

WORLD T'AI CHI & QIGONG DAY – PATCHOGUE 2007: THROUGH THE FOG

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Laoshi Laurince McElroy began checking extended forecasts over 10 days before the event. He says that the reason for this mindset was that this year is the first since the event's founding in Patchogue in 2001 that there has not been a "bad weather" location as a backup. According to Laoshi, "The weather kept looking better and better as the day grew closer and closer." The forecast remained positive even as rain fell through the day on Friday. Against the forecast, rain was falling in the early morning on the 28th. The continuing moisture plus an intense fog sitting over the usually scenic Patchogue Bay of Long Island's South Shore were probably contributing factors to lighter attendance this year. Last year saw records shattered with over 110 attendees. This year saw numbers closer to 75, but the morning still served as a wonderful connection to the concept of *One World ... One Breath*.



The NYS Assembly recognized the benefits of T'ai Chi & Qigong for the second time.

We were again successful in garnering recognition from several political figures. Assemblywomen Patricia Eddington, NYS Assembly 3rd District; the Honorable Steve Levy, Suffolk County Executive; the Honorable Jack Eddington, Suffolk County Legislation 7th District; and the Honorable Paul V. Pontieri, Jr., Village of Patchogue Mayor, all recognized the importance of this international event and secured a resolution from the Assembly, a letter-of-support from the County Executive Office, a proclamation from the NY Suffolk County Legislature, and a proclamation from the village, respectively.

Assemblywoman Eddington, Legislator Eddington, and William Hilton, Village of Patchogue Trustee and Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, were on hand for the presentation ceremony at 10:00 AM.

Ms. Eddington's 2007 resolution from the Assembly reiterates many of the same major points as the document from 2005. It touches upon a variety of the health benefits of T'ai Chi and Qigong, as well as recognizes the purpose of the event and its 7th anniversary in the Village of Patchogue.

The presentation ceremony continued with a bit of a family affair. Mr. Eddington, the Assemblywoman's husband, spoke to the crowd about setting a good example to the youth of the county through their active pursuit of wellness. Laoshi was happy to receive our fourth proclamation from NY Suffolk County Legislature.

Before handing over Mayor Pontieiri's fifth proclamation supporting the event, Commissioner Hilton talked about his annual feelings of enjoyment in helping Laoshi secure the necessary permissions and making sure the park is prepared for the forms to be played on the last Saturday of April every year.

This year's event included:

Bill Donnelly, Green Cloud Kung Fu of Holbrook, returned after an absence since 2003. He provided the people who joined him with a Walking T'ai Chi Set that is designed to assist the beginner through repetition and deepen the concentration of Qi for the experienced player.

For the sixth year, only one less than Laoshi, Spencer Gee, Spencer Gee Wellness Corporation of Old Westbury, returned to Patchogue with his T'ai Chi Workout. He weaved his simple yet strenuous workshop throughout the morning and filled most of the three hours with continuous movement. One participant shared that she really connected with Mr. Gee's step-by-step presentation. She said, "We were doing one

posture with lots of repetition, and he suddenly made a little change and we were doing something else.” She continued, “It really made sense how one movement transitioned into the next and was great way to spend a Saturday morning!”

Bob Klein of the Tai-Chi-Chuan School in Sound Beach has also been a consistent part of the annual event in the village and has been one of our facilitators for five of the seven years. This year his wife and fellow instructor, Jean Goulet, was able to share the front with him. Mr. Klein and Ms. Goulet led workshops on T'ai Chi as a martial art and on Age Reversal Qigong.

After missing last year, Sifu Tyrone “Wei” Wicksman of Seldon’s Zhang Style Tai Chi Chuan returned to the event. His time with participants included various aspects of the Zhang-Style form, Push Hands, and applications. Water Tiger student Michael Kandel says of his time in Sifu Wei’s workshop, “It was a little like stepping into a kung fu movie, but more real.” He tells us that the man with whom he was partnered was both strong and highly skilled and “when he grabbed me by the neck or twisted my hand, I thought, ‘What in the world am I supposed to do now?’”

Presenting for the first time, Sifu Michael Evans from Shaolin Kung Fu Studios in Medford was a delightful addition to the event. Sifu Mike, as he is known to his students, led people through the Golden Elixirs, an eight posture Qigong set. He tells us that the motions are the basis of many of today’s systems which teach the 18 Hands of the Lohan Qigong set, and are simple enough for the beginner yet contain enough energy work for those with more experience.

Laoshi’s workshop this year was slated to be on Opening and Closing. He admits that he was unsure if he’d have enough material to complete an hour long workshop on such a focused topic. At 50 minutes into his time at the front of the group, he realized he would not have any challenge filling the hour as he was still detailing Opening!

Aside from the various workshops, all six facilitators joined together to show the similarities and the differences in the variety that is T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Bill Donnelly played the 24-Posture Form from his lineage, Spencer Gee moved through various Yang-Style postures with Chan Si and Fa-Jing, Bob Klein and Jean Goulet played the Long Form from their lineage, Sifu Wei played a Zhang-Style Broad Sword form; Sifu Evans demonstrated a selection of the Golden Elixirs, and Laoshi played the 24-Posture Short Form from the Water Tiger lineage. According to our own Si-Goo Mui Francesca DeStefano, “It was almost overwhelming to watch these artists, each doing what they do, separately yet together. Had the scene been choreographed and shot for a feature film, it couldn't have been better than it was.”



A new feature at *World T'ai Chi & Qigong Day – Patchogue* was a facilitators' demonstration following the presentation ceremony.

Other schools were also represented although their head instructors had other obligations. Students of Steven Lee and Harmony Within, Inc. in Islip, and of Judith Budd-Walsh and Harmonious Movement in Port Jefferson Station were among the players in Shorefront. Mao Zhai stylist John Apperson, who is student of Gohou Chen from Corning, NY, also joined in the festivities.

Once again the event in Shorefront Park, in the Village of Patchogue, in the Town of Brookhaven, in the County of Suffolk, in the State of New York, in the USA, was met with great success.

