



Tang Soo Times

Pal Che Tang Soo Do

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March 2006

Issue No. 176

May	6th	Central Championships
May	13th	Family Picnic
May	18th	Black Belt Class
May	27th and 29th	Closed for Memorial Day
June	2nd, 3rd and 4th	Adult Black Belt Clinic
June	9th, 10th, 11 th	Youth Clinic
July	7 th - 8 th - 9 th	World Championships Anaheim, CA

Lauren Holst 1st, Janobia Height 22nd, Mike Grady 30th

Alexandra Tavani Nate Tavani Shawn Moore Abriana Height
Jannise Height Kellianne Mankin Bobby Mankin Bryanna Rudolph
Christopher Bargarillio Erin Orange Janobia Height
You are on the steep portion of the classic learning curve. Every class should reveal something new and exciting to you. If you ever have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask a senior student.

Congratulations go out to Angel, Sundar, and Jon Blessington who on Saturday April 22 successfully tested for advanced Black Belt rank. All three did very well in their written and physical exam. It was a pleasure to watch them test and I received many comments from other Instructors on each of them.

Once again the locker rooms are filling with trash and left behind uniforms and street cloths. Please remove anything that belongs to you right away.

Accountability-Pride-Courage

I found myself sitting alone outside our Hotel with an ice cold beer in my hand, I felt great. It was around 4:00 am, in three hours we would be gathering again for the morning session. Just an hour and a half earlier, we had completed our first pre-test for the rank of Sah Dan. I was feeling quite proud of myself and the group of candidates who had tested along side me. It had been a very hard test. But the feeling of accomplishment was interrupted by the fact that I knew, going into this test, there would be no promotion afterwards. But, deep inside I still glowed with accomplishment.

Recently, at the Dan test, the question once again was raised as to how some candidates pass their Black Belt test without knowing or performing up to the standards of the Association. This problem is brought to my attention each year from both our students, and other Instructors. Present this question to twenty teachers there and you will hear twenty different explanations, all politically correct, all lacking the courage to identify the truth. I've mentioned in past years the record of testing Black Belt Candidates from Pal Che, and from the Tang Soo Do Institute before that. The standards we set at our school are such that no one can ever question the worthiness of one of our students testing for Black Belt and higher rank. This past week we had three students test, in three different groups, and each one shined in their perspective groups.

Our standards are such that not everyone is willing to sacrifice to continue. We expect a lot from each student, in all of time, energy, and effort. But it is nothing that those who have gone before have not done. At times, these expectations can stress long time friendships and relationships, but if the expectations are understood in advance, this creates even a stronger bond between teacher and student. This is the way I have learned it to be, and this is the way it will continue to be. It is said that with each generation of Black Belts, the training and quality of the karate being taught at a school becomes watered down. In January, we had a well traveled and experienced Master, proclaim the quality of our Black Belts to be in the top 5% of all the schools he has ever seen. And this man throws compliments around like manhole covers. This comment should make each Black Belt prideful in their effort that day, and the

effort and dedication they exhibit every day.

The solution to having candidates more prepared for Black Belt is . Instructors need to have the courage to tell students well before the test time they are not ready. Judges need to have the courage to fail these students without fear of higher ranking Masters. (I feel some Instructors have the hope that someone else will fail their student because they themselves lacked the courage to do it) And the candidate must have the courage to realistically look at themselves and know in their heart whether they deserve or not deserve to be there.

Now believe me, I know first hand, there are many variables that go into whether or not a student should test or not test, physical and mental challenges, age, dedication to the association and school all go into the selection process. However, there can be no exceptions for candidates not knowing the required elements, and lack of desire and effort. Preparation falls on the teacher, heart and effort falls on the student, however, accountability falls on all three mentioned above.

Okay, so now you have passed your test, it was difficult, but you did awesome. You knew all your forms, one steps and self-defense. Your kicks were on, and you were flying all over the floor. However, the person next to you struggled, kept messing up hyung after hyung, didn't know any one steps, and flat out did not want to be there next to you. Fast forward three months, you are at the Black Belt Clinic, and there is the person you tested next to, receiving a Black Belt from their Instructor. How do you feel? Cheated? Does their promotion cheapen your own?

Around fourteen years ago, the WTSDA created a poster of a little girl (Michelle Prentice from our school) throwing her front kick while performing Bong Hyung Il Bu. The caption below her picture read, "*We wear our Black Belts around our hearts, not around our waist*". I thought of those words that night staring up at the sky outside the Hotel in Alabama. I did not need a belt or certificate to acknowledge what I did that night. I also think of those words every time someone asks me what rank I am. Yes I am proud, but does it really matter? And most recently, as I lay awake in my room after having just completed the third leg of the Master's test, I once again was reminded of that quote.

Whether you have just earned your Orange Belt or Master's Belt, it does not matter, at that particular time, they are equally important to each individual. When I teach, I teach from my heart. When I train, I train with my heart. You should do the same. You can not see your own

belt when it is tied around your waist. Others can, and if that is *their* measure of *your ability*, they do not understand what we do. Through the years, I have learned from all ranks, teachers and students alike. The measuring stick I use is not the color or stripes on a belt, but rather the intangible qualities that make up that person.

And although we are a part of a large organization, Tang Soo Do must be an individual pursuit. I reminded you when you began; when you train, your only competitor is yourself. Each night, you must constantly strive to make yourself better. In the beginning you depend on the teacher and higher ranking students to measure your progress. But sooner or later you must become your own critic, measuring your successes and failures by where you left off on the previous night. When you test, although you want to be a cooperative partner, you must be selfish while striving to be your best. Despite what others think or say, you must know in your heart of hearts, how you did, and if you deserve to pass. Whether you are the testing Candidate, Judge, or Instructor, fail or pass, remember, "*The only thing that doesn't abide by moral majority is a person's conscience*".

All the family members of Pal Che Tang Soo Do would like to extend their congratulations to Mr. Centrone and Mr. Melchiorre for their success at the Master's Clinic. We would also like to say thank you to them for their dedication not only to the art of Tang Soo Do, but also to us, the students of Pal Che. So, congratulations and thank you.

Following that suit, this month, instead of featuring an old Master's Corner article from Master Raver, we will be running an old article from Mr. Centrone. This article is from October of 2004.

Every once in a while when class is finished, after all the student's have gone, I sit look out on the dojang floor and listen to the sounds of silence, I reflect on the good old days. The nights when I was just beginning and every thing taught was new and fresh. Training was pressure less, purely physical and yet fun. The learning curve was huge; all the waters of my Tang Soo Do journey were yet uncharted. The school was new, the teachers were eager to share their experience, the students were like sponges, absorbing everything they could from the sea of knowledge the instructors possessed.

The road to Black Belt had not yet been paved, being cleared nightly by my Instructors.

Today, things have changed. The teachers I have learned from have found greener pastures (Golf Greens), the students I once trained side by side with are all gone. The children I have taught in the early years of the Tang Soo Do Institute and later Pal Che, have grown up and moved on. The road to Black Belt is now paved with the sweat and hard work of others. New dedicated teachers who have traveled the path, and are now instructing from the same blueprint that has worked for them.

You have all heard me say many times "*Karate is not for everyone*". However, it has taken me many years to accept and yet it still boggles my mind. How does something that you love one day become, over time, something that "you did?" Where is the commitment to yourself? The Art? Do people become bored that easily nowadays? It saddens me when students leave without saying thanks or at least goodbye. Parents who entrust their children with us, can't even take a minute for a phone call. The dropout statistics are staggering. But the dropout rates of students who attain Black Belt are more bewildering. Out of every 100 people who start in the Martial Arts, only one becomes a Black Belt. At the recent Dan test out of 194 who tested, 46 tested for E dan and only 12 for Sam Dan. Where do they go? Has Karate changed? On the other hand, have the people changed?

At Pal Che, we have defied the 1 in a 100 statistic. Our Black Belt rate is around 5%. Reaching Black Belt is within each student's reach. You just need to stay and train. Reaching the next level is a different story. Out of 30 Students who received Black Belts at our school, only 2 have reached Sam dan, and 9 E dan. The requirements Master Raver has set will not change or be modified; minimum time between ranks is set by the association. Training and teaching standards are set by the school. If you think the standards are too high, ask John, Scott, or George, who have been waiting much longer than their minimum time. However, when and if the day comes to test they will be more than ready and deserving.

Remember, Black Belt is just the beginning. The first plateau, you will spend a lifetime climbing the next mountain. There are no 30-day programs, magic wands, or lucky breaks. The rigors, sweat, pain and discipline of training will give you a new respect for what we call practice. With the burden of reaching Black Belt lifted, you will find freedom in each movement, while drilling in forms; you will feel yourself

stronger, better balanced and more fluent. As Black Belts, you will reach new thresholds of pain and exhaustion. When other have quit you will still be fighting. Your responses will become as automatic as your heart-beat, you will become strong, confident, and in command. When you meet all the self-imposed challenges you set for yourself, you will become a Martial Artist. Drop in to the Dojang, not out. Don't train for rank but rather train now for yourself.

A martial artist has a calmness of behavior, a composure of mind undisturbed by passion, what we call restraint or self-control. This is the ultimate honor of a warrior, a sense of the fitness of things.

KIDS' SECTION

Submitted Article

By

Do you have any goals?

I sure do, lots of them. A goal is a purpose or aim that you are trying to achieve. Don't confuse a goal with a dream. A goal, in order to be effective, has to have a reasonable time line. Dreams don't have any timeline.

Here at Pal Che, most everyone's goal is to reach black belt. That's great, but before reaching that big accomplishment it's good to set smaller stepping stones along the way. Regularly evaluating your achievements is one of Tang Soo Do's attitude requirements. Most of us know what areas we need improvement in or what you would really like to do better. After you've thought this through, it's time to write up a short list of four or five goals. This could be anything, karate, school-work or friendships. Under each goal list three or four ways that will help you reach that particular goal. Then establish a fair deadline (timeline) when you expect to have completed that goal task. Put your list in a place where you will see it everyday. Keep at it, don't give up, work on those smaller goal steps every chance you get. Every little bit brings you closer to your goal. Finally, you've reached your goal. That's great! Now it's time to make a new one.

It's important to make goals and to want to do better and be better humans. Challenging our minds and body and spirit allows us to continue to grow and learn.

