

The T.K.D. Flash

A Publication of the Association of Academies of Martial Arts

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With this issue, The TKD Flash, which has been published by the A.A.M.A. for over twenty years, begins its service as national newsletter for the United States Taekwon-Do Federation. Thanks are owed to Grand Master C.E. Sereff and Master Renee Sereff for giving your humble editor this opportunity to be of service. Thanks are also due to them for this opportunity for U.S.T.F. members to publish their news, pictures and articles. Blame for any failure to publish or errors in editing are entirely the purview of your humble editor. You are invited to make this publication great.

Message from Grand Master Charles Sereff and Master Renee' Sereff.

We look forward to a great relationship with all members of the USTF via this important newsletter! Congratulations to Master F.M. Van Hecke for his expertise in publishing this monthly publication. Remember there will be no Success without U! We are hoping to have participation from all USTF Regions and all Ranks, Instructors and Students in the USTF about any subject of interest to the members. With our support,

Grand Master Charles Sereff
USTF President

Master Renee' Sereff
USTF Test Director



Grand Master Charles E Sereff, USTF President announces the promotion of Master Bob Neidig and Master Kresimir Brusar to 8th Dan. June 28, 2008. Master Bob Neidig has been a student of Grand Master Sereff from 10th gup White belt to present. He currently teaches and is head of Trinity Taekwon do in Broomfield. Master Kresimir Brusar was on the first demonstration team in 1980 when General Choi Hong Hi took two from each country to go to North Korea, including Grand Master Sereff and Karl Nicoletti from USA. He is currently residing and teaching in Washington D.C. Along with these promotions Grand Master Charles E. Sereff, Grand Master Mike Winegar, Master Renee' Sereff, Master Kirk Steadman, Mr. Barney Montano, Mr. Dave Martin also graded Mr. Bob Ito and Mr. Mat Crackel to VI Dan, Mr. David Christopher to V Dan and Erika Sanchez, Estelle Yates, and Peter Wilson to I Dan. A reception immediately followed the grading. Pictured, from left: Master Bob Neidig, Grand Master Sereff, Grand Master Mike Winegar, and Master Kresimir Brusar.

Mrs. Jacqueline Karpinsky will host a Black Belt test in Sheboygan Falls WI on September 13. Several schools will participate. Interested Instructors should contact her at threecatsrule@yahoo.com.

A Black Belt Test will be held at Sereff Taekwon-Do in Broomfield CO on September 6.

A Color Belt Test will be held at Sereff Taekwon-Do on September 13.

Sereff TKD will also host a Black Belt Test on December 6 and and Color Belt test on Dec. 9.

The Midwest Chang-Hun Tournament was held in Elgin Illinois on July 26. Over 100 participants from IL, WI, NE, KY, MN.

Don't forget the 9th Annual Wyoming Invitational, hosted by Casper Rec Center Taekwon-Do, on September 20. Contact Jerry Sisco at siscokidool@hotmail.com.

Grand Master Sereff's Fall Championship for 2008 will be held in Broomfield CO on October 12. Contact HQ at 1-303-466-4963 for further information.

The United States Taekwon-Do Federation's National Championships for 2009 will be held on June 26 through 28th in Kelso, WA. The Tournament Promoter is Master Dan Huntington. Check out NWUSTF.com.

National Taekwon-Do Academy celebrates it's 20th Anniversary of continuous operation in Des Plaines Illinois, and 14th Year in Skokie! Congratulations to its students and faculty, and particular kudos to Master Earl Weiss, a regular contributor to these pages, who has preserved the integrity of his dojang through years of adversity and years of well-deserved success.

There will be a Referee Course at Sereff TKD on August 23. This course can lead to Class C, B, or A umpire certification. Contact HQ at 1-303-466-4963 for further information.

On September 27 Sereff T.K.D. will host an Advanced Ho Sin Sul Seminar with Maj. Frank Hannon. Contact HQ (#above) for details. Your Humble Editor has attended a course with Maj. Hannon--excellent!

Here's your chance! Grand Master Mike Winegar will teach the USTF Class A Instructors Course on November 8th and 9th at Sereff Taekwon-Do in Broomfield CO. Note: to be eligible to take this course you MUST be certified as a Class B USTF Instructor. Contact USTF Headquarters to reserve your spot now (October 26--too late)!

BACK-TO-BACK WITH BIG DOG

[Editor's Note: Herewith, two articles back-to-back by Big Dog Taekwon-Do instructors Sharon Spungen, Second Dan, (on right,below) and Marianne Armstrong, Third Dan (on left). Ms. Spungen's article was written years ago, Ms. Armstrong's more recently, but, what the heck, it gave the Flash a really great excuse to use the picture!]



The Least Likely Black Belt (Or A Journey Of I Can'ts)

By Sharon Spungen

I consider myself the "Least Likely Black Belt". When I started Taekwon-Do a little less than three years ago, it was accidental. I was thirty-three, with two children (then aged 1 ½ and 4). My then four year old had enrolled in a class because



Katey Armstrong, new First Dan, breaks wood.

he was afraid of taking gymnastics and his truly exceptional teacher had recommended that the Taekwon-Do program might be a good fit for him. He would still be developing his coordination and balance without the height concerns of the bars and balance beams. So, because I wanted him to get stronger and more self-confident, and because I liked the discipline aspect, I signed him up. I remember sitting in the lobby, watching my child (and his friends) pick up their little feet to try to kick and falling over like dominoes! I'm not ashamed to say that sitting in that lobby was the best entertainment I had some days! Anyway, one afternoon, I was laughing with another mom whose daughter was the only girl in the class. I noticed how well-put together she was and how her children seemed to respect her, all three of them! When I asked her what her secret was – how she managed to keep so cool and have such a good relationship with her kids, she told me it was simple “When they started martial arts many years ago, I decided that I should always outrank them!” It was sport she could enjoy with her children and they respected her for her abilities and her dedication as well as for her parenting skills. I was blown away... and then she suggested that I should come try it.

To be candid, I thought she was nuts. I was a lawyer by trade, a stay-at-home Mom, and was overweight and out of shape. I couldn't

imagine taking part in any kind of exercise class, much less a martial arts class. I had never been athletic, and had never even considered martial arts. But... she kept on asking and finally one day, we agreed that if I came and tried it once, she wouldn't ask again even if I decided it wasn't for me. When I told him about it, my husband laughed and said he'd watch the kids.

I remember walking into what I considered my child's classroom, and meeting Mr. Smith for the first time. I was, quite frankly, terrified. I was sure that it would be too violent, too rough, too “not me.” I guess Mr. Smith saw my fear and hesitation, and I will never forget how he pulled me aside and spoke to me gently about who he was and what he offered in his classes. He asked me to think about two questions “When was the last time you took time to do something good for you?” and “How would you feel if you could learn something that might help you protect yourself and your kids?” Given that I had no good answers, I signed up!

For the first few months, everything was a challenge and quite frankly, there were several times when I was sore and frustrated and thought about quitting. But every time I was convinced that I wasn't going to get it, I was quite dramatically proven wrong. With Mrs. Armstrong as my role model (she is a shining example of perseverance in and of herself) and Mr. Comer as my cheerleader, I hesitantly moved up through the beginning ranks. Each new belt had challenges, true, but with the support and friendship of the people from my class, the fun outweighed the frustration!

Then, about six months into my training, Mr. Smith told me I was going to break a board and that it was “Ninety-eight percent mental.” I told him that by my calculations, it was about 100% wood and was sure that there was no way I could possibly break anything. Well, it wasn't the first try or the second, but that night, I did break a board and I was hooked. That day,

something changed for me. Where before I didn't think I could, now I realized that it wasn't that I couldn't... it was just that I needed a different way to think about things.

In that first year of my training, I lost close to 30 pounds just by attending classes. I felt better about myself and became far more aware of personal safety issues and I became an advocate for the USTF program that I was so proud to be part of. After the following year, I even became a part owner of a new USTF school opened so that we could ensure that the standards and mission of the USTF were upheld. It has been an evolution of sorts.

To make a long story short, I am still a "high maintenance" student... my Instructors, all of them, understand that I learn first in my head and then try to translate to my body. I can't count the times that I have been frustrated by a kick or hol sin sul maneuver and then Mr. Smith will make time out of his busy schedule to help me break the move down into manageable parts. I've accepted that I won't look like Jennifer Garner, and there are times when I look at those black belt flying kicks with more than a drop of nerves... but on September 17, when I stand before Grand Master Sereff and Mr. Smith, I will be proud to say "Sir, I did my personal best" and know it will be enough. This journey has been a life-changing experience and I will forever be grateful for having taken the first steps.

Thoughts on becoming a Third Degree Black Belt

By Marianne Armstrong

The question "why do I want my 3rd Dan black belt" is a difficult one for me to answer. It's kind of like asking me "why do I want to breathe". Taekwon-Do runs through my blood, gives me purpose and keeps me motivated.

Taekwon-Do is not something I do for a hobby – teaching and practicing Taekwon-Do is part of my life and part of who I am. To put it simply, I cannot imagine my life without Taekwon-Do.

It's not just the investment of time or effort or energy that I put into teaching classes or practicing on my own – it's the choice we made to open our own school. I have given up many

things and made many sacrifices and with the love and support of my family and friends, I have been able to make doing what I love a way of life.

Becoming a Third Dan is not a goal in and of itself for me, it is just another step along the way. My commitment to this art and to my training is something that remains constant and unwavering.

Sereff World Camp Report

Wow! We had the best camp this year including many of our old friends in the USTF as well as some new ones! The Aussies arrived and made quite an impression especially at International Day at camp! The McCarthy sisters from Ireland gave us all a class to be remembered in Korean!

USTF State Directors taught the color belts outside while Grand Master Winegar taught the Black Belts inside. Master Renee' Sereff explained that training in the heat was part of the character building and getting ready for Black Belt.

The most memorable time was a bunch of kids from Washington brought by Mrs. Sharon Cormier. These kids all are adopted and showed all campers what a difference Taekwon Do can make in all of

Christie Meiklejohn and Cassie Bosse give Australian Josh Hill something to jump over to leap into the lake at Sereff World Camp.



our lives! The abuse these kids have endured and all of the problems they have overcome lets us know just how important caring can be. Thanks to "Tree House" they were able to attend the camp and gave us all a chill with their important songs like "Lean on Me". Look for more information on how you can make a difference in abused children's lives!

Not one but two Grand Masters put us through the paces! Grand Master Sereff and Grand Master Winegar. Technically and physically we all enjoyed the challenges! Camp Directors and Master Renee' Sereff had classes with all students and really set the pace for the rest of the week.

The day trip to Grand Lake Colorado had us training in the center of town at the park, lunch under the hot sun and the polar bear plunge into the cold Grand Lake. The tradition goes on!

Master Kirk Steadman and Ms. Denise Moormeier were the camp directors this year. Ms. Moormeier brought a little Disney to the camp by naming the 3 teams after Disney characters. Her logic was Mickey, Donald and Goofy were great friends and together for over 75 years. Team captains this year were Mr. Lance Edwards, USTF Regional Director, Mr. Robin Johnson, and Mr. John Bradley from Australia. From the scavenger hunt including every kind of wildlife poop to a four leaf clover, all campers were busy hunting all week long!



So exactly how, with those shades on, does the Grand Master continually find us goofing off in the back row? Grandmaster C.E. Sereff teaches at Grand Lake.



Distinguished USTF Officers and Directors at World Camp assembled prove, once again, that one can always look to Master Kirk Steadman for sartorial elegance in footwear.

What would camp be without our bonfire for s'mores! Thanks to Mr. Paul Byrne, USTF New Jersey State Director the fire went well and the s'mores were great! Master Kirk Steadman gave a brief history of smore's and of course it was quite a tale!

Master Renee' Sereff met with all of the Ladies at camp for a little chat! Ms. Denise Moormeier gave her thoughts on women training in Taekwon do along with Susan Marx-Maestas motivational talk. Several schools throughout the USTF have formed small clubs that honor women in Taekwon Do. The ladies from Maestas Taekwon do have the WBBC, (Womens Black Belt Club). The Sereff Ladies have been working on a name for their group and Miss Rebecca Rosenblum came up with the name after the meeting! Black belt Overachiever Women, BOW! These Ladies groups will gather together on important events like giving back to the community or addressing women's issues involved with Taekwon Do. If Ladies from your school come up with a group, let us know!

Great instruction by the best USTF has to offer, fantastic weather thanks to the III Dans, wonderful students eager to learn and number one, a great leader, Grand Master Sereff! Camp was truly a success!

In 2010 we are going to the Riviera Mayan for our Sereff World Camp.

Look for information soon!