

The T.K.D. Flash

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Don't forget to contribute news and events at your school to the T.K.D. Flash for publication. Free P.R. for your school, events!

On Sunday April 4 the School of Classical TaeKwon-Do, Crystal Lake IL, hosted a Black Belt test, the first in its beautiful new facility. Presiding were F.M. Van Hecke, VI Dan, the U.S.T.F. Region V Director, Mr. Braxton Miller, VI Dan, the U.S.T.F. Illinois State Director, Mr. Martin Lorenzo, IV Dan from Argentina, Mrs. Mary Lubner, III Dan from Cedarburg WI, and Dr. Neal Siegel, II Dan, UTF Universal TaeKwon-Do Federation. The following tested for Gup One: William Akin, Sandy Lasky, Karen Gacke, Patrick Geryol, Don Thomas, Jimmy Gritschke, and Kasey Kruckenberg. The following tested successfully for probationary First Dan: Roselle Recometa, Ron Refugio, Billy Thomas, Jon Colvard, and Jeffrey Cueto. Roselle Recometa was awarded Highest Test Score. First Dan Emily Landwehr performed her sectional test for Second Dan, and Second Dan Riz Refugio performed his first sectional test for Third Dan. One hundred and forty-three boards were broken. In a related development, the Illinois Department of Economic Development has reported that building materials prices in northern Illinois have skyrocketed in recent weeks.

Upcoming tournament action:

M.A.T.A. Spring Classic, Saturday May 15 at Jackson WI. Contact--Mr. Paul DuKatz, 262-335-8020.

Chay's Cedarburg Invitational May 8. Contact--chaytkdman@prodigy.net.

American Martial Arts Center Martial Arts Championships (M.A.T.A. Tournament) July 17th, Waunakee WI. Contact--email--info@amactkd.com.

AAMA NC Tournament

At Huntersville NC on Sept. 18. Under the leadership of Mr. Jeremy Kempka, this event will feature continuous free sparring, head-to-head bracketed Chang Han Patterns, team patterns and breaking competition.

AAMA Fall Classic. At the Neenah-Menasha YMCA under the leadership of Dr. John Butitta, this event will feature continuous free sparring, head-to-head bracketed Chang Han Patterns, and team patterns. October 9.

There will be a Gup Level Test at Mr. Henry Goddard's school in Green Bay WI on Wednesday May 5.

The McDaniel clan has a new addition, Shamus McDaniel. He was born this morning and weighs 8 pounds, 11 ounces and is 18 3/4 inches long. Mom, baby and dad are all doing very well! Please join me in congratulating the McDaniels!!! (Future cop?)

A Gup Level Test was held in West Bend on Saturday April 4. Presided over by Mssrs. Dwight Drescher, Ryan Kraemer, Kaleb Schad and Matt Schroeder, 17 students participated. Mr. Paul DuKatz cornered.

A Family Fun Day Demo was given by Academy of Martial Arts students at the YMCA in Mooresville.

A Gup Level Test will be held in Sheboygan at the Academy of Martial Arts on May 22.

On July 18 there will be a U.S.T.F. sanctioned Dan Testing at Marquette TaeKwon-Do, U.P. Michigan.

On April 17 there was a Gup level testing at UNCC-East.

Master Earl Weiss will preside at a Dan level testing to be held in Skokie IL on June 9.

On June 19 there will be a test at the UNCC location.

Teaching Women's Self Defense

By John Butitta, IV Dan

As Martial Arts instructors, we are considered the authorities for self defense. We are all likely to be asked at some point to teach a seminar or course for Women on defending themselves. If you are asked to teach a Women's self defense course, what is the best way to do this?

Women's Self Defense as a concept is very popular. When I did an internet search using "Women's Self Defense" as a key word, I got over 120000 hits. There was screen after screen of web sites advertising Women's Self Defense courses, with a wide variety of formats. There are numerous books, magazines and organizations devoted to Women's self defense. However, I could find

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little uniformity in what to teach or how to teach a course like this.

Part of the confusion arises because the group of women for whom the course is designed is vaguely defined. Advertised Women's self defense ranged from a formal martial arts type programs to simple seminars. They all proposed same concept – teaching women to effective ways to defend themselves.

My senior instructor and I taught a self-defense course for women for over 5 years. We were asked to develop the class for a Hospital Women's Center and present it there. We developed it for a specific group of women. These women were interested in a class or a brief series of classes during which they could learn enough to defend themselves in an emergency. They were not interested in cardiovascular fitness, rank or committed training over time. What they were seeking would more accurately be called survival training rather than a true self defense course they way we would define it as part of a Tae Kwon Do curriculum.

Unfortunately, Self Defense is the more common descriptive term, so I will use it through out the rest of this article but in doing so, I am referring to this specific type of short survival training for women.

In fact, we initially starting out teaching a short Tae Kwon Do Ho Sin Sul class. We learned very quickly that that our Women's Self Defense class required a much different approach. There were a number of special issues that women have regarding the whole concept of attack and defense to which we needed to be sensitive and deal with from a teaching

standpoint. I would like to share some data, concepts and the key elements we found to be most effective in teaching this type of Women's Self Defense.

Any Self Defense course should be based on dealing with the risk of attack and injury. The current statistics reveal some facts that should be included in every Women's Self Defense course.

According to the Bureau of Justice statistics in 2002, the incidence of violent crimes has been falling steadily over the last 10 years. The rates in 2002 reached the lowest point since statistics were first kept in 1973. Compared to 1993, the incidence of rape was down 60% (.4 per 1000 people over the age of 12), robbery was down 63% and aggravated assault associated with serious injury or a weapon was down 64%. In 2002, the rate of violent crimes associated with a firearm was 7%. The biggest decreases were in Suburban and Rural areas. Taking large cities such as Milwaukee, Chicago, New York and LA out of the mix would likely leave much lower rates for the rest of the country. Interestingly enough, the overall rates of violent crimes were higher in the Midwest and West than the Northeast and the South. Men were more likely to be victims of violent crime, robbery, simple and aggravated assault than women. Women were most likely to be victims of sexual assault.

Yet women continue to be very afraid of being attacked. One of the common concerns about being reassured by the Bureau of Justice statistics is that the actual incidence of violent crimes against women is underreported. It is a generally accepted fact than in sexual assault an estimated 50% to

as high as 90% of rapes are unreported (American Medical Association, 1997). These statistics are very hard to verify but at least one survey done in Australia supported this concept. In a 1996 Survey, 7.1% of women over age 18 reported an incident of physical or sexual assault in the previous 12 months and 23% of women who had been married or in a de facto relationship experienced violence by a partner at some time during the relationship. Of women victims, on 19% of victims of physical assault and 15% of victims of sexual assault contacted the police. The most common reaction was to discuss the incident with friends (58%) and family (53%).(ABS Women's safety survey 1996).

In our conversations with women participants, they most frequently express a fear of being assaulted by a stranger, typically in an isolated places such as a parking garage or while walking alone in a park. The Demographic statistics on crimes against women suggest something quite different. Women were attacked by someone they knew 67% of the time. Of this group, 20% of the assaults were by an intimate, 7% by another relative and 40% by an acquaintance. Only 31% of the time was the attacker a stranger (2% had an unknown relationship). If the underreporting statistics are truly as high as suspected, I think this likely means the attacks by a total stranger are probably far less because women are more likely to report an attack by someone they don't know than reporting an attack by a friend or relative. (Bureau of Justice, 2002 statistics)

With the falling incidence of violent crimes against women

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and the unique demographics, why should we teach a Women's self defense class at all? Women's Self Defense Courses are a popular as a response to preventing violence for several reasons. One goal is to prevent a women from appearing as a victim. Interviews with felons suggest that women who are not confident and are fearful give clues through posture, attitude and body language that identified them as a potential victim. The belief is that women who have the confidence to defend themselves present an appearance without the timid body posture and appearance that makes them less likely to be chosen as the victim.

Secondly, studies show that women who actually have a plan to defend themselves are more likely to successfully avoid or fight off an attacker. Finally, looking at the Bureau of Justice statistics, those women who defend themselves are no more likely to get injured than those who don't. A reasonable conclusion is that if a woman knows how to defend herself, then she is isn't more likely to be injured but may be able to escape or stop an attack better than one who doesn't.

Personally, I believe that any preparation is better than none at all. If a woman is interested enough to take even a brief class, she can learn enough to get out of a bad situation or hopefully to prevent one from ever occurring. For that reason alone, I believe it is justifiable to teach a short Self Defense class.

What is an Effective Women's Self Defense Course? There are enormous differences between a martial arts classes and a Women's Self defense seminar.

We learned this lesson very quickly in developing and teaching our first Women's self defense class. The first adjustment was adapting a curriculum for the type of class itself. A Self Defense seminar is a brief series of sessions which requires the instructor to present a martial arts training to people who usually have no background in the martial arts. The participants have the expectation that they will leave with the ability to defend themselves effectively after only a very short training period but will most likely only practice any given technique a few times in their life.

The biggest next and biggest adjustment we had to make in developing our class was in dealing with the mind set and self esteem issues of the women participants. The women in the courses we taught were uniformly concerned about being attacked by a stranger in an isolated place – completely the opposite of what the statistics on attacks would suggest. They also had never even considered the possibility of a female attacker. They often had no concept or plan on what to do if they were confronted, beyond perhaps using a simple knee strike to the groin. Most expected to use the knee strike to the groin to be successful, even though they had never actually tried one on a target. Almost all the women consistently underestimated how much stronger the male instructors were and the speed of an attack. Finally some women panicked at being touched with even a basic wrist grab because of their fear of attack. The concept of fighting back was frightening, even though they were in a self defense seminar. Many said they were worried about hurting their attacker. The

overwhelming contradiction we encountered was that women who said they would find it hard to strike an attacker to defend themselves became extremely aggressive and would not hesitate to attack and injure a person who was threatening a family member, especially a child.

It was very quickly apparent that the key concept we could teach participants was that they did have the permission and the right to defend themselves. We changed the curriculum to deal with these issues in the first class and reinforced the self-esteem issues repeatedly at every session.

The final major issue we had to deal with was the fact that most participants would infrequently practice any self defense techniques that we taught in the class. The participants would do some practice between classes but were unlikely to continue to practice after the class was completed. We wouldn't be able to see them work on the techniques in class over time and refine them into effective, automatic, reflexive techniques. Thus we needed to give participants simple precepts that they easily remember and use.

With this in mind, we spent a good portion of time talking about prevention. We set up 4 basic principles for the participants:

1. Don't get into a dangerous situation in the first place.
2. If you are confronted, walk away.
3. If you can't walk away, then try to talk your way out
4. If the above 3 don't work and you fear for your safety then do whatever you need to get

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away—there are no rules at that point. There are 3 keys to remember if you get to this point:

- a. An attacker that can't see can't attack you
- b. An attacker that can't walk can't chase you
- c. Never risk your life for your purse.

We repeatedly reminded participants of these 4 basic principles of Self Defense. In particular, we spent time on point #1. We had women talk about situations that were particularly frightening, such as a parking garage or walking alone outside. We had the group bring up alternatives and suggested some ourselves. We also brought up other potentially dangerous situations that weren't mentioned to have the group think about how to avoid getting in trouble. We used this opportunity to talk about the pros and cons of commonly promoted self defense devices. We also used this time to have participants think about a self defense plan and how to use it. I still consider the self esteem issues and learning the 4 principles of Self Defense by far the most important training for participants and the part they were most likely to remember in the long term.

We did ultimately get to teaching some self defense techniques. We knew that our participants would not keep practicing what we taught, so we had to keep any technique very basic, easy to remember and easy to do. Since hand grabs are the most common attack against women, we taught a simple release: making a fist, grabbing the fist with

the opposite hand and pulling against the thumb. The participants learned this quickly and retained it well.

For dangerous attacks such as a choke, we strongly recommended an eye poke. This technique has a number of advantages – it is simple, attackers rarely expect it, the defender doesn't need to be accurate because hitting anywhere around the eye is painful and will cause eye watering. Even if an attacker is under the influence of drugs, they still must see to attack. Finally, the technique is not lethal. I very rarely teach lethal techniques to my Tae Kwon Do classes. I am even more reluctant to teach people who don't have any training a potentially lethal technique such as a throat strike. The eye poke is a very simple and effective strike for someone who will not practice it. The women were somewhat squeamish at first about even considering an eye strike but when we offered alternatives, they almost all found it the simplest to remember and to do.

We taught the heel strike to the top of the foot and kicking the shin as the techniques for slowing an attacker from chasing them. For rear attacks, we taught this along with squirming and biting to get around to face an attacker, where they could use an eye strike if necessary.

We did let women try a groin strike with a straight leg (punter style kick) along with a heel strike and shin kick against a pad. It was very enlightening for women to see how hard they needed to kick and how hard they could kick if necessary.

The course lasted four 1 hour sessions. We found this left enough time to talk about key

concepts, review and teach any new defenses. For an occasional shorter course, we spent the majority of the time on prevention.

In summary, I would list the following principles for developing an effective Women's self defense course:

1. Prevention is the key concept you can teach
2. Base the information on real data
3. Deal with self esteem issues and fear early and regularly
4. Keep any techniques very simple and repetitive
5. Make sure women leave with a plan on prevention and defense
6. Try to get at least 3-4 sessions for repetition and reinforcement of key concepts

Teaching a Women's self defense was a great experience. It required a major shift in educational goals and teaching style. The participants were very enjoyable to work with. Once they got past the self esteem issues, they were very eager students. On the other hand, I have never learned of a single woman who took the class that eventually joined a Martial Arts class. These classes had to be geared to meet a specific need with very focused goals. But over 10 years since the last class, I still meet women who took the class. They all still say how beneficial it was to them and that they still remember what they learned in the class. And that is biggest reward of all to teaching the class.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Butitta heads Fox Valley TaeKwon-Do. This paper was completed as a portion of his Fourth Dan requirements.]