

Tai Chi instructor lets intuition guide her path



R. Ashley Smith Emerald

Strawberry Gatts recently led her students in a Tai Chi Chuan exercise on the lawn outside of Gerlinger Hall.

■ Strawberry Gatts uses lessons from her life to bring meaning to her practice

By John Burkart
for the Emerald

In the heat of the day, Strawberry Gatts meets her students on the green lawn near the University cemetery. It's a quiet afternoon and the grass is hot under the students' feet. Gatts greets her students, then begins her healing art. Gatts, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Exercise and Movement Science, teaches classic Tai Chi Chuan, an ancient martial and healing art that uses flowing, circular motion to combine a series of postures. As part of her research, Gatts looks for ways to use Tai Chi to help people overcome mobility problems.

"Strawberry is an expert instructor in Tai Chi. She comes at motor control from a different angle and it's interesting to have her perspective," said Dr. Paul Van Donkelaar, a professor at the University motor control lab. Many students in Gatts' physical education classes enjoy her style of teaching.

"Strawberry really impresses the importance of Tai Chi for personal health and development," said Jessica Butler, who is taking her third class with Gatts.

Bryan Kolaczowski, who is taking his fifth class in Tai Chi, also spoke positively about Gatts.

"The class is great. If you are attentive and willing to practice outside of class, it can be a great experience," he said. Gatts' students said they also benefited from her varied experiences and world travels.

In her early twenties, Gatts spent six years in New York City experiencing life as a "starving artist." There she met Andy Warhol and attended his parties. She heard bands like The Velvet Underground, where the admission price included two glasses of wine and a spaghetti dinner.

Gatts designed stage clothes for jazz saxophonist Julian "Cannonball" Adderley and his band, establishing a reputation as a designer. She then took her skills to Los Angeles, where she stayed with jazz musician Herbie Hancock at

his house in Beverly Hills. Through Hancock, she met jazz/fusion pioneer Wayne Shorter and British rock star David Bowie.

Gatts said she has always relied on intuition to guide her decisions. One evening in 1969, she attended the opening night of "Easy Rider" with some of her friends. Near the end of the film she got an inexplicable case of goosebumps when she saw Bobby Walker practicing Tai Chi on the screen.

The incident didn't make sense until 14 years later, when she met Walker's teacher, Dr. Marshall Ho'o. Working with him inspired

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Dr. Paul Van Donkelaar
professor,
motor control

her to study Tai Chi herself. Gatts entered into a discipleship in 1985 and studied with Ho'o until his death in 1993. During this time, Gatts began to fuse aspects of her previous experiences. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of California-Riverside and a master's degree in public administration at California State University.

After being accepted into the doctoral program in the Department of Exercise and Movement Science (EMS) in 1998, Gatts began teaching introductory Tai Chi classes. She also fell in love with the city of Eugene.

"If I think of myself as Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz on the yellow brick road of life," she said. "Eugene is home. It feels like a very special place."

Upon receiving her doctorate, Gatts hopes to write a book and produce educational videos highlighting the key elements that make Tai Chi an exceptional martial and healing art. Until then, she intends to continue teaching Tai Chi I at the University.



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If you answered "yes" to any of these questions you need to find out more about the September Experience Program. Through the September Experience Program, resident and nonresident students can take a morning course coupled with an afternoon workshop* for the low price of \$550. That's a total of up to 5 credits in nine days for just \$550! The University of Oregon's September Experience Program has the courses you need, the courses you want, and the courses you ought to be in. Courses offered are listed below:

Course No.	Course Title	Instructor	Credits	CRN	Grading Option	Time	Room
ASTR 121	The Solar System	Zimmerman	4	43314	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	30 Pacific
ANTH 170	Introduction to Human Origins	Nelson	4	43312	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	104 Condon
ANTH 314	Women and Culture I	Halberg	4	43313	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	360 Condon
CHEM 199	Math Skills for Science	Svanevik	4	43315	P/NP	8:00-11:50	102 Deady
GEOG 206	Geography of Oregon	Baldwin	4	43316	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	106 Condon
MATH 95	Intermediate Algebra	TBA	4	43317	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	122 Esslinger
PS 207	Intro. Contemp. Political Theory	Wahlstrom	4	43318	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	122 Grayson
SOC 301	American Society	Hunt	4	43319	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	123 Grayson
WR 49	Developmental Composition	Mariner	3	43320	Graded or P/NP	8:00-11:50	184 PLC
EDLD 408	Leadership	DeGidio	1	43324	P/NP	13:30-14:20	203 Chapman
CPSY 199	College and Career Success	Wilsey	1	43322	P/NP	13:30-14:20	104 Condon
SAPP 199	Drinking Decisions	Mace	1-2	43323	P/NP	13:30-14:20	197 Esslinger
WR 199	Reading, Writing, Using the WWW	Cusack	1-2	43325	P/NP	13:30-14:20	184 PLC

*Enrollment in the afternoon workshops is optional

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Calendar

Wednesday, May 30

Wellness Consortium University Walkabout 2001: In recognition of Oregon Fitness Day, faculty and staff will join the Oregon Duck mascot and President Dave Frohnmayer to walk a campus circuit. There will be a drawing at 1:15 p.m. for various prizes, including a one-year membership to the Student Recreation Center. Participants will receive free coupons good at several campus eateries for participants. Noon-1 p.m. EMU Amphitheater. Free. For information, call 346-2962.

Center for the Study of Women in Society Wednesdays at Noon: Kristina Tiedje, Anthropology graduate student, discusses "Ethnicity and Gender in the Sacred Space of Nahua Ritual Healing, Mexico." Noon-1 p.m. 330 Hendricks. Free. For information, call 346-5015.

Caregiver Support Group: Confiden-

tial and educational support for University community members who are caring for loved ones with any form of senile dementia, facilitated by the Alzheimer's Association Cascade/Coast Chapter. Special guest is Dr. Donald England, Oregon Research Group medical director and expert on senior health. No registration required; new members always welcome. Noon-1 p.m. Rogue Room, EMU. Free. For information, call 346-2962.

Russian Film Series: "Little Vera," about a 17-year-old girl's dramatic relationship with her husband and her father, in Russian with English subtitles. 6:30-8:30 p.m. 115 Pacific. Free. For information, call 346-5051.

University Ensemble Concert: The Campus Band and Campus Orchestra perform. 8 p.m. Beall Concert Hall, 961 E. 18th Ave. Free. For information, call 346-5678.