

## Accepting Life, With A Hint Of Defiance: C.J. Golden Celebrates Becoming An Author

BY SHANNON HICKS

Accept what you can't alter, rebel against the rest.

The first part of that line — now a life motto for Newtown resident and author Caryn (C.J.) Golden — came from one of the author's friends, Kathy Levinson, as that friend stepped confidently into her sixth decade of life. The idea of accepting life as the universe gives it to you quickly became the inspiration for Ms Golden's book, *The Tao of The Defiant Woman (A Guide to Life over 40: Accepting What We Must and Rebelling Against the Rest)*.

C.J. Golden will be hosting a celebration of her book and Newtown's library with a public reception on Sunday, April 17. The celebration will run from 2 to 5 pm. Ms Golden will be signing copies of her book that afternoon, and partial proceeds from the book's sale will be donated to the library.

*The Tao of The Defiant Woman* (Eronel Publishing; March 1, 2005), says its author, explains how women (of most ages, not just those over age 40) can attain true happiness by embracing a philosophy of Taoist acceptance coupled with a dash of healthy defiance.

The book is the result of countless interviews, seminars, and workshops with hundreds of women. It is filled with stories about women, in large part told around the five principles of The Tao of The Defiant Woman. It offers suggestions on what should be accepted and what can be rebelled against, Tao-girl dos and don'ts, and tips for planning a Taogirl gathering.

While speaking with these women Ms Golden recognized that those who were happiest with their lives understood that their Tao philosophy brings them peace, while their defiant attitude endows them with the necessary skills to deal with life's challenges.

"Taoism is a Chinese philosophy, not a religion," Ms Golden is quick to point out. "It says that the universe has its own yin and yang. Opposing forces, they balance each other. We need all of it in order to have a full life.

"Things happen of their own accord," she continued. "Leaves fall for a reason, and you can't force a wrong key into a lock."

Ms Golden is the first to admit that she is not a walking dictionary when it comes to Taoism.

"I'm not a Taoist. I am far from fully understanding the whole thing," she said. recently, "but I'm beginning to learn."

A few years ago Ms Golden and a friend, Jamie Callan, came up with the concept of The Taogirl

"We are talking about a woman who approaches her age in a fun, yet spiritual way. She's sexy and intelligent and ages gracefully and happily with a sense of humor and a vision for the future," Ms Golden told *The Newtown Bee* in 2003 when she and Ms Callan began their Taogirl Movement. The women organized workshops and started sending "Weekly Wisdom" emails — notes that offered clean jokes and sage advice.

The Taogirl Movement doesn't need to

be overt, says Ms Golden.

"It isn't like the Red Hat Society," she said. "This is an inner movement — it's not wearing something. It becomes very personal."

It was from these workshops that Ms Golden began gleaning information for her book.

Ms Golden wrote and rewrote the book for a few years.

"I became single-minded. I was focused on seeing this book from inception to publication, and what I saw wasn't always the way an agent or a publisher always saw it," she said. "Also, while she remained a great supporter, Jamie had her own projects to work on so this became my own vehicle."

Though Ms Golden is the sole author of *The Tao of The Defiant Woman*, Ms Callan is still represented thanks to her contribution of The Taogirl Blessing. Ms Golden also acknowledges Ms Callan was a huge part of the project.

"I probably would not have started or stayed so involved without her support," Ms Golden said.

Being defiant, she says, is both being rebellious and bold, with a stronger leaning toward the bold.

"The woman who is older and can't play basketball any longer," Ms Golden says as a first example, "is going to find the strength to be a coach for girls.

"I don't run any more," she added, "so last year I participated in a three-day, 60-mile Susan Komen Walk Against Cancer. I can't jog anymore, but I haven't let that stop me.

"Being a Taogirl is more than just physical. It's mental. It's taking what you do have and making the most of it."

Along with the publication of *The Tao of The Defiant Woman*, Ms Golden has made sure the movement's website is updated. Visitors to [www.taogirl.com](http://www.taogirl.com) can learn about Ms Golden's background; find out about upcoming book discussions, speaking engagements, and related appearances; and read up on Taogirl Wisdoms, weekly offerings

from readers.

Book signings are already scheduled for April 16 at Baileywick Books in New Milford, at 2 pm; April 28 at The Book Vault in Wallingford, at 7 pm; April 30 at The Barn Gallery in New Fairfield; May 1 at Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Westport, 2 pm; and May 6 at Barnes & Noble in Danbury, at 7:30 pm.

There will be some traveling in Ms Golden's future, too. She's done one book signing event in Kansas City already, and has others set up in Tucson, Ariz.; Springfield, Ill.; Lancaster, Penn.; and North Caldwell, N.J.

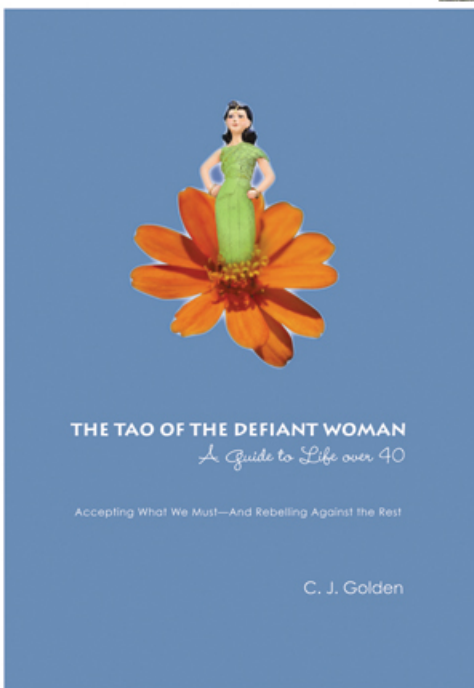
Visitors are also invited to help write the sequel, which is already loosely in the works.

"I hope the website helps people better understand this movement," said Ms Golden. "It's up to me and others to spread the word.

"The website is also bringing in anecdotes. Obviously there aren't enough yet for the next book, but that's OK. I don't have the energy for the next book... yet," she said.

Sounds like C.J. Golden has accepted that there will be another book, and is getting ready to use her writing strength again.

Just like a Taogirl would.



Caryn (C.J.) Golden says she couldn't be happier with what her publisher did with her first book, *The Tao of The Defiant Woman*. The book was released in March, is available in retail bookstores and online, and will be celebrated with a reception on April 17 at C.H. Booth Library.

—Bee Photo, Hicks