



## THE TAOGIRL GATHERING

### A Celebration of TaoGirls Everywhere

August 1, 2006 ;

The TaoGirl Gathering

Issue Number Three

Welcome , TaoGirls



Welcome , TaoGirls

As I sit here in my studio my thoughts keep being pulled from this newsletter to the annual family gathering that Joe and I will host – yet again – this coming Saturday. I suspect you've been in the same position; that of wanting to complete a task and staying on course when your mind insists on traveling to another spot, something that is looming over you like a, well, upcoming family party.

In the past I've heard from so many of you TaoGirls who are eager to share your stories and suggestions, that I think it is now my turn to present you with my thoughts about summer entertaining as excerpted from the June issue of WRAP Magazine (and reprinted with their permission). If anything I say here rings true for you and is helpful I will feel great.

To those who are so inclined, the very thought of hosting a summertime event brings out the Martha Stewart in them and, thus, creates visions of domestic bliss. There are actually those who revel in the pomp and circumstance essential in the world of entertaining; feeling most fulfilled caring for their guests by spending hour upon hour cleaning, shopping, cooking, preparing and decorating for these occasions.

I know some folks who grow their own produce; milk the cows to make the cheese appetizers; bake crackers, breads and cake; pluck the decorative flowers from their garden and place them in vases created in their own glass-blowing furnace. Some, I suspect, set the table using hand sewn tablecloths (created from the wool sheared from their pet sheep) and dishes they've created on their potter's wheel.

May I now propose a toast to these fine women and men who care so superbly for their guests. Here's to you, whoever and wherever you are. I tip my well-worn Met's cap, down an orange juice glass of Dom Budweiser and announce that I am truly impressed and awed by your graciousness. You are the true representation of my on-line dictionary's definition of host: "A person who invites guests to a social event (such as a party in his or her own home) and who is responsible for them while they are there."

There is, however, another definition of host I offer it to you now: "An animal or plant that nourishes and supports a parasite; the host does not benefit and is often harmed by the association."

That one? That's me. Or, at least that's me if I tried to be the over achieving host described above.

I love inviting friends and family to my home for fun social occasions. My husband and I enjoy entertaining and do it often. The difference between me and my Martha Stewart-like counterparts, however, is that if I try to duplicate the efforts of those fine folks, I end up exhausted, annoyed and resentful of my company.

When I was younger I, too, believed that the only way to show my guests how much they were valued was to dig deep into my domestic core and dredge up every ounce of the inspired host I could find within. Quite capable of sewing, cooking, baking, decorating I called upon all of my talents and energy to create what I hoped would be a memorable and festive gathering. And, it usually was. The house always looked pretty, the food was quite palatable, and the attendees were genial. The only drawback was that, while I remained the socially adept hostess throughout the soiree, I hardly had time to converse with anyone – unless they wandered into the kitchen where I was busily preparing the next great course to appear on the buffet table.

For several days after my well feted guests had gone home, I was completely totaled, burned out and wrecked. Yes, the gathering had certainly been festive and memorable. Festive for the guests. Memorable to my aching back, limbs and head.

Over the last several years I've learned much in the ways of party-giving and I'd like to share my hard-earned wisdom with you.

I've learned that one does not have to come within an inch of hospitalized exhaustion in the

preparation and hosting a social event. Quite the contrary, if working so hard deems you inaccessible and too tired to enjoy your own party don't do it. Not "don't do the party" but take a more comfortable route. Buy prepared foods; allow your guests to help in the planning of the event and let them participate during the party, if possible hire someone to assist you; use disposable dinnerware when feasible. Trust me on this, no one will think less of you for being sensible. On the contrary, they'll probably enjoy the more festive mood of their host and the opportunity to laugh and talk with you without having to watch you and your oven mitts juggling platters of sizzling appetizers and entrees.

A party is also called a bash. I, for one, have made a vow to never again be too bushed to bash. And guess what? I still host social gatherings. My friends and family still love to attend. And we all appreciate the time spent together laughing, eating and socializing. That is, after all, what it's about isn't it?

C J

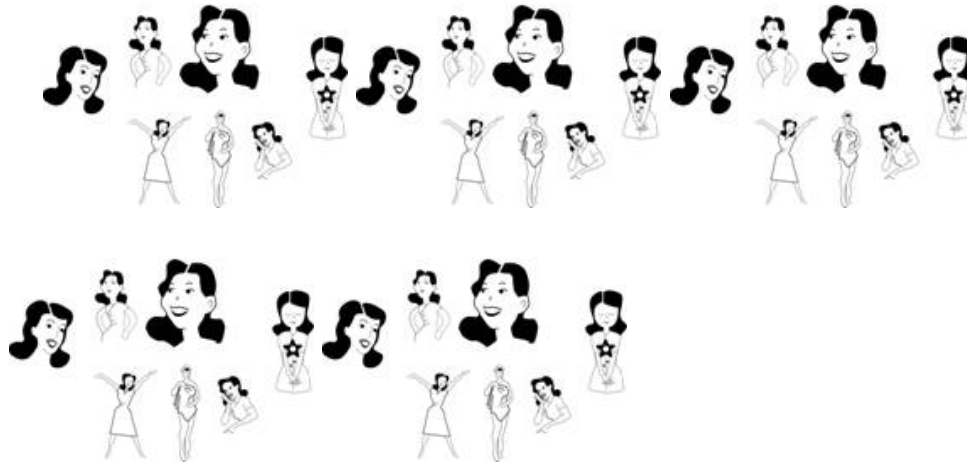
This month's Taogirl Gathering will feature:

- ✚ Photos of Tao Uno and their most unique member, Millie
- ✚ Our question and answer section – with some very interesting responses from our readers
- ✚ The Taogirl Wisdom of the Month
- ✚ A listing of my August travels – I would so love to meet you when I'm in your part of the world
- ✚ news of Taogirl Gathering Groups, including
  - photos
    - the introduction of new groups
    - a word or two of advice or information from established Taogirl Groups
  - ✚ a question and answer section
- ✚ a Taogirl Wisdom of the Month
- ✚ a listing of my upcoming travels – I would so love to meet you when I'm in your part of the world

✚ and (this one was my idea) a word from me to you

I sincerely hope you enjoy this, the very first issue of THE TAOGIRL GATHERING !

CJ



Sharing stories and photos is what the TaoGirl Gathering and TaoGirl Groups are all about.

Tao Uno, who was featured in our June issue of the newsletter had been patiently awaiting their order of TaoGirl T-shirts.

now having received them, they are eager to show them off!

Introducing.....for your viewing pleasure.....drum roll....

Tao Uno



*back row left to right:*

*Royce K. Minna D. Janie S. Joanne H. Barbara B*

*Front row left to right:*

*JoAnn C. Eileen J. Phyllis S.*

*missing from this photo are Catharine C. Dorothy S. Margie B*

*And Tao Uno's most unique member.....*

*Taodog Millie!*



back row: Barbara B

front row: Millie Taodog

I'd love to hear from all of you TaoGirls out there. Please email me so I can share your stories and photos with our readers. [www.taogirl.com](http://www.taogirl.com)

## TAOGIRL WISDOM OF THE MONTH

"To me, life is like the back nine in golf.

Sometimes you play better on the back nine. You may not be stronger, but hopefully you're wiser. And if you keep most of your marbles intact, you can add a note of wisdom to the coming generation."



Clint Eastwood

I found this piece of wisdom in a wonderful little book entitled BITS AND PIECES and had read it just before enjoying lunch at our local golf club. Sitting on the patio watching the golfers play the "back nine" (the last nine holes of an 18 hole course) I recognized the relevance of Mr. Eastwood's words – both for the simile and the season.

It's ? time

A new TaoGirl group.....My friends and I are starting a TaoGirl group up here on the Cape . Do you have any advice for us when we have our first meeting? What do we do? How should we run it?

Sophie V.

TaoGirl's answer to Sophie....I remember you from the workshop I held at The Inkwell in Falmouth – that was a particularly active and interesting group and I am very pleased to know that it became the birth of another TaoGirl Group.

Your first meeting as a TaoGirl Group will most likely be about the format you would all like to use for your meetings. I suspect you need to discuss when and where you want to meet; how often; how long; how formal or informal you want to make those gatherings. Some groups meet monthly at someone's home and enjoy cheese and wine. Another goes hiking. One is doing sleepovers. Tao Uno, now in their second year, has told me that they will each begin to put a small amount of money

into the pot and plan an annual get-away with the funds they collected.

At your first meeting you all might also suggest women who you would like to invite to

become members of the Group – women who will be both active participants and will enjoy and flourish within the support of other Taogirls. You will need to discover for yourselves, however, how many members comprise a comfortable group size. When your numbers become too large for the intimacy necessary for good connections, it is possible that you are looking at two or more Taogirl groups.

Because you have done the inviting this time I suspect you will become the host and narrator for the meeting, but this does not always have to be. You can choose someone to be the “leader” for the next meeting and let her add her own thoughts to the group at that time.

Perhaps you remember that one of the exercises we did together that evening at The Inkwell had everyone write down, on an index card, a transition or challenge they are currently going through. We then put the cards in a basket and, one by one, picked out a card and discussed what had been written. Some of the women remained anonymous and some wanted to let the rest know we were talking about their personal challenge. I find this the best way to get to the heart of the meeting. You might consider doing the same exercise. Read one of the index cards, discuss it as a group. Perhaps the other index cards can be saved for future meetings, or perhaps it will spur on a discussion related to something similar in someone else’s life.

The beauty of a Taogirl Group is that there is no one way to run it. It is an individual and group effort and, thus, can be done anyway that suits the desire of the members. Be patient – it’s a work in progress. But be consistent and don’t slough off – keep meeting on a regularly scheduled basis and you will see your group grow and prosper.

And, please keep me in mind – I’m always here to help in any way I can!

As a matter of fact, because so many Taogirls have had this same question as they start their own Taogirl Groups, I am now in the process of writing a workbook that will give some helpful suggestions. If any of you out there have exercises or ideas that have worked well for you, please let me know so I may include it.

CJ



On the road again.....

Here’s where I plan to be in June and July

Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Essex Books, Main Street , Essex CT

booksigning

2:00 – 4:00

Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

Healing Arts Community, 177 Federal Road , Brookfield , CT

“Meet Your Inner Taogirl” workshop

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup>

The Inkwell, Falmouth , MA

Taogirl workshop

4:30 – 6:00

July is still open for me to travel to wherever – if you’d like to have a Taogirl workshop,

let me know! [thepath@taogirl.com](mailto:thepath@taogirl.com)



One final word:

I’ve loved being able to send you THE TAOGIRL GATHERING and look forward to hearing from you and having you participate every month. The success of the GATHERING and the success of TAOGIRL depends on all of us working together to spread the word. Please help me by becoming an active contributor with your questions, comments, Taogirl Group news and ideas on how to expand the scope of the publication.

**Above all, share THE TAOGIRL GATHERING by forwarding it to your friends !**



For information, or to share your thoughts and wisdom with us: [thepath@taogirl.com](mailto:thepath@taogirl.com)