

The Newsletter of the  
**Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio**  
2242 University Ave  
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# Wu-Dang

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Complimentary for studio members.  
\$6.00 subscription for others.  
Please send requests to address at left.

## NEW SCHEDULE

Starting June 15<sup>th</sup> we will have a few changes to our schedule. The **Wednesday 7:30pm Hsing-Yi** class will be open to all, beginning with the **Five Elements**.

**Thursday nights at 7:30** we will be having a class devoted to the **Sword and Wu-Dang Fencing**. This class will cover the 13 energies, three foot-works, sensitivities, fencing drills, T'ai-Chi Sword Form applications, Wu-Dang fencing form and much more. You must have completed the T'ai-Chi Sword Form to attend this class.

**Tuesday night's 8:00-9:00pm Praying Mantis** is still on-going, though we will go to a one-hour summer class.

All other classes will remain the same. If you ever have any questions about the schedule or classes, or have any suggestions, always feel free to talk to your instructors.

## 10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL RETREAT

The dates for the annual retreat are August 15-17. The theme this year will be "Something Old, Something New". We will be offering two of our most popular classes from previous retreats, as well as offering two brand-new classes. The cost of the retreat remains at \$185. This includes room, board and instruction. If you would like to attend, please submit your \$50 deposit by July 1. We will hold the checks until August 1, but must have your financial commitment by July 1.

## NIGHT of TEN THOUSAND FROLICS TCTCCS' First Fundraiser

By Rondi Atkin

In the program notes for the Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan's first annual fundraiser, Board chair Val DiEuliis wrote, "First it was an idea."

I don't know about you, but for me, coming up with ideas is the easy part, and when, after joining the Board, I saw how the Studio barely scraped by each month, it wasn't hard to think, "We need a fundraiser." But it's the next step, realizing an idea, that often stops me in my tracks, and I can honestly say that without the know-how, commitment, and energy of my committee—Kim Hayward, Teisha Magee, Karen Taylor, Morgan Willow, Lynn Dennis, and Tim Dennis—my idea would have never become a reality.

On Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, we presented *Night of Ten Thousand Frolics* (coined by Morgan Willow). Sifu Ray's Masonic lodge provided the perfect venue: the upstairs auditorium, transformed into a nightclub, held the cabaret, including puppetry, clog dancing, sword play, belly dancing, folk songs, poetry, Morris dancing, jazz, and blues (featuring Sifu Ray on drums, Sifu Paul on guitar, and Val on bass), interspersed masterfully with wit and humor by our M.C. Jim Cunningham. Downstairs held the silent auction, food and drink. The weather was beautiful (despite the forecast predicting 70% chance of thunderstorms), and people were free to mill from the entertainment to the refreshments, to the silent auction, or to step outside and enjoy the evening breeze. **"Frolics" Continued on page 3**

## SOME REFLECTIONS ON T'AI-CHI RETREATS

By Ray Hayward

This August the Studio will be hosting our tenth annual retreat in Faribault. Starting with 13 people the first year; we now average 75 eager retreatants. At this milestone, I'd like to share some of my experiences with retreats over the past 29 years.

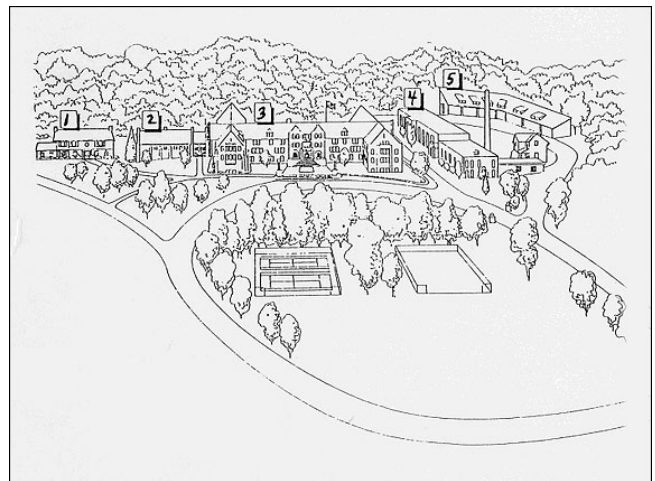
My first retreat, I was asked by Master T. T. Liang to be his assistant for one week of T'ai-Chi instruction at the Omega Institute, then held in Hoosick Falls, NY, the first week of August in 1979. What was strange is that it was the first paid vacation I ever had from a job and I spent it driving Master Liang to the retreat and assisting him for a five day and a two day series of solo form intensives. One anecdote, as we left Boston, Master Liang pulled a bottle of Tawny Port out of his bag and began sipping it the whole ride. I thought to myself how sad it was that he gave up alcohol so many years ago when his health was in danger, and now he was back at it. At a rest stop, when Master Liang went into the restroom, I grabbed the bottle and to my surprise, I smelled black tea!

At Omega, I helped Master Liang teach for six hours per day. Afterward I would hang out with him and talk, and when he went to bed, I had the great good fortune of staying up to the wee hours of the morning talking and comparing T'ai-Chi with my elder classmate, Paul Gallagher. On the last day, when the class was ready to "finish" the solo form, Master Liang went off to the bushes and came back with a switch. He then asked me to do the last section and when I made a mistake, he would stop me, hit the offending part, and then tell me to go on. This got lots of laughs from the students, at my expense. Afterwards Master Liang told me he had one teacher who taught that way and although he did it to entertain, for me it was a serious lesson. I still remember the corrections (ouch!) and my mixture of emotions at that time.

In the early 80s I was the guest instructor at Paul Gallagher's Deer Mountain Taoist Academy's Annual Retreat, held on the side of a mountain in Southern Vermont. This was rustic accommodations only, with people tenting and using a hose for showers! I taught at the first five,

even after moving to Minnesota. These were a little wild, to put it mildly, with students acting like they were in old China, challenging the teachers, each other, and even some of the teachers calling each other out like old-time gunslingers. I did meet some wonderful people there and spending time with Paul Gallagher was priceless.

My next retreat adventure lasted 13 years. Diane Cannon invited me and Paul Abdella out for a five day retreat in the foothills of the Pocono Mountains in central Pennsylvania. We filled an old Civil War- era stagecoach inn with 25 students to explore many aspects of T'ai-Chi and other styles. A few years we even held winter retreats as well as the annual summer retreat. We learned a lot about what people expect to learn and what we can teach in this ideal situation. During this time, we decided to host our own retreat in Minnesota.



St. Mary's Campus in Faribault

With a tip about renting Shattuck-St. Mary's School in Faribault, we began what is now a ten-year journey of bringing the best of the T'ai-Chi retreat experience to our students and friends of the Studio. With beautiful grounds, interesting topics and many talents shared, I feel we are continuing a great tradition. Come and join us for T'ai-Chi, fellowship, music, and fun as we enjoy T'ai-Chi in nature, with the comforts of home.

## SHIATSU: HELPING HANDS

By John Keske

*“When you have attained perfect health, we can proceed to...the practical use of T'ai Chi Ch'uan for self-defense.”*

*(Master Liang, T'ai Chi Ch'uan For Health and Self-Defense).*

What is perfect health? What is it to a child, an adult, a senior? What is it to someone who has never been sick versus someone who has a terminal illness? What is it to the office worker versus the martial artist? The answer depends on perspective.

For martial arts, the standard of perfect health is very high, particularly in T'ai-Chi where the goal is not only to avoid injury but to avoid being hurt at all. T'ai-Chi holds the highest standard of perfect health.

How is perfect health attained? As with everything else in T'ai-Chi, “First in the mind, then in the body.” A concept of perfect health is necessary, as is a degree of mental and emotional health. Additionally, a faith that perfect health is attainable must be cultivated.

In Chinese medicine, there are five pillars of health, which are acupuncture, herbal medicine, bodywork, exercise, and nutrition. To varying degrees, all five are necessary for maximum health benefit. In this article, I will explore some of the finer points of two of these pillars: exercise—namely, T'ai-Chi, and bodywork—specifically, shiatsu.

Some of the key health related goals of T'ai-Chi are to improve posture, increase sensitivity, relax and tone the body, quiet the mind, and attain perfect health. Correspondingly, some of the treatment goals of shiatsu are to improve posture, increase sensitivity, relax and tone the body, quiet the mind, and attain perfect health.

To paraphrase the late master Wu Tunan, good posture is the key to health. Bad posture develops when people habitually put their bodies in less than ideal positions and hold them. This causes some muscles to shorten and become too tight, and other muscles to lengthen and become too weak. The classics say, “There should be neither deficiency nor excess,” and also “Seek the straight in the curve.” Where posture is concerned, these curves exist in the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine. Part of our goal in improving posture is to straighten these curves

**“Shiatsu” continued on page 4**

## *“Frolics” Continued from page 1*

We know that genius depends on hard work and that no party is complete without great food. Nick Cronin volunteered to be chef for the evening. His talent and connection to free food provided an array of amazing appetizers. As attendee, Amie Jo Digatono said, “It was incredible. There would be trays of wonderful tidbits to choose from, and when those trays ran out, more trays—with completely different assortments—suddenly appeared.” Another attendee kept nibbling from one of the dessert trays, which had Gruyere cheese, blueberries, and chocolate. Nick’s culinary creations not only gave pleasure, it also saved us—literally—thousands of dollars in catering fees. But Nick could not have done it alone, and he was ably assisted by Bruce Tyler who worked with him from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon (when he went home to change and pick up his wife), and Jeff Christianson, who helped from five o’clock until the end of the evening. Dave Ridley’s generous contribution supplied us with submarine sandwiches from Buon Giorno.

A large part of our success is due to the countless people and businesses having donated or procured items for the auction, not to mention several cash donations. Seventy-four auctions ended successfully, and the average number of bids on each item was 4.5, but the crystal monkey montage received the most, with nineteen bids (one couple, both friends of mine, were bidding against each other for it). How successful were the Frolics? The final numbers are still crunching, but it looks as though we will have made nearly \$9,000. This far exceeds our early projections. We sold nearly 190 tickets and over 160 of those people attended, adding in performers and some volunteers, we had nearly 200 there on Saturday.

Dozens of volunteers helped throughout the evening, manning the front table, pouring drinks, setting up the auction, and cleaning up (most notably, the late-into-the-night-until-the-bitter-end-clean-up crew: Jesse Williams, John Stitely, Steve Leinen, Matt Peterson, Katie Westlund, and Adam Frank). Their commitment helped the evening run smoothly. Finally, what began as an idea could never have happened without all of you who attended: your generosity and spirit made the evening a complete success, or as Tom Waits once said to his audience, “Thanks y’all for coming. It would’ve been a drag without ya.”

**“Shiatsu” continued from page 3**

where they are excessive or deficient. This is done by relaxing the tight muscles and toning the weak muscles. (It is important to note here that when I say “tone” with regard to muscles, I do not intend to imply that strength training or conditioning could be replaced with shiatsu, but rather simply that shiatsu stimulates the muscles to perform their function.)

Tension originates largely from bad posture or alignment, emotional upsets, and injuries. When tension does not result in injury, it is very easy to ignore, and the act of ignoring tension creates a dulled sensitivity to it. Sometimes, our ability to adapt works against us as we adapt to such tensions. This is similar to how some fighting instincts are incorrect, or to how we are simply insensitive to certain techniques until we have practiced them many times. Therapeutic touch restores the body’s awareness of forgotten pain, tension, weakness, emotion, and then over time helps to alleviate these problems.

Injuries originate from tense muscles being suddenly or repetitively forced or strained. Injuries therefore have a self-perpetuating quality that can, if left unattended, become a downward spiral of ever-increasing tension and pain. Frozen shoulder is a good example of this. When injuries like this occur, it is tempting to think that our bodies have betrayed us, and it is an understandable reaction to then neglect what we feel has failed us.

Every living being strives toward a state of *homeostasis*, which literally translates as “seeking balance.” When we hold tension in our bodies without seeking a means to release it, we are not seeking balance. When we do T’ai-Chi, get massage,

shiatsu, acupuncture, or start taking care of ourselves in any number of ways, then we are seeking balance.

One of the marvelous things about our bodies is how perfectly they respond to touch. With touch, a tight muscle can be loosened, and a weak muscle can be toned. This is a guided *homeostasis*, when we have forgotten how to seek balance for ourselves and need the help of another. One could call it relaxation training.

In the same vein, compare the feeling of doing standing meditation alone to doing standing meditation in class with an instructor—it is much easier to quiet the mind with direction from another. Shiatsu stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, inducing an alpha state similar to meditation. It is the hands-on equivalent of guided meditation.

Restored body awareness allows the anticipation of injury and the prevention of it rather than getting injured and trying to fix it. Shiatsu cumulatively builds self awareness, a sense of well-being, and the body’s ability to relax on command, allowing one to “*move from hard to soft in the blink of an eye.*”



John Keske, 611 E Lake St, Suite A, Minneapolis  
612-825-6183 – Walk-in Appointments Available  
<http://www.twincitiesshiatsu.com/>

It was reported that Master Wang Yen-nien passed away at the age of 96 in Taiwan in May. Master T.T. Liang valued him as one of his teachers and Sifu Paul Abdella experienced his T’ai-Chi at a workshop on the East Coast. We practice Wang’s Ta-Lu in both the San-Shou and Pushing-Hands. He also created the T’ai-Chi Fan which forms parts of our Fan Form.

**Hearty congratulations to the Wednesday night Hsing-Yi class for graduating the 8 Brocades, 12 Animals, 13 sensitivities, Kuan-Do, and 8 Styles course. I am proud of you.**

**-Sifu Ray Hayward**

# USKSF TOURNAMENT

By Mike Sauter

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 I entered my first martial arts tournament. It was the USKSF North Regional in Madison, WI. I had entered this tournament with the idea of finding out where I stood among other martial arts practitioners. Sometimes it can be hard to gauge your level when training at the Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio. So this was an attempt for me to solve this and at the same time, represent our school.

The USKSF North Regional is an all-Chinese style tournament. It did not include Wu-Shu. It consisted of Tao Lu (forms), Lei Tai (full contact), light sparring, Bridge-Hands competition, weapons sparring, and Push-Hands competition. I chose to test my Praying Mantis forms in Advanced Hand Set and Advanced Weapons. I also entered the Lei Tai. The tournament had schools primarily from Wisconsin, but also included another school from the Twin Cities as well as a few from around the country.



I started the day fairly early in the Advanced Hand Set. I was surprised to walk away with a silver medal. A good rest later my weapons division came up. I happened to get a 4<sup>th</sup> place medal in that. I was the only Dao broadsword to place. The first three places were won by straight swords.

Next was the big, full contact fighting competition—it was the closer for the tournament. I was disappointed when I lost the first match. I feel that inexperience in the ring led to that outcome. The second match was different—I came away winning that one.

That gave me a third place medal.

By the end of the competition I left having gained a great amount of experience. One of the best things about it was talking with others in the world of Kung Fu and comparing my level of knowledge with that of people from other schools. I feel we have a good base at our school and with ample training, it stacks up quite well against anything out there.

## REPRODUCTION ANTIQUE CHINESE T'AI-CHI SWORD

**From Arms & Armor Now Available**

The most respected and historically accurate forge in the world, Northeast Minneapolis' own Arms & Armor, has replicated Sifu Ray Hayward's circa 1880 antique double-edged T'ai-Chi Sword or Jian/Gim. Using old world craftsmanship as well as modern knowledge of tempering and hardness, this sword will be a combat-ready heirloom for your personal practice and use. From standard to custom, this sword will be made to satisfy any practitioner of the Chinese straight sword. Sifu Ray has a prototype at the Studio.

Part	Dimension
Blade	29 3/8" from tip of cross piece to end
Grip	including pommel: 7 1/2" excluding pommel: 5 7/16"
Total Length	without scabbard: 39 1/4"
Width of Blade	1 3/8" at widest point
Cross Piece Width	3 3/4"
Cross View of Blade	diamond shaped

**\$100 will reserve your sword now.** Drop a check payable to Shu Kuang Press at the studio, by mail, or via Paypal to mail@shukuangpress.com. After deposit is received, we will contact you for full order details. Questions? Ask Sifu Ray or call 651-271-3500.

### Price List:

Basic Sword \$500

### Ala Carte Items:

Hardware (choose 1)

Bronze Hardware, no charge

Steel Hardware, no charge

Blackened Steel Hardware \$80

### Blade Length:

Standard 29 3/8", no charge

Shorter, \$20

Longer may be available in future

### Blade:

Dull, standard

Sharp, available if ordered

### Etching:

TCTCC Logo Etched, \$45

Other Etching, \$150

### Handle:

Wood, no charge

Ray Skin may be available in future

Sword will be sold without scabbard, which may be available in future.



*Sifu Ray's Original Sword*

## Class Schedule for June 15, - September 15, 2008

Monday		Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
12:30-2:30 Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)				12:30-2:30 Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)	10:00-11:30 Eclectsis (join anytime)
6:00-7:30 Solo Form (beginners only)		6:00-7:00 Solo Form Refinement (instructor authorization required)	6:00-7:30 Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)	6:00-7:30 Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)	11:30-12:30 T'ai-Chi Review & Practice (prerequisite: Solo Form completion)
7:30-8:30 Weapons Cycle 3: Spear, Cane Fan (prerequisite: Solo Form completion)		7:00-8:00 Pushing-Hands & San-Shou (prerequisite: Solo Form completion)	7:30-8:30 Hsing-Yi Ch'uan: Level I (join anytime)	7:30-8:30 Wu-Tang Sword (prerequisite: T'ai-Chi Sword)	12:30-2:00 Solo Form (all levels-join anytime)
8:30-9:30		8:00-9:00 Praying Mantis Level I (join anytime)	8:30-9:30 Pa-Kua Linked Palms (enrollment closed)		
Liu Ho Pa Fa Mother & Sons (join anytime)	Pa-Kua Linked Palms (enrollment closed)				

**NOTE: The Studio will be closed Saturday, August 16 for the retreat and Monday, September 1 for Labor Day.  
The week following the retreat will be led by student-teachers.**

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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**