

## Meet the oldest non-profit Tai Chi organization! (Photos)

February 7, 2013

4:18 PM MST



View all  
12 photos

Group practice at the St. Louis Tai Chi Ch'uan Association

*Violet Li*

When I woke up Sunday morning, there was five inches of snow on my deck. My car almost skidded on my way to Webster Groves, MO. It took me a while to find a parking spot by the elegant [Monday Club](#) building, situated at the corner of South Maple Avenue and East Cedar Avenue.



*Webster-Kirkwood Times*

Established in 1887, the Monday Club is a philanthropic organization dedicated to continuing education, serving the community and developing talents through arts and literature. Its building was designated a National Landmark. Last year the club celebrated its 125 anniversary. Within this well-maintained building, there is a small theater with large windows on both sides. With sun shining through the old glass panes, the theater had a warm atmosphere accented by wood flooring, on which almost 30 people with different demographic backgrounds, moved gracefully in harmony. Please meet [the St. Louis Tai ChiChuan Association!](#)

The St. Louis [Tai Chi](#) Chuan Association is the oldest formal Tai Chi Chuan association in the area. They teach and practice a shortened Yang Style Tai Chi Form called [Cheng Man-Ch'ing](#) Tai Chi (Taiji). Professor Cheng Man-Ch'ing was born in China and famous for his five major talents: painting, calligraphy, poetry, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Tai Chi. He modified the traditional Yang Style Tai Chi with a focus on health while still retaining its martial art applications. Grandmaster Cheng trained many outstanding Tai Chi teachers of our time and Master [Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo](#) is one of them. Master Lo is widely respected for his superb skills. The late distinguished Tai Chi author [Robert W. Smith](#) described Lo's Tai Chi as "Martial Musings". Master Lo came to the U.S. in 1974 and has lived in San Francisco, CA since. He teaches Cheng Man-Ch'ing style Tai Chi tirelessly and has trained thousands.

The St. Louis Tai Chi Chuan instructor Bill Grivna, Professor Emeritus of Theater at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE), recalled his friend's advice in 1974 to study with Master Lo. Once he moved to SIUE, he and others decided to invite Master Lo to St. Louis for workshops. Inspired by Master Lo, [Bob Goodwin](#) decided to set up [the St. Louis Tai Chi Chuan Association](#) in the summer of

1979. They initially taught classes at the Brentwood Community Center. Ten years ago, they chose to host classes at the Monday Club. Every year, and sometimes twice a year, they invite Master Lo to St. Louis to teach workshops. Due to work, Bob relocated to other cities, but the association has grown with the participation of more Tai Chi enthusiasts.

In the past 34 years, the St. Louis Tai Chi Chuan Association has trained at least a couple thousands of people. Many of the students return season after season. Rolf is a repeat student, and in his nineties, probably the oldest practitioner. Some of the students pursued further and traveled to San Francisco to receive advanced training from Master Lo to become teachers themselves. Now the association has nine instructors.

When asked what made him proud of the association, Bill said that after 34 years, this organization still maintains its non-profit status and all instructors volunteer their time by teaching or handling the organization's business without pay. The St. Louis Tai Chi Chuan Association may actually be the oldest non-profit organization for Tai Chi in the nation. Besides teaching at the Monday Club, some of the association instructors also teach at the various locations throughout the metro St. Louis area. For more information about the association and their classes, you can visit them at [www.taichistlouis.org/](http://www.taichistlouis.org/).

**Subscribe** to this column to get reviews, recaps, and latest news regarding Tai Chi, [Qigong](#), health and [martial arts](#) sent directly to your inbox. If you enjoyed this article **please click the social media links above and to the left to share it with your friends**. You can also **subscribe to my page on Facebook here**. You can also **follow me on Twitter**.

## SUGGESTED LINKS

- [A non-profit business model](#)
- [Sifu Chang Wuan-Wen has no time for aging](#)



**Violet Li**

St. Louis Tai Chi Examiner