

Cornelia Gruber & group: Fan Form



Tai Chi TCHO is organised by Cornelia Gruber- Belgeri who was helped by 25 volunteers this year. High in the Swiss mountains Cornelia starts to plan her meetings almost as soon as one ends, thus she ensures attention is paid to detail which leaves the visitor both surprised and delighted at the welcome they receive. Nothing I suspect is left to chance, yet the team seem to calmly glide through the weekend with charm and smiles, working seamlessly behind the scenes to bring about a truly unique experience. This bi annual meeting is now well established and certainly a 'jewel in the crown' of my Tai chi calendar.

The cost of all of the seminars and meals is inclusive and there are 60 free sleeping places for those who are happy to share a dojo! Hot water and showers are always available for those who take up this option. Plus there is the added bonus of getting to meet fellow Tai Chi players, share experiences and forms. I am always impressed at how many martial art dojos there are in the area my personal preference is for Cornelia's although Vietnam is also very attractive! (and less crowded this year I heard).

This year a group of ten Tai Chi students brought together by our teacher Richard Odell travelled to Switzerland to take part. This is a collective account of our impressions. Sadly Richard was called from the airport departure lounge because of a family illness leaving us all to fend for ourselves! One of the best things Tai Chi has brought me apart from the personal health benefits and general philosophy is the privilege of being part of such a group. Groups by their very nature contain both Yin and Yang and have the capacity for opposites. Fortunately our group always seems to find the positive even in adversity and it's always a magical time when away with them.

Being a well respected and charismatic figure on the European Tai Chi scene Cornelia invites some of the most experienced and inspirational teachers who willingly join together to provide a series of interesting, informative workshops. This year was no exception and a suitably impressive programme was presented. The teachers this year were: Nathan Managed USA, Nils Klug D, Ronnie Robinson UK, Epi Van de Pol N, Fernando Chedel ES, Le-My Lac F, Jean-Luc Perot B, Luigi Zanini I, Franco

Mescola I, Helmut Oberlack D, Jean-Pierre Schorpp CH, Almut Schmitz D, Thierry Huguet F, Susanne Lohrer Rovero CH, Cate Wallis CH, Jug Chamoud CH, Nicole Henriod CH, Josue Haefliger CH, Mireille Reichenbach CH.

On the Friday evening we were treated to a warm welcome from Natalie (any questions, she's the woman) followed by the first of our specially prepared meals, homemade pumpkin soup. Cornelia also employs a chef who provides vegetarian and mostly locally sourced organic meals from the Friday evening arrival through to the Sunday lunch. As each year the tables were laid complimented with beautiful hand made decorations. There was a huge basket heaped with apples closeby which we, along with others helped diminish over the weekend. And then there were the little swiss chocolates individually wrapped tempting us to linger at Natalies table longer than absolutely necessary!

Following our meal there was the debut of Sifu The board game. Each group was made up of 6 players and was aided by a member from the local game club. Sifu created by Cornelia, with art work done

Luigi Zanini: Bagua



Antonio Pugliese & Pierluigi Reveanne: Applications



Helmut & Tamara: Qigong



Group Demo: Tai Chi Hand Form



Group Demo: Tai Chi Hand Form

by her Artist husband Milton Gruber, arose from another of her passions her game club. Many of us were immediately introduced to other schools of Tai Chi and related theory whilst grappling with learning the rules of what appeared to be a well thought and constructed game. However in true tai chi spirit several of us found the balance of early morning travel, fine food and wine, and company affected our ability to develop the strategies to play competitively!

There was a full program of workshops over the next two days starting with a choice of early morning exercises or Qigong in the park, early Saturday morning. Workshops continued throughout the day in the main hall and the local dojos, with a break for lunch and a time to catch up with everyone and exchange experiences. Having chosen different workshops there was plenty to discuss, however, we all felt our chosen workshops were interesting and

informative giving an insight into other forms and styles of teaching, certainly giving us all food for thought! Saturday evening proved to be another highlight of the weekend. We were treated to demonstrations on stage by several of the teachers of forms and partner exercises. Cornelia and several of her students demonstrated the Dragon fan form and its applications in a sequence which was visibly stunning. Another delicious meal followed before it was time to get ready to dance the night away – and did we!

On Sunday morning a few of our group made the early morning sessions, with the rest of us opting for the workshops starting a little later, and again there was an impressive line up to choose from. As tradition demands 150 + people joined together in the central park to show case the various tai chi forms for the local people of the town on Sunday before returning for lunch! The press and television were there to report the event.

After lunch it was time to sample the final workshops or free pushing hands in the big hall.

It was then time for Tai Chi TCHO 2009 to draw to a close. Thanks were offered to Cornelia's helpers who had worked tirelessly throughout the weekend to ensure we all had an enjoyable time, the teachers for coming from far and wide to inspire and share their knowledge with us, and of course, Cornelia without whom this brilliant event would not happen.

And then it was time for the finale – Cornelia had us all following her round the big hall in a circle dance. With just enough time for tea and homemade cakes before it was time to say our goodbyes to friends old and new – until the next time.