TCHC Community Update

March, 2011

Yes, This Edition is Dated March. So that we can include information resulting from the Quarterly meetings of the TCHC Board, which meets toward the end of February, May, August and November, the Board agreed at their February Meeting to change the Newsletter dates.

Editions will now be published in March, June, September and December.

2011 JUNE WORKSHOP SCHOLARSHIPS FROM TCHC

During February, the scholarship committee evaluated the 14 applications received for the TCHC Tuition Scholarships for the June week-long workshop. Last year, TCHC members raised $3800 for scholarships. Thanks for everyone who contributed by donating items to raffle or sell and to those who made these items valuable by contributing their money. Also thanks to the classes at last summer's workshop who contributed money as a gift to their instructors.

At the February Meeting of the TCHC Board, the Board accepted the recommendation of the Scholarship Committee that 3 Full Scholarships and 6 Half Scholarships be awarded this year.

The recipients are being notified and a list of recipients will be posted on the TCHC website.

The focus of the Scholarship Committee now is on raising funds for next year's Scholarship Fund. It is always a disappointing when we have to deny support to very worthy applicants, so please support the Fund.

TCHC Scholarship Committee
Virginia Dowling, Chair

An Invitation from the President of TCHC

As a community of folks practicing and teaching tai chi for health programs we have the positive experience of bringing the many benefits of tai chi to others as we continue our own journey along the way to better health. The Board of Directors is composed of volunteer members of TCHC who serve the membership through their efforts to bring our goals and purposes to life.

We are seeking volunteers who will help TCHC bring its mission and programs to

our growing membership. In the next six months the Board will be seeking new members and committee members to conduct the work of the Board. Tai chi people are known for their interests in making the world a better place for to live in. Serving our organization will provide opportunities to activate that interest.

Check out our website or contact me to find out what volunteering will require from you. I invite you to consider joining us in our work to make TCHC a strong organization.
Contact me at: drbobmcb@comcast.net

Thanks for considering this call for volunteers.

Dr. Bob McBrien, President, TCHC

Fluency – A Poem

We move through an ancient language
Stepping, turning, reaching
Feet kick, hands slice
  A slowed violence of
  Single whip
  Eagle's beak
  Push the mountain
Memories of mountain bandits
We the village peasants preparing for the worst

We borrow others' gestures
  A white crane spreading its wings
  A woman working the shuttle
  A man leisurely tying his coat

And just as we learned our native language
With time we gain fluency
No longer thinking of each gesture's history
Feeling the rightness of this tongue
As it speaks us

Anne Bower

Teaching Effectively

While having good Tai Chi skill and a deep understanding of Tai Chi principles are good pre-requisites for teaching, there is much more to being an effective teacher. Teaching is an art that is cultivated through experience. When you have a desire to share what you know with another person and they have a desire to learn, look for ways to communicate the art and motivate your students.

Listen to Your Students

Involving students in the learning process keeps their interest focused on learning and gives you valuable feedback about what they need in each moment. Their comments give you indications of what movements are not yet clear and it gives them the opportunity to share how the movements feel, release any frustrations that are building up or share the improvements they are

experiencing. Clear communication from teacher to student and from student to teacher facilitates the learning process.

Follow the Energy

As you work with each student over time, you learn how to communicate and motivate them. This is not complicated. It is very much like push hands because each student has a different energetic make up, mind set, expectation and needs. When you truly understand Tai Chi principles, you are really just following the energy to see what needs to be done to achieve success. This is good coaching. The art of following your student's learning process translates into being able to guide them to their next step.

When your understanding of Tai Chi also includes an awareness of the learning process, you have the potential to become a good teacher. Teaching is a process of making a complex art form simple by breaking it down into small segments. You systematically teach a sequence of movements, develop concepts and cultivate physical abilities.

Footwork is the Foundation of a Movement

When I teach a new movement, I introduce students to the footwork first. When teaching the TCA commencement move, I begin with the concept of Tai Chi walking, where you step forward by placing the heel down without any weight rather than falling on each foot as we walk, which is our normal walking pattern.

After the students are comfortable with foot placement and movement, I teach the arm movement separately and then teach the movement as a coordinated interaction of arm and leg movements. I like the results of teaching this way. Students have more awareness of their bodies as they move. There is less to correct when I slowly and systematically break the movement into small teachable segments. By using repetition you build muscle memory for each small part of the movement until they can follow you successfully through the whole movement.

Be Genuine

People teach who they are. Teachers can attempt to create an image for themselves; however, the energy of who you are is seen and felt by students.

Caroline Demoise

Discovering Tai Chi

My first discovery of Tai Chi was at the age of 22, on a ship, in the Atlantic Ocean, as I was finishing my enlistment with the U.S. Navy. The impact this had on me was life-changing.

That was five years ago and I reflect on my journey along this path toward greater wellness. In my personal practice, what I enjoy most is the deep feeling of relaxation and also vitality which can surface after a good session of practice. We all have implicit motives for playing Tai Chi and this seems to be a prime reason for my coming back … that of renewing my spirits in a reliable and organic way. What are your incentives for practice?

Although I realize it is not a cure-all, I have become aware of the many health benefits that can be received from Tai Chi. It is in my nature to nurture this wellness in others-- through teaching.

There is nothing more remarkable than seeing the 'light' come on for students as they begin to grasp the subtle layers of Tai Chi: the breathing mechanics, the coordinated movements, that symphony-of-spirit which arises from sincere and continuous effort. In some way, it is clear that they are connecting with a facet of their natural selves. I always find it amazing to watch the before-and-after of a class session: how there are occasions when students come dragging in with the vigor of a languid lizard, only to leave with the spry lightness of a songbird. What is more impressive is watching their receptiveness to the world around them.

One of the great jewels in my life is the friendships I have made with my Tai Chi community. We all seem to share an unspoken language, a language that is beyond words but expressed in the silent knowing that we are united by the conviction and enjoyment we derive from our activity. The sensitivity that we share and the authenticity of our beings cannot be quantified; they make for a unique and most special encounter.

Justin Gruver

We Pause to Remember

We pause to honor the memory of two from our community who passed away in 2010.

Cynthia Fels was an ST and an author, whose writing supported Dr. Lam's Tai Chi for Health programs. Her services were private.

Dave Sheldon husband of Jenny Sheldon, ST died tragically shortly before Christmas. A strong supporter of Jenny's TCA activities he is well known to our community on the West Coast. His memorial was held early in February.

TCHC members wishing to honor Cynthia and Dave may send a contribution to: TCHC, P O Box 481, Glastonbury, CT 06033
Make note who the contribution is to honor and designate it for
June Workshop Scholarship Fund
The family and friends of Dave invite us to make a contribution to:
The Dave Sheldon Memorial Fund
Environmental Center of Bend, 16 NW Kansas, Bend, Oregon 97701

TCHC Directors and Officers

Bob McBrien	President
Bruce Young	Vice President
Maureen Miller	Secretary
Judy Nagle	Treasurer
Marty Kidder	
Pat Lawson	
Guy Prentice	
Shelia Rae	
Russ Smiley	

Mailing Address: **TCHC**
P O Box 481, Glastonbury, CT 06033-0481

Mark your Calendar !! The June 2011 Annual Workshop

The 2011 US Annual Workshop will be held at St. Mary of the Woods, Terre Haute, Indiana

Friday, June 10 – MT Training
Sat-Sun, June 11-12 – Seated TCA & Tai Chi for Falls Prevention
Mon-Sat, June 13-18 – Week Long Workshop

Will You Be at the June Workshop??

If so, please consider writing a brief (250 to 400 words) article on something you experienced at the workshop that we can include in the next edition of the newsletter after the Workshop. (If we get enough submissions we might just publish a special edition!!)

Notes on Submitting Articles for the Newsletter

Articles for the June Newsletter should be submitted by May 20 -- Thanks.

Articles can be submitted by emailing them to: editor@tchc.info
They can either be part of the body of the email, or attached as a text or word processing file.

You are encouraged to include Photos and/or artwork related to the article.
Please include your Full Name, City & State as well as your email address (your email address will not be included in the published article but is so that I can contact you.)

All submitted articles will be reviewed by the Editor and/or member(s) of the TCHC Board of Directors.

Submitting an article implies that the writer agrees to any appropriate editing of the article. Time permitting, the writer will be sent a copy of the edited version if anything other than minor spelling or grammatical changes are made.

In general, all articles and other material published in the TCHC Newsletter may be copied for your personal use or for sharing with your students. They should not be included in other publications without consent of the author.