

The T.K.D. Flash

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AROUND THE COUNTRY

A ZOOM meeting of Grand Masters, Senior Master, and Masters was conducted on January 16. To “cut to the chase,” here was the perspective of Distinguished Flash Stringer Grand Master **Renee’ Sereff**:

What a way to start out 2021! The first USTF Masters Zoom was well attended by not only USTF Masters USA but USTF Australia Masters too. The 5:30 am class for Australia was attended by Masters **Rob Taylor** and **Jan Taylor** and Master **John Bates**.



A bit of a trip down memory lane from the last Nationals: Officials, Masters, Sr. Masters, Grand Masters, and Sr. Grand Master. Front and center next to Sr. Grand Master C.E. Sereff, the late Grand Master **Paul DeBaca**. Long may his gentle and gentlemanly spirit infuse our hopes for our beloved Art.

We were welcomed by the founder of the USTF, Sr. Grand Master **Charles Sereff** and his words of wisdom. Grand Master **Mike Winegar** also gave us a great pep talk! Grand Master Renee' Sereff took on the role of Instructor for the day, following a moment of silence in honor of Grand Master **Paul De Baca**.

The goal of this class was to re-connect everyone after all events had been cancelled in 2020 due to the Pandemic and COVID-19. Training together filled the void we have all been experiencing in the last 20 months! Doing pattern Tong Il together was a highlight! Step sparring, social distance style with GM R. Sereff attacking and everyone defending was a way to practice the format, at least. Light Ho Sin Sul with creativity was practiced, as well. The spirits were lifted by all just spending a little time with each other. This is what we all needed to jump start 2021!

In attendance at the January 16 ZOOM meeting of Masters, Senior Masters, and Grand Masters:

Sr. Grand Master Charles Sereff
Grand Master Mike Winegar
Grand Master Renee' Sereff
Grand Master Stan Martin
Grand Master Earl Weiss
Grand Master Dennis Swan
Grand Master Kirk Steadman
Grand Master Larry Winn
Grand Master Tom Cope
 Sr. Master F. M. Van Hecke
Sr. Master Dan Griffin
Sr. Master Ricky Todd
Sr. Master Joseph Bosse'
Sr. Master Ed Lubow
Sr. Master William Dubbeld Sr.

Sr. Master David Ott
Sr. Master Ed Newcomer
Sr. Master Vicki Winegar
Sr. Master David Mason
Sr. Master Robin Johnson
Sr. Master Paul White
Sr. Master Matt Crackel
Sr. Master Robert Martin
Sr. Master Robert Pettijohn
Sr. Master Paul Byrne
Sr. Master Denise Moormeier
Sr. Master Lance Edwards
Master Lawrence Greene
Master Rob Riley
Master Kevin Bushor
Master Brandon Stoppani
Master Jim Smith
Master Rick Bauman
Master Mike Van Pietersom
Master Christopher Wadium
Master Rob Taylor, Australia
Master David Christopher
Master John Bates, Australia
Master Jan Taylor, Australia
Master Steve Osborn

A USTF Referee Seminar will be held on January 31 at the Academy of Martial Arts, Grafton. Master **Rick Bauman** will instruct.

Grand Master **Renee' Sereff** hosted a USTF Regional and State Directors Zoom class on January 16. We wanted all of the Directors to be able to reconnect with each other and their State Directors. We all trained in pattern, step sparring, social distanced and Ho sin sul. Lots of creativity with defenses and great format! There were some discussions about our uniform, etiquette when addressing a senior even in e-mail, making

sure you always talk to the instructor and not his students when needing a question answered and overall review of USTF policy. There will be no 2021 USTF Nationals due to the Pandemic but we will try to get this event back on track when it is safe to do so. Training together and just seeing each other helped with getting spirits up for 2021! Sr. Master Guy Williams, Alaska State Director made a surprise statement at the end and stated this would be his last Directors meeting as he was resigning his position as State Director of Alaska stating personal reasons. USTF Regional Director Grand Master Kirk Steadman will be appointing that position. We all look forward when we can return to events that will bring us all together again, until then keep training! Thank you to our USTF Directors for all your support!

Attendees:

Grand Master Renee' Sereff
Grand Master Kirk Steadman
Sr. Master Ricky Todd
Sr. Master Denise Moormeier
Sr. Master Guy Williams
Master Kevin Bushor
Master Craig Craddock
Master Brandon Stoppani
Mr. Anthony Giese
Mr. James Sroykum
Mr. Jeremy Bennett
Mr. William Awl
Mr. Freddie Cowns
Mrs. Marianne Armstrong
Mr. Charles Giotto
Mrs. Jacqueline Karpinsky
Mr. Omar Welch

February 25 will mark a promotion testing for all gup ranks and for selected dan ranks at **Axe Taekwon-Do** of Bellevue, Nebraska. Sr. Master Ricky J. Todd is the Promoter.

On March 13 a Black Belt test will be held at **Sereff Taekwon-Do**. Promotions are pending for Master and Sr. Master.

On May 27, Axe Taekwon-Do will have a test for Black Belt and colored belt ranks.

Sr. Master **Ricky Todd** sponsors a combined gup and dan testing at Bellevue, Nebraska, on August 26.

Sir:

As Regional Director for Region 3, I had the awesome opportunity to participate in the Regional/State Directors' Zoom meeting on this day. This meeting was a fantastic start to 2021 and offered much hope for a better year, and also reminded us how important Perseverance and Indomitable Spirit are, both in TaeKwon Do and our everyday lives.

It was so wonderful to be able to connect with Grand Master Sereff, my fellow Regional Directors, Grand Master Steadman, Sr. Master Todd and Sr. Master Moormeier, as well as the many State Directors that also participated in the meeting. We were able to come together to train and share out thoughts and concerns, despite the pandemic. Many of us have lost physical locations for our schools, have had direct impacts from Covid to either ourselves and/or to our loved ones and yet, we are still persevering, training when possible and getting together via Zoom! We will continue to live by all of the Tenets of TaeKwon Do and therefore, we will always be USTF strong!

Respectfully,
Mrs. Marianne Armstrong
Region 3 Director



Sr. Master **Ed Newcomer** shares twin flying side kick with us.

And planning well ahead as Sr. Master Ricky Todd is wont to do, **Axe Taekwon-Do** will hold a combined gup and dan testing on November 18.

The Fantasies of Samuel Gately: A Review

By the Editor

This writer has reviewed books for years. Many of these reviews may be found in back issues of the TKD Flash. However, all of the books previously reviewed in this publication explicitly dealt with martial arts or physical combat theory.

Here, by way of contrast, we deal with an entirely different genre: fantasy.

The works of Samuel Gately have a far more peripheral martial arts connection. The author holds a Black Belt (I.T.F.-U.S.T.F.) in another name, but the more remote connections are limited to one of his early editors and some of his themes, particularly in the later “Titan Wars” works which derive characters and scenarios from wrestling.

In his initial “Spies of Dragon and Chalk” series Gately, from the first riveting paragraph in Night of the Chalk, plunges aggressively into adventures in a conceptual world of dragons, a world outside of any time known to us but strangely familiar in its commercial concerns, socio-political intrigue, and character development. Breathlessly pounding down to an innovative final twist, it explores both the presence of evil and its non-recognition by those who would look the other way. The only question this reviewer would hazard: Why isn’t this made into a film?

The second in the series, Rise of the Falsemarked, continues the characters and relationships to which we were introduced in its predecessor. Here, however, economics, monopoly and treachery rear their ugly heads. After numerous plot twists and dealing with a more subtle brand of malice, good triumphs, but

not after clever maneuvers and a fair deal of luck.

Alliance of the Sunken takes us into a truly unique setting in a truly unique world. Just as bits of Atlanta, Seattle, and other places are underground, so the city within which this intrigue and these adventures take place has an underground, but this complex subterranean world is peopled by strange elements which intersect with the city above in many and mysterious ways.

In the “Open, Fire Eye, Close” series Gately introduces us to a city populated much as one would populate any city in a fantasy world, one with disparate human and quasi-human elements in uneasy balance. In The Fire Eye Refugee we are introduced to our heroine, a private detective wise in the ways of her venue but also savvy as to life in other places. Outside the city exists a vast encampment, a second city, of those fleeing persecution and death in other places but not permitted entry to the city for fear of instability and economic dislocation. She is no stranger to them. And the interface of the two cities creates many plot complications flowing through and about her.

Her personal drama continues in The Fire Eye Chosen. She deals with threats and opportunities posed by the numerous plotting of political forces and fire-wielding necromancy to a heart-stopping conclusion. The Fire Eye, an astronomical phenomenon peculiar to this fantasy world, creates the festival setting during which the plot unfolds.

The “Titan Wars” series begins with The Headlock of Destiny.

This writer’s first martial art was wrestling, but actual sport wrestling, as we know, bears little resemblance to the showy and bombastic world of the wrestling shows seen in the new medium of his childhood, television. They were all there, Vern Gagne, Dick the Bruiser (he actually played for the

Green Bay Packers), Andre the Giant (he's see in Princess Diaries), Hans Schmidt, Bobby Heenan, Da Crusher (a South Milwaukee statue is erected in his honor) and more modern iterations under Hulk Hogan, Steve Austin and the like. Vince McMahon and World Wrestling Entertainment "took off the mask" and made no pretense: it's show biz, not sport. Nevertheless, it's a rich genre to mine, and Gately mines its tone and types deeply, setting wrestling contests at the core of yet another fantasy world.

Headlock introduces us to Van the Beer Man, a young Titan who works in a brewery. Breweries are essential to the life of Milwaukee where Gately grew up, and one suspects the author's sympathetic portrait of a community dependent upon the industry rings true due to his experience. Van is a Titan, a human descendant of a race of giants living among humans. A bit alienated from their fellow citizens, Titan prowess is nevertheless useful: for lugging barrels and engaging in wrestling spectacles as much at the heart of this society as pro football and baseball are to ours.

We follow Van through a troubled childhood, life as a laborer, and eventual success as a wrestler at a town festival. A twist or two of fate put him into the nationally important Headlock of Destiny Tournament in far-away Empire City.

At the tournament political machinations of the promoters, local politics, regional factionalism, and the prizes and prestige of the contest blend into a toxic brew. Van, a naif, is thrust into a vortex of chicanery, duplicity, and treachery.

In The Piledriver of Fate we follow Van after the tournament. Here we discover a far more fantastic world as Van, many of his fellow Titans, and allies including a race of Valkyries one of whom appears as a love interest, resist an invasion from the armies of evil lead by a disgruntled Titan, supported by goblins, orcs, golems, dragons, and others. The graphic battle scenes feel "big screen" in their scope, and the

forces thrown together are an exercise in chaos and diversity.

Fantasy work, frankly, is not this writer's cup of tea. But in a world—our world—where works by Tolkien and Lewis must be taken seriously, Gately should not be overlooked. There's a lot of fun here.

Untitled

Below the wood
Above the brook there was the brae
The brae above the berm and wood where stood

Two strong thistles royal crowned
and lush with life
Nurtured by warmth of earth and sun,
fed by gentle rains
And brought by their forbear's love
to be themselves.

Rootbound, they could be together
through the wind and moth
the bee and goldfinch, seeking food
could make them one
And flower, so to make the seed
to carry on their line.

A winter, and
Then four new stood, one but briefly,
upon the berm above the brae

Three through bee and moth and loving breeze
did receive and give
The precious seed to ground about
upon the berm and brae.

That they might be, as were the two,
alive again
Above the brook that onward
ever flowed.

—F.M. Van Hecke

[Editor's Note: This poem was occasioned eight years ago upon a fortieth anniversary.]