

The Newsletter of the
Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio
2242 University Ave
St Paul, MN 55114
(651) 767-0267

Wu-Dang

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www.tctaichi.com
email: tctaichi@minn.net

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

NEW SCHEDULE

The new schedule started January 15, with all the classes from the last schedule continuing. The only difference will be that the **Monday Weapons Class 7:30-8:30** will begin the **T'ai-Chi Fan** on March 1. Also the Monday night **8:30 Pa-Kua Class** is now closed to new students. All other classes remain the same. If you have any questions, talk to your instructors.

Chinese New Year 2009
Year of the Ox
Annual Demonstration & Banquet
Saturday FEBRUARY 21

5:00 p.m. Demonstration
7:30 p.m. Banquet at

Hoa Bien, 1105 University Ave W, St Paul
At the corner of University and Lexington
The meal will cost \$15 and be served buffet style,
please sign up for the banquet at the Studio.

Notice: Door Will be Locked

Because of a break-in this week in our building, the landlord has required the outside doors to be locked at all times for the rest of January during which time we will figure out a secure solution for building access. There will be a person posted at the door for 10 min before and after each class start time. We ask your patience as we try to solve this as quickly as possible.

NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN & BOARD MEMBERS

By Rondi Atkin

Beginning this month, I will have the honor to serve as board chair for the Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio, and I have been asked to share my vision for the studio.

First, I would like to express my gratitude: I am inheriting a thriving organization thanks to the skill, wisdom, and guidance of Sifu Ray and Sifu Paul; the know-how of Kim Hayward; the leadership of past chair Val DiEuliis; and the support of our current board, Ralph Jerndal, Dennis Kelly, and Sharon Nyberg. I also look forward to working with our three new board members: Tom Hautman, Rich Palmer and Anita Ryan (look for bios in upcoming Wee Wu Tang). My only lament—for the first time in nine years, the board will no longer have the finesse of Julie Cisler, who is stepping down.

(New Board continued on page 2)

GRANT SURVEY RESULTS

By Rondi Atkin

To everyone who returned the surveys—thank you. Your responses provided important information concerning the make up of our membership; they were also affirming and underscored the value both of T'ai-chi and of our studio.

Of the 170 surveys sent out, around 70, or just over 40%, were returned (this, apparently, is a high return). The most interesting statistics concern education and income. 49% of our members have advanced degrees, followed by 45% with 4-year degrees or with some college. 23% earn over

(Survey continued on page 2)

(New Board continued from page 1) Second, as it is the responsibility of any board to ensure the wellbeing and solvency of the organization it serves, my primary focus is to enable our school to fulfill its mission, which states:

Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Studio is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation, dedicated to teaching and promoting the art of Yang-style T'ai-Chi Ch'uan. We believe that T'ai-Chi is universally accessible and that everyone—young or old, weak or strong, male or female, health enthusiast or martial artist—can benefit from its practice and study. To make T'ai Chi and related arts available to all, we offer a wide variety of courses and times, and we are devoted to providing the highest quality training for teachers, students, and practitioners.

Thus, my vision is that we continue teaching the highest quality martial arts, allowing as many people as possible to partake of and benefit from this deep and profound practice that has the power to fortify our bodies, provide martial skill, sharpen our minds and calm our spirits. As Layman P'ang once noted, "When the mind is at peace, the world too is at peace."

Ultimately, each of us is an emissary not only of our school but also of the art we strive to develop, taking our knowledge into the world.

(Survey continued from page 1) \$95K per year, with 34% earning between \$56K-94K, and 24% earning between 24-55K per year. Given this information on income, we will investigate alternative fee schedules to accommodate a larger range of people, and better live up to our mission of making t'ai chi available to everyone.

Results show that men comprise 56% of our membership, and women comprise 44%. We are evenly divided between those who live in or around St. Paul and those who live in or around Minneapolis, with 48 and 47% respectively. 6% live outside of Minnesota.

As for length of time studying, 18% have been studying at the studio over 10 years, 18% have been studying 5-10 years, but the majority, 41%, has been studying 1-5 years. Most of us are devoted to coming to class and practicing at home. 42% come to class twice a week, 16% come 3 times a week, and 9% come 4 or 5 times a week. 34% practice at home most days, 24% practice 3-4 times a week, 31% practice 1 or 2 times a week, and only 11% never practice at home.

In response to the question, how did you hear about the studio, 37% said, through friends, confirming that word of mouth is always the best advertisement. 31% said they heard about us through the Internet, confirming our commitment to build a top-notch website.

And, in response to the question on morning classes, almost half of you said that you would like morning classes, which Sifu Ray has begun to plan.

In response to the question, what is the best thing about the studio, many of you provided a list of things, but the overwhelming number said: the teachers. Praise for Sifus Ray and Paul, concerning their knowledge, skill, patience, and teaching methods came up over fifty times. Some of the words used to describe them include: "brilliant," "dedicated," "excellent," "outstanding," and "highly knowledgeable." Praise for the studio as a community also came up repeatedly, with such phrases as, "supportive," "low pressure," and "relaxed and friendly." Many commented on the variety of classes and times as well as on the pacing. Seven commented on the beauty of the studio space. One person said they liked the available parking.

In response to the question how has t'ai-chi improved your life, answers followed consistent themes, and the word "calm" was given over 20 times, followed by "balance" (both physical and mental), "focus," "health," "flexibility," "healing" (both generally and in regards to injury), and "strength." Many people gave answers that spoke to improved self-image, becoming one's better self, gaining new perspective on the world, and, my personal favorite: t'ai-chi has "changed how I walk the earth."

Thanks again for your input and for your support.

We have been publishing a monthly e-newsletter called the **Wee Wu-Dang** for the last 10 months.

If you aren't receiving it, we don't have your email. Please drop your email in the box at the studio, or send us an email to tctaichi@minn.net



It's only 1 page, but it's worth it

MEETING AN “Old Friend”

By Ray Hayward

Last fall I received a call from a very old and dear friend, Master Kenneth Cohen. He was in the Twin Cities teaching a seminar at Abbott



Northwestern Hospital about using ch'i-kung to treat and prevent cancer. I hadn't seen Ken for almost 10 years and so we met for breakfast. When I saw him coming out of his hotel, waves of nostalgia and deep feelings welled up in me as I recognized his familiar face. I shouted to him, "New friends are silver, old friends are gold and you are gold!" We had lots to catch up on and the time galloped as it always does when 10 year's absence is bridged.

I met Ken Cohen at Paul Gallagher's Wu Ming Valley House in the fall of 1979. Ken was teaching a workshop on Five Animal Frolics, Hua-Shan ch'i-kung, and a variety of other Taoist practices. Ken was one of the first people to receive a teaching certificate from Master William C. C. Chen and was also one of the few people to inherit the complete teachings of the late Master B. P. Chan who was my first Hsing-Yi and Pa-Kua teacher. Ken has a knack for finding and searching out the best teachers of the

best arts and styles.

Today, Ken Cohen is one of the most respected authors and teachers on Chinese Ch'i-Kung, as well as Native American spirituality, healing and practices. His bestselling book "The Way of Qigong" is the most thorough and in-depth in the English language on the subject. Ken told me a funny anecdote about his other book, "Honoring the Medicine: The Essential Guide to Native American Healing." He said me that among the Native American teachers who are spreading their culture and spirituality and using and endorsing his book, he received the highest recommendation and regard, while many non-Native American teachers mostly panned and criticized it! Indeed, the Chinese say "the tallest tree receives the most wind," which means that the higher level the person, the more people talk about them for good or ill.

Ken and I are now in contact and I asked if he would teach a seminar at our studio the next time he is in the Twin Cities. He said he is scheduled to come sometime next year. As soon as I have the dates, I will let you all know and we will invite him to share his vast knowledge and experience. Not only is Ken a gifted teacher, dedicated practitioner and a meticulous scholar, he is also a wonderful and hilarious storyteller. He is sure to entertain as much as educate us. Ken is much more than this, though, he is my old friend.

T'AI CHI WITH ANIMALS

By Karen Taylor

Animals are found everywhere in the martial arts. Their movements are sought and mimicked, and the study of monkeys, tigers, snakes, eagles and more have led to the modifications of both fist and attitude throughout the evolution of the arts.

When I first came to the Studio, I knew little of T'ai Chi and martial arts in general. From the start, I was intrigued by the names of postures, especially the names involving animals. As my learning progressed, I began to see why studying the movement that comes naturally to animals is critical to my own understanding of the solo form postures and pushing hands drills. I found myself observing

my back-yard fauna a bit differently, as well as my house cats during their wrestling bouts.



About the same time I was making these observations, I was spending a good deal of time in the backyard practicing the solo and weapons forms. During the summer, the animals are most active just prior to dawn, which coincided to the time slot my schedule allowed for practice. I noticed that when I opened the back door, it would startle the critters and they would scatter. However, as I moved through the sequence of the Solo Form, they could come back, little by little. By the first Single Whip, there would be sparrows in the tree. Around the kicks, squirrels

would return and somewhere around the Fair Ladies I would see the mother rabbit. It was as though the energy I created by doing the form attracted them back and made them comfortable enough to go about their business in spite of me.

I recall one day in particular that there was a baby rabbit sitting the driveway. I thought for sure this animal would not stick around, but it did. In fact, it seemed to move closer to me the deeper into practice



I got, and by the Double Saber Form, it was watching me with its head tilted to the side, perhaps in fascination. We were connected by the energy, and if it hadn't been for my day job obligation, I probably would have stayed outside with the little critter a bit longer.

As summer has changed to fall and early daylight and temperature has waned, my morning practice has

moved indoors. I now have a new awareness for the animals and while the back-yard players are not inside with me, my cats are. They rub my ankles during standing meditation and watch the solo form, seemingly as intently as I watch them. Again, it is as though the energy reinforces the connection between us.

I encourage anyone reading this article to tune into the animals around you if you have not already done so. You will find that they hold clues to the T'ai Chi



journey: The level of relaxation we seek comes naturally to them, and the energy we create simply by doing the form brings them comfort. I have found exploring this connection

has deepened my meditation and practice and I look forward to sharing energy with them every day.

Take Note! Take Notes

By Dominick Veldman

When I first started studying at Twin Cities T'ai Chi Ch'uan Studio, I was struck by how many people took notes. Unfortunately I wasn't too struck, because for my first year of practice, I never put pen to page. I somehow imagined I would just retain everything like a sponge—a really *big* sponge. This was ridiculous. Here we are being given amazing amounts of information on a regular basis and I thought, “Oh, I'll remember all of this, no problem.” After all, that method got me a solid 3.0 average coming out of high school. No, wait. I took notes in high school, and the best I managed was a 3.0...



So I began to take notes. Bad notes. Illegible, useless scribbling, chicken scratch notes. But a while later I came to a system of note taking that works. Amazingly, it's a lot like the

notes I took in school—only I care about them now.

But why take notes anyway? For one: Even if you never touch them again, they will have helped you file away the information you're learning. It's a fact that the more senses you can engage in the learning process, the more successful your retention of the

info will be. If as Sifu lectures, you listen to him speak, and you read it on the board as he writes, that's two: Sight and Hearing once each. If instead, you copy those notes in your own words, that's three *Plus*: Sight twice, for reading it on the board and on your own page. Hearing, for listening to Sifu lecture. And Touch, for the tactile sensation of writing it down. The *Plus* comes in the action that takes place in your brain as you change what you hear into the written word. That *Plus* is wiring sections of your brain to remember the lesson better.

Okay so how do you take notes? It's not like history or physics where there are just names, dates and formulae to keep in order. It's abstract concepts, and movement theory. Well. That part's up to you largely. But here are a few suggestions to get you started.

- 1) When it comes to what to write (at least when at the board), start with whatever the teacher writes. You could leave it at that, but try expanding on it. Most of the time what is written on the board is the title of the chapter; it's meaningless without some explanation.
- 2) Come up with a shorthand of some kind. You are never going to be able to write out longhand descriptions of every movement you do. Use abbreviations: R for right, L for left, etc. for et cetera. You get the idea.

(Notes continued on page 5)

(Notes continued from page 4)

- 2) (Cont.) When trying to note a two-person exchange, I use two columns. That way I can keep track of both sides separately.

Side A	Side B
L Punch to body	Block across w/R 4arm Bridge & grab w/L hand Hor. Chop w/R
R drill block	R grabs the block...Twist arms clockwise to lock arms

- 3) Draw little pictures, and I'm talking stick figure work here. Michelangelo need not apply. Sometimes a picture is actually worth a thousand words. But that doesn't mean it has to be a work of art.
- 4) Highlight your main points. Not literally with a highlighter, but use larger script, or underline elements that show a change of topic or a key point.
- 5) Find trigger words or phrases that simply sum up what you're trying to say. But be neither too cryptic about it nor too simplistic. Saying "hop like a sparrow" may be a little vague if you don't include a quote or anecdote to make what you mean more clear. But saying "just turn the left foot!" with no explanation may be just as difficult. Experience can be your best guide in that case. Whatever you put down on paper as a reference is better than whatever you fail to.

These are just some starter ideas. Look around, and ask people to look at their notebooks to get some ideas. Most people don't guard their notebooks furiously, except to prevent their loss.

Every class our Sifus dole out invaluable tips, stories, knowledge and lessons. You can opt to just let it all wash over you and hope some of it sticks as it blasts past, or you can choose to value the knowledge they're trying to impart upon us. We're frankly lucky to be at a school so free with its "secrets." It's true that knowledge is power. A great many schools lord over the finer points of their styles, only doling out information to a select few, and then only after years of study. Other schools ask that you pass tests and pay fees to "advance" in the style. We get none of that. We are the buffet style of education: Take as many styles as you like, learn as much as you can handle, come as often as you want. It's a blessing. Value it. Now, what to do with your notes? That's another question for another time.

Training Seminars for Teaching New Students

Remember to attend these two Saturday evening seminars if you are a tutor helping out at the studio or just want to review some tips on how to introduce T'ai-Chi to beginners.

**February 7 and March 7
6:00-8:00 p.m.
At the Studio**

T'ai-Chi Music CDs

Are available for \$15
They include the form music with and without Master Liang counting.
CD also includes an interview with Master Liang
See the cabinet in the office.

Our annual summer Retreat will be held as usual in Faribault at the Shattuck - St. Mary's Campus

August 14-16, 2009

More information about what the Retreat entails
As well as fees and other details will follow shortly, including a new brochure.

As always, deposits will be due by July 1 with balance of fees dues by August 1.

DRESSING ROOMS GET A FRESH NEW LOOK

If you've been a member of the studio for any length of time you have no doubt noticed the recent face lift given to the dressing rooms. This is the completion of the first phase of a three-phase capitol-improvement program initiated by board member Dennis Kelly and made possible by proceeds from our 2008 fundraiser and contributions from our annual fall drive.

The design and organization of the renovation project was lead by longtime studio member Pat Hemmis. Her background as a teacher of design and aesthetics at the University of Minnesota were fully utilized in creating the look of the rooms as well as a more efficient use of the space. The harmonious color palette, matching storage elements and clean look of the rooms make them a perfect space to begin and end a T'ai Chi class. To top it off Pat brought the project to completion under budget!

The project could not have been completed without the help of our studio members. We would like to thank the following members for their generous donation of time and talent:

Painting

Kevin Ahtou
Margo Bock
LaVonne Bunt
Julie Cisler
Amy Haselberger
Tom Hautman
Linda Hermanson
Matt Peterson
Michael Pilla
Georgia Schlegle
Paul Thompson
Woody Wolston



Clean-Up

Rondi Atkin
Linda & Paul Brady
LaVonne Bunt
Kim Hayward
Misato Sakai
Ann Schulman
Chris Sorman
Paul Thompson

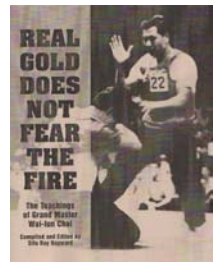
Carpentry

Paul Brady
Anita Ryan
Paul Ryberg
John Stitely
Woody Wolston

General Help

Patrick Jarvis

Special thanks to Lisa Strong for framing all the artwork and mirrors (soon to be hung) and creating a beautiful wall stencil in the women's dressing room (soon to be completed).



REAL GOLD DOES NOT FEAR THE FIRE

Just released, this newly published book about the life and teachings of Grandmaster Wai-Lun Choi will be a valuable addition to your Martial Arts library. Articles, interviews, notes and testimonials reveal many levels of the Internal Martial Arts. Most notably, Taiji, Pa-Gua, Xing-Yi, and Liu Ho Ba Fa, Grandmaster Choi's specialty. It includes many rare photos from his private collection, which span his 35-year teaching career.

"I just spent the holiday weekend reading this new book cover to cover. Although many hands helped produce it, I think only you (Ray Hayward) could have created this book. It required a unique combination of student, teacher, historian, scholar, and above all a practitioner who understands the arts being illuminated."

-Sifu Paul Abdella

"As soon as I received a copy of "Real Gold Does Not Fear the Fire" I read it all in one sitting, I could not put it down. I will reread this book until the pages end up unreadable, then I'll buy another."

-Matt Lauters

Paperback available now for \$25
Hardcover available January 19 for \$50
Published by Shu Kuang Press & Publications

Did you know you can now pay the Studio for dues, retreat, donations, or anything else - online!

The link is on the home page at tctaichi.com. It will take you to Paypal where you can use your Paypal account, or simply use your credit card with no account.

Ask Kim if you have questions:
651-767-0267 or tctaichi@minn.net.





**Master Li Shou-ch'ien
Master T.T. Liang's first Long Form
teacher – demonstrating
"Turn and Chop with Fist"**

The Guodian Bamboo Slip Text:
The Great One Begot Water

Part I

The Great One Begot Water,
Water in turn assisted the Great One,
Thus Heaven took shape.
Heaven in turn assisted the Great One,
Thus Earth took shape.
Heaven and Earth in turn assisted each other,
Thus divinities appeared.
Divinities in turn assisted each other,
Thus *Yin* and *Yang* came into being.
Yin and *Yang* in turn assisted each other,
Thus the four seasons occurred.
The four seasons in turn assisted (each other),
Thus cold and heat were formed.
Cold and heat in turn assisted each other,
Thus there occurred humidity and dryness.
Humidity and dryness in turn assisted each other,
Thus we have the period called the year.
Therefore, the year
Was generated by humidity and dryness;
Humidity and dryness
Were generated by cold and heat.
Cold and heat
Were generated by the four seasons.
And the four seasons
Were generated by *Yin* and *Yang*.
Yin and *Yang*
Were generated by Heaven [and Earth].
The Heaven and Earth
Were generated by the Great One.
Thus, the Great One
Is embodied in water
And moves along with the four seasons.
It moves in a cycle for ever,
Serving as the mother of myriad things;
It is both complete and incomplete,
Serving as the model of myriad things.
This is the logos that Heaven cannot destroy,
That the Earth cannot change,
That *Yin* and *Yang* cannot end.
The gentleman knows this is called (the Great One).

-Lao Tse
(These texts are thought to be the precursors to the Tao Te Ching)

Class Schedule for January 15—June 15, 2009

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: Cane, Fan (beginning March 1) (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 64 Mother Palms (enrollment closed)				

NOTE: The Studio will be closed Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day.

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Saint Paul, MN 55114

FIRST CLASS MAIL