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## Tai Chi— A Slow and Easy Way to Fitness



**Marge Grudzinski**

It's hard to believe that the slow deliberate movements of Tai Chi could have such powerful health benefits: improved circulation, flexibility, strength, posture, stamina, concentration and much more. Marge Grudzinski, who leads a weekly Senior Center Tai Chi class, credits the practice with helping her overcome a lower back problem that has not recurred in 15 years.

When the Taoist Tai Chi Society began to offer classes at the Senior Center in 1995, Marge was among the first students. A

year later, she had become certified as an instructor and has been leading the weekly class ever since. A retired music teacher, Marge says teaching Tai Chi allows her to continue teaching – “something I love” – while keeping her in shape at the same time.

Dorothy Barone,, who has been practicing Tai Chi with the group for eight years, said she tried Tai Chi after hearing some people talking about it at the Senior Center. She liked it and has been at it ever since. Dorothy says Tai Chi helps keep her legs strong which is a benefit because she is on her feet all day as a cashier.

Originally developed as a martial art, Tai Chi (pronounced "gee") is a series of fluid movements that relax and stimulate every part of the body. The gentle movements relax your muscles and joints while strengthening your body. Physicians may recommend Tai Chi rather than

yoga for some seniors because it is less stressful to delicate arthritic joints.

Due to the large number of participants —20-70 people—the class is held at Gulfport's waterfront Recreation Center fall to spring and at Scout Hall in summer. Participants must be registered as Senior Center members.

**Senior Center Tai Chi  
 Thursdays at 9am**  
 Gulfport Recreation Center  
 5730 Shore Boulevard, Gulfport



## Something Different is in the Air

By Sarah Peel  
 Foundation President

There's something different in the air at the Senior Center. You have the same warm feeling when you walk in the door but it's different in the sense that there is now a heightened interest and even excitement about health, of all things. Our participants are taking a very active role in improving their health and the Senior Center provides

plenty of opportunities to make that happen.

We have the usual exercise equipment (treadmills, recumbent cycle) but also the very unique Shapemaster exercise chairs. And many support programs are offered to enhance the health and well being of our participants such as Stretch Class, Yoga, Tai Chi, Individualized Fitness Assistance, Diabetic Education, Wii Bowling,

Computer Classes and so much more!

All of this demonstrates that our participants are choosing to live healthier lives. Thanks to the 600 plus members of the Senior Center Foundation and numerous individuals, businesses and agencies whose support continues to make good things happen at the Senior Center.

## Sign up Now!! Centennial Fun Trot 5 K November 6

Sign up now and start training for the Gulfport Centennial Fun Trot 5K race. Cost to participate in the Foundation sponsored event is \$15 in advance and \$20 on the day of the event. A special t-shirt featuring a Gulfport scene will be included in every runner's packet.



**Information:**  
Gulfport Senior Center  
5501 27th Avenue S  
Gulfport, FL 33707

**Online:**  
gulfportseniorfoundation.org  
**Telephone:**  
727-893-2237  
or 727-893-1231

**Gulfport Chamber  
of Commerce**  
2808 58th Street South  
Gulfport 33707

## Looking Back ... Before the Senior Center

Between 1961 and 1983 a group of seniors met weekly at the Casino. They were a strong and organized group with officers, standing committees, and bylaws. The Club met weekly October through May. Unofficial outdoor meetings were held at the beach during the summer months.

Meetings consisted of sing-alongs, travel stories, card games and refreshments. Once a month they had a dance. The first president was Alice Kittelburger. Senior Center Volunteer Margaret Reilly was one of those early members along with her mother Rose Chyz and her aunt Anne Howay. Every week Margaret

played cards with her friends Lillian Tomkins, Katherine Lehnebach, and Katherine Dudka.

The members paid annual dues of \$1 and a weekly donation of 25 cents. Jay P. Clymer (former Gulfport Mayor) was the Chaplain and his wife Naomi played the piano.

In 1983 the Club relocated to the newly constructed Senior Center on Beach Blvd. and 27th Ave. S. By then there was a waiting list of seniors wanting to join the Club. That took care of itself when the Club broke off into smaller interest groups.

A notable offshoot was a musical group called the Ukulele Ladies. The 16 member group played ukuleles and wore grass skirts and Hawaiian blouses made by Katherine Lehnebach. Before long, the Ladies took their show on the road. The ladies held strong for 10 years.

It's hard to believe the Senior Citizens Club, too, is now only a memory. Lucy Maggio was its last president. With the exception of the Gulfport Garden Club, the groups dissolved one by one. Nevertheless, they are an important part of the history of the Gulfport Senior Center. Thanks to Margaret Reilly for taking the time to share her memories.

### Great City Great Art Opening Night Oct. 15, 2010 6:00 until 8:00 PM

*In celebration of  
Gulfport's Centennial.  
Support our award  
winning Senior Center,  
and enjoy this event  
showcasing the work  
of local artists.  
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catered snacks  
included. Cash bar.  
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opportunity drawings.*

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\$5.00 donation.  
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Lobby &  
Gulfport Senior Center**

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# Thanks for the Ride!

by Sue Frank  
Gulfport Multipurpose  
Senior Center Supervisor

It's been nearly two decades that I've been working at the Senior Center! Looking back over the years, it's interesting to see how the Senior Center has evolved.

Yes, there have been facility improvements such as the addition of Room #101 for mental health counseling and #107 for added activities. Of course, the creation of the Fitness Center in 2009 took on a life of its own. And so many events! We are

always adding new things that keep things fun and exciting for our participants. The Senior Center Accreditation Celebration in 2010 was no exception.

We have truly been blessed over the years and we have many people to thank. Thanks to the City of Gulfport, Mayor Yakes and Council members for keeping seniors a high priority over the years. Thanks to the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs for funding and guidance. Thanks to the Senior Center Foundation for keeping us strong when the econ-

omy weakened. Thanks to city employees for providing interior and exterior facility upkeep, to fellow staff for hard work and dedication, and last but not least, thanks to all of our Senior Center volunteers, sponsors and Foundation members for ongoing support.

You all have played a significant role in helping us fulfill our mission of offering opportunities that promote independence and quality of life for our participants. It's been quite a ride for the past 19 years and I wouldn't trade it for anything!



**Celebrate  
With Us  
Monday  
October 11  
1 PM**

# Happy Birthday to Gulfport, Happy Birthday to Us!

It's nice to celebrate the Senior Center's 27<sup>th</sup> birthday in the midst of the City of Gulfport's centennial year. That just feels right. If it weren't for some very wise members of the Senior Citizens' Advisory Committee on Aging some years ago, we wouldn't be here today. The need for a Senior Center in the community was identified and the City agreed. So here we are 27 years later.

Some very special Gulfport people and friends of the Center are celebrating their own 100 years in synch with the City: Therese Rowohlt, Janet Stutz, Margaret Scarfia, and Mary Ann Snow. We have invited them to attend the Senior Center's 27<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on Monday, October 11. We hope they will join us and maybe even share a little wisdom with us.

Over these past 27 years,

membership has grown from a few hundred to over 2,000 registered members. We once mailed our newsletters upon request and now we e-mail them to over 600 people. And we have a Foundation/Senior Center website to share on the worldwide web: [GulfportSeniorFoundation.org](http://GulfportSeniorFoundation.org)

At first we depended solely on the City to support our events and activities; now we have the help of the Senior Center Foundation and its 800-plus Foundation members for program and facility enhancements. Staff once conducted business as we thought best. Now we adhere to Accreditation expectations to meet the high standards of the National Institute of Senior Centers.

Once we were self focused. Now we realize the importance of building relationships outside of the Senior Center

and we are thankful for the growing number of sponsors who find the Senior Center a worthy cause. It was once a challenge to get participants to attend health related programs. Now we have an overflow of people using our new Fitness Room. We have progressed from serving coffee at the lobby reception desk to serving light meals for breakfast and lunch at our lobby Snack Bar.

Some of our participants were here when the doors first opened 27 years ago and continue to benefit from our services and programs today. Just ask volunteer Margaret Reilly about the changes at the Senior Center.

**Happy Birthday, Senior Center! Happy Birthday City of Gulfport and Happy Birthday Therese, Janet, Margaret, Maxine and Mary Ann!**

## Gulfport

A place so serene  
How fortunate to have seen.  
With all its charm and grace  
A smile easily comes to one's face.  
Take a walk on your pier  
With pelicans oh, so near.  
Maybe a stroll along the beach  
Right within your reach.  
No more gracious place around  
Absolutely cannot be found.  
A little bit of heaven came from Above  
To show His Love.

— Janice Ryan

## Learning to be Fit and Fine

For more information about the Fit & Fine program, call the Senior Center at 727-893-2237 or 727-893-1231

For 12 weeks ending mid-November, a group of 10 Senior Center participants are meeting weekly to work together on their personal exercise and wellness goals. The group comprises men and women, age 56 to 90, with a wide range of goals from weight loss to lowering blood pressure.

This new Senior Center program called Fit & Fine is coordinated by Elaine Mikurak, a volunteer who is certified with the Senior Fitness Association to teach and coordinate fitness programs for seniors.

To get participants started on the right track, each of them filled out a questionnaire about their health and personal goals. Mikurak then held individual meetings with each member to refine and record their goals.

At the end of 12 weeks, their progress will be measured and certificates will be presented.

Older adults have lots of different fitness needs and challenges, Mikurak says. Some members of the group have serious health issues that require them to take extra care as they increase their physical activity. At each meeting, the group will be able to talk about their fitness challenges and try different kinds of activities.

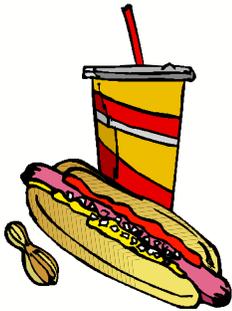
One session featured stretching with music, led by Mikurak. At another session, she taught the members to do wall push-ups. Another meeting will feature a nutritionist. Other activities organized for Fit & Fine include chair yoga and training on the new Wii Fit. As the Centennial Fun Run

approaches, many of the participants will be training to participate.

The goal of Fit & Fine is for senior participants to learn how they can become more physically active every day to increase their general health and wellness, whether that is by activities they can do at home or at the Senior Center.

According to the Senior Fitness Association, general physical activity, not just structured exercise, can help to promote major health benefits such as: increased cardiovascular fitness, increased flexibility and muscle strength, decreased depression and anxiety, weight loss, lower blood pressure, dramatic reduction of the risk of heart disease, stronger immune system, and prevention of bone loss.

### Grab a Bite Today at the Senior Center Snack Bar



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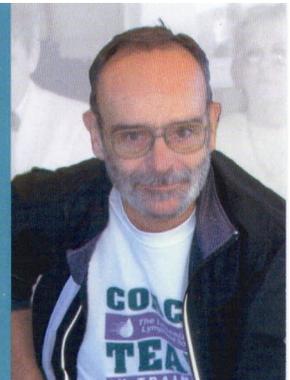
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# Catching Up with the Technology Monster

“Technology is growing faster than seniors can keep up with it,” says Henry Grierson, who teaches a new series of 12-week beginning and advanced computer classes at the Gulfport Senior Center. “I do this because seniors are going to be a forgotten segment of society as this technology monster continues to grow.”

Soon the computer will be the only way of getting news, money saving coupons and many important communications, Grierson says. Old methods of communicating and getting information are being replaced by computers. Typewriters are relics. Printed encyclopedias are non-existent. Before long, every phone call will be made on a computer with live video. Grierson believes seniors who don't have the ability to plug in to today's fast-changing technology will be left behind.

On the other hand, seniors who master using a computer will be able to maintain connections to the outside world as their options become limited with age. That's what these classes are all about -- making computers useful to seniors.



Finally, seniors will learn about the Internet and how to begin using it.

By the advanced class, students should have their own laptop computer but it's not necessary to attend the class. Prerequisites for the advanced class: students should have an email address, basic working knowledge of how to use any computer, basic knowledge of the internet and how to navigate online.

Advanced skills learned will include connecting to WiFi, using Google Maps and YouTube, Facebook, chat rooms, instant messaging, and Skype. Both classes will include a session on computer housekeeping: backups, virus checking, cleaning and troubleshooting.

In the 12-week beginner class, students will learn the basics of using the computer for work, for fun and for communication.

**For information about fees and registration for the next class in 2011, call the Senior Center at 727-893-2237 or 727-893-1231.**



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## 125 Senior Participants Enjoy September Patio Party



Pit masters Louie, Bob and Mike Worthington served up hot dogs to the hungry crowd! Photo by Gail Biron

The Senior Center held its first Patio Party on Friday, September 3. Staff and volunteers were applauded for providing a great time for the 125 participants who attended. Utopia Home Care, Inc. purchased an 8 burner outdoor gas grill for the occasion.

Pit masters Bob Worthington and Lou Worthington cooked

up some great hot dogs which gave the feel of an old fashioned backyard barbecue party. The cooking team also donated a set of professional barbecue tools.

Adding to the festivities was Woody Bianchi with his lively accordion music and some very nice door prizes. Senior Center friend Norm Bungard brought a sheet cake in honor of the Social Security's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and said a few words about the importance of preserving Social Security. WellCare, Inc., Brentwood Senior Living Community, and Palazzo Di Oro also helped sponsor the event.

Staff and participants can always depend on Mayor Michael Yakes for stopping in to say a few words and to

wish everyone a great time. Twenty one volunteers helped make the event run smoothly. It was another good time at the Senior Center! Next on our celebration list is the Senior Center's 27<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on Monday, October 11. See you all there!



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# Senior Center Foundation Seeks Sponsors



This article first appeared in the Gulfport Watchdog, [www.gulfportwatchdog.com](http://www.gulfportwatchdog.com). We thank the editor for his permission to reproduce it here.

## SENIOR CENTER FOUNDATION SEEKS SPONSORS

Everything at Gulfport's recently accredited, (only about 180 in USA), Senior Center is growing except its funding. Actually City funding has lagged behind demand for many years. So, the people of Gulfport formed a 501c3 non-profit foundation to augment funds to help fuel the growth and to provide funding for "above and beyond" services, facilities and programs.

Given the tight economy and the consequent downward trend in City revenues, it doesn't appear that there will be any real increases in public funding for the foreseeable future. So, the Gulfport Multipurpose Senior Center Foundation has decided to build on the Senior Center's wide reach in the area's senior community by offering, tax-deductible sponsorship opportunities to area businesses and institutions.

The sponsorship opportunities are designed to provide real advertising value to businesses to which the large over 50 market is an important part of their customer base and, at the same time provide substantial funding for enhanced Senior Center programming and facilities. With over 2000 registered members

**FMI: Call**  
**Susan Frank**  
**727-893-2237**  
**Cynthia Dean**  
**727-892-1231**

who are active, independent and live without mobility and self-care barriers, the Senior Center represents a substantial customer base for

prospective sponsors; the average daily attendance is about 200 and over 100 volunteers, serving in a variety of capacities, support the two full time staff.

E-mail distribution is growing rapidly with a current list of over 600 members, friends, partner agencies and community businesses and organizations, including the media throughout Pinellas County and beyond.

Part of the reason the Senior Center achieved accredited status is their extensive outreach program. All Senior Center programs are announced weekly in the Gabber that has an area circulation of over 6,000. Other outreach programs include the Senior Center Calendar of Events, informational fliers and brochures, a monthly newsletter via e-mail and a website with links to the City of Gulfport site and other community websites, including the Gulfport Chamber of Commerce.

Most importantly, the proceeds of sponsorship revenues go directly to the support of the Senior Center, one of the City's most vital resources. The Senior Center's mission statement is: "To support the independence and increased quality of life of its participants by encouraging involvement in programs and activities that promote their health, welfare, safety and dignity."

The Senior Center has become a clubhouse for people over 50 years of age in the Gulfport area where they can find good friends, enjoy a

sense of community, find opportunities for lifelong learning, keep abreast of current health and financial information, enjoy entertainment and keep their bodies fit in the highly popular fitness center. Active members are less vulnerable to depression, isolation and loneliness. Involvement in programs and services such as those offered by the Senior Center are known to delay the progress of disabilities and institutionalization.

There is no doubt that the Gulfport Multipurpose Senior Center needs and deserves the support of the Greater Gulfport business community. There is also no doubt that the Senior Center and the entire area senior community can best be reached through a regular sponsorship program at the Center in partnership with the Multipurpose Senior Center Foundation.

For information regarding a wide variety of sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

Senior Center Supervisor, **Susan Frank** at 727-893-2237 or e-mail her at [sfrank@mygulfport.us](mailto:sfrank@mygulfport.us)

or Senior Services Coordinator, **Cynthia Dean** at 727-893-1231 or e-mail her at [cdean@mygulfport.us](mailto:cdean@mygulfport.us)

*Gulfport's  
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 serves more than  
 2000 registered  
 members.  
 Attendance is  
 about 200 daily.  
 More than 100  
 volunteers serve in  
 a variety of  
 capacities in  
 support of the two  
 full time staff.*

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**TO ADVERTISE, CALL: Sue at 727-893-2237 or Cynthia at 727-893-1231**

## Leave A Legacy ... Support the Gulfport Multipurpose Senior Center Foundation

You can help make sure that the Gulfport Center will continue to look after the needs of your community's future generations of older residents by arranging a charitable gift in your estate plans.

It is easy to arrange your legacy to the Gulfport Senior Center Foundation through: A bequest in your will or living trust, a beneficiary designation on a life insurance policy, a beneficiary designation on an IRA or retirement plan (401-k or 403-b), a payable-on-death arrangement on a bank account or certificate of deposit (CD), a transfer-on-death designation on an investment account or mutual fund.

For information, call 727-893-2237 or 727-893-1231



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1. Call 1-800-963-5337 to speak to a S.H.I.N.E. counselor.
2. Call the Senior Center 727-893-2237 or 727-893-1231 to make an appointment to meet with a S.H.I.N.E. counselor at the Senior Center.
3. Attend an S.H.I.N.E. information seminar at the Senior Center.

### S.H.I.N.E. Information Seminars

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March 9

Gulfport Multipurpose Senior Center

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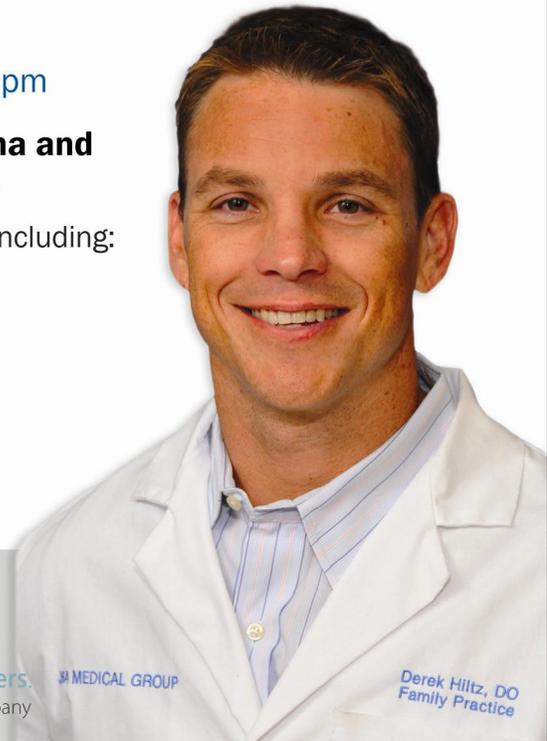
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