

Phoenix T'ai Chi Centre 30th Anniversary Celebration



Phoenix T'ai Chi Centre, founded by Sifu Steve Holbert's instructor Sifu Gloria Jenner, held its anniversary celebration on the first Saturday evening of May this year at a Unitarian church in London. Peter Reist and I were fortunate to be in attendance, with Peter contributing a bagua demonstration to the program.

The occasion reminded me of our own club's Chinese New Year events, opening with a Lion Dance and providing an opportunity for club members past and present to catch up with one another. There was a buffet as well as several live music performances on guitar and one on harmonica. The Phoenix student body began by demonstrating the opening of the Yang 108, followed by a brief retrospective by Sifu Jenner on the club's history. Other demonstrations included Chen Man-Ching's 37 form, sword and sabre forms, and the same double-fan two-person form popularized in our club by Lisbeth Haddad.

I want to specially mention two presentations. One was 'Eight Ways to Move Chi' presented by June Ross. She invited the audience to stand and led us through an eight-step qigong form which she received from her instructor Judy Elliott. Many of its elements are familiar from our own practice, making it a nice 'party favour' to bring home to share with Cold Mountain:

- Arms at sides, shoulders back and palms facing forward
- Raise arms to the sides, up to about elbow level
- Bring hands together in 'Monkey Presents Fruit' at level of solar plexus
- Face palms together as if holding a ball, then move them apart to expand it
- Bring palms closer together to compress the ball
- Perform a small microcosmic orbit
- Push palms out in 'Pushing Mountains to Front' gesture at level of lower dantien
- Lower hands in 'Conclusion'
- Roll shoulders back and palms out to return to starting position

The other presentation I wanted to specially note was by Terry Lynn Clarkin on tai chi for diabetes. The Oneida Nation community just southwest of London has a serious diabetes problem, often poorly controlled and in younger people than would be seen elsewhere. Clarkin has been hosting classes at Banting House in London, the historic home of the discoverer of insulin, teaching a short medical tai chi and qigong form developed by an MD for diabetes management. Unfortunately we weren't able to stay for the entirety of her presentation, but it was an important reminder of unmet health needs in our region and of how tai chi clubs can be of service to the larger community.

Megan Hine has been a member of Cold Mountain Internal Arts since 2013, focusing on Yang style, and is responsible for the Cold Mountain archive and video library.