

celebrating the spirit

BY SAMANTHA L. DANIELS

The last Saturday of April is World T'ai Chi Day. In Pittsburgh, enthusiasts of the ancient Chinese practice, as well as curious spectators, can head to Bird Park fire pit in Mt. Lebanon for the fourth annual Pittsburgh celebration held by David Clippinger of Still Mountain T'ai Chi. The observance on April 28 goes around the world, beginning at 10 a.m. in New Zealand and traveling across the globe to end at noon in Hawaii.

Clippinger, a seasoned martial art *sifu* (teacher) who has practiced for more than 20 years, will offer free demonstrations and short forums. "It's all about giving people the opportunity to try t'ai chi," Clippinger says. "They get a real flavor for it. They do things, learn things, and understand it." Last year the event about 100 people.

"T'ai chi is very good for managing stress and for keeping perspective," Clippinger says. "A lot of philosophy is working behind t'ai chi. It's about the dynamics of relationships — either physical objects or physical people — it changes the way you interact with the world."

The Center for Integrative Medicine at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center also offers t'ai chi classes. The CIM strives to incorporate evidence-based natural healing with traditional medicine. Sifu EngKeat Teh leads an ongoing class from 7 to 8 p.m. every Thursday. The fee is \$12 for one class or \$40 for four. Drop-ins are welcome. **j**

Still Mountain T'ai Chi & Chi Kung, Mt. Lebanon, 412.480.9177. www.stillmountaintaichi.com. UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine, Shadyside campus, 412.623.3023. integrativemedicine.upmc.com.



David Clippinger



Did you know?

Allergies may be genetic! According to the Web site www.theallergyauthority.com children have a 40 percent chance of developing allergies if one parent has them, 80 percent if both parents suffer.

solving the puzzle of autism

Approximately one in 150 children is now diagnosed with autism, a health problem that has increased tenfold in the past decade. Working to ultimately decrease these numbers, the non-profit organization Autism Speaks raises awareness and research funds through events, public service announcements, and school presentations.

While April is Autism Awareness Month, Pittsburgh's eighth annual Walk Now for Autism will be held on Saturday, June 2, at Heinz Field. Last year the event drew close to 10,000 people and raised \$674,000. Kim Fiore, publicity co-chair for this year's walk, says the 2007 goal is \$1 million.

"We want to raise awareness so parents can learn the signs of autism and start early intervention programs," says Fiore, whose 20-year-old son is a non-verbal sufferer of the disease. Last year her walk team, Johnny's Angels, raised \$26,000 alone, the most raised by a family team that year.

For more information, contact Autism Speaks of Greater Pittsburgh, 412.487.6851. www.autismwalk.org/pittsburgh.

