

The T.K.D. Flash

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The National Newsletter of the United States Taekwon-Do Federation

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AROUND THE COUNTRY

We have no reports from Stringers as to events in July.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pursuant to an admittedly arbitrary editorial decision, we will not publish notices of August events. However, we will



The group photo for a Black Belt test held at **Marquette Taekwon-Do** in the Upper Peninsula on June 26. The story and pictures in more detail in this issue. From left, new First Dan Miss **Kate Wisuri**, Corner Mrs. **Sara Wisuri**, Presider Mr. **Chuck Giotto**, USTF U.P. State Director, Mr. **Bob Ross**, who assisted, and new First Dan Mr. **Nate DeWitt**.



The Upper Peninsula is in Michigan’s phase 5 which allowed Marquette Taekwon-Do to have an indoor test with a limit of 10 people. Beside the two candidates 6 family members were allowed to attend. Advised by U S T F headquarters not to hold Ho Sin Sul for the test, family members video taped their skirts (shores of Lake Superior/Public Park) for review. Both candidates’ mothers are TaeKwon-Do practitioners and

were able to assist in the test. Kate Wisuri is the 8th member of her family to attain a black belt. This is the most in Marquette’s venerable school history. Nate is studying to be a pilot. Pictures of some proud moms and the new Black Belts: left, Mrs. **Jennifer Boyer DeWitt** and Nathanael DeWitt, and right, Mrs. Sara Wisuri and Kate Wisuri. More photos, next page.



publish notices, at least in this issue, of events scheduled for after August 31. We have not received formal notice of the cancellation of some of these events so we apologize in advance if events were either included or deleted in error. Promoters should feel free to contact us to inform of any changes, cancellations, or rescheduling.

Stay safe out there!

Your Humble Editor

On September 6 a Black Belt test will be held at **Lone Wolf Taekwon-Do** in Cadillac, Michigan. Mr. **Jim Alger** is the Promoter.

On September 19, the USTF Step Sparring seminar at **Mountain View Taekwon-Do & Fitness**, Washington State, is cancelled.

The 21st Annual Wyoming Invitational Tournament which was to have been held on September 19 is cancelled.

On September 26 (alternative dates possible) a Black Belt test will be held at **Senatobia Taekwon-Do**. The Promoter is Mr. **Jeremy Bennett**.

Also on September 26, there will be a Black Belt test at **Big Dog Taekwon-Do** in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

A Black Belt test will be held at **Mountain View Taekwon-Do and Fitness**, at which candidates will participate from Mountain View and also **Bodystrong Taekwon-Do** and **Rainier View Taekwon-Do** on October 10. Promoter, Sr. Master **David Mason**.



Left, Mr. Nathaniel DeWitt in 2009 and today; right, Miss Kate Wisuri in 2010 and today, sources of pride to teachers and family.





On a glorious July 23, Third Dan **Valerie Locklair** and Fourth Dan **Matthew Thur** were married at Grafton, Wisconsin. Saluting them upon their exit from Our Savior Lutheran Church were well-wishers from the Academy of Martial Arts where both serve on the faculty. Below, the traditional father-daughter dance with a new twist (her dad is Prof. Gary Locklair, Concordia University); at least nobody can knock **her** stance... (Note: all photo credits Kathleen Van Hecke.)





The Winners!

On November 19 there will be a Black and Color Belt Testing at **Axe Taekwon-Do**.

[Editor's Note: The following two articles are reprints from, respectively, the October and December issues of the Flash from 2009. Some of the commentary is certainly dated, but, hopefully, they may have stood the test of time.]

Some Simple Ideas for Increasing Your School's Holding Power

By F.M. Van Hecke

Everybody who has studied the business aspect of martial arts is now aware that the cost of retention of existing students is far less than that of initial recruitment. The presence of more advanced students is in itself a recruitment advantage for you with those who visit your school and see progress for other children and adults who, but for the skills acquired, look a lot like themselves (rather than being carbon copies of Bruce Lee, shirtless).

More advanced students at a demonstration speak the message that there are goals to be achieved and the viewer could participate in the realization of such goals at your school.

Finally, more advanced students eventually work their way to Black Belt and added prestige for your dojang. And maybe some teaching help.

Recruiting new students initially is very much a "skill game," and one concerning which volumes could be written. But retaining students is itself a challenge, and we offer here some tips in that direction.

One method is to have a specific "parent" bulletin board (different from the student bulletin board) in which you can not only post notices of upcoming events and pictures of past events and tests but articles from publications that stress the value(s) of Taekwon-Do. We make it a point to keep the bulletin board "fresh" by changing articles at least once a month and changing positions of articles around during the month.

Another thing we do is take advantage of our good-looking students (aren't they all?) by taking a picture of each when he or she signs up. This is not done in a vacuum since a photographic use release must be signed with every application. We keep a

simple and inexpensive digital camera in our Black Belt room, snap the picture (at the same setting, location and lighting each time, thereby minimizing error and maintaining consistency) at the student's first class, and by the time of the second class the magic of same-day processing provides us with a picture to put on another bulletin board with the student's first name printed on it in magic marker. We put the photo of the new student at the bottom of the group and they can watch their progress up through the ranks.

The teachers (we have a large faculty at our school) check the bulletin board to connect name and face (they're all informed by e-mail of any new recruits as soon as an application is taken). They make sure that each student introduces himself or herself at the beginning of class. Students are encouraged to check the bulletin board to learn the names of their fellow students.

A "Student Director" is appointed who monitors the "attendance sign-in" sheet for early drop-outs and places phone calls to ask where little Johnnie is, how we miss him and are concerned he continue his studies.

These are just a few of the rare, non-web-related ideas, to aid with the retention problem. More in the next issue (perhaps).

Some Simple Ideas for Increasing Your School's Holding Power, Part II

By F.M. Van Hecke

In October we looked at a few simple, non-technical ways to retain students. They included the use of student photos and bulletin boards and the appointment of a Student Director to aid in retention.

This month we'd like to continue our discussion of a few ideas which work to keep students in our dojang.

One idea is to put together occasional joint classes if you otherwise separate children from adults. When children find themselves working together with adults toward common goals, an interesting dynamic occurs. The adults tend to "adopt," promote and encourage

the kids and the kids tend to appreciate the seriousness of their studies. Because the only comparable analogies (adults and kids working together in a common goal) are the family and schools, and schools tend to have comparatively few adults on their side of the equation, the net consequence is to develop a “family feel” for your school. If you have older students (grandmas and grandpas) it’s a delight to watch how kids attach to them naturally.

We generally put Black Belt Candidates who may have trained in different geographically proximate schools or classes (“Adult” vs. “Kids”) into a single “Candidates’ Class” for their final polishing. During that period it is fun to watch people, across geographical, age, and other natural social barriers, bond as they attempt to drag one another across what many would regard as the finish line.

School projects can also cement the feeling of “family” or “team,” not just for community service projects but also for such relatively mundane activities as giving the dojang its spring cleaning.

The Student Director can help pull together social events for the school. Every year we go to a local college’s women’s basketball game as a group. Often we hold a “lock-in” for kids. With parental “consent” forms, an adult male and an adult female to supervise, kids can play games, do a mini-class, and sleep on the dojang floor in their sleeping bags. Do it on New Year’s Eve and mom and dad get a night out!

On a hot summer evening, treat everybody to ice cream at a local drive-in after the last class. Consider a costume party or a seasonal get-together.

Travel to a tournament? When you get back, have an awards dinner for participants. They can wear their medals, be recognized, eat pizza and win prizes.

Students are often happy to complete their community service working as a team, and occasionally schools need funds and can do a fundraiser such as a car wash.

In the last of this series, we talked about the importance of bulletin boards and keeping them “fresh” by providing new materials regularly. Even just reminders (“Remember, no class on Thanksgiving”) on colorful paper in different fonts can provide that new look. “Have a great Ground Hog Day!” can fill blank space.

If you have a database including your students’ birthdays, sort for birthdays at the beginning of the month and put up a Happy Birthday greeting for each student having a birthday that month.

Keep material changing!

You can put up Taekwon-Do information (pattern names, abstracts of essays from Taekwon-Do literature, pictures from martial arts magazines).

And, of course, if your students do not directly receive the TKD Flash, you can put it up on the bulletin board each month. It fills a lot of space.

There are other potential uses of the Flash to promote your school and improve on student retention. If, for example, you have a gup level test, why not report it? The student (and his proud parents) get to see that there is national recognition of little Johnny’s Yellow Belt promotion. This also sends a message: your school is “connected,” recognized, important in the scheme of things.

And how much stronger is the case for publicizing your Black Belt tests?

Promotions are just part of the potential for your bulletin board or for the Flash. Tournament successes, the births of new children in your TKD family, marriages, acknowledgement of important people who have passed on.

Have an event? Don’t ever let a seminar or a tournament go by without whipping out that camera and taking a snapshot. It can go onto that bulletin board or into the Flash.

What are your proven ideas for student retention? Share. We’re all in the same boat.