

WORLD T'AI CHI & QIGONG DAY – PATCHOGUE 2006: AT THE BAY

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Although some suggested we were over 200 people in attendance this year, the actual number was somewhere in the neighborhood of 110. Event assistants found it challenging to keep an accurate count with so many participants moving from workshop to workshop and the constant flow of people in and out of the event as the three hours unfolded at Shorefront Park. Regardless, our previous attendance record of 90 from 2005 was shattered.



**Suffolk County
recognized the benefits
of T'ai Chi & Qigong for
the third time.**

There was a chill in the air and a gust in the wind, but they did not drive the event indoors this year. The morning's activities played out with a full and gorgeous view of Patchogue Bay, the Great South Bay, and Fire Island. "You couldn't have asked for better weather" was the phrase heard over and over throughout the morning. We knew it was going to be a good morning when we arrived at 8:20 AM and saw a long-time friend of Water Tiger School, Elan Abneri, already at the park and playing the Long Form. He was a solo figure moving in stillness and framed by water and sky, and served as a precursor for what was about to unfold.

Political dignitaries were again on hand for proclamation presentations. The Honorable Jack Eddington, Suffolk County Legislation 7th District, presented us with our third proclamation from the NY Suffolk Country Legislature. In his speech, he shared his own experience with the martial arts, including T'ai Chi, and he recognized the importance of the arts in addressing the issue of stress and conflict in contemporary society. William Hilton, Village of Patchogue Trustee and Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, was also on hand to

present us with our fourth proclamation from the village. He spoke of the village's pleasure at supporting the event and its appreciation for the work Laoshi puts forth every year in coordinating the event.

This year's event included:

From the Five Animal Frolics (*Wu Qin Xi*), Laoshi helped participants get in touch with their inner Tigers through four of the five movements of the Tiger Frolics. "I thought The Tiger Twisting might be a little much for 9:00 AM on a Saturday morning," he tells us. So, the Tigers in Shorefront were Stretching, Walking, Pouncing, and Fighting. Laoshi also discussed the history of the Wu Dang approach to the Qigong set and demonstrated the walks of the other four animals, which are the Crane, the Monkey, the Bear, and the Deer.

Spencer Gee, Spencer Gee Wellness Corporation of Old Westbury, brought back his very popular T'ai Chi Workout. Taking advantage of the scheduling flexibility provided by being outdoors, he divided his time putting people through their T'ai Chi paces into two workshops over the three hours.

Returning after a year off, Bob Klein of the Tai-Chi-Chuan School in Sound Beach had to be tired at the end of the morning. Except for the few minutes he rested during the presentations, he worked participants through aspects of Yang-style T'ai Chi and Qigong Health Exercises for all three hours of the morning.

Although martial applications were interwoven throughout the morning in most all the other presentations, the Hand Trapping workshop by Sifu James Robinson, Running Fist Kung Fu of East Setauket, was the most martial – hands down! Sifu Robinson was our

only new facilitator this year, and we were very happy to welcome him to our event and hope he, and his many students, will return next year.

Phil White of Sea Cliff joined us again this year. Mr. White scheduled his own workshop so that he could participate in Spencer Gee's and also was the only facilitator that made sure to get a taste of as much of the different flavors available through the morning as he could. His own time at the front guided people through his original 12-posture, Yang-style T'ai Chi form.

Sifu Tyrone "Wei" Wicksman, Chang Style Tai Chi of Selden, was originally scheduled to facilitate a workshop on Chang-style. Unfortunately, Sifu "Wei" was called out of the country on personal business. Our thoughts were with him and others touched by the loss that called him from us. Also Dr. Ronald Rebhuhn, Westbury, sent his apologies and voiced his disappointment that he would not be able to attend and lead his workshop on Silk Reeling Exercises.

There were many other schools represented by the attendees. Sifu Kasey Cheung actually closed his dojo, Integrated Martial Arts Institute in Medford, so that he and his students could attend. His school is affiliated with Sifu Robinson's lineage. The comments of one of Sifu Cheung's students, Anisa Llorens brought a smile to the faces of several Water Tiger students. Ms. Llorens observed that she found the martial play done with Sifu Robinson easy and quite relaxing, but she found the slow movements of the Animal Frolics with Laoshi creating more stress than they eliminated!

Past facilitators, Steven Lee from Harmony Within, Inc., of Islip, and Judith Budd-Walsh from Harmonious Movement of Port Jefferson Station, were both unable to attend this year. Mr. Lee was out of town on personal business and Ms. Budd-Walsh was spending the weekend at a retreat with Kenneth Cohen, one of the leading Qigong teachers in America. Both, however, sent several of their students to participate. Quite a few of Dr. Rebhuhn's students from a program he leads in Huntington joined us as well.

As mentioned above, Elan Abneri was an active participant throughout the morning. Elan has facilitated at *T'ai Chi in the Park* and is currently a student under Sifu "Wei." He was obviously exhilarated as he played a type of Moving Push Hands exercise with John Apperson for most of the final hour, and even after the event ended. John is a student of Gohou Chen from Corning, NY, who was also in attendance and seemed quietly joyful to be a part of the event, but declined Laoshi's invitation to lead a workshop. Mr. Chen teaches Mao Zhai Style T'ai Chi. Wang Mao Zhai was a disciple of the founder of Northern Wu Style T'ai Chi, Wu Quan Yu.



***One World ... One Breath* was clearly demonstrated in the variety of T'ai Chi & Qigong played throughout the morning.**

The event also served as a launching for Water Tiger T'ai Chi's audio CD, *Oneness*. "I'm very happy that the second offering in our series of audio products launched in conjunction with our annual event in Patchogue," says Laoshi. "We've been fine tuning the initial recording since January," he continues, "and we couldn't have planned a better launch date."

We may not have broken the all the records from previous years, but 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, has once again truly served as a demonstration that it is, indeed, *One World ... One Breath*.

