



# Our Calling Is To Prevent Falling.

SPRING EDITION 2021

## MY COVID-19 STORY

By Irene Stillwell

We didn't really become aware of the pandemic until after the 2020 Arizona Senior Olympic Games were over. On March 12 we closed the office except for three days a week. We cleaned the office well and myself and volunteer Roxie Allen faithfully wore our masks and disinfected everything we touched each day. I was able to get an appointment for getting the vaccine on January 19th. Unfortunately, I came down with Covid 19 on January 13th and began an unexpected journey.

Because of my age and my health history I was determined to get through it at home. My son had a good friend - Dr. Joseph Varon, who is the Chief of Staff at the United Memorial Medical Center in Houston. He is a specialist in both pulmonology and critical care and was working 7 days a week, 12 hours per day, spending many nights at the hospital, but he took the time to give Tom instructions regarding a protocol that he and his colleagues were using with great success for COVID-19 patients. I began the protocol immediately. We had heard about the Monoclonal Infusion of Antibodies

(the same as given to the former President) and were surprised that Tom's next door neighbor was in charge of a study here in Phoenix.

On January 20th I spent 6 hours getting the infusion of antibodies. All this was done to try to keep me out of the hospital and at home continuing the protocol. To say I have been blessed would be an understatement.

I am 84 years old and have a history of numerous "co-morbidities", but my family and their very kind friends all took action to keep me at home. At the beginning I was very sick and wasn't at all sure that I would win in my battle with the bug, but I am well now with mostly just fatigue, insomnia and the miscellaneous "zinger" pains that come with the territory. I have been working from home in February and as soon as I get a negative COVID test I will be able to schedule time at the office. I look forward to my vaccination in mid-May (I have to wait because of the infusion of antibodies).

For those of you who may doubt the validity of this virus and don't take it seriously, please believe someone who's past includes 11



Irene Stillwell  
AFPC Vice President

surgeries (including cancer and brain surgery), COVID is real and serious. I have been blessed with family and friends to whom I will always be grateful and I will continue to wear my mask, wash my hands and keep my distance to protect others.

### 2021 Meeting Dates

May 20

July 15

September 16

November 18

# Community Member Spotlight

## Tai Chi in the Time of Covid-19

Submitted by Corey Cooper



What a time to be alive! Look back 12 months and ask yourself, "Could I have envisioned anything like the tumultuous year we've all just survived?" I don't have to recount the cultural, political, environmental, & health roller coaster of 2020 and now 2021; you know. It's been different for everyone, but also global in effect.

This isn't about all that though, it's about Tai chi. Like many things, just when we needed it most, our tai chi classes were taken from us. We know it's for the greater good, but that doesn't change the fact that it feels like going from bad to worse. Don't worry y'all, this isn't a gloomy piece to wail about the woes of corona virus. This is a reminder that you can use the magic of Tai chi to help your tai chi.

So, there we all were last winter, living our life when we first heard about some virus that was creating a lot of hubbub. I was teaching a couple of tai chi classes per week and preparing to assist with a new tai chi study in partnership with the local university and medical center; life was good. Suddenly, everything stopped. Emergencies were declared, offices closed and tragically, all tai chi classes were

cancelled indefinitely. Now what? Zoom and other online webinar/meetings rooms became all the rage. Everything we had been doing was now being done virtually, online. This would've been a real option had I had the forethought to gather the contact information for my students. I didn't, so inviting my students to a zoom tai chi class was not an option.

So, what are our options? Even if we did a zoom class, virtual is not the same! I love the social component of tai chi. We laugh together, catch up on life and give free hugs (physical contact! Gasp!) It's never going to be the same. Ok, so I had a little pity party. It is what it is; familiar with that phrase? Well, there are some things we cannot change; such as pandemics and emergency proclamations.

However, we have control over our attitude and how we handle situations. We can choose to make the best of each situation, lemonade from lemons. How does this apply to tai chi? You may not be able to participate in class the way you could one year ago, but you can continue to grow as a tai chi player.

Anyone who's experienced tai chi for more than 5 minutes can tell you that it's way more than just the flowing forms you see. There's the internal quest for peace, meditation or however you prefer to label it. There's the nuanced technique that only an experienced tai chi player is familiar with, balanced weight distribution, riding the skinny horse

or low center of gravity squatted stance, deep belly breathing, slow meticulous heel to toe steps, etc.. In a word, practice, this is and always has been the greatest tool for developing your tai chi. I get it; you want to practice, but your class has been cancelled or your high-risk status prevents you from enjoying a class. We may want our traditional class, but the world gave us lemons. That leaves us with the choice; stay home and wither away or find a new way to practice. Most of us have access to the internet and a smartphone. These two tools alone give us decent options for practice. The internet provides countless options for tai chi classes. There are some paid subscriptions, such as Dr. Lam's, and there are countless free videos on services such as YouTube. With a bit of sleuthing, you may even find a local instructor that streams live classes for some instant feedback and social connection. If you don't have access to high speed internet, but do have a smart phone, there are still options. You know some tai chi and you know you have a lot to work on. Set up your phone to video yourself practicing at home.

Focus on one thing. Video your forms and then play back. For instance, if you move too fast through the forms (I always do! Lol) practice and focus on that one

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# Committee Update

## Policy & Advocacy Committee

Steve Wagner- Committee Chair

The 911 Task Force was created as a result of the AGO Health & Safety Committee's collaboration with joint Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Fire Chiefs. Through such partnerships, the RightCare Foundation spearheaded two bills (HB2627 and SB1373) in this legislative session that addressed falls and its socioeconomic impact. HB2627 was a virtual mirror of SB1373 and did not receive a hearing. SB1373, titled "health facilities; duty of care," passed the Senate with bipartisan support 25-5 and will be heard in the House Health and Human Services Committee on March 22nd. The proposed bill establishes "an affirmative duty of care for specified health care institutions and their employees, agents and assignees". It will essentially require professional caregivers to deliver life-saving CPR and First Aid in accordance with individual advance directives to older Arizonans during the course of their care. Of note, the current statute only requires training and certification for professional caregivers. As a result some care facilities and caregivers do not provide CPR and First Aid prior to EMS' arrival. This bill is the result of an initiative through the Attorney General's Health and Safety Committee, RightCare Foundation and years of stakeholder engagement and 3 legislative sessions. SB1373 evolved from the HB2260 in the 2020 Arizona Legislative session. -by: Steve Wagner, Chairperson, AFPC Policy & Advocacy Committee

If you are interested in joining the Policy & Advocacy committee and making a change to current legislature please e-mail Steve at [swagner@rightcare.org](mailto:swagner@rightcare.org)

### Tai chi Continued from page 2

thing until you see improvement. It doesn't matter; it could be speed, stance, balance, breathing, etc... Even focusing on one facet of your game will strengthen you as a whole. You may seek that perfect hand form of slightly cupped, relaxed outward facing palm, but you'll also be building strength, releasing tension, clearing your mind, etc... It is a quest for perfection that you will never attain, so be patient.

The choice is yours. You can follow the path of least resistance and stop working your tai chi until it's convenient to restart, if ever. You can find other, non-tai chi, classes or mediums for fitness. This is never a bad idea; diversify your fitness, even if it's just walking your



neighborhood and saying hello to neighbors at a distance.

Or lastly, you can acknowledge that you love tai chi. It provides the most comprehensive (mind, body & spirit) rehabilitation/pre-habilitation program for the least cost. It's the most bang for your buck and while you may find other options, where can you find another program that's as perfectly suited for seniors and those with limited mobility?

So, don't give up, buckle down. Change is hard, but inevitable. Tai chi has been around for hundreds of years for a reason. We will get back to traditional classes, but until we do, focus on what you have control over and make gains where you can. Keep calm and tai chi on!

# Please consider joining one of our committees to help advocate for fall prevention in our communities and state!

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## Policy & Advocacy Committee

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## Strategic Grants & Funding Committee

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We want to know what you are doing to promote and prevent falls in your community! Do you have a program or event that you want to share with our members? E-mail Lianner@cox.net to submit your article. Please keep your article submission to 400 words.



If you are interested in being a part of our editorial team please reach out to Lianner@cox.net

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