

Tai Chi comes to Maynooth



Front, Taoist Tai Chi instructor Marion Lott takes those who gathered at the Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism Peterborough-Lindsay Branch open house through beginner movements. / SARAH SOBANSKI Staff

By Sarah Sobanski

Registered charity the **Fung Loy Kok Institute of Taoism Peterborough-Lindsay Branch** has brought a new way to stay active to Hastings Highlands.

'Wave hands like clouds' is one of the 108 beginner Taoist Tai Chi movements instructor Marion Lott will be teaching at the Old Community Centre in Maynooth, this fall through until January. She hosted an open house there Sept. 13 - a Wednesday night, the same night classes will be hosted once a week from now until the end of the four-month session.

Returning from teaching overseas, Lott found herself practicing under the institute's Wilberforce, Haliburton and Kinmount instructor Wilma Thomson. After a year of observing her dedication, Thomson suggested she take up teaching.

'She was very impressed with my ability to keep up with Tai Chi, even though I was away from it for quite a few years,' said Lott. 'I said, it'd really be nice to have it closer to my area.'

Lott hails from the Madawaska area. Locals might recognize her as a supply teacher. She's taught elementary classes in the area including in Bancroft and Maynooth. Her other passion, of course, is Tai Chi. She's been practicing since the late '90s.

Lott said anyone practicing Tai Chi can become involved in a community of fellow practitioners. Because of this she knew like-minded individuals who also wanted Tai Chi further north. Once she was accredited the next step was finding a venue. She praised the community centre as a great place to practice.

'Maynooth was great because I thought, well there is already Yang Style Tai Chi in L'Amable,' said Lott, referring to instructor Sandra Zabłudofsky's practice at the Dungannon Recreation Centre. 'I thought it would be a nice hub because then I could pull people if they wanted from Barry's Bay or Madawaska, Whitney and then Bancroft.'

The difference between Yang and Taoist is that Taoist is a martial arts but it's considered a soft martial arts because it focuses more on the health benefits, Lott said. It's great for seniors and people who have had injuries, she said.

'Even though there is blocking movements it's all about your health, strength, balance, flexibility - all the movements are about turning of the spinal cord so there's a lot of focus on massaging the internal organs.'

This session of classes is \$135 for seniors, \$90 for those ages 16 to 30 and \$165 for everyone in between. Lott is a volunteer, as are all of the institute's instructors. All proceeds will go the institute for expenses such as the venue.

'Some people like the idea of yoga but they don't like sitting or shifting into postures - this may be a different way of exercising [for them]. It is a martial art but it focuses more on your wellbeing,' said Lott, encouraging community members to come and try the practice out. 'Anyone that's really interested in a nice sort of gentle way of improving their health, balance, strength, flexibility? come and try.'