

CHANGE IS INEVITABLE: 2018 WORLD T'AI CHI & QIGONG DAY

WTS Staff

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April 28 saw our first new location since we began hosting the annual event on the Isle of Length in 2001. That new location was the Town of Brookhaven's sports complex, Diamond in the Pines in Coram. At the start of the morning, Town of Brookhaven Supervisor Ed Romaine presented his letter-of-support and a proclamation from the Town of Brookhaven. His remarks included: "Change can be a good thing."

The reviews are in and our 2018 event certainly reflects that sentiment. What we heard during the event from people who had been with us before — facilitators as well as attendees — went something like this: "Great space! Kinda miss the water — **not** the wind."



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A first-timer to our event told Water Tiger's Laoshi Laurince McElroy, Local Event Coordinator and International Event Co-Creator, that she's been to a number of other celebrations over the years and "this has been, really, the best one!"

As we work to put the event to bed, we have had back and forth with our facilitators and here's what three of them have shared with us:

"Not only is the *World Tai Chi Day* event that you organize, plan and host — and fund — always serious, well done, inclusive, and full of Tai Chi spirit, but your follow-up is certainly thorough and professional."

"Thanks again for the great work you do. ... We always enjoy the *World Tai Chi Day*. It gives us a feeling of connection."

"The day went off without a hitch and that doesn't happen by accident."

Finally, over two weeks after the event, we received an email that was pretty short and very sweet: "THANKS for a great event ... Still relishing the experience ... "

"I have to admit that I had concerns," says McElroy Laoshi. "I thought having been established in a certain location for all those years would couple with a change in the marketing dynamic — we were always included in Patchogue Parks & Rec's collateral advertising — and would result in a much smaller turnout than we've seen the past few years."

The final count was in the neighborhood of 60 (+/-) participants. Though this is a lighter number than has been attending the annual event — there were around 80 last year, it was much higher than McElroy Laoshi thought it would be. We even came close to last year's record-breaking fundraising total of \$285.00. With additional funds still expected, we're currently sitting at an impressive \$269.00.

Recognition was also lighter this year. Aside from Supervisor Romaine's letter and Brookhaven's proclamation, we also received letters-of-support from US Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand, her seventh, and NYS Senator Thomas D. Croci (3rd District), his fourth. Oddly, we should not have received a letter from Senator Croci. The New York State Senate invitation letter had gone to the offices of Senator John J. Flanagan (2nd District), who represents the area surrounding Diamond in the Pines. His office, apparently, forwarded the letter to Senator Croci's office because our office address is in the 3rd District. Although we did not reach out to officials in the hamlet of Coram, we did send our usual invitations to the appropriate representatives for the US House of Representatives and other state and county offices. Supervisor Romaine was our only visiting dignitary this year. As well as speaking to the relevancy of change during his address, he also spoke about how the new location is in the center of the island and is blessed not only with plentiful parking, but also with a gorgeous surrounding grove of Long Island pine trees.

The facilitator list was, basically, equal with last year's. This is true even with the last-minute withdrawal of Teresa White, Long Island T'ai Chi (Babylon), and the unavoidable miss of Spencer Gee, Spencer Gee Wellness Corporation (Roslyn Heights). For the latter, Spencer had transportation issues with the rerouting

of his flight returning home just before the event; however, he sent his associate, Maria DeAngelis Campanella, in his stead. As always, the content of the workshops and what the facilitators chose to present during the ever-popular group demonstration at the break reflected the breadth and depth of the arts.

A senior student of Sifu Tyrone “Wei” Wicksman at Silent Fist Tai Chi (Huntington Station), Elan Abneri joined us a seventh time. This year, his workshop was *The Basics of Rooting* and his contribution to the demonstration was the Zhang-Style T'ai Chi Form.

For her 13th year with us, Judith Budd-Walsh, Harmonious Movement (Port Jefferson Station), presented a workshop she titled *Tai Chi / Qigong Flow for Healthy Living*. She was, unfortunately, unable to be with us for the demonstration.

An associate of Water Tiger for nearly as long as we've been on Long Island, Joe Cronin joined us for the first time this year. Joe is based in Bethpage and teaches privately and publicly across the island. His workshop focused on his Nine Pearls Qigong set, Tibetan breathing, and some Tibetan Qigong. For his part in the demonstration, he played the first chapter of Master Yu Cheng Hsiang's Four-Chapter, Yang-Style Long Form.

Stepping into the slot held for Spencer Gee, Maria DeAngelis Campanella represented Spencer Gee Wellness Corporation (Roslyn Heights) with workshops focusing on exploring the Five Elements (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water) with exercise tools and on detailing aspects of the Yang-Style form. The Yang-Style Long Form was her choice for the demonstration.

Also with us for his 13th year, Bill Donnelly, who is based in Patchogue and teaches privately, workshoped the art of practicing within space constraints and presented a series of drills entered into through what is commonly known as the Yin / Yang Symbol, a.k.a., T'ai Chi Symbol or *Tai Chi Tu* (*Taiji tu*). For the demonstration, he played the Yang-Style Long Form.

Bob and Jean Klein, from Long Island School of T'ai-Chi-Ch'uan (Sound Beach), joined us for their 14th time. Due to popular demand, they deviated from their planned dual workshops and presented a two-part focus on internal aspects of Yang-Style form play, which was also reflected in their demonstration play of William C. C. Chen's T'ai Chi Ch'uan, 60-Movement, Yang-Style Short-Form (a variation of Cheng Man-Ching's 37 Postures).

The only one of our facilitators to participate in all our past events is, not surprisingly, our very own McElroy Laoshi. The event's new location and its abundant trees this year gave him an opportunity to present *Branching Out Your Energy Work: An Introduction to Arbor Qigong*. He also gave his first public performance of Water Tiger's Traditional Yang-Style Staff Form for his part in the demonstration.

Joseph Panico, who is based in West Babylon and teaches throughout Nassau County, returned for his fourth year. His workshop took people through the details of his lineage's Yang-Style 24-Posture Form and he presented the T'ai Chi Kung Fu Fan Form for the demonstration.

For the fifth consecutive year, Valerio Laoshi, who teaches privately and lives on Staten Island, joined us and, this year, he presented *Eight Trigram Qigong* for his workshop and played Water Tiger's Medium-Frame, Yang-Style 24-Posture Short Form for his part of the demonstration.

We all know that moving can generate all types of anxieties. With that knowledge comes the realization that most all of those anxieties are unnecessary, and even those that might be rooted in some level of justification are usually quickly relieved as we settle into our new home. Such seems to be the case here. To support our annual efforts as advocates for these arts we play, and, as hosts to an annual event that has been globally recognized for its successes, we needed a new home. And, we believe, we've found it.

We hope you'll visit again next year.



Supervisor Ed Romaine (L) presents this year's proclamation from the Town of Brookhaven to Laoshi Laurince McElroy, Local Event Coordinator and International Event Co-Creator, of Water Tiger School of T'ai Chi Ch'uan (Medford).

