

The T.K.D. Flash

A Publication of the Association of Academies of Martial Arts

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TOURNAMENT ACTION. A “High Noon” showdown! Set aside April 13, a Sunday, for the Wisconsin Chang-Hon Challenge. The Tournament Promoter, Mr. Kevin McDaniel, can be contacted at (608) 831-5967 or e-mailed at Kevin.McDaniel@ustf-region5.org.

Patterns, free-sparring, team patterns, and sparring with foam weapons. Bound to be fun, bound to be well-run, bound to be officiated fairly. The tournament will be at the Keva Sports Center in Middleton WI.

Preregistrations received by April 1 get a free tournament t-shirt. Inexpensive, family friendly and family discounts, quality custom medals for individual patterns and sparring, great trophies for team patterns and Sword Sparring. Plan on it!

On March 5 Miss **Amirah AbuLughod**, herself a Gold Award Girl Scout, gave a seminar-demonstration to the Saukville Girl Scouts on self-defense for girls. Everybody had a lot of fun.

On May 3 and 4, 2008, **Grand Master Mike Winegar** will teach a “C” instructor course in Cadillac MI. Dr. Steve Osborn will host this event for our Region. This is simply not to be missed. Contact Dr. **Steve Osborn**, at Cadillac TaeKwon-Do, sosborntkd@hotmail.com. Recommended highly by all “in the know.”

Congratulations to **Jay and Michelle Mustapich** on the birth of Tessa Maritza on March 27th. Tessa Maritza arrived in the world at 8 lbs. 5 oz. and 20 " long. (No report as to the color of her trunks.)

On March 15 a U.S.T.F. sanctioned Referee seminar was hosted by **Master Earl Weiss** and National TaeKwon-Do at DesPlaines IL. The course was taught by Mr. **Kevin McDaniel**.

Mr. Jukka Ahola leaves us to return to his native Finland shortly. Finland’s gain and Minnesota TaeKwon-Do’s loss.



Master F.M. Van Hecke conducted a Seminar, “Improving My TaeKwon-Do” at St. Peter’s TaeKwon-Do on March 8 in St. Peter, Minnesota. From left in front row: Mitchell Hockenberry, Alex Devens, Neeko Jensen-Connel, Elvis Narvaez, and Molly Jurewicz; from left in second row: Abby Dubois, Jenae Steiner, Jacob Fager, Christiam Narvaez, Stephanie Steiner, Stephanie Narvaez, and Levi Ballman; from left in back row, Dr. Larson, Mr. Lanes, Master VH, Amanda Freiborg, Jeff Jurewicz, Mr. Paar, and Mr. Ahola.



At the Third Dan test of Mr. Marcus Paar, St. Peter Minnesota, on March 8. From left: Mr. Jerad Lanes, Mr. Jukka Ahola, Master F.M. Van Hecke, Mr. Paar, Dr. Karen Larson

Students and faculty of the Grafton Academy of Martial Arts presented a Demonstration at Saukville Elementary School's Special Interest Day March 14. Participating were **Mrs. Mary Lubner, Miss Christen Langlois, Brittany Ashley and Matthew Thur**. And Your Humble Editor.

Big Dog Honored By Working Mother Magazine
Voted One of Best Women-Owned Businesses in the U.S.
[Credit Edwin Albanese and the Grand Rapids Press]

(Editor's Note: Sharon Spungen and Marianne Armstrong are the entrepreneurial spirits behind Big Dog TaeKwon-Do.)

"I broke the glass ceiling the first time I broke a board," said Spungen, 39, who went from lawyer to second-degree black belt and martial arts instructor.

"I feel the same way," said Armstrong, 47, a former stay-at-home mother who now holds a third-degree black belt. "I still have my first board that I broke."

For them, broken boards represent empowerment -- breaking away from the status quo and chasing what seems unattainable.

That drive -- and the way they support fellow women and mothers -- caught the attention of "Working Mother" magazine. The magazine named Big Dog Taekwon-Do one of the 2008 Best Women-Owned Companies in its April issue and at workingmother.com.

Winners were chosen for managing a business and at the same time championing family-friendly policies and the advancement of female employees.

There's an unmistakable maternal force at work at Big Dog Taekwon-Do, 6504 28th St. SE, in Cascade Township, where more than 75 students learn skills and discipline. While holding true to the techniques and tenets of the art, the women are not afraid to show their sensitive sides. It's not uncommon to hear laughter during the sparring.

A shelf holds the boards students have broken over the years, scribbled on with words of pride and encouragement.

"People walk in, and they expect to see an old Korean guy or a 6-foot brick house, and we're not that," said Spungen, mother of two boys.

But they are forces to be reckoned with. A mother of five children between the ages of 31 and 11, Armstrong requires her students to clean up after themselves and follow the rules. "There's nothing I haven't seen," she said.

Spungen and Armstrong met about five years ago at Gymco in Cascade Township. Spungen, whose son was involved in tae kwon do, was curious about taking an adult class. Armstrong was one of her first instructors. Armstrong already was a black belt with five years of experience. She also followed her son into the sport.

As their relationship grew, an idea began to take shape: the two mothers, who at first glance seem the antithesis of martial arts experts, would open a studio together.

Armstrong is executive director, and Spungen is marketing and program director. The business is 3 years old, offering children's and adult classes and a family class -- "A family who kicks together sticks together," they quip.

Todd Smithee, of Lowell, and his children, Connor, 9, and Erin, 7, have taken classes, including the Saturday family class, since September. "I get to go with my kids. I enjoy it, and they enjoy it," he said. "It's a friend/family atmosphere. People are always willing to pitch in," Smithee said.

Armstrong and Spungen employ three instructors.

For both women, family is the main focus, alternating nights they teach. They cover for each other for the circumstances that arise in family life.

Their kids often are with them. The flexibility they offer employees extends to their students.

"We have a lot of moms who are students,"

Armstrong said.

Many people are surprised to discover the women are martial artists. Disbelief is common, especially from men. Their children's friends think it's cool.

"We don't fit the mold," Spungen said.

"That's what makes it so cool. I don't like molds," Armstrong said.

Are you distracted?

By Paul Hebein, Third Dan

[Editor's note: Mr. Hebein has been a regular contributor to the Flash. He is a full Faculty member at the Academy of Martial Arts in Grafton, where he is an innovative, caring and able instructor.]

A distraction is defined as "an obstacle to attention."

What are some of the obstacles to our attention while practicing our art of Tae Kwon Do? Of course, there are numerous forms of distractions and they come in all shapes and sizes.

Of all the situations that can distract our attention, they really can be put into two categories: External and Internal. We will discuss examples of both, and more importantly, how you can overcome these distractions to make you a better practitioner.

First, let's talk about External Distractions. In this meaning, we focus on external distractions to your own being. External distractions to your being can range anywhere from a headache to having a bad day for whatever reason. External distractions are caused by an outside source. They are usually the result of a chain of reactions that ultimately find their way around to affecting your actions. They can be situations that are expected as well as unexpected. These are difficult to deal with, in that they take an effort above and beyond your own self control. It would be nice to live in a utopic world; free of aggravations and turmoil, but that is just not a reality. How each person copes with this is different from person to person. Generally, as human nature takes over, it is easy for a person to place blame on this interference rather than on themselves.



Mr. Marcus Paar demonstrate twin flying turning kick.

In Tae Kwon Do, external distractions can lead to many undesirable outcomes. They can be the source of a mistake that you make when testing. They can result in loss of a train of thought. Typically, a person or thing is the result of this distraction. To cope with this, you feel you must fix or eliminate the source of this distraction before you can move forward with your intended path.

What do you do when an external distraction occurs? For most humans, reaction is to blame that person or thing for the cause of your misintention. You make efforts to get around the distraction or cope with it. This generally leads you to an unintended path, in which you now have to change your plans. Sparring for example. You have been trained on the proper execution of an arm bar, utilized when someone throws a punch at you with their right arm. You practice this over and over and you feel pretty comfortable with its execution. The person that offers you an opportunity to utilize this

technique during a sparring match may offer a distraction in the form of kihapping loudly before throwing said right arm punch. This may distract you and therefore, you miss your opportunity. Or worse, the distraction changes your reaction, and offers your opponent an opportunity to react in a way that you are not expecting. Your arm bar could fail you.

You are at a tournament, and you sign up to compete in forms. You are awesome at your form and have practiced the movements of this form over and over again. People see you in class and assure you that your technique is flawless. At the tournament, your name is called to perform. The crowd cheers you on very loudly and there are many people with their eyes on you. Five movements into the form and you have made a mistake! The crowd was so loud; you lost your composure for just a moment. This is another example of an external distraction.

Second, let's discuss internal distractions. For this example, we look at the distractions of our own being, not distractions to our own being. This type of distraction can be very difficult to recognize. After all, like mentioned above, human instinct can instruct the person to place blame on the outside rather than the inside. Internal distractions come in many forms as well, ranging from self pity to insecurity. These distractions can rock a person to their very core.

In Taekwon-Do, internal distractions can lead to many undesirable outcomes as well. Different from External distractions, in that the person may not even know that they are faced with this internal distraction. This is what makes it hard to recognize. People are generally very comfortable with a set routine, even starting out at a very young age. When a routine is established, so are the existing internal distractions. The person may cope with these distractions and learn to deal with them.

How can we recognize these internal distractions? This is very dependant on the individual. The first step is to open your mind to fault. Everyone can be better and what they do. There is always room for improvement. Without this mind set, you close yourself off to identifying what these distractions may be. As mentioned, a distraction is an obstacle to attention. If there is lack of attention, there is room for more obstacles. Let's look at Board Breaking as an example. We are taught that we should focus beyond the target, beyond the wood. This is where our attack

should strike. The very first time you try to break a board, we instruct the practitioner in this very mind set. We may speak a second or two about this and we then allow the person to strike at the board. The person may be unsuccessful at his attempt. The result may be a hurt hand or foot, even tears. Underneath all of that may lay a new internal distraction for that person. This distraction may be in the form of uncertainty. For that individual, the next time he is tasked with breaking a board, he will revert to the time that he failed and may therefore distract himself from achieving his goal the next time.

So how do we compete with distractions? What can a person do to deal with both internal and external distractions? We must recognize that distractions can never be eliminated, nor do you want to eliminate them. The situations offer the person a chance to learn. As a student, you must enter every new learning situation with an "I can do it" attitude. You must change your paradigm with existing things that you have learned or experienced both good and bad. You should approach your next moment forward and from moments forward from here, that you are capable of anything. As teachers, we need to focus on fostering the mental "I can do it" with the student rather than the physical. This is especially crucial upon the first stages of the new learning experience for the student. An instructor and the student must take a proactive approach to strengthening the student's ego. This will generally lead to lessened distractions in the future. This will allow the student to better cope with external distractions in that they can find their way back to their intended path easier. It will also help to lessen internal distractions by allowing the student to approach a new situation with a positive attitude and self confidence. It is necessary to focus on strengthening the mind first rather than the body first.

In conclusion, distractions can be a part of every day life, if you allow them to be. You are better than you think you are. You are more capable with a forward thinking mind set. You are stronger than your opponent. You are the ultimate fighter in your universe. Distractions exist only if you allow them to.

There are no weak soldiers under a strong general--Anonymous