1971!"

It's Never too Late...

continued from page 8

My presentation to the fitness directors was a study in pranja — just the right descriptions popped out of my mouth at just the right moments. But I wouldn't have had the confidence to do that before my other experiences.

Perhaps I waited so long to start teaching because I knew that once started, the teaching would take off. And it has. Now is the right time. The fear, of course, has since burned off like morning fog inevitably does. The trick was trusting that it would and having the patience. The confidence has grown by leaps and bounds. I'm ready for whatever unknown Justin was referring to when he said "You will know later, dear, that I am right." Justin has recently written that "What meets the eye is not what meets the heart." My heart says bring it on; I'm ready, willing, and grateful.

When not trying...

continued from page 10

off I pride myself on doing things for myself, like reading or writing or T'ai Chi Chih. I do practice my T'ai Chi Chih daily, and I still feel that energy flowing. I love knowing that there is an exercise that I can do that makes me feel content. My whole life is finally content. Is it all due to T'ai Chi Chih? Maybe, but it has definitely brought something into my life that I have never had before, peace.



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 now 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, fax, 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:			
Spring:	January 10th	Fall:	July 10th
Summer:	April 10th	Winter:	October 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:

**"But if you turn your eyes within yourselves
And testify to the truth of Self-nature—
The Self-nature that is no-nature,
You will have gone beyond the ken of
sophistry."**

-- "ZAZEN WASAN / The Song of Zazen" by Hakuin,
A Flower Does Not Talk by Abbot Zenkei Shibayama

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.

When an addition or substitution for a word or words in the original text has been made, these 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 second weeks of March, June, September and December. 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:

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The Lighter Side...

1. One evening before their first TCC class, I asked the students to introduce themselves and briefly tell me why they were there. Glancing at his wife, one of the students said, "My name is Mike, and I've been living with a T'ai Chi Chih commercial for the past couple of months!" **[Editor's Note: See page 10 for her story.]**

After a short burst of laughter from the class, I asked, "Oh...was she the one that dragged your butt in here?"

"Yes," he replied. "And I brought the rest of me in too."

* * * * *

The following week I asked the class how their practice was going. Mike said he was doing the moves about 10 times the normal speed, and then added, "It felt more like T'ai Chi - Cha Cha Cha."

– Sharon Sirkis

2. This spring I taught T'ai Chi Chih to a group of 15 people who are residents of a retirement community in Toronto. They came very faithfully. A few of the students were in their 90's. Three comments I received:

Herta: "My body wants to do T'ai Chi Chih even when I don't, like when I'm waiting for the elevator. If they carry me off to the loony bin, it will be all your fault," (said with a smile).

Dorothy (who is totally blind): "I really enjoyed learning T'ai Chi Chih. It has helped me with my ballroom dancing," (in which Dorothy, in her 80's, still competes).

Ann (age 92) wrote me a note: "Thank you for the handsome diploma." (I had hand-painted a sumi-e wild orchid for each student with the caption 'moving softly with feet planted in the earth.') If the Head of T'ai Chi Chih looked in on me, he might say, 'What kind of T'ai Chi is that?.....But I continue to do T'ai Chi Chih softly and pleasantly."

By the way, several of the students from this class still get together on Saturday mornings to practice.

– Nancy Vermont

3. During practice, as I tried to whisper ever so softly, "soft knees - soft hands," I overheard one of my students quietly say to himself, "I could sure use some hand lotion."

– Ann Sollars

4. At the end of class, we do a few minutes of sitting quietly and focusing on the soles of our feet to make sure the Chi is thoroughly grounded. During one such instance one student quietly got up and prepared to leave. As I instructed the rest of the class to become more aware of their surroundings and thus opening our eyes, the wayward student, without missing a beat, blurted out in explanation, "I have to take my chi to the grocery store!"

– Debbie Cole

5. As a new student of T'ai Chi Chih, I was enthusiastically telling a colleague of the benefits I have already experienced. Both of us wear splints for nerve damage—her in her wrists and me in my elbows. I told Diana how I now am experiencing less pain, tingling and numbness in my hands. I told her that I was experiencing these benefits after doing T'ai Chi Chih for only eight weeks. I told her a little of the history of Justin Stone going to China and India and coming back to the States and developing T'ai Chi Chih. After patiently listening to me expound for quite some time, Diana finally asked me, "And can I get this in a health food store?"

– Kat York

Student of Donna McElhose

[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..."]

