

# The T.K.D. Flash

A Publication of the Association of Academies of Martial Arts

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*There was a testing in Mooresville for High White Belt through High Red Belt on January 20 and one for Charlotte students on the 21st.*

On February 17 the Academy of Martial Arts Invitational Tournament will be held at the Charlotte A.M.A., 6445 Albemarle Rd.

A test is scheduled in Sheboygan for February 24.

**Brat-Fry!** A brat-fry will be held for all A.M.A.-affiliated students and their families at 11:00 a.m. 'til ? on February 24 immediately after the Eastern Sun gup test (which starts at 9:00 a.m.). The "fry" will be at Manning's Pub in Sheboygan. Beat those Winter Blues and Blahs. Manning's is just north of Eastern Sun one-half block on 15th Street. Raffle, door prizes, good times and story-swappin'. Mr. VH has promised not to sing.

The first of the regular Deacon classes (non-accelerated schedule) is February 3 in Sheboygan.

*Please feel free to contribute information about yourself, your events, triumphs, etc. to The Flash. A golden chance for free P.R. without the pain of doing your own newsletter.*

A test will be held in Jackson on February 3.

Upcoming tests in Charlotte: March 10, May 20. Upcoming tests in Mooresville: March 11, May 19.

**Inner-School Tournament! A super chance to warm up for the Spring season. At Eastern Sun Martial Arts on February 10. A free freesparring seminar will be held at 11:00 to be followed by competition at noon. An inexpensive opportunity to have fun in a controlled and friendly environment.**

*A faculty seminar was held on stepsparring at Grafton on January 27.*

Note the American TaeKwon-Do-Jujitsu Association's First Annual Tournament on March 10, 2001 at Maine East High School, DesPlaines. Call Mr. VH if you need more detail. Mr. John Miller is Tournament Director, and Mr. VH knows him to be a fine fellow. Moreover, the Tournament will feature a Board Breaking Competition, Forms Competition, and Continuous Freesparring in an I.T.F.-similar format, something we don't see in Wisconsin much.

*Assistant Instructors at the Charlotte/Mooresville Schools were honored at a banquet December 9. They have the gratitude of the Association.*

A Black Belt Test will be held for the following persons the fourth week end in March, subject to U.S.T.F. approval: for Second

Dan, Mr. Gregg Thursten, Mr. Peter Spitz, Mrs. Jacqueline Karpinsky; for First Dan, Mr. Dwight Drescher, Mr. Marc Mikkelson. Details will be posted in their schools, and all are invited to cheer them on.

A test was held in Sheboygan on January 28. Mr. Henry Goddard, Ms. Julie Berglund, Mr. Paul Schneider and Mr. VH presided. Mr. Floyd Jones was Corner. A total of 14 students from Sheboygan and Howard's Grove tested.

It is possible, just possible, that a test may be held for Black Belt candidates and advanced degrees of Black Belt in late November or early December of this year within a reasonable geographic proximity. Any person interested in testing is cordially invited to take the initiative and contact Mr. VH to discuss such issues as eligibility and preparation. Please do so very promptly....

A test will be held at the Mequon school on February 12.

## Protocol for Black Belts

By F.M. Van Hecke

[This is the final installment of an article begun in the Flash in October of 2000 (Vol. XII, Number 10) and continued in Numbers 11 and 12, and Vol. XIII, Number 1.]

## THE LIFE OF THE MIND.

Thinkers are quite often drawn to the Art. They are capable of transcending their own culture and learning an exotic and coherent science. However, thinkers are also

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often people whose egos have always been rewarded primarily for being smart kids, and as a result, there is a tendency to overintellectualize to prove both prowess in the Art and the underlying fact that one can think. "Did you know that there are 44 different stances?" really may not contribute to the education of your students, but is really just showing off. It may shock the Chodan, but there is stuff they should not yet learn and stuff to be learned. It is a ruder shock to those in even higher ranks; you can be a big dog in your kennel, but your kennel isn't the whole world. The sorry state of the American who wants to tell it all about the Art is revealed by the utterly dismal state of martial arts literature, which is singularly marked, like your television set, with pictures, not substance.

**SPONSORSHIP.** In our system, Deaconhood is the official recognition of the Black Belt Candidate. Some other systems do not have comparable concepts. A deacon must be sponsored by a Black Belt. Unless someone will sponsor a student, he may not be awarded deaconhood. The highest ranking Black Belt in your school, your "School Master", has the ultimate say-so as to who may sponsor whom, but will generally consult with other Black Belts. Generally, a Black Belt may not sponsor until a period of time (usually six months) subsequent to achievement of Chodan, for reasons that should be obvious. Generally a Chodan will not sponsor more than one student at a time. Sometimes a "problem student", or one perceived to be in a position to derive benefits from input of more than one Black Belt,

will be cosponsored. Occasionally cosponsoring is done because one of the sponsors is not sufficiently senior and it is anticipated that the less senior Black Belt will be "handed off" the deacon prior to testing when the newer Black Belt achieves seniority. During deaconhood, the sponsor is responsible for the complete training of the sponsoree, "rounding out" the candidate. If the candidate is deficient in physical terms, the sponsor should work on conditioning; if in teaching, on knowledge; if in humility, on personal improvement. The sponsor "certifies" the readiness of the candidate for testing, but is not the final arbiter. If the candidate is deficient (in terms of what he must be), it falls upon the head of the sponsor.

**YOUR UNIFORM.** Your uniform is the outward symbol of the inner reality, but it is also a sign of your respect for the Art, your School, and your associations. Different schools have different uniform requirements. Sure, you'd like to express your individuality, but save it for the disco. Unauthorized patches or uniform styles should not be worn. If your instructor has particularized requirements, meet them and set an example for the students. Avoid smelly unkempt uniforms. Don't wear a uniform that looks like a refugee from your glove compartment; use an iron! Do not wear jewelry on the dojang floor, and do not wear a watch unless you have no choice. Require yourself that the one uniform you cannot change, your body, is kept fit, clean, and worthy of the outward uniform. Long, dirty toenails are not only unsavory—they are thoughtless.

**YOUR DOJANG.** A filthy dojang is an offense. It says something about your school, your organization, your leaders, no matter how harried. Ever step on gum in bare feet? Locate pornography or six week old French fries while cleaning lockers? It says even more about you because you perceive it and choose to do nothing. Pictures of bloody confrontation, sadistic torture, exotic weaponry send a message—the wrong one. Pictures of children, interesting news articles, informational tracts and bulletins and oriental art and exhortational calligraphy are more appropriate adornment for the walls.

**WHAT A BLACK BELT MUST BE.** We allow and encourage people to grow through the Art. Thus the standard for growth is measured by the capability of the student. What you have been accustomed to assume are objective standards are intrinsically subjective, in that while the achievement of objective standards aids the student in growth, it is truly the student's entire character in growth that is the true measure. With that in mind, it is easy to see why an 82 year old woman, the physically handicapped, the mentally retarded, and yes even the klutz, may be Black Belts. To be a Black Belt, one must be committed and competent in light of one's natural limitations. Above all, a Black Belt must understand the inner peace that arises from the defeat of his or her own fear, and that the directness and simplicity brought about by such tranquility is strength.