



Newsletter

December 1997

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The Yin Yang Do Karate Holiday Party

The annual winter workout will run from 1:30 to 4 pm, December 13, at the KYF in downtown Kenosha. The Holiday Party will follow at the Taste of Wisconsin at I-94 and Highway 50. Please send in your reservations by December 6, 1997.



From The President

Dick Bruno

This summer has rushed by us and we are already preparing for the holiday party. We had an excellent turn out for our summer workout and our dinner. Charles Plaines demonstrated Japanese Police Force techniques and Joe Ferraro with the help of Jim Frederick demonstrated grappling and restraining techniques. Each group consisted of about 30 students which rotated after 55 minutes. Tim Hillary did an outstanding job teaching our youth group which also numbered about 30. Everyone enjoyed the different ideas and options that were learned as an alternative to karate techniques.

Our dinner was well attended in the evening and Ron Zeith did an excellent job on planning the cuisine and program with the help of Bob Brown. We had some time to chat and see old friends before the dinner. Our program was focused on recognition of sensei contributions to the art, association, and to his/her students. A very special award was given to a man who has contributed many years to our association and is very active in a number of other martial arts associations. I would like to personally congratulate Chuck St. Pierre on his William H. Foster Recognition Award which was given to him by the Yin Yang Do Board of Directors that evening. We were all proud of the hard work and accomplishments that Chuck and his students have made in northern Wisconsin. As Chuck said, "This is more of a credit to my students than to me."

Our Holiday Event is approaching very quickly and will soon be here. This year we will be at the Taste of Wisconsin in Kenosha, Wisconsin (please see the announcement) for our dinner and program. I would like to thank Mike Radigan for hosting us at his restaurant this year. We will also have our regular workout at the K.Y.F. from 1:30- 4:00 p.m. We plan to have a warm-up for about 30 minutes and two 1 hour sessions. The sessions will be announced later with two of senior instructors teaching one class for each time frame.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone that we have two shodan boards upcoming. The first board of review is in Atlanta, Georgia on Saturday, November 15, 1997 for Sean Flaherty. The second shodan board of review is Sunday, December 7, in Cecil, Wisconsin. This Board of Review is for Jean Lutsey. We wish both the best!



Editors Note:

Al Gomez

Thank you to all the authors and people who distribute this newsletter. Once again in order to keep our costs down I will send one copy of the newsletter to each club to reproduce.

The next Newsletter will be out during the month of December. Please have your articles or any notes of general interest to me no later than November 1, 1997. If possible please type your article. For those who have access to a computer, you can send me your article in text, Microsoft Word or Word Perfect (no formatting please) and submit on a 3 1/2 disk. I have a Macintosh but can also read IBM disks. Anyone with a modem can reach me on America Online at "algomez" or on the Internet at:

Mail it to:

Al Gomez

Hope to see you soon!

Al



From the Treasurer

Al Ferguson

We have the following available to members:

- Patches - \$5,
- Double Ax (Yudansha) - \$3
- Kyu Certificates - \$5
- Dan Certificates - \$10
- T Shirts - \$10
- Yin Yang Do Silver Anniversary Booklet - \$10
- Lifetime membership - \$25 (includes a patch)

The Second Annual Founder's day workout Tee shirts are available in black and white, large and X-large. They have the Yin Yang Do Karate Association symbol and printed with "W.H. Foster 1913-1994. Second Annual Founders Day July 29th, 1995". (\$15.00 each plus postage.)

Send application and orders to:

Al Ferguson



Practice Tim Hillary

Karate isn't a matter of attending twice weekly classes, getting a promotion, or becoming a bit better at what you do. It is a lifelong commitment to practice...practice...practice. Learn to love practice. You can't excel if you think of practice as a chore. Mastering any skill takes regular dedicated practice. People who are continuously developing their abilities learn to love the day-to-day, hour-by-hour practice. They recognize that mastery isn't a goal, but a lifelong process.

Once you view karate as a journey -- and acknowledge that the trip may be difficult and slow at times -- you'll have the stamina and good sense to go beyond the setbacks that emerge along the way. Abandon your desire for instant gratification. Dedication to the Art or skill you want to master means surrendering your ego-driven need for instant results and embracing the regular study that discipline demands.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the journey is the jerky, often frustrating learning curve of mastery. Getting better is never a smooth upward slope. The very nature of the process means that after every gratifying leap in proficiency, you'll remain on a plateau -- possibly for weeks or months. Many people at this point say, "Nothing is really happening...Why can't I learn?...Why can't I get better?". And they are tempted to quit. The intelligent student of karate knows that quite the opposite is true! It is when you are on the plateau that you're most actively learning -- consolidating the fruits of your practice, letting it slowly program your mind and body for the next spurt upward.

Activities are coordinated by complex interactions of nerve cells in the brain. When you practice, these neurons actually grow microscopic filaments to connect to one another. It's a process known as arborization. When you stop practicing, these connections wither away. Every time you learn new skills or master fresh areas of knowledge, neurons secrete growth hormones that foster arborization, thus stimulating their own growth and the growth of their neighbors. The road to mastery is a slow succession of small gains.

All great karateka have spent many years practicing their particular talents. It takes about 10 years of intensive practice or study before you can become so proficient at what you do that excellence comes almost naturally. Mistakes must be made...new solutions discovered...and difficult situations endured.

To minimize the time it takes to learn you must practice your skill correctly from the start. If you set out on the wrong track, you'll never achieve your full potential. You will just get very, very good at doing things very wrong!

Maintain the right attitude. Insecurity makes it tough for many people to practice their skills. Remind yourself that your goal is to improve. Even if it takes two or three times as long to do it right, remember that you are striving for mastery. Small improvements look minute, but over time they lead to great improvement...and this contributes substantially to confidence. Keep in mind that everyone -- Gichin Funakoshi, Kenwa Mabuni, Gogen Yamaguchi, Phil Koeppel, William Foster, and your sensei -- were once klutzy beginners, too!

Some people practice mindlessly, doing the same thing over and over, hoping to get better as if through magic. True practice requires focused attention -- to identify what aspects

you want to improve and to override old habits that lead to errors. Use your imagination to remain dedicated. Mind & body are never separate. What you think greatly influences how you perform. Your job is to transform the dream of proficiency into reality. Make the dream as real as you can. A key to superior performance is the ability to hold a vivid image of you performing the perfect punch, kick, kata, etc. Spend time rehearsing in your mind that perfect punch, kick, & kata. Push this visualization to the extreme and try to mentally picture not only how it looks, but feels, tastes, smells, etc. The more vivid and intense you make your imagined experience, the more powerful it will be in shaping your performance.

Visualize yourself performing perfectly. Whatever skill you seek to develop, imagine you know how to do it. Your mental image will be transformed into reality, so be sure your image has no flaws! Practice, practice, practice -- mentally as well as physically.

Find the right sensei or mentor. Without one to guide you along your path, you'll waste time and energy. The ideal guide is someone who has achieved what you want to achieve and who is willing and able to share what he/she has learned. Books, videotapes, and lectures can also provide valuable instruction...but their power is limited by the lack of feedback. They can't see & correct your technique or answer your specific questions.

Once you have found a sensei or mentor, you must suspend enough of your pride to accept his/her instruction humbly, while still maintaining your own integrity. Also, identify others who are proficient at the skill you're trying to develop and learn from them. What you gain from participating vicariously and observing actively is the mental image of how the task is properly done --which you can then apply to your own efforts.

If you measure progress by comparing yourself with others, be realistic. Since your goal is to become, as the Army puts it, "the best that you can be", comparing yourself with a person of far greater talent or many more years of study is a formula for discouragement. Instead, make yourself your own measuring stick. Compare today's performance with last month's or last year's. I highly recommend you keep a personal journal that not only shows your personal and Martial Arts growth, but also clearly states how to become better -- and who can help you grow.

In order to become more competent, you must avoid dwelling on the competence that you have already achieved. Be willing to make mistakes, be clumsy, or seem like a fool. A person's practice tasks must stretch him/her and tax the limits of his/her abilities -- or they won't make him/her any better!

Great personal growth is possible only when you slip into a "flow state". When psychologists talk about "flow", they are referring to what the Japanese call "MUSHIN" -- that state of mind during which you actually lose yourself in whatever you are doing. To reach this state, you must refuse to accept your current level of accomplishment and instead strive to be much better. You must put a great deal of effort into the task, and the activity must challenge you. Go beyond the territory with which you are familiar. Although mastery requires dedication to fundamentals and surrender to the hard work of practice, it's also driven by a daring spirit to push beyond limits. You must throw caution, prudence, and all thoughts of comfort aside, and pour every fiber of your being into the effort. You may fall flat on your face...or you may experience the incomparable and unforgettable MUSHIN/flow state.

