



The Vital Force

Journal of the Tai Chi Chih® Community

"Tai Chi Chih is a Service to Humanity. It is a Form of Love." —Justin Stone, Originator

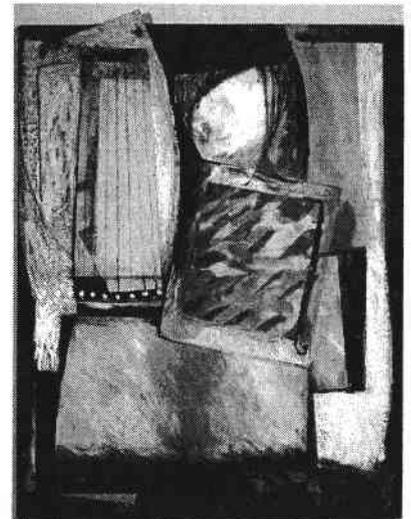
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Editor Kathy Grassel • **Membership and Accounting** Victor Berg • **Submissions:** Send your letters, stories, articles, poetry, and photos to Kathy Grassel over email at kgrassel@unm.edu or via snail mail to 510 Edith SE, Albuquerque, NM 87102. Please include a 100-word biography of yourself with your submission. **Membership:** Send your membership subscription requests and renewals, remittances, and changes of address to *The Vital Force*, P.O. Box 23068, Albuquerque, NM 87192-1068, or contact Victor Berg at vfjmembership@yahoo.com. **Memberships:** \$25/year. Members receive four issues of *The Vital Force*. The annual teacher directory will be posted to the website. If you fail to receive your issue, or if your issue is torn up, e-mail Kathy Grassel for a new copy. *The Vital Force* is an unincorporated, non-profit association serving T'ai Chi Chih practitioners worldwide. T'ai Chi Chih © is a federally registered trademark owned by Good Karma Publishing, Inc. Copyright 2004 *The Vital Force, Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih Community*. All rights reserved. **Cover:** Sandy McAlister in a tandem sky dive in Namibia, Africa, June 2003.



Contributors

Rodney Anderson was and is a student of Ron Barker. He has been practicing TCC since 1999 and teaches in the northern Twin Cities suburbs since 2001, serving the Norwest YMCA as a sort of "Pancho" to Judy George's "Cisco Kid."

Victor Berg shares his life with wife Maggie and daughter Chelsea in Albuquerque, NM.

Linda Braga was inspired to write the article called "Inspecting Job Sites for TCC Class" as a result of her many years as a Special Education teacher, working with learning handicapped and behavior disordered children. Over the 39 years of teaching, she taught in almost every site imaginable, at various schools in the district: a storage room loaded with furniture, small rooms designed as a office for one person, hallways with no heat, faculty rooms abandoned due to size, and even a principal's office! She recalls being assigned one small room that was located in back of the stage in the multi-purpose room. This was the Special Ed room. When the band practiced or PE was held indoors, the noise forced Linda to abandon her reading lesson and teach art! Just another lesson in learning to "go with the flow."

Carmen Brocklehurst got her last name from her husband of many years, Dwight, better and only known as Brock. He takes her with him on tennis tournaments all over the world, and she takes him to retreats. Carmen and Brock seem to be just fine with this arrangement.

Lois Broome is a TCC student of Gordon Wade and Margo Carpenter. She became involved in TCC in 2002 in Edson, Alberta, Canada, fell in love with what it could do for her and has been trying to learn more ever since. She attended a workshop in Victoria, students' day in Banff, a wonderful retreat in St. Albert and a few refresher courses, and is eager to learn more.

She wants to attend a teacher training in Canada soon. Lois lives with her husband on a quarter section of land in Carrot Creek, Alberta, 23 miles east of Edson. Lois has a variety of interests including photography, gardening, sewing, swimming, camping, horseback riding, reading, fishing, jigsaw puzzles, crossword puzzles and knitting.

Jillian Burcar is student of Sharon Sirkis.

Debbie Cole is ever seeking simplicity and spiritual growth as she attempts to dissipate old habit energies and embrace non-judgment.

Sher Dano is a very busy T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku teacher, enthusiastically sharing her discoveries with others. Sher is currently involved with a National Council on Aging (NCOA) pilot project, a collaboration with three other organizations to promote interest, availability, and funding for more research of T'ai Chi and Qigong for seniors.

Anne Doering was accredited in 1994 by Steve Ridley. She has a master's in fine art, and has shown her collage art. She worked as a graphic artist and newsletter editor for Health Sciences at the University of New Mexico before retiring. She has taught TCC classes to women with diabetes on the Navajo Indian reservation.

Kathy Grassel lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico—the hot-air balloon capital of the world. Kathy has been running her dog Chuck every morning for the last 16 years. Chuck is terrified of hot-air balloons and will break away from his leash and run away if he sees one. One balloon, far away on the horizon, is enough to trigger his terror and cause him to run miles, crossing rush-hour streets to the safety of home, and causing Kathy great distress trying to run him down. Chuck has taught Kathy a lot

about fear—that most, if not all, fears are a product of the mind and are irrational, a fact which apparently does not make them less real. Meditation helps greatly to burn the samskaras from which irrational fears derive. Both Kathy and Chuck meditate every morning before their run, cultivating faith in an auspicious rebirth free of fear.

Christopher Griffin is a student of Sharon Sirkis.

Caroline Guilott moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana, from Belgium. She was introduced to the TCC discipline in 1997 and became a teacher in June of 1999.

Evan Hammond is slowly waking up in Sun Lakes, AZ. He shares space with his best friend/wife who is instinctively spiritual and his dog who lives in the moment. Evan does HR "stuff" for an Indian Community which has a legend about the Man in the Maze (an allegory for life's journey.) Evan's maze began at his home next door to a Baptist seminary in Louisville, KY, and continued with undergraduate studies in the Philosophy of Religion and graduate play in Educational Psychology. He believes that loving roses unconditionally (whether or not they bloom), and sensing the life force of trees may indicate some progress within his maze. Poetry sometimes flows when he lowers his shield. He hopes to quiet his monkey mind and relax into a deeper experience of T'ai Chi Chih.

Judy Hendrichs grew up in Neenah, Wisconsin and does not think it is an accident that she ended up in Albuquerque, NM in one of Carmen Brocklehurst's TCC classes in 1997. Carmen said TCC would change her life, but being the skeptical scientist

she didn't believe her. Boy, was Judy wrong! She felt the stress reduction right away. Judy learned how powerful TCC could be when she was in the hospital, six months pregnant, being told that she would soon be delivering a premature baby. She had ruptured early and was told the odds of her delivering a healthy, full-term baby were equivalent to winning the lottery. She began doing her TCC mentally in her hospital bed, and after three weeks of hospitalization, her rupture resealed, which is extremely rare. She did bed rest and TCC for the next two months at home, and then delivered a happy, healthy, full-term baby girl named Anastasia. Judy's doctor calls her a miracle baby; Carmen calls her a Tai Chi Chih baby.



Anastasia is now 4 years old and is learning TCC. TCC continues to change Judy's life.

Moira Holland is an active student with Larry Sava and Nancy Beck in Lubbock, TX.

Nancy Lecraw was accredited in Chicago in September 2003.

Ginny Morgan was accredited in Albuquerque as a teacher in November 2002 and has been active teaching classes since that time. With her love of TCC and wanting to share it with everyone, she says it has helped with her shyness of speaking before a group.

Ann Rutherford's girlhood bedroom looked out over fields of strawberries, lettuce, and apple orchards. Upon arising, she would stretch and stand

at the window looking out at the field workers putting in another long day of backbreaking work. Later, in her teen years, Cesar Chavez came to town and

organized the workers into a union. He would go out and pick the fruit with the people. He was one with them while at the same time being their leader. He was compassion and love; he had finished with himself. Ann says T'ai Chi Chih has deepened her connection to people. It has also strengthened her awareness of her ego as it attempts to judge, grasp, and/or belittle others. She sees ego as the "Gollum" side of her: It can be very tricky. Fortunately T'ai Chi Chih is pure energy containing infinite wisdom. As she practices, she gratefully humbles herself to its transformative power. She becomes aware that Being, as consciousness, seems to pre-date the physical.

Sharon Sirkis was accredited in 1997 by Ed Altman. She is working on paying attention and staying in the present moment. She was recently taught this lesson while walking around a high school track, when she was dive-bombed by a cicada at mock force on the top of her head, causing her to suddenly turn into a whirling dervish

Lisa Thorburn teaches at Kaiser Permanente in Fremont, CA. She is the web mistress for the International TCC website (www.taichichih.org) and the Northern California TCC website (taichichih-norcal.org).

Judy Tretheway has volunteered for six years (perhaps 200+ weekly trips inside) as the facilitator and teacher for the Folsom Prison program. She has become a Hospice Chaplain and Spiritual Director and has taught Qigong classes for Kaiser in the Sacramento area.

Justin Stone leads an interesting life in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Bobbie Weichman was accredited in Chicago in September 2003.

[Sr. Francis A. Kay RSHM tried but missed the bio deadline to accompany her article about her students' experience in Africa.]

Dear Kathy,

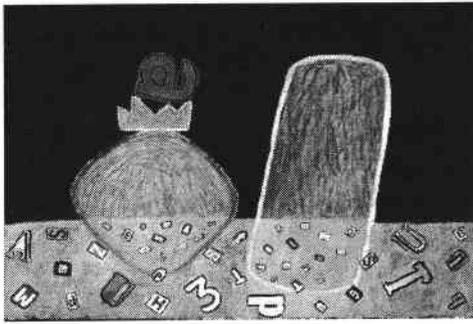
Better late than never? This is my third attempt to write a bio sketch to you. The first went into space, somewhere. The next I could not find the 'save' icon and lost it, and now, yes the third time does it.

The Vital Force has been a real lifeline to my T'ai Chi Chih, Joy through Movement family. I cannot thank you enough. As for myself, it was back in '88 that I received my Accreditation with no other than my very dear Justin, a real privilege, having been encouraged and prepared by our caring, patient, competent and loving Jeanne Engen. Ah, if I only had been exposed to the energy of T'ai Chi Chih as a Religious (Sister of the Sacred Heart of Mary). I was teacher at our Marymount International School in Rome, Italy, for 24 years, and Art Guide, Official Guide to the Vatican Treasures. I was Religious Education Director at AFSO. Base in Naples, Italy, before returning to the States, and finding T'ai Chi Chih! Then I served as Massage Therapist, Iconographer, and Pastoral Minister in Choma, Zambia, Africa. I was a Lecturer at Teacher Training College in Mutare, Zimbabwe, Africa. Now I'm in the Healing Ministries with Hospice and an AIDS Center in Harare, Zimbabwe. My whole awareness is a God-blessed wholeness, energy-filled entity. With a grateful heart, I encourage new teachers, as I have helped mine, to be faithful to practice. Listen to this 78-year-old's advice, and enjoy life. It is very fragile; it is gift. I join my group with yours in Joy Through Movement.

I would so want to meet you, but even when in the States, on home leave, I stay in the East. I would relish a conversation again with my friend whom I greatly admire, Justin, to practice with him and meditate together...if not in this world, in the next? Peace.

Angels surround you.
Sr. Francis A. Kay

Justin Stone on Life



Loneliness is one of the most important problems in our society, much more so than in Eastern ways of living. In China, Japan, and India, the family and, in the case of Japan, the clan take precedence over the individual, though that may be slowly changing. Here, if we have a family of four—two teenage children and their parents—we are apt to have four cars. When I was growing up, there was usually one car in the family. The family ate most meals together and lived as a tightly knit unit. Today, each member of the family seems to live a separate life, very seldom even having dinner together. Everybody is off in his or her car, one lonely figure in an island surrounded by other lonely figures. Perhaps this is why people like to take their vacations in such places as Peru, where, in smaller localities, everyone comes to the central market place, where much laughter is heard and where the local gossip is exchanged. In Carmel, California, a vote was taken and all the villagers opted

Our Biggest Problem?

by Justin Stone

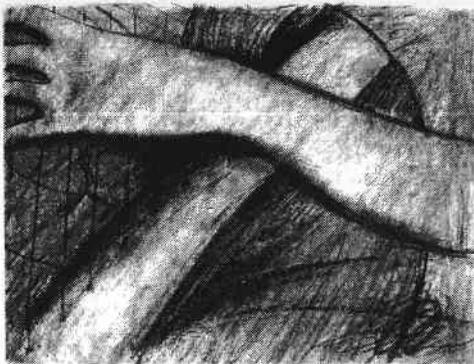
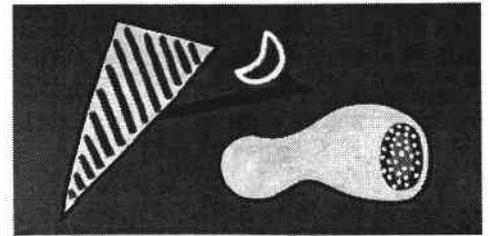
to keep getting their mail at the post office, where friends came for their mail and news of what was going on locally. That was half the fun of getting your mail.

Loneliness is most prevalent in big cities, where one is seldom acquainted with his or her neighbors in the apartment house where one lives. In small communities, neighbors are there for help, if needed, but, in apartment houses, one only sees the neighbors in the elevator, and a nod of the head passes for communication.

This cult of the individual private way of life may be great for the rich or very attractive person, but most of us do not fit that description. How many lonely women and men go home after work to a solitary dinner we'll never know. Living in crowded circumstances does not keep one from being alone. Hence the television is so popular, making noise and faintly simulating some sort of companionship.

We live in a competitive society, where the unattractive person is not catered to, and not all of us are born able to compete in such a society.

Can we change the society? Probably not. I reluctantly feel that loneliness is here to stay.



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Justin Stone on T'ai Chi Chih

May 9, 2004

Dear Justin,

Yesterday when Dan held the usual 2nd Saturday of the month meeting, we had a particularly lengthy discussion on two subjects: (1) Six Healing Sounds, and (2) the subject of "emphasizing" as mentioned in your article in the recent issue of *The Vital Force*.

(1) Six Healing Sounds. We agreed that the movement itself is done softly but are in confusion about how to make the sounds. In the Justin Stone book, we read, "...slowly uttering the correct sound in a long drawn out whisper." Yet to the contrary we have heard from different and respected sources that the sounds should be expired in a short, crisp manner, that this is what Justin recommends. It is the way I teach it in my classes. Which is the correct method?

(2) Passing Clouds. One page 9 of the April *VFJ*, you use "Passing Clouds" and "Push Pull" to illustrate the importance of emphasizing "...the hand opposite the Yang leg." While I am aware of the opposite hand emphasis in "Push Pull" and in "Carry the Ball to the Side," not mentioned in your article, it is the first time I'm hearing that there is an emphasis to the opposite hand in "Passing Clouds."

There was much talk yesterday about "what Justin means," and about whether "emphasizing" and "substantial" have the same meaning. Is there a 60/40 emphasis in the hands in "Passing Clouds"? If so, how does it relate to the substantial/insubstantial leg in that movement? We could not get a clear understanding yesterday.

Always with deepest respect, and loving thoughts,
Lucia Veteran, Lake Winola, PA

Dear Lucia,

By now you've gotten my first letter, and now I have your second, which I'll do my best to answer. I'm not happy explaining what I wrote 20 or 30 years ago as things do evolve, sometimes for the better.

As to the Healing Sounds, my original intention was to have the sounds slightly drawn out: Hooooo. However, Ho and Hoo (who) would then look exactly the same. On the sheet you sent, your elucidation of the sounds is exactly the way I wanted. To clarify, I would like the sounds slightly drawn out in a forceful (oral) manner. Most teachers have gradually come around to utter them in a short manner. Okay, but not my original intention. Remember, others have been giving the Teacher Training Courses for many years now. Change is not desired, but it is inevitable under the circumstances. Incidentally, there is no way to concentrate on the inner organs; I wouldn't know where to concentrate. That was taken from ancient instructions and was a mistake. The article on the six healing sounds does not read like my writing and may have been taken from an article; I don't remember.

In doing "Passing Clouds," a change was suggested by Steve Ridley at a Seijaku course I gave in San Francisco, and it was a good suggestion. By emphasizing first the left hand and then the right hand, slightly cupped, we scoop up the Chi as we move. I cannot go back and change what I originally wrote, but I welcome good change, of which we have had little. For instance, Kathy Grassel started counting to six as her hands circled in "Light at the Top of the Head" and "Light at the Temple," and again to six as the hands held steady. Most of us now do it in the improved manner. Consistency can be a hindrance if the change is an improvement.

Your letter confirms my thought that you are a good and serious teacher. It is necessary for a good teacher to understand the movements, so I am always at your service. Meantime, I compliment you on your work. You might want to share my answer with Dan.

With loving thoughts,
Justin

Lois Mahanay

Living Legend retires from active teaching of TCC

By Linda Braga

There are many ways to use T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Through Movement to promote peace in the world. This includes teaching TCC to various groups of adults and children, contributing to the *Vital Force Journal* and being an active participant in the TCC organization at the local and national level, and offering free TCC practices at a park. Working behind the scenes for countless hours, days and years has been a labor of love by one special teacher in the Bay Area in California. Her name is Lois Mahaney.

This long time TCC teacher has done this and much more. She has been an active TCC teacher for years, teaching at the San Lorenzo Adult School and other locations. She was the keeper of the TCC database for 15 years and did this single-handedly! She also helped prepare, collate, and mail the *VFJ* for

many years, having TCC teachers come to her house and work to get out the next *VFJ* issue. She was also responsible for the TCC Directory and put in all the maps that show where TCC teachers are located in the USA. For years, she attended the weeklong TCC Accreditation and presented information about the *VFJ* and supported new teacher candidates.

In her spare time, she designed and sold the familiar TCC t-shirts and sweatshirts at Conferences that have the Ou Mie Shu birds with the words T'ai Chi Chih on them. These shirts have helped to spread the word about TCC. Some TCC teachers use her shirts as their main wardrobe, in order to advertise TCC to the community.

She also has supported the Bay Area TCC teachers, working hard to put on many of the early TCC Conferences in California, at Vallambrosa and other retreat centers.

This spring Lois retired from active teaching of TCC. Now in her mid-80s, she plans to stay active in the local Bay Area TCC group, at-

tending meetings and promoting TCC as a way of life.

Recently, Lois was hospitalized and when we went to visit her, she fretted that she had not done TCC for four days! We asked her if she wanted us to do TCC with her, "mentally" or physically. She wanted to see us move, so we moved the chair and did some T'ai Chi Chih. Later, the doctors and nurses reported that her blood pressure dropped and her heart rhythm stabilized while we were doing TCC with her. The monitors Lois was wearing at the time recorded this data. Very nice to know!

Those of you who know Lois know that she is a tireless worker and promoter of TCC. We take this opportunity to honor her huge contribution to TCC and to her community. Thank you, Lois, for your commitment to TCC and for your loyal service to others. You are a living legend!



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Feature Interview

Globetrotter Sandy McAlister takes T'ai Chi Chih along

The luck of the Irish was with us to catch up with Sandy McAlister just before she left for a week with the Sierra Club, then an intensive in New Jersey, and finally a teacher training in the Bay Area. What would be a frantic pace for some, Sandy takes in stride.

VFJ: How did you grow up?

Sandy: I was very, extremely, painfully shy. I know that nobody is going to believe that, but it's true. I hated recess because you had to go out and play with the other kids. Like, no, I want to stay here and sit at my desk. I didn't try out for anything; I wasn't in any groups. My mother thought I would never leave home and never leave her apron strings.

VFJ: Did you?

Sandy: Yeah, the first time I left home I was 20. I moved up to Sun Valley in Idaho and became a ski bum. I went up there to work and I learned to ski. That's where I learned all the vices. I had to leave home to do that; I couldn't do that at home.

VFJ: Where was home?

Sandy: I was born in Utah, but we moved from there when I was six months old, so I grew up here in California in the Bay Area. I have a younger sister and much younger



Sandy in Thailand March 2000

Sandy: Oh my gosh, they are in their 80s and 90s, sometimes more.

VFJ: Where do you get the jokes?

Sandy: They have to be real simple. Mostly

brother. I was raised Mormon, so it was a strict upbringing, and a lot of my time outside of school was spent with church people doing church things. I was raised very religious, and then I did a 180 and became like, "Back! Back! Don't get near me!" Part of my growing up thing, I guess. It was kind of a big thing of my life, and getting away from it was a big thing, too.

VFJ: And now, you're not a ski bum anymore. Do you have, what would you call it, a day job?

Sandy: I work for two school districts, in their older adult program department. I go into convalescent homes, senior housing, and senior centers where I teach gentle range-of-motion

it's me. I'm the joke [laughing]. They know everything about me, but I figure it brings a real person to them. I tell them everything that happens in my life, the good and the bad. They still like me, even then.

VFJ: Unlike a classroom full of kids, are they the same people?

Sandy: Yes, to some of the places I've been going for 10 years. Some of the people have come and gone in those 10 years, but still, in convalescent homes, sometimes people hang in there for a loooong time.

VFJ: This is part of the school district?

Sandy: Yes, actually. Here in California, the school system pays for teachers in the older adult program to go into these different facilities and teach classes. They will teach current events and exercise and music. Yes, I actually get paid to go in and be silly and make people laugh and make them exercise.

VFJ: Do you do TCC with them?

Sandy: There are a few groups that are able to do some seated TCC.

VFJ: Do you teach other groups, too?

Sandy: There are a couple T'ai Chi Chih classes that I teach for older adults through the education department, which are for active healthy

older adults, and they come once a week for the class. One of my classes



exercise classes. I make people laugh and I tell jokes and we do trivia. I try to make people feel like there is somebody still listening to them.

VFJ: How old are they?

has been going on every Friday now for about 10 years and I still have a couple people who started with me way back then. I also have classes through Hayward recreation department, and I teach for three different Kaiser facilities through their wellness programs.

VFJ: What do your students want from you in general? Are they pious, or spiritual? Or do they want to alleviate their arthritis or lose weight?

Sandy: I think most of the time it's the stress thing. I think that's the biggest reason people come to classes. They are looking for something that will make them feel more comfortable in life. They feel crazy and stressed out, and that's what they hear T'ai Chi Chih is good for, among other things.

VFJ: No grass is growing under your feet?

Sandy: Well, you got to do it while you can. I

have to pay for the time I take off and for vacations. You don't get any benefits working for the school department when you're part time.

VFJ: Is your employer amenable to when you go off to these intensives and trainings for a week at a time?

Sandy: So far they haven't said anything, but this year is going to be stretching it. So I'm just kind of waiting on that. I just keep putting in, saying, "Okay, I'm taking next week off," and if they ask why, I tell them. They know what I do. Not only do I take off for all the T'ai Chi Chih stuff, but I have to take off for my vacations, too. And that's always three, four, sometimes five weeks.

VFJ: You do fab things on your vacations. I remember you went to Nepal?

Sandy: Yes, in 1995. That trip ties back

into the religion thing. What I learned in going there was a little more tolerance. After doing a 180 and being very cynical about any type of religion—you know, people with their rosary beads, and people who do all these different kinds of rituals with church—I go to Nepal, and I see people with their mala beads and they're chanting, which is just like repeating prayers, and they have lots of rituals. Yet it was more acceptable because it was different and exotic. You know, Ti-



In the Himalayas, teaching her travel group and the Nepali porters.

betan religion is really in, kind of mystical and cool, and here are these cool people doing these cool things. I realized it was the same thing that I was putting other people down for. So it was quite a revelation. It was a very good learning experience in that I recognized that.

VFJ: How long were you there?

Sandy: Three weeks. I did some trekking in the mountains and sightseeing in Katmandu.

VFJ: Was that your first huge journey away from your mother's apron?

Sandy: It was in 1983 to Morocco and Spain, my first big going away out of the United States.

VFJ: And what took you there?

Sandy: This fellow I was dating at the time (laughing). I loved Morocco. We rented a car. I wanted to spend more

time in Morocco and he wanted to spend more time in Spain, so we divided it evenly, exactly a week and a half in Morocco and exactly a week and a half in Spain. Then I didn't do anything until the Nepal trip in 1995. And now it's like I'm on a roll and you can't hold me back. I want to go to all these interesting, different, challenging places. What I really go for is the challenge. Europe is out, forget that. People look like you, dress like you. I'd rather go see temples and monasteries

than churches, but then again, hey, is that the same thing? Hello. You know, how I was negative about western religion, and yet I think, oh, eastern religion, whooo, cool. Religion is religion really, once you get to the core of it.

VFJ: What did you find when you went to Central America?

Sandy: My sister and I went down on our own. We went to Belize, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.

VFJ: So overall, are you able to make any assessment of the world changing? Are people more globalized?

Sandy: I've probably gone to too many varied places, and sometimes when you go to those places you don't really get to talk to the people. If you're with a tour group, and sometimes I've been with a tour group, you see the sights but you don't get to spend time to really talk with people. Unless you do it like you did, Kathy, and live there, and you get to really converse with people and get to know their hearts and mind. I wouldn't mind doing that, spending months in one place, but I keep thinking there are so many places to see

that I would have a hard time doing that.

VFJ: Where do you go last year?

Sandy: I did a 24-day driving and camping trip in Africa—South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Botswana. I was 10 years older than the oldest person, and everybody else was 10 years younger than he was, so basically I was 20 years older than everybody.

VFJ: Did they single you out as the den mother?

Sandy: No, I wouldn't take on that role. I wanted to be like everyone else, and I'm not the mothering type anyway, and I sure made it clear from the beginning. I was the only American. They were from New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, and Germany. I did a tandem skydive for the first time. That was pretty cool—over the sand dunes looking over to the Atlantic Ocean in Namibia. I could only talk two other people into going with me, bunch of ninnies (laughing). The animals were absolutely wonderful. I've always had a soft spot for zebras and when I saw my first running herd I just started crying. I've felt so stupid, like, I'm really seeing zebras, oh my God, look at that. The landscape was wonderful, to do it camping and driving. The first several days reminded me very much of the Southwest U.S., New Mexico, Nevada. I kept wondering when are we going to get to Africa? Then we got to the sand dunes in Namibia. We rode sand-dune quad bikes. I'm the only one who dumped my bike, I guess because I was more daring, or more.... I jumped up and got back on again. Great fun.

VFJ: Your next trip?

Sandy: My next trip is Turkey, a really old culture. Justin was funny. I happened to mention Turkey, and he

wrote back, why Turkey? I wrote him and said, hey, I'm traveling with five good friends, there's great Mediterranean food, and six days cruising on the Mediterranean Sea in our own private yacht. I get to walk in the footsteps of Abraham, where Abraham was born. Whirling dervishes, Rumi's home and burial place, all on the agenda. So he wrote back to say, you make me want to go with you.

VFJ: You will be teaching T'ai Chi Chih to the Sierra Club next week, let's go to that.

Sandy: That's one of my favorite things to do. This will be my fifth year. The Sierra Club has planned weeklong national outings all over the U.S. We usually go up into the Sierras here. The program I do is a combination hiking and T'ai Chi Chih. People come from all over the U.S. We stay in a lodge, very rustic. In the morning we have a T'ai Chi Chih lesson, then go for a hike, then come back in the afternoon and have another lesson. In the evenings, I might show Justin's video. I might show the Carmen and Justin interview video to give people a chance to connect with Justin and hear his words, too. I always take my teacher list so that I can refer people to a teacher in their area. It's wonderful to see people who are taking a lesson twice a day for five days how much they progress, how fast they learn it—it's just incredible. And I really would like to know—I probably should do a follow-up, but I haven't—are they sticking with it?

VFJ: I imagine that if it were meaningful to them that they would keep it up.

Sandy: Last year I had one lady... We had a class in the morning, and then we took this nice gentle hike out to a lake. They asked to do it there at the lake before we ate our lunch. So we did another practice, and for this one woman, the practice just brought tears to her eyes. The serenity of the

place and something about doing the practice really touched her. She was doing the practice, and she had tears streaming down her face. She said, "I don't really know what's going on, other than I was really touched by the beauty as we were doing the practice." Yeah, it can do that to you. Really can touch your heart and open you up. That was pretty cool for her to have that experience.

VFJ: How did you get a gig like that?

Sandy: The Sierra Club has a lodge in the mountains by Truckee, and I went up there for a hiking weekend and started talking, and the old "What do you do?" came up, and they said, "Well, come and teach a class here at the lodge." So I came and did a weekend class. Then they said you should do one of those weeklong things with the national outings. So it was just one of those things. I would like to do it a couple times a year and go to different places. They also have international outings. I'm working toward that, one of these days.

VFJ: Well, I'm jealous.

Sandy: It's a matter of following what you like to do, and doors will open. Then you have to walk through them. Sometimes they are already open; it's figuring out that they are open.

VFJ: All these hints presenting ways to turn in our lives, it's right in front of us. We don't have to read books.

Sandy: That's one thing that T'ai Chi Chih has done for me. I don't know if I can put it in words, but it's allowed me to be open to experiences, and when they come, to be able to be in a space that I can partake of them. I think that is due to doing my practice.

VFJ: How did everything get started?

Sandy: I wasn't going to be a teacher. The only reason I took training was so I could learn from Justin. At that point in 1985, the only way you could learn from him was to take teacher training. So I told my teacher, "No way am I go-

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ing to be a teacher." So I took the training, came back, and I still had no intention of being a teacher, but I kept going to her class because I wanted to keep connected with T'ai Chi Chih and doing it. Then the company I worked for closed down, so I was out of a job, and hanging out because I got six months severance pay. Those were the days when I was still pretty much a hand-to-mouth kind of person, and didn't really plan for the future. Of course I still don't [laughing], but even less in those days, thinking, ooh, I've got six months of money here, I don't have to work for a long time. I can stretch this out. A few months later, my teacher said, "Hey, I'm moving to Japan. Would you take over this T'ai Chi Chih class here, the one that you've been coming to all the time?" I said, uh, well, yeah, I can do that, because I don't have a job, and I've been coming here doing this long enough with you, hanging out, I can do that, sure. The rest, as they say, is history.

VFJ: Now look at where you are.

Sandy: Who would have ever guessed, how many years ago when I started T'ai Chi Chih that I would still be doing it, and that I would be doing what I'm doing now? I mean, it never entered my mind... anywhere along the line... that I would be in any kind of position. Even though I always taken these positions of helping at conferences and doing those kinds of things, stepping forward, that to me was just like, well, stepping forward to help. But having a position of authority or responsibility that I have now, I don't think ever entered my realm of consciousness. I could be fooling myself, but I don't think so. Not that it wasn't possible—but that I'd even wanted to do it, or that it would even come my way. And why would it? I was just a T'ai Chi Chih teacher.

VFJ: No, I think you stood out. Maybe you just thought of yourself as a

teacher, but you know, people have a certain aura, or presence, and those people might not know it, but everybody else does. You had to be somewhat present that Justin noticed. I mean, how did that happen that you were named?

Sandy: I guess because I'm active in the community. I attended every conference. I only missed one when I was really poor and we didn't have scholarships at that time. I would audit trainings and any time there was any-



Sandy, exhausted after the 1990 conference, helped by Dan Finn

thing in Albuquerque like meditation retreats, I would come. I was always sort of a TCC groupie, right out there with it. And I was not shy to talk to Justin, although he was very intimidating in the beginning. I remember my first time, when he lived here in the Monterrey area. I was going to visit him, I don't remember why, maybe something about a conference that we were doing. I thought, "Oh my gosh, I don't know what to say to him, I don't know how to talk to him, I have no idea what to say to him, but I'm going anyway." I know I felt very intimidated to be one-on-one with him. In a group, no big deal, but to go

down there one-on-one, gosh, I don't know this guy and I have nothing to say that could be worth listening to. I know I had that attitude.

VFJ: And how did it go?

Sandy: Oh, he knows how to make people comfortable. He knows how to make people damn uncomfortable, too [laughing].

VFJ: What do you think about the new Intensive program? People seem to love them.

Sandy: I think they're wonderful. I did my first one in Houston. I loved doing it. The students—even though it was intense—said it was still fun and they really enjoyed it. I think it's going to make a big difference, not only for the students, but also for the teachers. Intensives are the only thing where teachers can really have their practice evaluated. We don't have any other format for that. Workshops, what can you do in one day with 30 or 40 people? And at trainings, your attention is focused on the students. At the conferences, that's all self-evaluation. So the intensive is just as valuable for teachers as it is for students.

VFJ: So, I hope you have a good Sierra Club outing before the Intensive in New Jersey. It must feel good to be free, not tied to a desk.

Sandy: Yeah, sometimes when I get tired of what I do, I remember, hey, what's the alternative? 8 to 5, two weeks off a year? But all the money I should be putting away for retirement I spend on my vacations because I would rather experience it now while I'm healthy. Who knows what's in the future? I'm not willing to sacrifice now for later. I'm just not one of those kind of people, never have been actually. So I'll be working till I'm 70 or longer. That may not be such a bad thing either.

Our Students, Our Selves

The Joy of a Tai Chi Chih Child-Parent Class

By Judy Hendrichs, Albuquerque, NM

It has been something I have always wanted to do – teach Tai Chi Chih to children and their parents. I was anxious and excited about the opportunity to teach children. I was anxious since I'd had little experience teaching children.

I got some wonderful ideas and suggestions about teaching TCC to kids at the TCC Teachers conference in Banff at one of the informal table talks. I felt much more confident after talking with others who had already taught kids.

My first class consisted of five eager kids (ages 6-10) and their parents. The kids are generally very soft, but I was surprised by how they moved. They did not really seem to know what their legs, feet or arms were doing. I was beginning to wonder during that first class if this was a good idea after all. I kept going over yinning and yanging – they seemed to have no idea whether their knee was bent or not. I would ask the kids to stop and look at their knee, to see if it was bent. (I remember when I looked to see what my feet were doing during an advanced TCC class; I was very surprised to see my heel about three inches off the ground during Perpetual Motion Taffy. I had no idea what my body was doing either.)

I remember talking to my teacher, Carmen Brocklehurst, after that first class and wondering if the kids would ever be able to do the yinning and yanging. She as-



[When I read this passage by Pablo Casals, I knew I had to teach T'ai Chi Chih to children. —Judy]

"You are a marvel. Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again. And what do we teach our children? We teach them that two plus two is four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move. You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is like you, a marvel? You must work – we must all work – to make the world worthy of its children."

sured me they would, that I would be amazed at how they improved. I said, yes, maybe after the eight weeks. She said she meant next week. And of course she was right. By the third week they were yinning and yanging all in unison, at least for a few minutes! By the 5th week, ALL their fingers began to move! I was amazed. I had invited Carmen to my class and while she was leading them, the chi was flowing so strongly. I have found that inviting my teacher to help teach one of my classes can be very beneficial.

Now I can honestly say I love teaching my Child-Parent classes. I just finished with another class—it does get easier. The joy and the love I feel from the children is amazing. I hope others will consider teaching kids and parents. It is a lot of fun and there is a demand for it. I did some advertising in a kids/parents newspaper, but I also found that people who already knew TCC really wanted their kids to learn it. My first class consisted of two TCC teachers and their kids, among others. Since I just became accredited the year before, and these teachers were very experienced, it was a little intimidating for me. But I realized these experienced teachers could help me improve my class. Now I regularly ask them for feedback about my class, especially when I try something new. (These discussions take place outside of class.)

Things I learned: It helps to define the space for their practice. I place Yin and Yang symbols on the floor so they know where to stand (since the



younger kids may want to wander around the room or stand very close to another child). I used cardboard cake rounds, and used various colors of construction paper.

Repetition and patience. Yinning and yanging is not easy for the younger children. I'm still teaching yinning and yanging by the 8th week. I find that more repetition and more patience are needed when teaching children.

The children, as they get quiet, often confuse this with being tired and want to sit. During my one-hour class, I have them sit twice. I have the kids sit and draw what they are feeling. They seem to love this. While the kids are drawing and writing their answers to my specific questions, I work more individually with the parents. I do explain to the parents that this is a child-centered class. Also I have them sit and I ask them how their practice is going and what nice thing they did for themselves. (Their assignment is to practice every day, and to do something nice for themselves every day

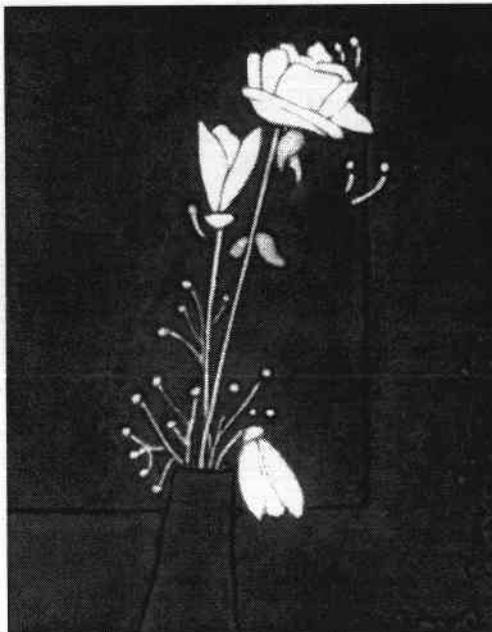
they practice.) At the end of the eight-week class I return all their drawings/writings to them in the form of a booklet, with some quotes from Justin about TCC.

I learned not to get too discouraged when the kids do not practice. I learned to appreciate their honesty when they tell me they didn't practice at all that week. I kept reminding them about all the benefits and one has to practice to get them. I kept asking each of them about their practice every week, and towards the end of the eight weeks, they began to practice much more frequently.

I give them a small surprise at the end of each class. The kids really look forward to this. The surprise gift represents some principle of TCC. For instance, I ask them to tell me where are the circles in a movement we just learned, and then give them bubble solution to make more circles. I have also given super balls, pencils with the phrase "polarity between the hands," or "flow from the center," or

stickers of the yin/yang symbol or stickers of colorful footprints to remind them to stay in their feet. (I order these things in bulk from a teachers catalog called Oriental Trading Company; the prices are very reasonable.)

I have found teaching children and their parents to be very rewarding. Six-year-old Dylan writes, "I feel happy, I feel wind" when practicing TCC. Seven-year-old Erin "learned to stay grounded," Shana, 9, "feels happy," Shelby, 7, learned, "I can be calm." Zach, 12, writes, "Chi feels like a cloud flowing through the sky and kinda like fire." Tai Chi Chih is a wonderful gift; let's share it with everyone, young and old. As Justin has written, "Circulation and balance of the Chi energy is one of the great secrets of life, open to any of us who will make the effort." Kids do make the effort and they have not forgotten how to flow. A world where all the children have learned T'ai Chi Chih – would be a beautiful and peaceful world.



Mother's Day

By Sher Dano, Surprise, AZ

After a class, a lady approached me, saying that she had wanted to share something with the class but did not trust her emotions. As her eyes misted over & voice started to quiver, she explained that her mother, also a student, had passed away the previous week. The daughter then explained how the loved ones gathered around the mother's hospital bed and did Rocking Motion, the mother's favorite movement. She said her mother smiled sweetly, closed her eyes, & serenely slipped away.

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Inspecting job sites for T'ai Chi Chih classes

By Linda Braga, Castro Valley, CA

T'ai Chi Chih Teachers dream of teaching classes in an ideal setting: a quiet, well-ventilated room, good accessibility from the street, a table and chairs, and space to move. A fireplace and a view would be the icing on the cake. Few of us are so blessed. When establishing a new TCC class, it is wise to inspect the "job site" before classes begin. Never, never assume that the room will be adequate for the needs of the class. This I have learned from hard experience.

Years ago, when I first started teaching TCC, I taught at the SL Library. Naturally, I expected to have a nice room with plenty of space, very accessible to the public. I was shocked to find that the small room reserved for TCC was a smoker's haven on the 2nd floor. The curtains, rug and chairs reeked of smoke. We couldn't breathe. Bad news!

We were eventually moved to another room, a larger one, on the main floor. We were pleased until we met there and found the floor covering was the carpet from Hell: huge geometric patterns with loud obnoxious colors that literally assaulted our eyes. It made us nauseated and dizzy. Focusing on the soles of the feet was no help. So a parquet dance floor was installed at one end of the room. That was better for awhile.

The following year, our TCC class was moved to an elementary school library. Ah, windows, no smoke, and soft neutral carpet. But,

there was yet another drawback. We had to move and rearrange all the furniture every time we met for class. The understanding was that we would "return the room to the exact way it was before class." Even members of a labor union would not be happy to have to move the furniture as often and precisely as we did.

The next location selected for TCC class was a multi-purpose room at another school. It was a nice big space with windows, tables and chairs, and an old furnace. Problems, you ask? Yes!

The floors were often dirty with candy wrappers, gum, pizza sauce, and the dirt from 500 kids. Then the custodian quit and things got worse. No chairs set up ahead of time, no lights outside the building for safety, a bad furnace that banged when turned on, and, oh yes, birds nesting in the upper windows. (I am teaching my last TCC class of the year at this location next week.)

In looking for other places to offer TCC, I was told that an exclusive country club was looking for a T'ai Chi teacher. I had visions of a fabulous room overlooking the green hills of a golf course, nestled among huge trees in a lovely neighborhood. I followed up on the contact and arranged to meet the Sports Director at the Club.

In viewing the room set aside for Yoga and Tai Chi, I was stunned by what I saw. A huge cavernous room made for racquetball or storage. No windows, not one! And, of course, no natural light! There was only ONE

door with no alternate exit, a definite safety issue in case of fire. No chairs, no table, just the overpowering smell of sweaty bodies from former classes, and lingering paint fumes. Oh yes, the room had a 3-way echo that I heard as I stood there and said, "Oh, my!"

Having a sense of humor helps in situations like this. I dubbed it "Cell block 7" in my mind, and politely asked if there was any other room available. A second choice was the Children's Center by the pool and Pro Shop, with lovely carpet and view. Drawbacks itemized by the Director were the loud lawnmowers that were used to groom the golf greens and availability of this room in the daytime.

I was not deterred. Children's toys were no problem, nor the lawnmowers, nor the Pro Golfer's office adjoining this room. I had dealt with much worse in the past. I knew that once TCC classes started, the positive Chi in the room would outweigh the various problems. At least we could breathe in fresh air and see the green grass, natural elements that would enhance our practice.

My advice to TCC teachers setting up new classes is this: be sure to check out the "job site" before classes convene, hold out for what you want in terms of space, ventilation, and accessibility, and wear a hard hat if birds are nesting in the windows. Remember the Story of The Three Bears... "Not too big, not too small, not too hot, not too cold," the room should be "just right" for offering the gift of TCC to others.



Good news from Folsom, Old and New

By Judy Tretheway

I am so glad that I reached out in April when I was feeling all the doors closing around my prison work. All the prayerful responses seemed to have shifted the energy in a significant way.

After three months of no program, our class at Old Folsom is once again happening on Thursday afternoons. Many men are unable to come because of all the new restrictions, and it seems that one in three classes gets canceled; BUT we have the chi flowing again and those that can come are grateful.

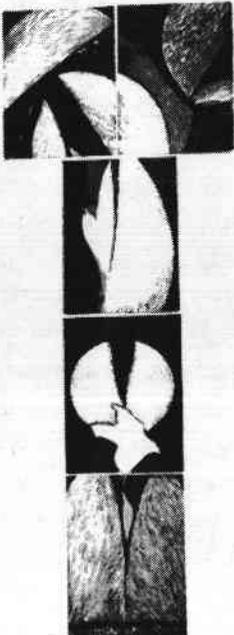
PLUS, I have an invitation to begin a program in New Folsom (a higher security facility). AND ...

This Wednesday and Thursday I am journeying down (four hours drive) to Avenal State Prison, and offering six sessions, on six different prison yards, and starting up six different practice groups. There is one man I know there who was a student in Folsom and was transferred — he got this ball rolling. Our plan now is for me to go there every couple of months to teach more of the movements of the Tai Chi Chih form and help develop these six practice groups with the help of the Chaplain.

Thank you so much for your prayers and please hold me in the Light this week as I begin a new adventure and open the doorway into this style of meditation to so many inmates.

May we all find and move from that peaceful core essence that quietly awaits our attention.

Chifully,
Judy Tretheway
916-921-2172
judytre@surewest.net —NEW EMAIL



Now this is dedication! Are there any teachers out there who can help with this TCC teaching program at Avenal State Prison in Central California? If you are moved to volunteer in this rewarding work, contact Judy Tretheway.

Thanks! — Pam Towne

Loyal students keep coming to class

I have been teaching in Rossmoor, Walnut Creek (an "over-55" community) for 13 years. Many of my students keep coming to class year after year, and seem to me, and by their own accounts, to be staying very fit and getting many of the well-known benefits from the practice. We end each class with a five-minute seated meditation, which many of them practice on their own as well. Wonderful students, wonderful practice! Here is a story told by one of my students. — Barbara Riley

T'ai Chi Chih replaces medication

Nellie B. Stahl, student of Barbara Riley

Almost a year ago, I was prescribed medication for leg swelling due to high blood pressure. I took the medication until the end of January and at that time the results were minimal.

I have gone to T'ai Chi Chih classes weekly for five years and practiced sporadically at home. On February 1, I decided to practice daily the full amount as recommended. At the end of February, the blood count had lowered and the medication strength was cut in half.

I continued with the daily practice and added a 10- to 15-minute walk, and after six weeks the blood pressure was slightly less than normal. The medication was cut to one dose every three or four days. T'ai Chi was prescribed on a continuing basis.

Trainings, Intensives, Workshops, Retreats

Deepening our practice in the Deep South

By Caroline Guilott, Lake Charles, Louisiana, co-host with Sr. Carletta

The TCC intensive in Houston was quite a wonderful and intense experience. The setting at the Dominican Sisters was ideal for learning, sharing and quiet time. People from all over the United States and Canada came together to treasure the teachings given by Sandy McAlister. So many states were represented: Alabama,

California, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Texas and Saskatchewan. Four teachers and nine students shared their experience and worked through the challenges of understanding the TCC practice. We all came with our own idea of what the practice "should be" and came out with the notion that it might not be quite so.

For me, this experience of the practice has changed in more details, in the "when, where" is the release of the knees, of the wrists happening, allowing the flow and not just the move. The release or softening of the knees creates a vacuum that propels us forward and



*Back: Rita Beth, Lidia Paice, Sr. Cathy Fedewa, Lorraine Lepine, Warren Young, Laura Maria Celis, Janelle Taggart, Arlene Oehler.
Front: Margie Carnew, Caroline Guilott, Sandy McAlister, Sr. Carletta Lacour, Janeen Johnson, Johanna Runfalo*

back, explains Sandy. For Sr. Cathy, this intensive was a real eye opener or as she would say, "an energy opener," an opportunity to look at the deeper aspects of the practice, in particular the way the energy flows in each move.

Johanna found that the affirmation "less is more" became true. She feels that the intensive training is an excellent tool in refining the movements and increasing the flow. It gives the student a good indication of "how ready" they truly are.

Rita loved the new feeling of lightness and movement that comes from releasing the energy as the movement begins, referring to the expression "pulling the plug."

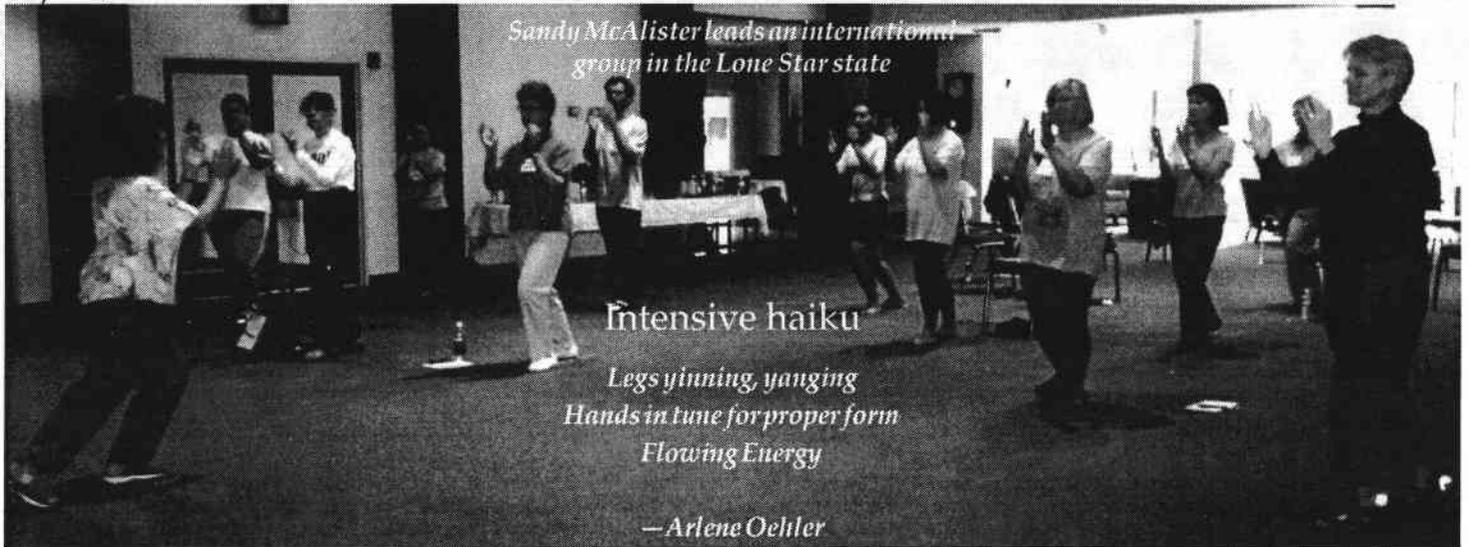
Sandy was extraordinary in her

ability to convey the feel and precision of the movements, commented Lidia.

Each and every one of us left with another vision of what we have to work (or maybe not work so hard) on. For people who came with the intention or the expectation of getting a signature, it became clear that maybe, just maybe, "allow-

ing more time" for improvement was necessary. We realized that all—students and teachers—are definitely on a journey in regard to their practice.

The TCC way is like life, full of challenges big and small, and it is through them that we can learn and improve if we really listen, if we really pay attention. And once we can find our center in the midst of all the details, all the limitations whether physical, emotional, unseen, and unexpressed; the unfolding of the practice becomes softer, becomes a flow. So allow yourself to find that center, feel it through the soles of the feet, and feel it through your guts. Let it guide you through your practice of the TCC discipline and through your life.



Sandy McAlister leads an international group in the Lone Star state

Intensive haiku

Legs yinming, yanging
Hands in tune for proper form
Flowing Energy

—Arlene Oehler

Light

I saw my feet turn transparent
my legs translucent, and my hands invisible.
I knew
I had been pierced by light

It penetrated through the soles of my feet
went up my energy channels
opening them
freeing them of all obstacles
allowing its free flow to
fill
overflow
ignite
energize!

Light entered my soul
as if it had been there always
without surprises
acknowledging every corner with its shine
every fold with its warmth
every crevice with its grace.

I am crystalline
suspended in the air and ethereal
and I exist
because I do not exist.

—Laura Maria Celis

[The intensive was a VERY INTENSE experience for me. I wrote this poem originally in Spanish and translated it to English. —LMC]

Inner Poets

Oh
My Stress
Leave Me Now
T'ai Chi Chih Soothes
Peace Within
Tension
Fades
—Lisa Thorburn

She
loves to
dance to the
tambourines of
tai chi chih
Justin
claps!
—Kathy Grassel

Wrapped
Fire
You Teach Me
Pay Attention
Rocks and Wood
Blazing
Chi
—Sharon Sirkis

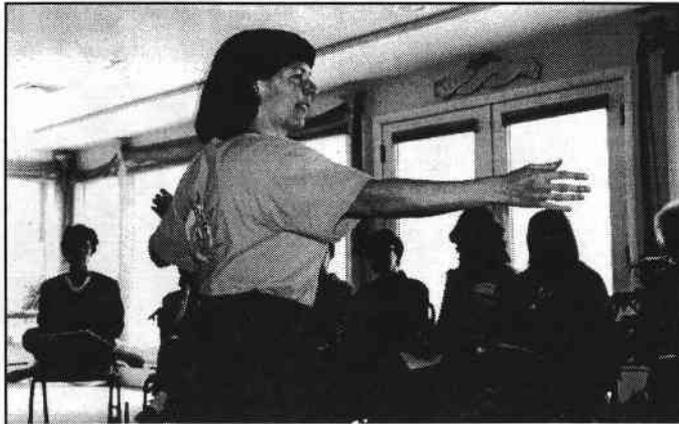
The
bamboo
bends and gives
with the grey storm
and returns
again
still
—Jillian Burcar

Masks
Hiding
Concealing
Truth From Others
Illusions
Sealing
Real
—Christopher Griffin

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Hard Work and Easy Play at the New Jersey Shore Weekend Gathering, April 30-May 2

By Debbie Cole



Debbie Cole (MD) demonstrates softness and continuity in Working the Pulley.

The annual TCC teachers' gathering at the NJ shore is always a treat to experience! This year we were blessed with a newly accredited teacher from Newfoundland and a familiar face now moved to Missouri. We shared so much with each other; ourselves, our experiences and our teaching tips – from lace-edged plungers to squishing beach balls.

It is amazing how much we can fit into our short weekend together. It's like our annual parking shuffle. (Space for parking is VERY tight at the shore.) One look at the small parking area and one must wonder how so many cars are going to fit. It requires a lot of trust –in our own instincts and in whoever is guiding us into position. One doesn't always have the perspective to see how things fit together, but is

given an opportunity to trust another to help with the blind spots. For this weekend, we all got a chance to trust, to guide and to learn in the presence of much love and deep understanding.



Sr. Agnes Fleming (NY) demonstrates polarity during Bass Drum.



Sharon Sirkis (MD) focuses on the soles of the feet.



April Leffler (PA) demonstrates yinming and yanging.

A mini-plunger as a teaching aid

By Marise Burger

Moving back and forth or sideways with the plunger close to the navel area demonstrates how the dan tien moves us. Noting that the handle remains the same distance from the floor throughout the movement helps us visualize that one must move at the same level, not return over a speed bump. The image of the pelvis as a basin that contains precious fluid reminds us to move softly so as not to spill it, either by leaning or sloshing.

Photos and captions by Janet Oussaty (NJ)



TCC Guide
Antonia
sharing joy.
Viktoria
Vercelletto
(NJ) at left.



Viktoria Vercelletto (NJ) and
Siobhan Hutchinson (NJ) after
a hard day of T'ai Chi Chih.



Eating has become a very important part of T'ai Chi Chih. Just ask Carolyn Allenby (NJ), Linda Joy (DC) and Karen Houser (MD).



During Happy Hour, Dan Pienciak shares his photos of Paris with Nancy Adams. Vive la T'ai Chi Chih!



The New York City contingent of teachers Diana Bahm, Thauha Bui and Patricia DeGeorges review photos from the T'ai Chi/Qi Gong Day in Central Park on Apr. 24. Many NYC and NJ TCC teachers and students participated.



Intensive in Albuquerque: Will The Air Force Academy Accept Blind Students?

By Ann Rutherford, course host

Justin used this analogy at the Albuquerque Intensive workshop May 13-16 when describing what kind of student is ready or not for teacher training. A teacher, he said, should never recommend her pupil because she is fond of the student any more than the Air Force Academy should admit a cadet on the basis of the applicant's possession of a pleasant personality. "One who enters teachers training must understand the movements and do them well," he said. "In teacher training you learn how to teach, not how to move. The movements must be second nature."

Pam suggested that the teacher aspirant make a video of her practice and not only examine it carefully themselves, but also give it to a teacher to assess. The student must ask herself, "Am I flowing from the center, softly and continuously? Is the Chi manifesting through my soft hands, wrists and waist, or am I just moving mechanically as a series of cut-up parts?" If the answer is "No, I am moving stiffly," then that student does not yet realize that T'ai Chi Chih is a whole; it is a beautiful butterfly, not the sum of two wings, two legs and antennae. IT IS ALIVE!



The Agony and the Ecstasy of a T'ai Chi Chih Intensive

By Moira Holland, Lubbock, TX

T'ai Chi Chih is the one activity that I can now do and not be exhausted. I have been very ill since July of 1998 and T'ai Chi Chih began to facilitate the movement of the energy that I thought that I had lost forever. When my teacher, Mr. Larry Sava, suggested that by going to an Intensive my practice would be enhanced, I was excited and yet terrified. I didn't know if my then current level of energy would hold up to the four-day workout. Recently, I took myself off all medications, which had included five years of steroid use for pain. The side effects had been arm numbness with no ability to use my hands. Sensing that I was very nervous regarding my decision, my other teacher, Ms. Nancy Beck, told me to just relax and have a good time. With the internal mantra, "Enhance My Practice and Relax," I headed for Albuquerque, New Mexico.

I was very fortunate to be part of a small group of truly "nice folks" as well as exceptional teachers. Most of my fellow students were there to be viewed as prospective teachers and readied for the Teacher Training in November. My desire was to survive from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. and make it home alive! The Albuquerque sponsoring teachers, Ms. Ann Rutherford and Mr. Vic Berg, were very supportive and saw to it that we made it to and from the T'ai Chi Chih Center each day and corrected our movements when necessary. Ms. Pam Towne expertly orchestrated our days with TCC practice while Mr. Justin Stone frequently visited to view and comment on the "Teacher Candidates." I was having a blast and excited to have all this expert help under one roof to facilitate "the Enhance-

ment of My Practice and to Ensure My Relaxation."

Each night my legs and feet would ache. I felt dehydrated and was famished but couldn't really eat much. A fellow student from New Jersey and a direct student descendant of Sr. Antonia, Ms. Alba Cordasco, graciously offered to work on my feet after I complained that they felt like swollen stubs and unattached to my ankles. She admitted that she didn't have a clue regarding what to do to massage the stubs called feet, but if I were to show her she would be glad to help. The offer was too awesome to pass up. I slept like a log to get up each day to repeat the experience. I was truly ecstatic for the challenge as well as the opportunity. The morning of the third day while in the shower, I raised my arms to practice Bass Drum and WOW what an experience! The energy was already flowing and IT was ready for me to continue. I felt at that moment that my T'ai Chi Chih teacher had changed. Suddenly, it was as though all the excellent earthly helpers at the Center were merely facilitators and the new teacher was the Chi itself! The highlight of the Intensive for me came when we were sitting in a circle and Ms. Towne asked what we thought the Chi was. I was surprised to hear myself say that I thought it was the movement of the Holy Spirit! Having been ill since 1998, my spiritual self had questioned my life's purpose more than a few times. But when the Chi began to flow differently during the Intensive, as trite as it sounds, I felt as though I had come home. My belief in the Trinity was never so strong and I knew that all would be well.

The Chi seemed to be everywhere

those last two days and I was having a dickens of a time bringing it down. I was exhausted but a "healthy exhausted" like I'd never felt before. Needing to be grounded took on a new meaning as well as a new occupational hazard. On returning to my weekly class in Lubbock, I still felt as high as the proverbial kite for several days. However, an intense abdominal pain had begun the day that I got home. I had an emergency visit with my ob/gyn and apparently numerous cysts had burst and the pain was due to the fluid in my abdomen. For the next week, I rested, did the Nei Kung and mini T'ai Chi Chih practice sessions. The following week I was ready to begin class again with an entirely new "chi-full" outlook. My main goal now is to practice all the movements for the proper flow of Chi for my best health and continued well-being. If along the way I am fortunate to be able to become a teacher and share this phenomenal information, it will be the icing on the cake.

I am currently working to establish special programming for the cancer patient. There is no question that T'ai Chi Chih will become the most important element that I will share in this program. My excitement of T'ai Chi Chih is boundless. As my health continues to improve I can say that I have been blessed to be able to experience this movement of Chi daily. The T'ai Chi Chih opportunity will only help to mold me into the individual that I was meant to be and to serve mankind in the way that God intended. Thank you, T'ai Chi Chih community, for your support.

Ripples - Believe It or Not

By Evan Hammond, Sun Lakes, AZ

A small pebble of Reality was dropped into my consciousness in May 2004. Ripples continue to spread, my awareness expands and it's increasingly difficult to isolate events which occurred in Albuquerque from the present moment in Sun Lakes, Arizona.

It's Not About the Hands

Initially I thought that Pam Towne's admonition to **relax** during the ABQ **Intense** (aka Intensive) Workshop to be either a Zen Koan or an oxymoron. My hands and waist were tight because I have a habit of being psychologically "uptight" as I strive to be perfect. Pam, Victor, and fellow students consistently prompted me to soften.

Justin's voice seemed so harsh while correcting me on the first day that I had great difficulty relaxing enough to truly listen to his admonition as essentially a caring correction. I came so close to quitting. With some synchronicity I got by with a little (or rather a lot of) help from my new friends and fellow students, Moira Holland and Alba Cordasco, as we shared our "corrections" over dinner. Lesson: Insisting on perfection alienates me, sharing and accepting imperfections bonds me to others.

But It is About the Hands

When I gave up my insistence on my mind and body being separate, I saw that my body was reflecting my thinking. As I relaxed some, and let go of a vague and habitual mistrust, I unfolded and began to "go with the flow." I lessened projecting my issues/weaknesses onto others and more clearly saw teachers and fellow students as beautiful human beings – a much better way to be in the world.

The Pebble

The pebble was the following quote written on the whiteboard at the TCC Center: "Empty space vibrates with energized intelligence. We could call this a sea of consciousness. It is overflowing with an urge to manifest and the manifestation is LOVE."

Now, back in the Phoenix areas, I am increasingly blessed to be working with two instructors with incredible *teh* (sincere intent): May Swanson and Wayne Kipple. Sometimes my ego loosens its grip, my hands soften enough to hold a soap bubble, and I feel the truth, the love mentioned in the quote from Justin's *Spiritual Odyssey*.

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Too Quickly

Six thirty-six a.m. was the precise earth time of my arrival. Under the beguiling guise of being a child, I managed to stay on bio-cosmic time for at least three earth years. But my keepers (my touchers, feeders, huggers, protectors) worried very hard to teach me tick-tock time. To relax their frowns and tight lips into smiles, I learned to get up, eat meals, be home, and be asleep before the long hand and the short hand got around to numbers my scowl-masters mysteriously chose.

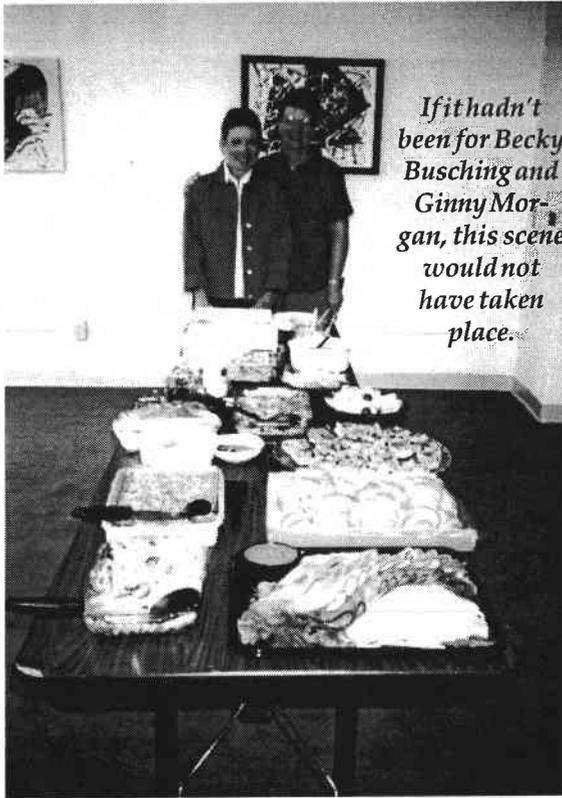
For a little while, I swung like a pendulum between trying to kill time and make time. These were trying times, for time was everywhere I spoke. Just a second. Have you got a moment? It'll only take a minute, every hour on the hour, day in and day out. So take your own sweet time because I've got time on my hands.

Then once upon ...a time, I awoke from my nightly nap, 40 tick-tock years old. Head time had changed. Weeks had become days, months had become weeks, and years – months. While my son was cleaning his magic slate of a mind with eight to ten hours of digital duration, I merely had to blink and the sun would reappear as yesterday's worried awareness played on.

More recently I wondered whether this brief, real life episode was being sponsored and videotaped by God/Buddha/Whomever. At first I anticipated my life would take several videocassettes to record, perhaps enough for a week long serial to amuse the gods. But how much tape would it take to record my nightly blinks? Perhaps as each thought expands, loses the illusion of distinct parts and moments, it captures more and more earth time within it. Eventually there will be but one photograph of this moment of consciousness, of this life. And after I've collected several of these life-times into my scrap book, I'll take them to my Teacher in amazement of how many lives it took me to wake up.

— Evan B. Hammond

Another smashing potluck at the Center



If it hadn't been for Becky Busching and Ginny Morgan, this scene would not have taken place.



Chowing down. Forty-some people came to enjoy the post-Intensive Horn of Plenty.



Justin between Alba Cordasco (NJ) and long-time Albuquerque teacher Suni McHenry.



Justin gets first pickings.

A spring gathering in Edmonton

By Margo Carpenter

From April 2nd to 4th, students from across Alberta and Saskatchewan met to learn, share and experience T'ai Chi Chih in new and greater ways. To accomplish this we invited Carmen Brocklehurst to come and share her knowledge, insights, and experience, not only of the TCC movements themselves, but also of the nature and power of the energy contained within these simple movements. We were not disappointed!

Our weekend started with Carmen simply sitting with us and talking about the nature of T'ai Chi Chih: its circularity, the movement of the Chi, and the depth of this Chi down to the cellular level. We listened and shared our experiences and expectations for the weekend. Carmen promised we'd all be feeling and experiencing the

flow of the Chi before the weekend was over, and she was true to her word.

Over the next day and a half Carmen took us through each movement. We worked at performing the movements correctly as well as experiencing the difference in energy when the movement was done incorrectly or without attention to the flow of the Chi. We learned that we were moving "through something that is actually substantial – it has life in it." And that moving through this sea of life was more a matter of relaxing and letting go rather than simply a correct placement of hands and feet. Carmen encouraged us to feel the flow of the Chi in every movement: where it began, how it was directed through the movement and how it came back to rest in the T'an T'ien at Graceful Conclusion. We were encouraged to feel

for this "life" with our hands and be aware of not scattering the energy or throwing it away. Many felt for the first time the difference between full and hollow movements. We also worked with the waist to let it direct the energy flow and move us rather than trying to move through the arms and shoulders. We practiced grounding and doing the Jing to store the energy. After all, as Carmen stated, "you worked hard for that energy, now make sure you keep it."

Most of all we learned to relax and enjoy the simple pleasures TCC has to offer us. Indeed, as Carmen said, "Until you relax you're not going to get to the deeper parts of yourself." And is this not the true goal and great joy of our TCC practice? The weekend was over all too quickly, but I believe the effects will truly last a lifetime.



*Back Row: Donna Aldous, Yvette Bowman, Carmen Brocklehurst, Margo Carpenter, Lois Broome, Rhonda Gill, Tamara Zajewskyj
Sitting: Jim Elphinstone, Ruth Isley, Maria Aruanno, Gail Terriff, Byron Gill
Front: Janine Pidruchney, Mereline Griffith, Rita Beth
Missing: Amelia Kaminski, Louise Bureau, Swee Lin Ludwig, Kui Lin Phoa, Ann Wylie-Turner*

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Awesome weekend in Canada

By Lois Broome

April 2-4, 2004. The dates are etched in my chi forever. What an awe-inspiring weekend for me! I have attended a number of TCC retreats, but never have I experienced anything remotely close to the depth of inner peace and self-awareness that flowed through me during our weekend retreat in Edmonton, Alberta (actually St. Albert, Alberta) under the tutelage of Carmen. Carmen has a gift that she uses superbly by helping one feel the energy of the movement, not only physically, but also mentally by using what I call image-streaming that energy through our mind, senses and body, all at the same time. WOW! What an impact! The sense of movement and energy and stillness all flowing through together is just beyond my meager vocabulary.

Life in general has taught me that everything in life is a circle. TCC has taught me that it is my choice whether to live in a vicious circle or a serene, smooth flowing circle. This is my decision alone with the help of my higher power. That is important information to know and accept.

I can but try, by giving of my little knowledge, to become one-tenth the TCC instructor and person that Carmen has become. Giving so much of herself so that we may learn more. I wish that everyone could at some point in their practice, whether it be as a student or a teacher, be able to spend time doing TCC with Carmen. She

opened soul doors for me that rocked me to my core. She took me deeper that I had imagined possible. Many, many thanks Carmen. It was a weekend that will be in my depths forever, as will a piece of you because of your

I never write poetry and I am not know for sharing my inner feelings, but as I was writing this letter I felt the desire — no, the need — to share it with you and to thank all involved. —LB

Supreme Ultimate Knowledge

The circle begins
It calms the mind
It deepens awareness
It brings desire to go deeper
Thereby it opens the mind
It brings the desire to learn more
It brings peace to the inner core
Because as you learn more
It brings balance and you soar
To begin the circle once more.....
So appropriately known as T'ai Chi Chih

giving and sharing spirit. You touched me.

Thank you Margo, Yvette and Tamara for having the foresight of knowing that this was precisely what everyone should have the opportunity to experience and that many of us were missing it in our practice. Without your input and hard work this endeavour would never have happened.

I will be eternally grateful to everyone involved in showing me just how important TCC has become in my life. Not just important for its physical attributes, but more importantly, to me, the mental and emotional balance it develops as I become more ready to let it flow through my very essence — so flows my circle.

As a last word, it is with deep respect that I extend great appreciation to Justin Stone for developing TCC and so generously sharing with all who are willing to learn it.



Lois Broome, Carmen, Swee Lin Ludwig, Kui Lin Phoa, Ann Wylie-Turner

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Never too late to break through

By Amelia Kaminski

I have always struggled with the practice of T'ai Chi Chih. I know the movements and have attended various events here in Canada. Even so, it has felt as though pieces of the puzzle have been missing or inaccessible. I have always trusted that there was more to T'ai Chi Chih and it has been this belief that has helped me to continue in spite of my frustration.

Recently, I attended a retreat in Edmonton, AB. Carmen was leading the session. From the beginning of the class, I began to learn about T'ai Chi Chih in a way that I had never experienced before. Carmen knew exactly how to communicate the information and the wonder of the movements in ways that I could finally grasp. Many times during the session, she would make reference to Justin Stone and what Justin would say. Carmen has been dedicated to the practice of T'ai Chi Chih for many years and shared many personal insights. How has this affected my practise? The answer is that now I do practice, regularly and with joy. Thank you Carmen for making T'ai Chi Chih come alive for so many others and me.



Canada Comments

Absolutely fabulous! I had a couple o' pivotal moments which have allowed me to glimpse greater depths. —Janine Pidruchmey

Carmen lives T'ai Chi Chih! Carmen is a shining example of TCC's benefits. She is an amazing instructor. I appreciate her talking about the awesome benefits of the Chi. We all felt the Chi, being made more aware. Thank you Carmen. And thank you Margo Carpenter and the Edmonton group for the excellent organization and restful, beautiful facility. —Rita Beth

Thanks for coming to the Prairies, Carmen and Brock. It was a real treat for us. I'll see you in New Mexico. —Donna Aldous

What a fantastic workshop and weekend. I continue to learn so much about T'ai Chi Chih. Thank you Carmen for your comments, suggestions and love. I am so glad you were able to come to Edmonton. Thank you to the Edmonton Group for your support and commitment to T'ai Chi Chih. —Rhonda Gill

Thank you, thank you. It was both a pleasure and an honour to get to know Carmen and Brock. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to "feel" the energy more in my practise and what to do to keep it in my practise. I thank you for this experience. What a gift you have shared! —Byron Gill

Thank you very much, Margo, for the time, energy, and love you put into the planning of this retreat. I enjoyed very much this weekend. I learned so much and now know that I have so much more to learn. I know that this weekend has helped me to stay aware of my body. I need to learn to stay grounded. Thank you Carmen for your conversation, insights, and support. This is so valuable. —Gail Terriff

It was an honour and an inspiration to work with Carmen. I learned so many valuable lessons. Thanks Margo, Yvette and Tamara, for organizing this retreat. —Mereline

Thank you and bless all of you. I am so appreciative of all your efforts. The workshop has proven to be a great challenge and awakening to T'ai Chi Chih. I am truly inspired and humbled. —Ruth

Thank very much Tamara, Margo and Yvette for bringing Carmen and have the opportunity to learn more about T'ai Chi Chih. It was an excellent experience that I would like to repeat. Carmen you really opened my eyes to feel the energy. —Maria

Special Events

A Sweet High Family

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

Sri Dadubhai, a holy man from India, recently came to Albuquerque to visit "Justinji," as he calls him. (Dadubhai comes to the States to raise money every two years or so.) His record of service is very impressive. Dadubhai's foundation, for instance, pays for thousands of eye operations annually. (Eye disease is one of India's biggest problems.) His ashram includes a facility for old people so that they can spend their final years in dignity. His ashram's school has graduated students who have gone on to become doctors. And as if to complete the circle, some of those doctors are now performing eye operations at the ashram. The foundation also helps poorer families by marrying 100 couples at a time; otherwise the costs to marry would be prohibitive. And the list goes on. It is exhausting work, as there are always people needing operations, children requiring schooling, old people living in poverty, and young women wanting to marry. What does he charge the people for these services? Not a dime. He simply tells people, all around the world, about the work taking place at the ashram. Donations of generous hearted people flow in and support the work.

Another work also goes on at the ashram. Sri Dadubhai's teacher was

Swami Krishnanand, the son of a Maharaja who, like the Buddha, left the soft life to be of service. Sri Dadubhai created the ashram for his teacher, only to be put in charge of it after Swami's death. When Swami was in America and was asked why India was so poor he said, "India is not poor. It is America that is poor. At our ashram the name of God is being chanted 24 hours a day." And the tradition continues; every other word

ment on the reading. He smiled sweetly and talked about what an extraordinary evening it had been, about how what seemed like a simple, pleasant evening was really so unusual. He praised Justin for his tremendous insight — both for what he had chosen to read and for his comments. He also said how unusual it was to find a group who would rather be with Justin listening to "high thinking" than out doing other

things. He wondered if we realized what a "sweet high family" we had in T'ai Chi Chih. My mind immediately went to all the teachers and practitioners of T'ai Chi Chih around the world.

We talk about the power of the chi, but there is something else in our practice: a special sweetness. Many who have been in desperate straits

and come to T'ai Chi Chih have felt it immediately. It has soothed them and helped them heal. I believe that each one of us who has felt this sweetness feels very grateful.

It was a very special evening, one that we will long remember and which will encourage us to love and share the chi.



Photo by Guy Kent.

out of Sri Dadubhai's mouth is "Ram," the name of God. When asked, he joyfully blessed us with the singing-chanting of the Gayatri Mantra found on page 106 in *Meditation For Healing*. It is a cure for many things, but mostly it brings forth Joy.

Why does Sri Dadubhai come to visit Justinji? To learn and be blessed by him. After an evening of meditation and reading from a book by Nityananda, with comments by Justinji, Sri Dadubhai was asked to com-

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Spring Meditation Retreat at the Madonna Center, Albuquerque, NM. Carmen Brocklehurst led the retreat. Amy Tyksinski was the host. We came, there was meditation; we left, still there is meditation.... We'll be back in October! Please join us for a sacred weekend of meditation and a gathering of community in the Fall. Photo by Guy Kent.

Ginny Morgan's Board Meeting Chocolate Chip Butter Cookies

1 cup butter (no substitutes)
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup confectioners sugar
1 cup (6 ounces miniature semisweet
chocolate chips)

Melt butter in a microwave, stir in vanilla and cool completely. In a large bowl, combine flour and sugar; stir in cooled butter mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate chips. (The mixture will be slightly crumbly.) Shape into 1-inch balls and flatten slightly. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375 degrees for about 12-14 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Yield: about 4 dozen.
Note: For a different taste, you can also add a little orange zest.

T'ai Chi Chih and Health

Anne Doering wrote this autobiographical version of the 23rd Psalm to pay tribute to friends who have shared in group T'ai Chi Chih for many years. Despite major problems with her health, she feels the healing benefits the practice provides. Her memory sometimes fails her in remembering the proper sequence of movements, and there are times when counting to nine repetitions is her best skill. Her thanks go to the advanced students and very experienced teachers who share the chi in Albuquerque's Spruce Park every Tuesday night.

A Psalm of David . . . The LORD Is My Shepherd

By Anne Doering



Our Creator is my editor, I give many thanks;
Mother teaches me how to green gardens.

He and She bring me good cheer, with no fear;
they restore my enthusiasm.

And I am led in T'ai Chi practices
for balance and calm's sake.

Although my memory is weak in my thoughts each day,
I still do create; for fine art is with me.

Your hoe and your shovel,
they comfort me.

You diminish my voice as a trade-off
for improvements in my overall health.

Although my brain has had surgery,
my joy still flows.

Surely goodwill shall be with me
all the rest of my days.

And I will gratefully sing with our choir
to give you much more praise.

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TCC On Location



Experience T'ai Chi Chih on the tropical shore of Lake Atitlan, and the flower filled patios of Antigua, Guatemala. Terry Gay Puckett, accredited TCC instructor and artist from San Antonio, Texas takes a group every year. The dates for the next trip are January 27-February 4, 2005. TCC, sketching, shopping and exploring the markets of Guatemala are a few of the pleasures of the trip. Add museums of Maya textiles and antiques, beautiful scenery, interesting travel companions...well, you get the picture. Web site: <http://www.exploreguatemala.com>. Terry Gay's email tpuckett@accd.edu. For more information, email exploreguatemala@idworld.net.



The Lighter Side

After TCC class at the retirement community, I did a little Reiki (energy healing) on Margaret, a delightful lady with a playful sense of humor. Before I started, I said, "I have to be quiet for a minute." To which she replied, "I know that's a great sacrifice!" --Sharon Sirkus, Columbia, MD

I recently finished reading the book, *Don't Sweat The Small Stuff*, by Richard Carlson, for the Radio Reading Network of MD, books-on-tape for the blind. One of the sections was titled, "Take up Yoga." The line I was supposed to read was, "While you are stretching, you are also concentrating, focusing your attention on what you are doing." It was everything I could do to keep from blurting out, "...focusing your attention on the soles of the feet." Ah, such habits! --Sharon

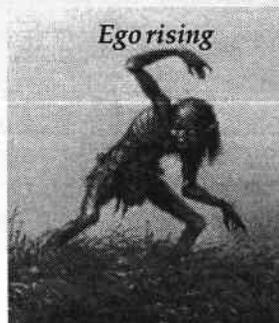
One of my college students, Matt, stayed after TCC class for the second day in a row to tell me the same thing. He placed his hands on his dantienne and said with a big grin, "My tummy feels happy." --Sharon

As always, during the last college TCC class, we play show and tell. Here are a few cute ones:

Leslie brought in a picture of her kids. She said, "My kid is light, and I'm light with my moves. My kid has big feet, and when I buy him shoes, I'm reminded to put my attention in the soles of the feet. And, my kids both originated from my dantienne!" Ilija brought in a Magic Eight-Ball. He said, "Before I was uncertain about

the future, and now I feel like I have more control of my destiny." Without missing a beat, I asked, "So, speaking of destiny, should everyone pass this class?" He shakes the ball, laughs, and reads, "It is certain." --Sharon

Two of us have been taking Intermediate T'ai Chi Chih classes together for the past three years. Because we had been together for so long and had experience in the practice, our instructor felt we could benefit from learning some elements of the Maximum Chi Program. After a few weeks of journaling, we went on to the massages. The teacher demonstrated, and then we practiced. At one point, after finishing a massage, our teacher bent over to look at her notes on the floor. We thought this was part of the program, so the entire class bowed low in unison. Seeing this response, the teacher broke into peels of laughter. Two weeks later, the class was asked how the massages were going. One massage, similar to lightly tapping the teeth together, led a senior member to comment, "Fine, but you have to remember to put your teeth in before you do it; otherwise, it's hard on the gums." --Nancy Lecraw and Bobbie Weichman, Chicago, IL



Sometimes my classes at the juvenile detention center just spin out of control. And no wonder. Most of them have Attention Deficit Disorder and none seems to have any impulse control. So why should I have been surprised when at "Working the Pulley" the kid leading the move said, "Think of the ocean, and you've never seen the ocean, think of a bathtub." For some reason, this just set them off. "Yo, Rubber Ducky, get down!" one of them hooted. "I'm crossing the ocean of delusion," another crooned, swimming mightily. I asked another, spinning his arms like a motorboat rudder, what ever could he be doing?! "I'm hurrying to get to the other side," he panted. When I think about it, they had some pretty good insights there. Light at the Top of the Head, as usual, calmed them and brought them onto the shore.--Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM

I always take a few moments from one of my classes to talk about the literature available about T'ai Chi Chih. I was passing around several of Justin's philosophical works, and then showed some past issues of the *Vital Force Journal*. One elderly gentleman in my class seemed very intent on part of one issue (I later saw it was page 34 of the January 2004 issue, where Justin is surrounded by several adoring disciples). At length he asked me, "THIS is Justin Stone?" Yes, I affirmed, it is. He gazed thoughtfully for a long moment, then observed, "He looks like the Hugh Hefner of the Pure!" --Rodney Anderson, Roseville MN

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With this July 2004 issue The Vital Force is 20 years old

Below are Justin's first words in the first Vital Force Summer Solstice 1984 that you see on your left. Our technology has improved, but the words are as true today as they were then.



VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

LETTER TO TEACHERS

The emergence of the Tai Chi Chih Journal is an important event, for it will serve to bind the TCC teachers more closely together and encourage them to seek further encouragement. It is also to further something as beneficial as TCC, and you who are the "early" teachers. These who came "early" will profit by your pioneer work.

There are many ways of appreciating TCC. One is to realize the harmonizing of the Outer and the Inner that takes place in practice—or, in Zen terms, the harmonizing of the Mind-Body continuum. If we realize the Kidneys are the Great Yin ("Rain Dragons" to the Chinese), while the Heart is the Great Yang (the "Sun"), we begin to see the relationship of Microcosm and Macrocosm—the small, individual lot and that of the Cosmos and beyond. To harmonize the individual Intrinsic Energy with the great Universal Flow, that is the task, and it is easily accomplished thru TCC movements. As it is accomplished, we begin to lead a TCC life. If enough people do so, we may know Peace and Joy in this world.

I have tried to keep TCC as pure as possible, even at the expense of my earning a living. It is important that we prevent deviations in the Teaching and the Practicing. You all know how Churches and Spiritual Organizations often degenerate into self-seeking political centers, with the benefits of the Practice involved almost completely forgotten. We must never forget that, as we receive rewards ourselves, it is our Way to serve.

Justin Stone

TEXTBOOKS AVAILABLE

Send money! The web-printing of the Tai Chi Chih Disciple's Manual will be available and ready to ship to teachers and students. The Tai Chi Chih Disciple's Manual is available for your students to purchase for \$29.95 per copy, plus \$4.00 per copy shipping (over \$50 orders for California residents).

Send your order to: Justin Stone, Box 10100, Santa Barbara, CA 93100

LETTER TO TEACHERS

The emergence of this Tai Chi Chih Journal is an important event, for it will tend to bind the TCC teachers more closely together and encourage those who need further encouragement. It is nice to spread something as beneficial as TCC, and you who are the "early" teachers (remember, this Discipline is only ten years old) are to be congratulated. Those who come later will profit by your pioneer work.

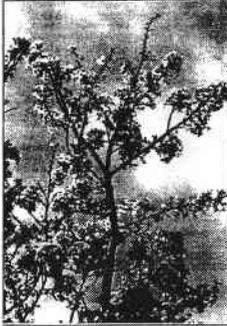
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THE VITAL FORCE
Journal of T'ai Chi Chih®

Volume 11, No. 1 Spring Equinox March 1995

All things come alive in spring (with light)



Features in This Issue

Feature by Justin Stone: TCC With Sixty Years: A Little Background for Teachers & Teachers' Guidelines: What's New? TCC in the Bedroom Experience
Ch. Giovanni Writes About Teacher Renewal and Self-Healing
Photos from the Tai Chi Exhibit in Paris, France

The Vital Force
Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

Volume 18, No. 1 March 2001



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The Vital Force
Journal of the Tai Chi Chih® Community

"Tai Chi Chih is a Journey to Enlightenment: It is a Journey of Love" — Justin Stone, Copyright

Volume 21, No. 1 April 2004



Simplify, simplify, simplify: Present and future changes for the *Vital Force*

By Victor Berg, VFJ membership manager

Noel Altman donated a tremendous amount of her time producing the *Vital Force* and she did a wonderful job. We need to recognize that it is a level of effort that we cannot expect others to continue if the *Vital Force* is to remain a volunteer service. We will be enacting a number of changes over this next year.

As you have probably noticed, the *Vital Force Journal* is no longer being sent in envelopes. Envelopes take a significant time to prepare, stuff, label, stamp and send. Mailing flat like other magazines allows for the VFJ to be sent without any additional effort on the part of the volunteers.

The Directory will no longer be sent to teachers and you will not receive a 2005 Teachers Directory in the mail. Instead, the Directory will be moved to the T'ai Chi Chih website (www.taichichih.org) at some point this year, where it can be viewed or printed for those who want a printed version. This significant change reduces both the effort and cost associated with the Directory. It allows us to quickly fix errors and keep the Directory up to date. It allows us to list all T'ai Chi Chih teachers in the Directory—not just current *Vital Force* subscribers—which we couldn't afford to do in the past. This will be done as a free service for the entire T'ai Chi Chih Community and there will no longer be a \$5 website fee. In addition, poten-

tial students using the website will be able to choose from a complete list of T'ai Chi Chih teachers. For those who do not have internet access, we will still produce and send a Directory to those who request it. The Directory will be more expensive to produce and to send and there will be a \$15 cost for this.

In order to reduce efforts and minimize errors, we will be removing the option for first class mailings and send the *Vital Force* via bulk mail. If you are someone who lives in a geographic area that cannot receive bulk mail, please contact us and we will send it to you via first class, but we expect this to be the exception rather than the rule. We will continue to send the journal to international subscribers the way that it has been done in the past.

Sometime this year, we will be providing the ability to pay for the *Vital Force Journal* via a secure credit card transaction on the T'ai Chi Chih website. When this is in place, you will no longer need to take the time to send us a renewal form and a check as it will be handled via the T'ai Chi Chih website. For those who do not want to use their credit cards over the Internet, renewal forms and checks will always be accepted. As the popularity of the Internet increases, we fully expect that this will simplify the subscription process for all involved.

The price of the *Vital Force Journal*

will be a flat rate of \$25 for both students and teachers. The only additional fees are for international subscribers (which will be \$10) and for those who request a Directory to be sent to them (which will be \$15). The changes in price and bulk mailing are effective immediately. For those who have already paid for first class mailing or website display for your subscription cycle, please consider one of two things: 1) treat the extra money you sent us as a donation, 2) have this extra money applied to your next year subscription price. We would rather not rebate the difference to you by check, but we will do so if requested. Please send us an email and let us know what you want to do. The website display will occur soon and we'll keep you informed of this and any other future changes.

We are very excited about these changes. They enable the production of the *Vital Force Journal* at a high level of quality with reduced effort, reduced cost and a reduced price to our subscribers. We would like to continue to reduce the price in the future, if possible. These changes enable the *Vital Force* to grow with the T'ai Chi Chih community while remaining a volunteer service. Please send your comments and feedback to vfjmembership@yahoo.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Karmic Komments

from Kim Grant



reetings,

To search for what cannot be found-

To find what cannot be seen-

To throw away what has been won-

This is the essence of Zen.

GKP is now selling Justin's beautifully reprinted and inspirational ZEN poster emblazoned with the above "non-sentiment." It's a real bargain at \$60 (unsigned) or \$75 (signed and numbered in a limited edition of 100.) I

try to pay attention to my framed copy daily. Thanks to Justin for making these available at a very discounted price.

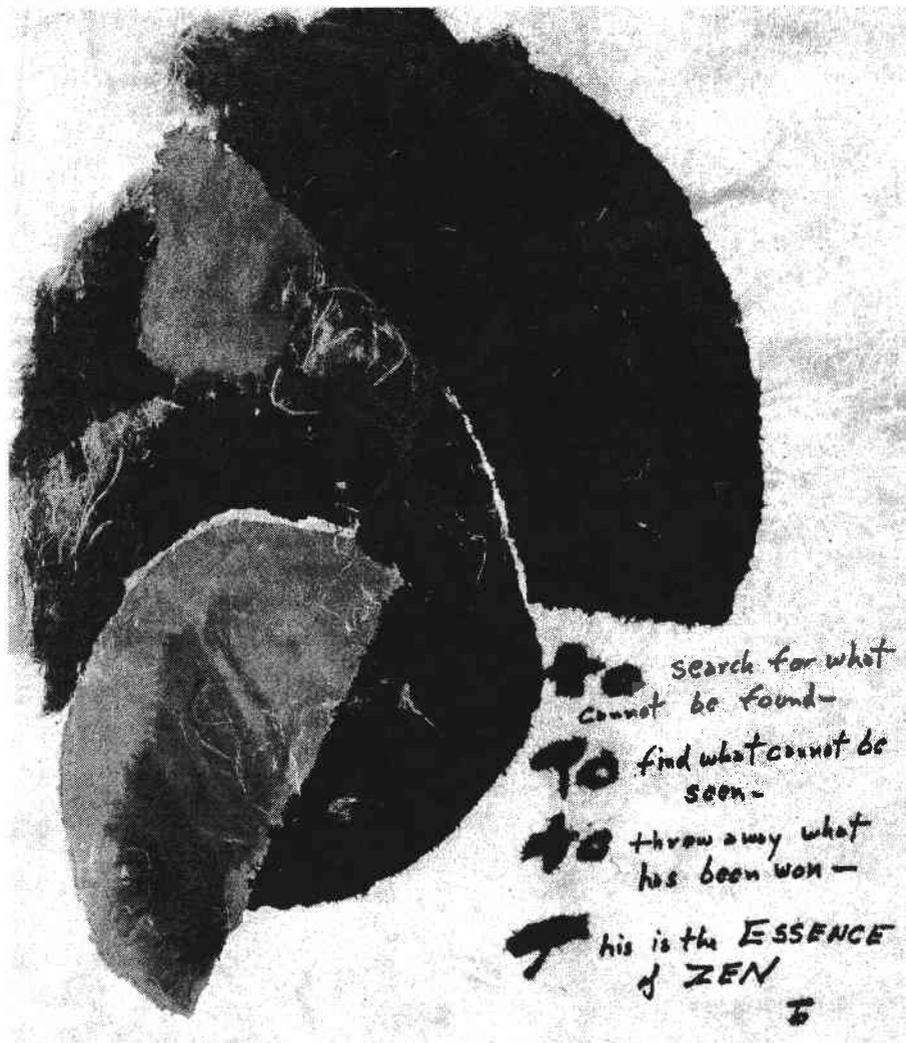
GKP is also now distributing the 1994 KNME interview tape (\$19.95; no teacher discount available) with Justin Stone and Carmen Brocklehurst. The 13-part PBS TV series concluded each segment with a Q & A session between the master and his student. As you'd expect, Justin's commentary is insightful and delightful. This video is

an invaluable resource to use in classes, to loan to students, and to deepen your own understanding.

Both new items are currently in stock and will be available at the Conference.

Thanks to all who've responded to the GKP questionnaire.

Sorry to change things, but I'm now shipping on Mon/Thurs rather than Tues/Fri.



Justin's original paintings routinely sell for thousands of dollars, which makes this faithful reproduction, now for sale by Good Karma Publishing, a fabulously good deal. See the Zen poster item on the GKP order form for details.



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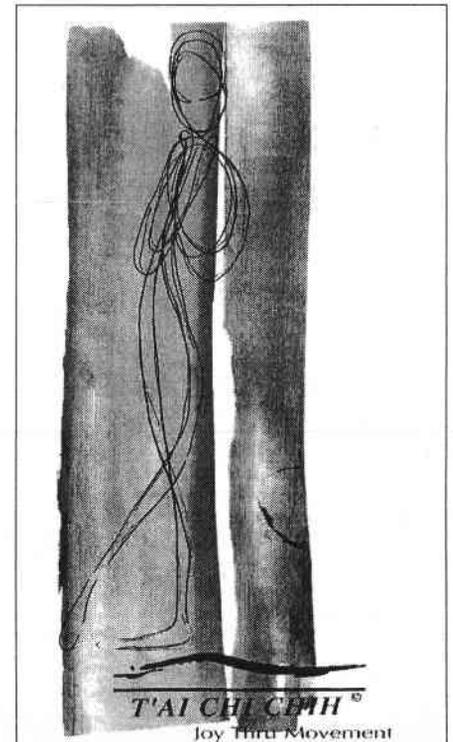
ACCREDITED TEACHER ORDERFORM

(Prices & shipping effective through the Conference 2004)

Teacher discount on 3 or more items; retail on 1 or 2 items

PLEASE INDICATE QUANTITY IN BLANK PRECEDING TITLE

___	T'AI CHI CHIH® Joy thru Movement Photo-Text book - Justin Stone	15.6 oz.	\$15.95
___	Spanish translation Photo-Text book w/ translation inserted - Stone	18.7 oz.	\$15.95
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___	20 TH ANNIVERSARY INTERVIEW TAPE spoken & musical audio cassette - Stone & Christeen McLain	3.6 oz.	\$10.95
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___	HEIGHTENED AWARENESS book - Stone	7.3 oz.	\$ 8.95



Now available through Good Karma Publishing: This PBS-produced video features 13 Q&A sessions between Justin Stone and program host Carmen Brocklehurst. A must-see for serious teachers and students. See the GKP order form for details. Discussion topics on the video include the importance of softness, how to move, developing Chi, the essence of TCC, yin-yang, weight control, Seijaku, the power of Chi and its effects, TCC Teachers, aesthetic experiences, and cumulative effects.

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Zen Poster	15.5 oz	\$60 unsigned \$75 signed
KNME Interview Tape 65 min. (no discount)	9.8 oz	\$19.95

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AB, Sherwood Park, Chery Ann Hoffmeyer (780) 467-8701

United States

California, Encinitas; Pam Towne, (760) 944-9544

California, Hayward; Sandy McAlister, (510) 582-2238

Minnesota, Bemidji; Jeanne Engen-Duranske, (218) 751-3173

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8 lb., 1 oz. - 10 lb.	7.05
Over 10 lb	\$7.05 + 60c
for each additional pound beyond 10	

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Please send a catalog with my order.

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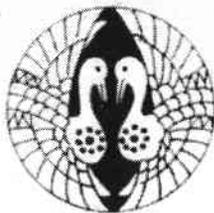
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Contacts



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Calendar

***For all Intensives: \$100 for reviewers if space is available.

Dates	Activity	Location	Contact
Sept. 3 - 5, 2004	TCC Workshop w/Sandy McAlister	Mantova, Italy	Cristina Minelli taici@tin.it
Sept 9-12, 2004	TCC Intensive *** w/Pam Towne Student/Teacher attendance fee: \$200	St. Paul, MN	Cathy Dalton (651) 426-9284 e-mail: csdalton1@comcast.net
Sept. 16-19, 2004	TCC Retreat w/ Pam Towne Fee: Contact Donna for cost.	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada	Donna Aldous (306) 236-4610 e-mail: aldous.home@sasktel.net
October 17, 2004	TCC Teacher Renewal w/Pam Towne Fee: \$50	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak 732.988.5865 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
October 19-24, 2004	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/Pam Towne Fee: \$450 (no fee for auditing teacher)	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak 732.988.5865 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
Nov. 13, 2004	Teacher Renewal w/ Sandy McAlister Fee: \$35	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com (505) 292-5114
Nov. 15-20, 2004	Teacher Training w/ Sandy McAlister Fee: \$450	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com (505) 292-5114
Feb. 1-4 or Feb. 15-18, 2005	TCC Retreat w/ Sr. Antonia Mt. Calvary Retreat House	Santa Barbara, CA	Pam Towne (760) 944-9544 ptowne@inreach.com
POSSIBLE August 16 - 21, 2004 	POSSIBLE Teacher Training w/ Pam Towne w/ Sr. Antonia for last half Providence Renewal Centre	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	Yvette Bowman 255 Heath Road Edmonton, AB T6R 1T6 (780) 441-3911 cybowman@shaw.ca
 POS- SIBLE Fall2004	POSSIBLE Seijaku Training	Lubbock, TX	Larry Sava

Subscribe to the Vital Force

Thank you for your interest in the *Vital Force Journal*. By subscribing, you will receive 4 issues of the Vital Force every year. Please note that the *Vital Force* will be discontinuing the First Class delivery option with some exceptions. Please let us know if you are an exception. In addition, the printed version of the Teachers Directory will no longer be sent to all teachers. **A printable version of the Directory will be available for free on the T'ai Chi Chih Website and accessible by all potential students.** If you are a teacher, you will be included in the Teachers Directory. Please let us know if you do NOT want to be in the Directory.

If you have questions, please email Victor at vfjmembership@yahoo.com.

Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Teacher Accreditation Information

Date you were accredited as a T'ai Chi Chih Teacher:

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku Teacher:

Name of the teacher who taught you T'ai Chi Chih:

Vital Force Subscription Information

I DO NOT want to be listed in the Teachers Directory and the T'ai Chi Chih Website.

Delivery in the U.S. _____ years @ \$25/year \$ _____

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Printed Teachers Directory (only sent once per year) _____ years @ \$15/year \$ _____

Donation for VFJ Outreach or to help those without means to subscribe to the VFJ \$ _____

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*Sandy McAlister, riding in a "mokoro" in the Okavanga Delta,
Botswana, Africa, June 2003*

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