

## 5 Minutes with... Marilyn Rooper

Rooper, a Cannon Beach resident since 1971, is a tai chi instructor. (This interview has been edited for length and clarity.)



Marilyn Rooper

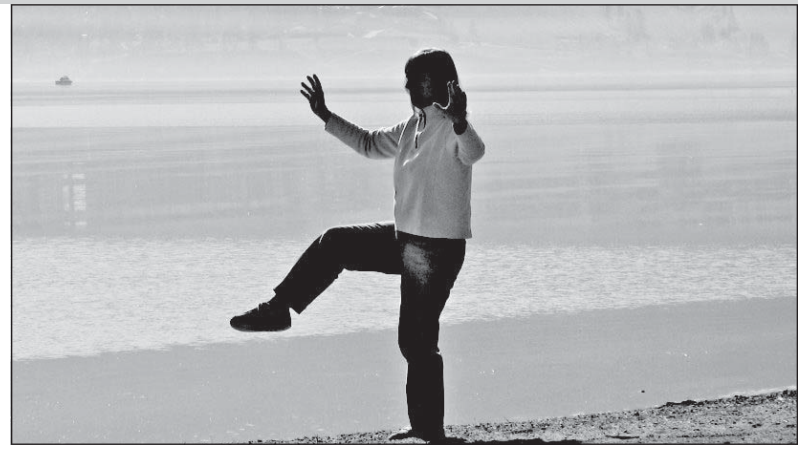


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**Q:** How did you become involved in tai chi, and where, and why?

**A:** Actually, I got involved in it down here because one of my friends, Beth Holland, had taken the class from (Gregory Fong). There are five different styles/types of tai chi. Beth was teaching me one of them — the Wu form (or “Wu-style”) — so I learned that and did it.

And then, one time, she came to me and said, “You’ve got to know this ... Gregory is coming down (to the North Coast).” And so I was just ecstatic ...

I signed up for Greg’s class, and I followed him all over the place (Gearhart, Seaside, Cannon Beach, etc.). We were doing tai chi, believe it or not, in the Whale Park ... And then we went to Nehalem ... and then we went to Manzanita, on the beach, when the weather was correct and we could do it. And from the beach, we went to Gregory’s house in Nehalem ...

And I just followed him because he was such a good teacher, and I was so interested in tai chi. And then finally, one day, there was just me in the class, which was wonderful, to have one-on-one. But then I felt sor-

ry for him because he had a class going on in Portland. And so I said, “Greg ... why don’t I come to Portland, because you have a class up there; you come here, and you have (only) me.” And he said, “That sounds great,” of course.

So then I started going to Portland once a week and taking classes up there. And so (I’d) drive up for an hour and a half, and take an hour-and-a-half(-long) class, and (take) an hour and a half to drive back. It was very intense, but it was wonderful. I absolutely loved it.”

**Q:** Did you have a preexisting interest in tai chi before you got involved in it?

**A:** No, but I’ve always been very interested in Asian cultures, and tai chi is Chinese.

I also am a calligrapher, so that helps a little bit with understanding (tai chi) ... with the movements and the circular form of your letters ... A lot of practitioners of tai chi (do) beautiful calligraphy, too.

Unfortunately, my teacher just passed away at a very young age, and it’s going to be really hard

to find someone to replace him. I guess you really can’t replace him.

**Q:** How did you start teaching tai chi? (In the 1970s, Fong suggested to Rooper that she start teaching the classes he no longer had time to teach, but a few years passed before she acted on his suggestion.)

**A:** One time, I gave him a ride back to his class in Portland, because I was going to go and take the class from him, and he said, “When are you going to start teaching?” And I said, “Gregory, I don’t know everything,” and I said, “I feel awkward.” And he said, “You think I know everything? Why do you think I learn all the time from different teachers? Why do I go to Hong Kong? Why do I go to Hawaii?”

He traveled around because his goal, as a teacher, was to get some of the best teachers available so he could study with them and learn more, and then he would

**Marilyn Rooper does Tai Chi.**

give it to us. It was like a gift, all the time — he came in and always had new things going for him.

So, after he said that, I thought, “Well, I’d better go ahead and wade in.” And I did, and started teaching, and I’ve been teaching ever since.

**Q:** What is it about tai chi as a practice that keeps you interested?

**A:** It’s an incredible practice. It’s called “meditation in motion.” It has 108 different moves with my form, the long-form (of) the Yang-style, and some of the moves have four or five moves within them.

Tai chi is incredible for your mind — the mental, the physical, the spiritual. Each tai chi movement is at least one martial arts movement, so you do something in tai chi and it can be three different martial arts movements ...

But I don’t teach it for the martial arts ... It’s a Chinese exercise; I teach it more for that ...

It’s good for older people to take because (tai chi) really helps things like balance.

**Q:** How do you usually feel when it’s over?

**A:** Oh wow, I feel wonderful ... “Chi” means energy, and, when you do the form, you develop a lot of energy. I can drive into Portland, go to class for an hour and a half. When I get back in my car, I’m just wide awake. I have so much energy. I feel safer on the highway ...

Every time that I’ve really been doing tai chi and get through (the form), I always feel an uplift of energy, so that’s what tai chi is supposed to do, too.

**Q:** What are some of the biggest misconceptions about tai chi?

**A:** I think one of the biggest ones probably is, “Oh, this is going to be easy. Piece of cake.” (Laughs.)

## Indie Author & Book Fair slated May 9

The first ever Cannon Beach Local Indie Author & Book Fair will take place 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, May 9 at Jupiter’s Books, 244 N. Spruce, Cannon Beach.

All twenty participating, independently-published authors are local to the Pacific Northwest and many live on the North Coast. A few have new works they will be signing at the event, which organizers hope will become an annual affair.

Authors include David

Robinson and Gregory E. Zschomler from Cannon Beach; Jeva Singh-Anand from Seaside; Chip MacGregor and Holly Lorintez from Manzanita; Melissa Ousley from Warrenton; Paula Judith Johnson from Hammond; Tricia Gates Brown and Travis Champ from Nehalem; Julius Jortner from Pacific City; Jan Bono from Long Beach; Thomas Gondolfi from Yelm, Wash.; Andy R. Bunch and April Bullard from Vancouver, Wash.; Traci Leigh Taylor from

Gaston; Montgomery Mahaffey, Jessica Cox and Rita Traut Kabeto from Portland; Maquel A. Jacob from Beaverton; and Donald McEwing from Tigard. In addition, Matt Love of Astoria will have his books available.

The event is sponsored by Jupiter’s Books and the Read Local Indie movement, a cooperative between indie bookstores and the indie authors around them. For more information email gregory.zschomler@gmail.com.

## Chamber board looking to fill up to 3 vacancies soon

The terms of three Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors members will expire in June, and the board’s Nominating Committee is now accepting applications to fill the upcoming vacancies.

Some of the candidate criteria are:

- Must be a member of the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce in good standing

- Period of service is 3 years

- Must attend at least 75 percent of board meetings (nine per year, out of 12 total)

- Can be eligible for two consecutive terms of three years maximum

- Election to be held after Nominating Committee of President, Vice President, and Past President review applications and submit

them to the membership for vote within 10 days after nominations are closed

- Announcement of election results will be declared at the Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting in June

For applications, please contact Executive Director Courtland Carrier at 503-436-2623 (phone), 503-436-0910 (fax) or CourtC@cannonbeach.org.

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