



THE TAOGIRL GATHERING

A Celebration of Taogirls Everywhere

October, 2006

The Taogirl Gathering

Issue Number Five

Welcome , Taogirls



As I sit at my computer looking through my window, I'm amazed to see the leaves, once again, beginning to turn colors - and I can't help but reflect back to last October when I had one of the most pleasurable and memorable experiences of my life.

While walking down a scenic trail outside of Philadelphia , I had encountered the most majestic sight I'd ever seen. The unusually warm, bright day had been all the more glorious for the wooded scenes I'd passed; an abundance of brightly colored autumn leaves clinging to their branches in their last flashes of life, a serene brook sailing alongside of me suddenly thrust into a flurry of tumultuous activity as it cascaded down several steep rocks. Yet the vision that pulled my total focus and stays with me still, was the frail-looking, elderly woman walking toward me. Obviously enjoying the same exhilaration I was experiencing that morning, and perhaps at the objections of children or grandchildren left behind at home or in the car, she was traversing the level but rocky path - pushing a walker in front of her.

This amazing woman so perfectly reflected the philosophy of Tao and defiance that has helped

me along my path of life:

I've learned a bit about the ancient philosophy of Taoism which teaches that all of life follows a prescribed path. Just as the seasons come and go, the transitions of our lives are a natural part of the Universe. But I've also come to realize that as we follow our own paths, we need to remain active in mind and body. This is essential – for to truly "age gracefully" we need to not sit back in our rocking chairs and merely let the wrinkles and gray hairs materialize. Aging gracefully is a product of aging happily and vitally. To do this we need remain as active as our bodies and minds will allow

The state of our health may diminish: our muscles weaken, our immune systems wane, we become less resilient and our hormones play tricks on us. This is all a natural part of the process of being one with nature.

True, this "being one with nature" business can be a bit disheartening. It is definitely not fun to find your body incapable of performing as it once did. You might have suffered an accident and injured your leg or neck or back; perhaps you are now dealing with a difficult health issue. Maybe the passing years have stolen some of your flexibility or strength. However, by making peace with your situation, you can rise above these setbacks. Instead of "why me?" and "I hate this . . ." (you fill in the blank), you can turn your thinking around to "Okay, this is me" and "I can deal with this." It *can* be done. People all around us provide living, breathing examples of this philosophy of acceptance and actions.

As a Tao and defiant woman (or man) you deal with the physical detours along your path. They don't grind your journey to a halt, because you have strengths and attributes that will take over for those that need recharging. And you use those strengths to forge a new path—one that can be just as exhilarating and fulfilling as the last one was.

We live our best when we are vital and active. No, we might not be able to climb a mountain or surf the waves of the Pacific. However, when we remain vital because of, and in spite of, whatever circumstance we find ourselves in, that's when we are truly experiencing this amazing adventure called life.

Back to my walk in Philadelphia last October: The leaves understood they were going to fall yet showed their glorious colors to the bitter end. The stream happened upon an unexpected detour yet met the rocks head on and continued, vitally, on its way. And that beautiful elderly woman joyfully pushed her walker along the trail. What a picture they all make in my mind's eye. They will stay with me forever and serve as a constant reminder that no matter what my

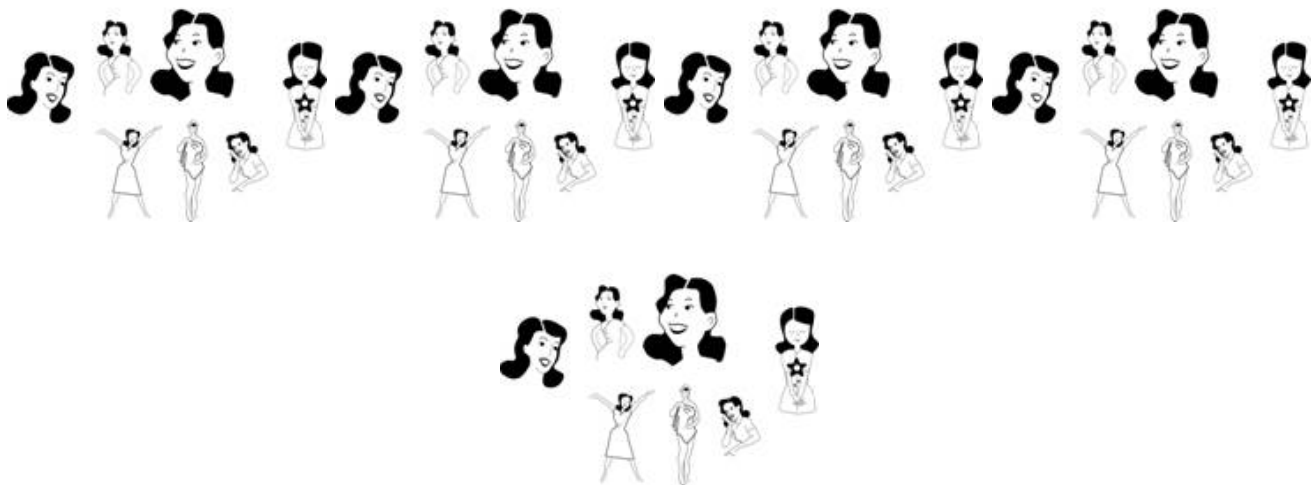
physical state, I can, should and *will* always stay active and vital. How about you?

CJ

(reprinted in part from THE TAO OF THE DEFIANT WOMAN)

This month's Taogirl Gathering will feature:

- ✚ A interview with a brand new Taogirl Group
- ✚ Tao Uno bids farewell to the summer
- ✚ The Taogirl Wisdom of the Month
- ✚ A Very Special Opportunity
- ✚ Our question and answer section
- ✚ A listing of my October travels – I would so love to meet you when I'm in your part of the world
- ✚ "Let's link"
- ✚ The Taogirl Boutique featuring a brand new creation!!!



In this month's issue of The Taoirl Gathering I am pleased to feature
our newest Taoirl Group
"The Cape Cod Taogirls."

You might remember Sophie V. who, in our August newsletter, posed a question about how one might start a Taoirl Group.

I am pleased to announce that on Saturday, September 16th, 8 women gathered at her home for their first Taoirl Meeting!

SOPHIE, THANK YOU FOR SPENDING THIS TIME WITH ME AND FOR ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS, WHICH BEGIN BY ASKING YOU

WHAT EXPERIENCE OR EVENT PROMPTED YOU TO START A TAOGIRL GROUP?

Reading the newsletter and hearing about other groups....I thought it would be fun to belong to a group of my own.

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE WOMEN WHO WOULD ATTEND THAT FIRST MEETING?

They all read "Tao of the Defiant Woman" and when I suggested that we form our own group everyone thought it was a good idea!

TELL US ABOUT YOUR TAOGIRL GROUP:

It's a diverse group...some are of retirement age others still have teenage children...two are still working though they are in their seventies. They come from all different states but all live here on the Cape .

THERE WERE THE EIGHT WOMEN WHO CAME TO YOUR FIRST MEETING, DO YOU ANTICIPATE MORE OR LESS WILL BE AT THE SECOND?

If everyone comes to the second meeting we will have 12 women.

WHO MODERATED THE MEETING AND WILL THAT PERSON HOLD THAT POST FOR EVERY MEETING?

I moderated the meeting but we decided that there will be a different moderator each time we meet.

MANY DECISIONS HAD TO BE MADE ABOUT FUTURE MEETINGS SUCH AS WHERE, WHEN AND WHO. HOW DID YOU COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON THESE ISSUES?

We have not decided all of those issues as yet but we will discuss them at the next meeting.

HOW OFTEN WILL YOU MEET?

We have talked about meeting once a month.

WHERE DO YOU ANTICIPATE YOU WILL MEET?

October's meeting will be at my home but we talked about taking turns at each other's home.

WHAT FORMAT DO YOU ANTICIPATE THAT MEETING WILL TAKE?

Following the format from the handbook worked out well for me...

THOSE LAST QUESTIONS HAVING BEEN ANSWERED; DO YOU ALL BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE A WORK IN PROGRESS AND ARE YOU OPEN TO THE CHANGES THAT WILL COME AS YOU CONTINUE TO "COME INTO YOUR OWN"?

I can only speak for myself but, I feel that I'm open to change and I try very hard not to dwell on the negative in my life...I've known most of these women since I moved here to the Cape and they too, seem to dealing with life in a positive way...they all have had challenges to face, be it loss of a spouse, through death or divorce, loss of a child, loss of a job, and just the many facets of growing older..but, they always seem to be able to laugh whenever we are together.

HOW DID YOU BEGIN THE MEETING TO BREAK THE ICE?

I used the first exercise in the handbook..that seemed to get everyone laughing and relaxing!

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TOPICS YOU DISCUSSED?

We discussed many topics..children..grandchildren..gardening,... marriages, men(how different they are from women) and the question that was taken out of the basket...that took most of the meeting.

NOW, THIS ONE IS A BLATANT PLUG, SO PLEASE FORGIVE ME; IN WHAT WAY OR WAYS DID YOU FIND THE TAOGIRL HANDBOOK HELPFUL?

I found it a most valuable tool....This was the first time I moderated a meeting..when the women saw me pickup the handbook it worked as a signal that the meeting was about to start. I read straight from the handbook about Taoism and its founder...they all seemed interested.....

ANY THOUGHTS ON ADDITIONS WE CAN MAKE TO THE HANDBOOK?

I really can't think of anything else other than the pronunciation of each of the terms.

(DULY NOTED AND REVISED)

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE TO WOMEN WHO ARE JUST STARTING THEIR OWN TAOGIRL GROUPS OR THINKING ABOUT

DOING SO?

I find that having women of different ages come together adds to the dynamics of the group...it doesn't matter if everyone knows each other or not..in my group there were three women who only knew me and no one else in the group but, by the end of the meeting everyone seemed like old buddies.

Many thanks to you, Sophie, for taking the initiative to start The Cape Cod Taogirls and for allowing me to feature you and the group this month.

Now that we've met our newest Taogirl Group, I'd like to revisit our very first Taogirl Group.

TAO UNO!





On Friday, August 11, Tao Uno held their first annual summer picnic and were kind enough to share these pics with us. Looks like great fun!

I'd love to hear from all of you Tao girls out there. Please email me so I can share your stories and photos with our readers. www.taogirl.com

TAOGIRL WISDOM OF THE MONTH

If you're quiet you're not living. You've got to be noisy and colorful and lively.

— Mel Brooks



A Very Special Opportunity for a Very Special Cause:

This piece ran in our September issue of The Tao girl Gathering, but as we have so many new subscribers I wanted it to appear again this month so every one has an opportunity to know about the Esteemed Woman Foundation and the important documentary its founder, Suzie Galler, is planning to produce.

Dear Taogirls, you Can Help Make A Documentary Film That Supports Women As Leaders...

Did you know the women only comprise 14.9 per cent of the seat in the U.S. Congress? And that even though women make up almost half of America's labor force only two Fortune 500 companies have women CEO's or presidents?

On November 18th I will be speaking at a leadership conference in Newtown, Ct. called Lead Out Loud!. The conference is conducted by the Esteemed Woman Foundation in partnership with the Southwest Athletic Conference of Connecticut. It is a wonderful full day program introducing high school girls to leadership skills and women leaders in a variety of

fields.

As part of this project, Filmmaker Suzie Galler (*I am Beautiful, I am My Mother's Daughter*) is currently working on a documentary about women and leadership to bring public awareness to the growing movement in the U.S. to place women in decision and policy making roles within our government and corporate arenas. The film, entitled *Taking the Lead*, will focus on women who are leaders in their respective fields in an effort to define the skills and characteristics necessary for women to become leaders, whether in the White House, the Board Room, or the PTA. It will also highlight the growing number of leadership programs that have been blossoming across the U.S. in the past 10 years, and the results of those efforts. "Ultimately, our hope is that, in addition to providing healthy role models for our daughters, this film will help to de-stigmatize the concept of women in top leadership roles in the U.S. and help the public understand that women need not serve only at the dinner table—they can serve the world at large," Galler told me when we met recently.

The film will be shot by a professional crew with the support of a group of student volunteers from Lead Out Loud! who will conduct interviews with women leaders and act as research and production assistants.

Make a Donation and Receive a Copy of "The Tao of the Defiant Woman"

You, too can help. The producers have taken a grassroots approach to funding the film and are asking for donations of \$50 or more from individuals to help get this film into production quickly – before the November elections. I will donate a copy of "The Tao of the Defiant Woman" to anyone who contributes \$50 or more to help see this film made. In addition, your name will be listed in the film's credits.

So please, help us spread the word about *Taking the Lead* and tell your friends about this wonderful project. This is proof positive that we can all help to make a difference in our world if we chose to.

Send your donations to: The Esteemed Woman Foundation

P.O. Box 693

Georgetown, CT 06829

For more information called (203) 938-8833 or visit www.esteemedwoman.org.

It's **?** time

How can the Tao and defiant philosophy help me help my daughter?

I became a mom later in life. I'm now 43. Can you tell me some of the ways the Tao and defiant

philosophy can help me help my 5-year-old daughter and my teenage nieces?

- Janine K.

TAOGIRL'S ANSWER TO JANINE

At 5 years of age it might be difficult to teach your daughter the principles of Tao and defiance – certainly you won't sit her down and give her a crash course in Taoism. The way to teach this philosophy is by showing her how you apply it to your life. If you let her see how you confidently and boldly travel your path you will become a role model for your daughter to follow. As she gets older you can have conversations with her that explain those parts of Taoism which work to ease our way. Certainly you can do that now with your teenage nieces. Remember that the challenges they face – even those of your young daughter – can appear overwhelming. You will be helping them understand that while change is an integral part of life there are ways to face these challenges with strength, courage and joy.

CJ

Dear Taoirls,

Please remember that I would love to hear from you. Would you like to add to my response to Janine? If so, please email me and I will post your comments on next month's newsletter. I'm sure she and all Taoirls will benefit greatly from your comments.

And, of course, I'd love to have you write in with questions of your own so we might keep up a Taoirl dialogue with each other.

thepath@taogirl.com

Thank you,

CJ



On the road again.....

Here's where I will be in October:

Thursday, October 12 – in celebration of Women's Week

Now Voyager

357 Commercial Street

Provincetown , MA

1:00

I will be speaking and doing a book signing

Friday, October 13 – in celebration of Women's Week

Recovering Hearts

2-4 Standish Street

Provincetown , MA

9:30 – 11:00 AM

I will be conducting an introductory Taogirl
Workshop.

4:00

I will be speaking and doing a book signing

I will be participating in an author's roundtable

Saturday, October 14

I will be honored to participate in a meeting of the
Cape Cod Taogirls

Sunday, October 15

The Inkwell Bookstore

199 Main Street

Falmouth , MA

4:30 – 6:00

I will be conducting the second of a series of
Taogirl workshops

Tuesday, October 17

The Cos Cob Library

5 Sinawoy Road

Cos Cob, CT

7:30 – 9:00

I will be conducting an introductory Taogirl
workshop

Keep checking the Travels page of the website for current updates.



LET'S LINK !

If you know of, or have a website that I think Taogirls would enjoy seeing, let me know and I'll be happy to set up a hyperlink from this newsletter to that site. Conversely, if you would like to do the same from your site to this newsletter, please contact me to do so.

It is in this manner that we can support each other as we all strive to support women everywhere!

Esteemed Woman Foundation... This amazing and important organization was founded in 2000 by filmmaker **Suzie Galler** who began conducting research about women and self-esteem which led to the making of the highly acclaimed documentary film I Am Beautiful. The film then became the cornerstone of

an outreach program designed to help women explore and strengthen their self-image.. It now includes ongoing workshops, resource materials and an outreach network that provides support nationwide. The foundation's primary focus has been to develop comprehensive programs for women of all ages and backgrounds. The programs teach that self-esteem is not a destination, but a life long journey--one that requires recognition of the sources of self-esteem, and a willingness to address those areas that impede a positive self-image.

Visit the Suzie and the Esteemed Woman Foundation at: <http://esteemedwoman.com>

Connecticut Muse... This seasonally published newsletter is the brain child of **Patricia D'Ascoli**, columnist, essayist and author of *Home Is Where the Humor Is*. The Connecticut Muse is a celebration of contemporary Connecticut authors featured in a quarterly newsletter. Each issue focuses on a different literary genre and includes book reviews, author interviews, a listing of upcoming author appearances and information on new releases. You Taogirls who do not reside in Connecticut will also enjoy reading the Muse to discover what new books are out there for us all to enjoy.

Visit Patricia and The Connecticut Muse at: <http://connecticutmuse.com/aboutus.html>

Donna Ferber ... is the author of the wonderfully supportive and encouraging book, *From Ex-wife to Exceptional Life: A Woman's Journey through Divorce*. Donna is a licensed professional counselor and licensed alcohol and drug counselor. She is also a psychotherapist and experienced speaker who has drawn on her twenty years of experience counseling women through this difficult process to create a comprehensive guide comprised of 365 one page essays that offer inspiration, insight and information.

Visit Donna at: <http://www.donnaferber.com/index.htm>

Prill Boyle ... Like the women she writes about in her book, *Defying Gravity*, Prill Boyle is a late bloomer. After graduating from college at 38, she became an English teacher. Then in January of 2000 she read an article in *The New York Times* about a 65-year old Kentucky woman named Wini Yunker who had waited 39 years to join the Peace Corps. Inspired by this woman's persistence and courage, Prill decided to write a book about late bloomers. Her book recounts the stories of 12 "ordinary" women who've done extraordinary things later in life. It is a delightful and inspiring book to read and all the more so as Prill connects these first-person accounts together with her own story. Prill is also very active on the speaking and workshop circuit.

Visit Prill at: <http://www.prillboyle.com/index.html>

THE TAOGIRL ON-LINE BOUTIQUE IS OPEN



THE TAOGIRL'S HANDBOOK

A Primer for Creating Your Unique Taogirl Group

The Taogirl Handbook

is chock full of suggestions to aid you in the organization of your Taogirl Group.

Along with the exercises and discussions within the pages of this three ring binder, I've also included blank pages for your own notes, as well as plenty of "growing room."



Some final words:

As fall begins I am embarking on a new round of speaking engagements and workshops and can hardly believe how my little book and its philosophy of Tao and defiance has begun to take wing. This has been an amazing adventure which seems to be finding on a life of its own.

I am proud to say that THE TAO OF THE DEFIANT WOMAN has been bought by Sourcebooks who will re-publish it a year from now. They're a great publishing house who will bring to the book and the Tao and defiant movement a tremendous amount of expertise, enthusiasm and marketing strength.

Last fall I was learning how to be Tao and defiant as I walked along that path in Philadelphia ; this fall I

am finding myself in a position to pass along this philosophy to all of you; and next fall there will be the next edition of the book.

Life does, indeed, travel an ever changing path and we need to remain open to all of the

possibilities.

I am awed and so very grateful for the opportunities I have been given along my way, and thankful to all of you for sharing this experience with me helping me to grow stronger, joyful and defiant!

My thanks to **Sophie** for allowing me to feature you and The Cape Cod Taogirls this month; to **Janine** for your very interesting question; and, of course, to **Tao Uno** for allowing us to share in your summer picnic – next time could you send some burgers, chips and black and white cookies along with the pictures!

And, as always, a big thank you to all of you out there for being the wonderful, sharing and caring Taogirls (and Taoguys) that you are.

Please email me and let me share your story with our readers in the October issue of The Taogirl Gathering.

thepath@taogirl.com

CJ

Spread the word – share this issue of THE TAOGIRL GATHERING with your friends!

If you would rather not receive future issues please respond to this email and put “unsubscribe” in the subject line.

For information, or to share your thoughts and wisdom with us: thepath@taogirl.com