

TANG SOO TIMES

ISSUE NO. 119

610-522-9120

JULY 2001

PAL CHE TANG SOO DO

229 SOUTH CHESTER PIKE

GLENOLDEN, PA 19036

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jul 2 - Gup test at dojang. No adult class.
- Jul 3,4 - No classes. Independence Day.
- Jul 16 - Black Belt pretest. No adult class.
- Aug 13 - Gup test at dojang. No adult class.
- Aug 18 - 5th Annual John Celli Gup Clinic.

MONDAY NIGHT ADULT CLASS SCHEDULE

- Jul 2 - Gup test at dojang. No adult class.
- Jul 9 - Regular adult class.
- Jul 16 - Black Belt pretest. No adult class.
- Jul 23 - Emphasis on breaking. All ages and ranks.
- Jul 30 - Black Belt class. Red belts and higher.

MASTER'S CORNER

On July 2nd Matt Byrne will be presented his Black Belt and will become our youngest practicing Black Belt at Pal Che. This is an open letter to him.

A Black Belt is a leader. As such, you will have the opportunity to be a leader among your classmates and friends outside the dojang. You can lead them down many paths, however the important thing to remember is that **YOU MUST BE A HERO**. All paths will have pitfalls and some may even lead to a dead end where you have to retrace your steps. There are, however, some paths you should never enter. From this day forward when you are introduced you will be introduced with four simple words after your name; "He's a Black Belt!" Make no mistake, that seemingly unimportant phrase carries an awesome burden. Your every action will become a reflection of this simple karate school and me. There are several millennia of Tang Soo Do warriors watching you. (Paraphrasing Douglas MacArthur's speech to the 1962 Graduating class at the United States Military Academy at West Point): "If you are to fail us, a million ghosts in white dobok trimmed in black would rise in unison thundering those magic words: **LOYALTY, RESPECT, HONOR.**" Choose your paths carefully, my friend.

NEW STUDENTS

We would like to welcome the following new students to our Dojang and to the worldwide family of Tang Soo Do:

ALI NAQVI DARRELL BROWN

Train often and train hard. You are on the steep portion of the classic learning curve and every class should reveal something new and exciting to you. If you ever have any questions, do not hesitate to ask a senior student.

KICK-A -THON

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every student who participated in the kick-a-thon to raise money for Haley Quinn to help offset her medical bills. As you remember, Hayley is six months old and has spent almost her entire life in Children's Hospital. She has already lost one kidney to her illness. Well, through your efforts and generosity, we raised over \$1800. Again, thank you very much. I know the money will be greatly appreciated by her family. We also give a special salute to the following for the most money raised:

Alyssa Belville	\$270
Fagan Family	\$160
Mark Valinote	\$122
Michael D'Angelo	\$ 86
Billy Blessington	\$ 85

FEATURE ARTICLE

I am stretched out on the hot Astroturf in the push-up position, jokingly referred to as the "downward rest position" by the Masters. Four hundred and seventy five other Black Belts are lined up the same way. My legs are aching from the run earlier that morning. The muscles in my back and arms are burning from the countless push-ups we did earlier that day. My whole body is weak from lack of sleep. The hot sun beats down on my back and shoulders as I feel the sweat trickle down my face on to the Astroturf below. Several Masters walk up and down the rows of black belts preventing us from kneeling to relieve the pain. Repeatedly the Masters ask us if we want to give up, if we want to go home. I try to take my mind off the pain while thinking that the day has just begun. My arms tremble with fatigue as I think to myself "Why am I doing this?" At that very moment, I wanted more than anything to be at home in the air conditioning or sitting poolside. Yet as I now sit at the desk in my office writing this, tears are streaming down my face and I'd give anything to be back on that hot Astroturf, in my sweat drenched dobohk with the four hundred and seventy five other black belts.

Since I've returned from the Black Belt Clinic several people have said things to me like "You look like you are taller!" "You look like you've lost weight" or "You just look different." None of these people know anything about the Clinic I attended. Why would they think those things about me? It is physiologically impossible for me to have grown taller over three days. I weigh the same as I did before I left. I agree I do look different, maybe it is because I feel different. Maybe it is because I carry myself differently now. Maybe what I feel on the inside is being reflected in my posture and in my mannerisms.

Each year the Clinic changes those of us who attend. Each year we test our limits and each year we raise them a little bit higher. Each year we conquer a seemingly insurmountable challenge and come out virtually unscathed. The ancient samurai warriors had a name for this type of endurance training. They called it *shugyo*. It fills me with pride to know that we still train in the spirit of ancient warriors that can be traced back over 2,000 years ago. It is times like this that test our indomitable spirit. Not many people go through life knowing what their limits are. As martial artists we test them every night in class. Testing our limits and overcoming them is a matter of life or death for us. Master Raver calls particularly tough classes "5 pound classes". He says we sweat off at least 5 pounds during those hot nights in the summer in the un-airconditioned dojang. At times it feels the temperature in the dojang reaches at least 100°. Each "5 pound class" we have increases our endurance and gives us something to use in the future when we really need it. How I perform at the Clinic is a reflection of my training over the past year. Every "5 pound class" that I put in the "bank" is drawn on to get me through that weekend. In the true nature of Um and Yang, the clinic in turn gives me more to draw on for the remaining 100° classes I will need to survive in the future. To further continue the circle, every 100° class, every "5 pound class" and every Clinic gives me the indomitable spirit to get through bad days at work, difficult exams at school or to protect myself on the street if I ever need it. "No retreat in battle" means much more than not giving up during a physical fight. In our everyday life we encounter "battles" at home, work or school that we must not retreat from. The indomitable spirit we develop through training transcends all aspects of our life. As a result, if we want something bad enough we will get it. It is who we are and what we do.

After that weekend I walked in to the dojang like nothing happened. Ignoring the pain in every muscle of my body, I was ready for Master Raver's regular Monday night class. I saw several of my fellow Black Belts who also attended the Clinic getting ready for class. I jokingly said to Mr. Centrone, "What is wrong with us? What are we doing here after what we have just been through? I think we need to get a life!" He smiled and said, "**We have a life...THIS is it!**" I couldn't agree more.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

THE MASTER SWORDSMITH TAKES SHAPELESS IRON AND THROUGH FORGING, COUNTLESS POUNDING, AND TEMPERING, THE FINEST SWORD IS PRODUCED; A STRONG CHARACTER IS NOT REFINED WITHOUT THE CHALLENGE OF ADVERSITY. SO, WHEN YOU ARE ASKED TO DO 300 JUMPING JACKS AND YOU THINK YOU CANNOT GO ON, DO 5 MORE. THAT VERY DECISION IS THE BEGINNING OF FORGING SELF-CONTROL, DISCIPLINE, AND INDOMITABLE SPIRIT.