

Winners of 2011 Tai Chi Enthusiasts Choice Awards

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Frances Gander (center)

Charles Votaw

[2011 Health and Martial Arts Festival & Symposium](#), which was held on May 19-22 at the beautiful [Mensch Mill Conference Center](#) in Pennsylvania, was a great success. Eleven outstanding individuals and organizations were voted and selected among 50 nominees to receive this year's winners of the Enthusiasts' Choice Awards. The award ceremony was held at the festival's banquet. The award winners were presented with a unique sculpture designed by [David Chen](#).



Charles Votaw

According to C J Rhoads, Managing Director of [Taijiquan Enthusiasts Organization](#), the recipients of the awards are individuals who further the effort toward high quality skills, who improve health and wellness practices in the community, who consistently demonstrate habits and lessons of longevity, who go the extra mile, who put forth the extra effort, and who demonstrate superior ethics. Nominations for the awards were chosen in the fall 2010, and all the members of the organization then voted online on the winners for each category. After reviewing the votes, the awards committee selected the winner for each category and this year's winners are:

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Fitness Center/School of the Year
[Academic Training Traditions](#) - Paul Cote of New Market, MD**

Academic Training Traditions is a public service organization specializing in holistic integrative education in [martial arts](#) and mind-body connections to the life sciences. This includes specially designed programs, workshops, and lectures that draw on principles and methods from [Tai Chi Chuan](#), [Qigong](#), and yoga. Over the years, Paul Cote, PhD, Director of Academic Training Traditions, has provided an introduction to mind-body practices for novices of all ages and special needs groups, and he has conducted and coordinated numerous seminars and study groups for veteran martial artists and

mind-body practitioners. In the life sciences, Paul earned his master's degree in physiology in 1977, and his doctoral degree in biological sciences in 1986, with specialization in immunology and infectious diseases. He has extensive work experience as a research scientist and university professor, both of which carry through in his extramural public service contributions via Academic Training Traditions.

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Grand Instructor of the Year
T. Julian Chu of Great Falls, VA**

Mr. Julian Chu has been teaching Yang-style Tai Chi Chuan and weapons for about 30 years in Tennessee and the metropolitan area of Washington, D.C. His current classes in Maryland and Virginia include [Cheng Man-Ching's](#) style Tai Chi, Yang-style Tai Chi sword, Yang-style Tai Chi saber, Yang-style Tai Chi spear/long-staff, and push hands. He has been co-sponsoring the quarterly greater Washington, D.C. area push-hand events over 15 years. He is a senior student of Mr. Benjamin Lo and has published a number of articles in Taiwan Tai Chi Chuan Magazines.

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Instructor of the Year
[Karen Schlachter](#) of Atco, NJ**

Karen exemplifies an amazing talent to bring her students to a higher level of excellence and professionalism in a short period of time but with the realization that our passion will last a lifetime from her instruction. Sifu Karen Schlachter is a [Master Instructor at Pine Wind Zen Community](#). She has been involved in the martial arts for 51 years. She holds the equivalent of five black belts and is a member of eight halls of fame nationwide. She was rated the #1 Senior Woman in the country in Forms and Sparring by the Professional Karate Union and has held that distinction for 3 years. Although Sifu Karen has competed quite successfully on the national circuit, her interests lie in teaching the benefits of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong for healing and spiritual growth.

“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Health Provider of the Year Frances Gander of Athens, OH

In 1977, Frances Gander started her study of Tai Chi Chuan beginning with Waysun Liao in Oak Park, IL, to strengthen her body after an old back injury. Later she also studied Cheng Man Ching's Yang-style Tai Chi Chuan as well as other Tai Chi style and forms. In 1990, she enrolled in the [Traditional Acupuncture Institute](#) in Maryland (now TAI Sophia). Following graduation with her master's of acupuncture degree, she entered TAI's Chinese herbal medicine program taught by Ted Kaptchuk, OMD. Frances relocated her practice to Athens in southeastern Ohio in 2004. In 2005 she studied at the Chengdu University of TCM. In 2010, she returned to China on silent retreat at a monastery in Hunan province. During this time, her study and meditation brought home the Confucian ethics of living an authentic life and the value of xiao (family reverence) in daily life. Frances has been teaching Tai Chi and Qigong classes and workshops since 1990. She is Editor and Publisher of the [Journal of Martial Arts & Healing](#).

“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Integrative Health Scholar Kevin Chen of Baltimore, MD

Dr. Chen has had extensive experience in designing and implementing various research projects, including clinical trials and longitudinal survey studies with advanced statistics. He has been a principal investigator in a NIH-funded survey research on substance abuse, and clinical trial or behavior therapy development study of applying meditative therapy for addiction treatment. He has worked as a biostatistician or co-investigator in a number of federally-funded research projects and has served as a mentor in a number of career development awards for new faculty in medical school. He is currently the director of Data Management and Statistical Analysis core in two NIH-funded center grants (P01 and U19) at University of Maryland School of Medicine. Dr. Chen is also involved in designing and directing a series of clinical trials to investigate the effectiveness of the complementary and alternative therapies for treatment of addiction, arthritis and other health conditions. Most of his career has been related to research methodology on sub-stance abuse and mental health. To promote the science of nurturing

life, he first created [Qi Dao eNewsletter](#), which has expanded now to [Yang Sheng](#), an online magazine and network.

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Health
Researcher/Practitioner of the Year
[Ross Chafetz of Cherry Hill, NJ](#)**

Dr. Chafetz is a research assistant at Shriners' Hospital and has contributed much to the use of Tai Chi in physical therapy. He is co-author of [PEDS](#) pocket guide, a practical evidence-based guide needed to assess, diagnose, treat or refer pediatric patients effectively in any care setting.

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Health Researcher of the
Year
[Penelope Klein of Buffalo, NY](#)**

Dr. Klein has done extensive research on the clinical applications of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong and has been published in major medical journals. She has identified the benefits of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong for individuals with Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, disease, and cardiopulmonary therapies. Her instructional manuals based upon Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong are distributed in all long-term care facilities in New York State as part of a fall prevention program. She was also generous in her time and effort as part of the academic team for the one-of-a-kind International Tai Chi Symposium held at Vanderbilt University in 2008, which brought together the top practitioners with the top researchers in the field of Tai Chi and other integrative health practices.

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Tai Chi Event Promoter of
the Year
[Joanne Chang of Rockville, MD](#)**

Carrying on with the work her husband started, Joanne has struggled to keep the Tai Chi community active and united by hosting workshops and events and maintaining the Tai Chi event bulletin that goes out to nearly 900 enthusiasts. She has worked to bring Chen-style, Wu-style and Yang-style groups closer together so that the best of Tai Chi can be preserved.

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Tai Chi Enthusiast of the Year: Technology
Steve Arbitman of Roslyn, PA**

Steve Arbitman has been studying Tai Chi and Kung Fu since 1968, learning Yang and Chen styles. He has learned saber, staff, and other unarmed forms of Kung Fu. At first a student of Dr. Fred Wu of Columbus, OH for the last 11 years, he has studied under Laoshi John Chen of the [Ba'z Tai Chi and Kung Fu Studio](#), where he has achieved his black belt rank. In 2002, he won a Silver Medal in Men's Advanced Yang Style Form at a regional competition in Baltimore. He has been teaching Tai Chi to students of all ages for the last seven years.

**“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards - Tai Chi Enthusiast of the Year: Well Traveled
[Lee Scheele](#) of Costa Mesa, CA**

Lee Scheele is a student of T'ai Chi Ch'uan for more than 30 years. His principle teachers have been Ben Lo in Chen Man-Ch'ing Style and Tony Ho in Wu Style Square Form, and he has had workshop exposure to many other top teachers over the years. In the past, Lee has competed in a number of push hands tournaments with superheavyweight victories both nationally and internationally. Mr. Scheele also maintains a [blog site](#) for Tai Chi.

“ 2011 Enthusiasts Choice Awards: Best Workshop 2009 Festival *John Loupos of Cohasset, MA*

John Loupos, M.S., C.H.S.E. has been teaching martial arts since 1968. His martial arts background includes Okinawan Karate, several styles of Chinese Kung Fu, Tai Chi Chuan, Liu He Ba Fa, Bagua, Hsing-I, Qigong, and more. John also has a background in classical homeopathy and is a certified Hanna Somatic educator. He serves on the board of directors for the [Association for Hanna Somatic Education](#) and is the founder of [Jade Forest Kung Fu/ Tai Chi](#) in Cohasset, MA, where he also maintains his Pain and Mobility Clinic. John has published several books on Tai Chi and assorted other learning media. His latest book, “[The Sustainable You - Somatics and the Myth of Aging](#),” has just become available.

CJ Rhoads also shared a sad news that David Elston-Phillips, the Festival Director, was taken to the hospital in an ambulance and died just hours before the awards ceremony - missing the event which he spent the last few years of his life promoting.

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SUGGESTED LINKS

- **Act Quickly on the Health and Martial Arts Festival & Symposium**
- **Mark your calendar for the Tai Chi Gala & Bagua Circle**
- **Don't miss 2011 Tiger Claw Kungfu Magazine Championship**



Violet Li
Tai Chi Examiner