



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.  
\$5.00 subscription for others.  
Please send requests to address at left.

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## Fall Schedule

Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup> our fall schedule begins with a new class devoted to the 8 methods of Pushing-Hands and various techniques of defense and counter attack. **(7:30-8:30 Mondays)** The Pa-Kua class will be completing the last two palm changes and beginning a 2-person Pa-Kua form. If you've never done Pa-Kua or would just like to learn a 2-person set you may come to this class. **(8:30-9:30 Mondays)**

The Tuesday night Pushing-Hands Research class will be devoted to Fa-Ching, which means 'issuing energy'—how to push, pull, uproot and other ways to get that 'T'ai-Chi whole body energy' to come out. **(6:00-7:00 Tuesdays)** Next, Paul will be teaching Tamo Sword, which is a beautiful Shaolin sword form with tassel which Master Liang T'ai-Chi-ized. **(7:00-7:30 Tuesdays)** Once again, this is the starting point for the T'ai-Chi 2-Person form called San-Shou which takes about one year to learn. If you are interested in learning this beautiful 2-person sensitivity, you must start by early October. **(7:30-8:30 Tuesdays)** Because there is so much interest in beginning Praying Mantis, Level I is open for anyone to start at any time. **(8:30-9:30 Tuesdays and 7:30-8:30 Thursdays)**

A new addition to our schedule is the T'ai-Chi Guided Practice and Review. This will be a time to practice and review all the previously learned material with guidance from the instructor and opportunities for questions and corrections. **(6:00-**

**7:30 Wednesdays)** Pa-Kua Course #2 students will be learning 16 self-defense techniques and refining their sensitivity. Course #2 is open for new people. **(8:30-9:30 Wednesdays)** Thursday night Praying Mantis Level II will review all the material in their level for one more session. This class is only for students having completed Level II. **(8:30-9:30 Thursdays)**

For the next 15 weeks we have a new Jump Rope class during the first half hour **(11:30-12:00 Saturdays)** of the Conditioning class. For those who wish to stay for the second half hour we will finish with the usual conditioning routine. This class will start with fundamentals for both new and experienced jumpers and progress to a fairly intense level both in terms of endurance and coordination jumping. You need your own rope—they may be ordered at the studio or bought at a sporting goods store. Paul's prefers a plastic speed rope. All ropes should have ball bearing handles (weighted or non weighted—Paul prefers non) and be leather or plastic. *No beaded ropes!* The noise and floor damage factors make them an undesirable choice. The chart on pg. 7 will help you determine what length rope to buy. Err on the side of too long (the rope can be shortened)!

Virtually all styles of martial arts possess an inherent rhythm which is brought to life by their active footwork patterns. From the smooth circularity of Pa-Kua and the linear explosiveness of Hsing-Yi to the fluid cycle of opposites contained in T'ai-Chi, understanding the essential rhythm of a style is essential to its mastery. All students are welcome, please come and try it out.

# The What, Why, When and How of Pushing-Hands—Part IV

by Ray Hayward

In the last issue of the newsletter we explained some of the hows to practicing Pushing-Hands. Because it is such a big question even this second part won't begin to cover all the methods of learning, practicing and mastering Pushing-Hands. My sincere hope is that this article is food for thought and an inspiration for you to dive deeper into the mysteries and subtleties of this practice.

There are many talks by different masters and authors about the 8 Postures of T'ai-Chi. These 8 Postures or Energies play an important role in Pushing-Hands. In Master Liang's book T'ai-Chi Ch'uan for Health and Self-Defense on pg. 89 the Classic says, 'In Ward Off, Roll Back, Press, and Push one must know the correct technique.' In the commentary it says, 'They are supplemented by the movements of the four corners—Pull, Split, Elbow and Shoulder. Together, all of these are called the 8 positions (essences) and all the variations in T'ai-Chi Ch'uan are derived from them.' The 8 Postures are not static or just single movements, they are actually outward manifestations of 8 intrinsic energies.

Here is a brief list with basic descriptions of the 8 Postures and the uses of the energy.

1. Ward Off: Keep out or away using the circular principle of the horizontal wheel. (Common-First Energy to Master)
2. Roll Back: Lead in and past, or away, like a matador with a bull. (Cheng Man-ch'ing-First Energy to Master)
3. Press: One hand controls as one hand counters.
4. Push: Manipulating yin and yang to attack partner's balance, control and attack with the same hand.
5. Pull: To guide the power or to off-balance, as if plucking fruit.
6. Split: Divide four options, split the power, break the joint, attack the stance, and split the mind from the body.
7. Elbow: All strikes, Folding, and Unfolding.

8. Shoulder: Short power.

The 8 Postures are, in essence, 8 sensations or feelings you are developing within your body, or manifested from your body to your partner's body, or sensed in your partner's body. The 8 Energies are one of the steps in understanding Master Liang's quote, 'The first step of Pushing-Hands is to make a thorough investigation of feeling and sensibility.'

When practicing Pushing-Hands with Master Liang, he would always remark that we didn't know him, but he knew us quite well. I found out later he was paraphrasing a line from the Classics which goes, 'My opponent does not know me, but I know them quite well. If you can master all the techniques, you will become a peerless hero.' I asked him, 'What is it that you know, that I don't know?' He answered, 'The 8 Techniques.' The word 'techniques' confused me for many years because I thought of the word as related to physical procedures like blocks, grabs, attacks, etc. Once I had grasped the 8 Techniques, I started calling them the 8 Conditions in my mind and that cleared them up for my own learning, practice, and now, I hope, teaching. The 8 Techniques are essentially conditions present in your and your partner's bodies which make your attack effective, or their's ineffective.

Here is a brief list of the 8 Techniques with a basic description:

1. Yin and Yang: the hard and soft, the insubstantial and substantial, the moving and the still and all the variations in between.
2. The Line: this is the weak point in your partner's stance or position and the line being the most effective direction to attack them.
3. The Center of Gravity/The Center Line: these are the horizontal and vertical lines in a person's torso which make them difficult to turn or defend themselves.
4. Superior and Defect Position: having your opponent at a disadvantage and being able to take advantage of it.
5. Single Weighting: knowing the correct way to issue energy from your body.
6. Concentration of Energy: like a mathematical equation, getting the whole body to issue energy at the same time for maximum power.

7. Control: the Chinese word Na, which means seize or hold, the technique of keeping your opponent in the defect position.
8. Territory: the “living space” of your and your partner’s stance—how to get inside your partner’s territory to attack them, without them taking advantage of you.

Master Liang told me that the Yang family could get all 8 Conditions any time they wanted and that is why their Pushing-Hands was so effective. He also said to work on 1 or 2 and gradually build up to getting all 8 before pushing. There are numerous references made about the 8 Techniques/Conditions in Master Liang’s book—see pp. 5, 24, 26, 39, 41, 76 and 91.

In my early days studying with Master Liang, I loved to ask him questions and hear his stories and comments about the old Masters, especially the Yang family. One day I asked a question that elicited an answer which, to this day, continually gives me fresh insight. I asked Master Liang, ‘At what level are you, compared to Cheng Man-ch’ing and the Yang family?’ He answered by saying, ‘I asked Professor Cheng the very same question.’ Master Liang was told what the various levels were and how to recognize them. He alluded to these levels on page 105 in the short text called ‘To Know Before the Action’ in his book, which states ‘The way of T’ai-Chi can be divided into three levels: that of one who has foresight and vision, one who knows and apprehends only after the event, and one who knows nothing from beginning to end. As soon as fellow disciples of T’ai-Chi join hands and begin to practice the Pushing-Hands exercise, they can perceive each other’s level of mastery.’ I like to tell students that when you meet a new partner for Pushing-Hands you want to figure out; is this person more, less, or the same level of sensitivity? If more, work on defense. If less, work on offense. If equal, work on sensitivity, which is all the variations of yin and yang. As T’ai-Chi for health, self-defense, philosophy, and meditation are all based on the nervous system, or more simply, the sense of touch, we can see the correlation between how delicate and refined the sense of touch is and how elevated the level of Martial ability and meditation.

Once again, here is a list of the 8 Levels and a brief description, along with a reference for each from the Classics:

1. Jumping Energy (t’iao-chin): when your partner’s energy has fully reached your body, you ‘ride’ it and land safely, maintaining your relaxation and centeredness. *When one has been struck and is just about to fall over, they must hop like a sparrow.*
2. Neutralizing Energy (hua-chin): when your partner’s energy is 70% in your body, you turn, shift, bend, etc. to neutralize, reduce or transform it so that you maintain your balance. *When your partner puts pressure on the left, the left becomes insubstantial; when pressure is brought on the right, the right becomes empty.*
3. Withdraw/Attack Energy (tsou fa chin): when your opponent’s energy comes to your body, you neutralize it, borrow some of it, and issue energy of your own at the same instant. *To withdraw is to attack; to attack is to withdraw.*
4. Receiving Energy (chieh-chin): when your opponent has issued half their energy, you combine the skills of neutralizing, rooting, and issuing with timing and sensitivity to add your push to the last half of their push—getting 150% by spending 100%. *Suddenly disappear and suddenly appear.*
5. Listening Energy (t’ing-chin): the sense of touch is so developed at this stage that as soon as your partner’s muscles are stirring with energy, about to push you, you can feel it or ‘hear it coming’ and push them first, anticipating and stopping them. *If your opponent does not move, you do not move. At their slightest stir, you have already anticipated it and moved beforehand.*
6. Interpreting Energy (tung-chin): akin with Chinese medicine, you can feel which organ/meridian is manifesting energy and know, or interpret, which action they are taking, be it offensive, defensive, or controlling, before the muscles even move. *From the mastery of all the postures you will apprehend ‘interpreting energy’; from apprehending interpreting energy, you will arrive at a complete mastery of your partner without recourse to detecting their energy.*
7. Sticking Energy (nien-chin): by controlling positive and negative charges in the body, the practitioner can attract or repel their partner using bio-electric magnetic energy. *The mind*

*and the ch'i must respond ingeniously and efficaciously to the exchange of substantial and insubstantial so as to develop an active and harmonious tendency.*

8. Spiritual Insight (shen-ming): the practitioner's sense of touch is so acute that they can feel/read the intentions of their partner and anticipate them well in advance—'reading their mind' and dealing with their attack perfectly. *After you have learned to interpret energy, the more you practice, the better your skill will be, and by examining thoroughly and remembering silently, you will gradually reach a stage of total reliance on the mind.*

As we can see from this list the 8 levels are about how sensitive your nervous system is and at what distance your nervous system becomes aware. Master Liang said, 'When you practice the Solo Form imagine you are swimming in air. This will make your body so sensitive and alert. Gradually,

## **T'ai-Chi Ch'uan, Meditation, and the Five Stimulations**

by Paul Abdella

*"The ch'i should be stimulated and the spirit of vitality should be retained internally."- T'ai-Chi Classic*

T'ai Chi Ch'uan is an art belonging to the internal school of Chinese boxing. This means there is a marriage between the external movement mechanics of the style and the inner qualities of meditation. This article will explore T'ai-Chi as moving meditation and the energy stimulating properties of the movements themselves.

### **Meditation**

The three essential components of meditation are posture, breath, and a quiet mind. In the posture of meditation, the muscles and bones are harmoniously aligned with the force of gravity thus creating a body which is relaxed and free of tension. As we begin to experience gravity as a source of support rather than a source of tension, the body's energy is naturally stimulated. Breathing is both a voluntary and an involuntary action. This means the breath is controlled by two sets of nerves—the voluntary (central) and involuntary (autonomic) nervous systems. Therefore, the breath can act as a bridge

you will become aware of an ever increasing area around your body.'

These three lists of 8 are considered by many masters to be the 'secrets' of T'ai-Chi Ch'uan and they would make their students wait many years before revealing them, if ever. As we can see the secret is not in what we do, but how we do it. A Classic says, *'To enter the gate and be guided onto the correct path, one requires verbal instruction from a competent master. If one practices constantly and studies carefully, one's skill will take care of itself.'* Master Liang, in his true role as a teacher, learned them, cataloged them, taught them, explained them, demonstrated the ones he could, and encouraged us to seek the highest levels. I've said it before and I'll say it again, the first, last and always starting point to any Pushing-Hands practice is softness, but I'll let the Classics sum up this whole 4-part article; *From the most soft and yielding you will arrive at the most powerful and unyielding.* ☺

between the two and begin to have an influence over what are generally believed to be involuntary processes in the body. When the breath is deep and slow utilizing the abdomen as well as the chest, more oxygen is drawn into the cells to nourish the body as the nervous system both stimulates the circulation and calms the body down. When quieting the mind it is important to learn to control mental activity and the emotions. To do this the mind is brought to a single focus utilizing a variety of possible techniques such as visualization, sounds, breath-work and the cultivation of emptiness. Any of these techniques can interrupt our emotional patterns and bring our electrical brain wave activity to a lower frequency. When the three elements of posture breath and quiet mind are brought together in a practice the ch'i is stimulated and becomes active. Master T.T. Liang has said, "The ch'i in and of itself is not sufficiently forceful to increase the flow of blood, but if the ch'i is persistently stimulated, it produces heat and becomes powerfully effective in activating the circulation of blood throughout the whole body without any discontinuity. The same principle is illustrated by the conversion of water into steam: the latent invisible power in water is made active enough, effective enough to drive the pistons of a powerful engine."

## The Five Stimulations

The T'ai-Chi Classics state, *In resting, be as still as a mountain peak; in moving, act like the current of a great river.* When T'ai-chi postures are held, the three essential elements of posture, breath, and quiet mind combine together to stimulate the ch'i as if igniting a piece of charcoal. Such is the power of stillness. In moving from posture to posture the energy is further activated and circulated as if fanning or blowing on the hot coal. This increase in the flow of energy takes place primarily because of five basic actions or stimulations inherent in the movements themselves. These actions are: 1. Expand and Contract, 2. Rise and Sink, 3. Full and Empty, 4. Turn and twist, and finally, 5. Fast and Slow. A closer examination of each action will reveal the hidden power of the Tai-chi movements to increase the flow of energy in the body for health and self defense.

### Expand and contract

From the smallest atom to the far reaches of space, expand and contract is the fundamental rhythm of the universe. When we examine the movements of the solo form we can see the manifestation of this rhythm within each individual posture and from posture to posture within the entire sequence. For example, the postures Single Whip, Lift Hands, and Shoulder Stroke illustrate this idea well. From beginning to end the posture Single Whip is a series of expanding and contracting gestures as are Lift hands and Shoulder Stroke. The finished position of Single Whip looks and feels more expanded than Lift Hands which looks and feels more expanded than Shoulder Stroke and so on. To experience the stimulating power of expand and contract select a posture from the form and perform it repeatedly with or without footwork as if doing Ch'i-Kung. Soon you will notice that the movement and breath combine together in this rhythm of opposites to stimulate and mobilize your energy.

### Rise and Sink

There is a general principle in T'ai-Chi practice which states that the form movements should remain at an even height throughout the sequence (with the exception of stand-up and squat-down postures). Although this principle is designed to keep a practitioner from arbitrarily bobbing up and down, there are numerous places throughout the form

where subtle rise and sink actions stimulate energy and enhance the practical use of a posture. In most postures that finish with the forward hand and forward foot opposite each other such as Brush Knee a subtle rising action will occur at the end of a posture caused by the straightening of the rear leg and a slight opening of the chest. In most postures that finish with the forward hand and forward foot on the same side such as Ward-Off a subtle sinking action occurs at the end of the posture caused by bending the knees slightly and relaxing the chest. Postures that stand up such as White Crane Spreads its Wings straighten the legs, open the chest and lengthen the spine. Postures that squat down such as Needle at Sea Bottom bend the legs deeply, relax the chest and round the back then rise up again into Fan through the Back. In all of these examples the rise and sink actions correspond to the posture applications but also stimulate the movement of cerebrospinal fluid along the spine. Most postures utilize the action of rise and sink, those that do not are governed by one or more of the other stimulations. Select a posture with an obvious rise and sink component such as White Crane Spreads its Wings and perform it repeatedly left and right. Soon the movement of energy along the spine and elsewhere will begin to flow.

### Full and Empty

In Tai-Chi practice when stepping to advance, retreat, turn left or right the weight must be shifted from one leg to the other in a gradual and deliberate manner. When the stepping foot is lifted and placed in position it is in a state of emptiness leaving the leg that bears the weight completely full. As the weight is slowly shifted from one leg to the other the status of full and empty in each leg is reversed. This interchange is continuous throughout the form and applies a steady on/off pressure to the bubbling well points on the soles of the feet-one of the most significant energy centers of the body. In addition, there is a full and empty aspect to the movement of the arms as well as the breath. Together they unite and stimulate the circulation of energy in the body. Select a posture from the form such as Push and perform it continuously paying special attention to the full and empty aspects in the feet, legs, arms and breath.

## Turn and Twist

In T'ai-Chi, it is the waist and legs that direct the movement of the postures. There is however some confusion as to what is meant by the *waist*. The pelvis consists of the bones of the hip and sacrum. The lowest section of the spine, the lumbar, is attached to it. Unlike the middle (thoracic) and upper (cervical) sections of the spine which can bend and rotate in all directions, the lumbar vertebrae cannot rotate or *twist* very much. Therefore when the pelvis turns so does the lumbar vertebrae. This unified movement of the pelvis and lumbar make up what is referred to as the waist in T'ai-Chi. A common principle in T'ai-Chi is to move the body as a unified whole. When the waist directs the movements in turning side to side this unity is preserved and the spine is gently stretched and massaged. A small amount of rotation or twist beyond the movement of the waist is acceptable, even beneficial to the spine and nervous system. If the twist comes before the turn, in other words the shoulders and chest direct the movements not the waist, the movements become segmented, the breath shallow, and the benefits for health and self defense are diminished. Select a posture from the form such as Cloud Hands and perform it repeatedly—letting the waist turn guide the movement. As the waist reaches the limited of the turn and a subtle twist of the upper body moves a little past that point, the stimulation of turn and twist will become apparent.

## Fast and Slow

Training forms at different speeds is a traditional and beneficial practice. Slow speed training in T'ai-Chi develops ch'i by allowing the practitioner to

observe, correct and control those elements which interfere with the essentials of meditation and the five stimulations. Training at faster speeds allows one to express that energy for martial purposes. When practicing T'ai-Chi slowly there will occur natural shifts in tempo in individual postures and various sections of the form. These subtle shifts in rhythm will have a stimulating effect on the body providing they follow the general principles of the classics. Practice a posture, a section of the form or an entire round of the form at a slow, medium, or fast pace and note the different feeling each will produce.

## In Conclusion

When the essential elements of meditation: posture, breath, and a quiet mind are integrated in Tai-chi practice and the movement of the five stimulations fully realized then the body's energy will be full and flowing and ready to obey the dictates of the mind. As Master Liang has said, "When the mind mobilizes the intention, and the intention mobilizes the ch'i, and when the ch'i mobilizes the body (circulates throughout the entire body), then the energy of stimulation, which is latent within, will be created. When the mind and ch'i are joined and linked together with the variations of substantial and insubstantial, the energy becomes so very strong and fast that it is like a howling typhoon and fearful waves, or passing clouds and flowing waters, or a flying hawk and a leaping fish, or a hopping rabbit and a swooping falcon, now sinking, now rising, suddenly appearing and suddenly disappearing. The stimulation of the natural greatness of the ch'i is inscrutable like the winds and clouds." ☯

## Announcing our Annual Saturday Night Free Seminars

All members are welcome  
Seminars will be 7:00-9:30 p.m.

November 4 - A brief history of T'ai-Chi Ch'uan

December 9 - Explanations of Chang San-feng's T'ai-Chi Ch'uan Classic

January 13 - Teacher Training Course Summary and Recap

March 3 - Solo Form Corrections (1 2 or all 3 sections as time permits)

## Limitless Thanks!

- ⇒ Todd Nesser, design of brochures and Master Liang birthday shirts
- ⇒ Heidi Johnson, our new studio caretaker
- ⇒ Aaron Friday, web page design and CD player
- ⇒ Larry Elder, water orders and upkeep
- ⇒ Micah Lopez, web page initiation and annex help
- ⇒ Steve Martin, remodeling the annex
- ⇒ Mark Tomlinson, annex help
- ⇒ Kim Hayward, retreat coordinating and annex help
- ⇒ As always, the Board of Directors, Joanne, Sally, James and Julie

# Graduation News

Congratulations from the instructors to those members who have finished the 150 movement Solo Form. Many have started, few have finished. Congratulations also to those members who have completed other forms and styles. Keep up the good work and know it is an honor, a privilege and a great joy to share these arts with you.

Solo Form

Andrew Meyer  
Lisa Strong  
Liz Tufte

Cliff Owens

Tony Sandusky  
Delores Steinlicht  
Mark Tomlinson  
Peggy Ward  
Jenny Wrenson

Pa-Kua

Swimming Dragon

Julie Cisler  
Matt Cisler  
Mike Cosgrove  
Brad Felske  
Charles Morris  
Patrick Philips  
Tim Sullivan  
Bob Tjostelson

Ch'in-Na San-Shou

Tim Behm  
LaVonne Bunt  
Julie Cisler  
Mike Cosgrove  
Brad Felske  
Chris Inda  
Kyoko Katayama  
Dan Nave  
Cliff Owens  
Eric Stull  
Ryan Taylor  
Beth VanDam  
Woody Wolston

T'ai-Chi Knife

Tim Behm  
LaVonne Bunt  
Matt Buzzard  
Betty Carlson  
John Clifford  
Barb Delaney  
Lynn Dennis  
Holly Ewing  
Aaron Friday  
Joe Herbulock  
Ed Kao  
Laura Kohlhase

T'ai-Chi San-Shou

LaVonne Bunt  
Holly Ewing  
Brad Felske  
Aaron Friday  
Pat Hemmis  
Jim Jacoby  
Kyoko Katayama  
Laura Kohlhase  
James Whitney

5 Element

Change Form

Brad Felske  
Dan Haar  
Chris Inda  
Patrick Philips  
John Zembiec

## New Studio Annex

from the Board of Directors

Your Board and staff are excited about the studio expansion. Work on the new room is well under way and even in its raw state it is available for our use. We anticipate the work will be completed in mid-October when Steve Martin returns to put in the floor and ventilation. We would welcome help with painting after that occurs. (See Paul if you'd like to lend a hand.)

We believe that uses for the new space will evolve naturally, but here are some of the possibilities that have been suggested. It is a T'ai-Chi practice space. Besides being available for form practice, it may be used, as well, for special small classes and for private lessons. There is a reinforced wall which we plan to attach box-spring mattresses to make Pushing-Hands practice both safe and realistic. There will be a station for stretching exercises. The

new back relaxing machine is already installed and getting daily use. Perhaps the room will be appropriate for bag training and weights, with mats available for practicing throws.

We are confident that our teachers as well as the students will find the best ways to use the new area. It belongs to all of us, so come in and help us make it all worth while. ☺

### JUMP ROPE SIZING CHART

Your Height	Rope Length
up to 5'5"	8'
5'6" to 5'9"	9'
5'10" to 6'3"	10'
over 6'3"	11'

**Schedule**  
**September 18, 2000 - January 15, 2001**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
12:30-2:30 Solo Form	6:00-7:00 Pushing-Hands Research: Fa-Ching		12:30-2:30 Solo Form	10:00-11:30 Eclectsis
6:00-7:30 Solo Form	7:00-7:30 Tamo Sword	6:00-7:30 T'ai-Chi Guided Practice and Review	6:00-7:30 Solo Form	11:30-12:30 Jump Rope/ Conditioning or Stretching *
7:30-8:30 8 Pushing-Hand Methods	7:30-8:30 2 Person San-Shou	7:30-8:30 Hsing-Yi	7:30-8:30 Praying Mantis Level I	12:30-1:30 Chi-Kung, Standing Meditation and Energy Work
8:30-9:30 12 Animals/ Pa-Kua San-Shou	8:30-9:30 Praying Mantis Level I	8:30-9:30 Pa-Kua #2	8:30-9:30 Praying Mantis Level II	1:30-2:45 Solo Form

\* First and last Saturdays, 11:30-12:30 are Stretching, all other Saturdays are 11:30-12:00 Jump Rope and 12:00-12:30 Conditioning.

NOTE: The studio will be closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and New Years Day.

**Twin Cities T'ai-Chi Ch'uan**  
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**First Class Mail**