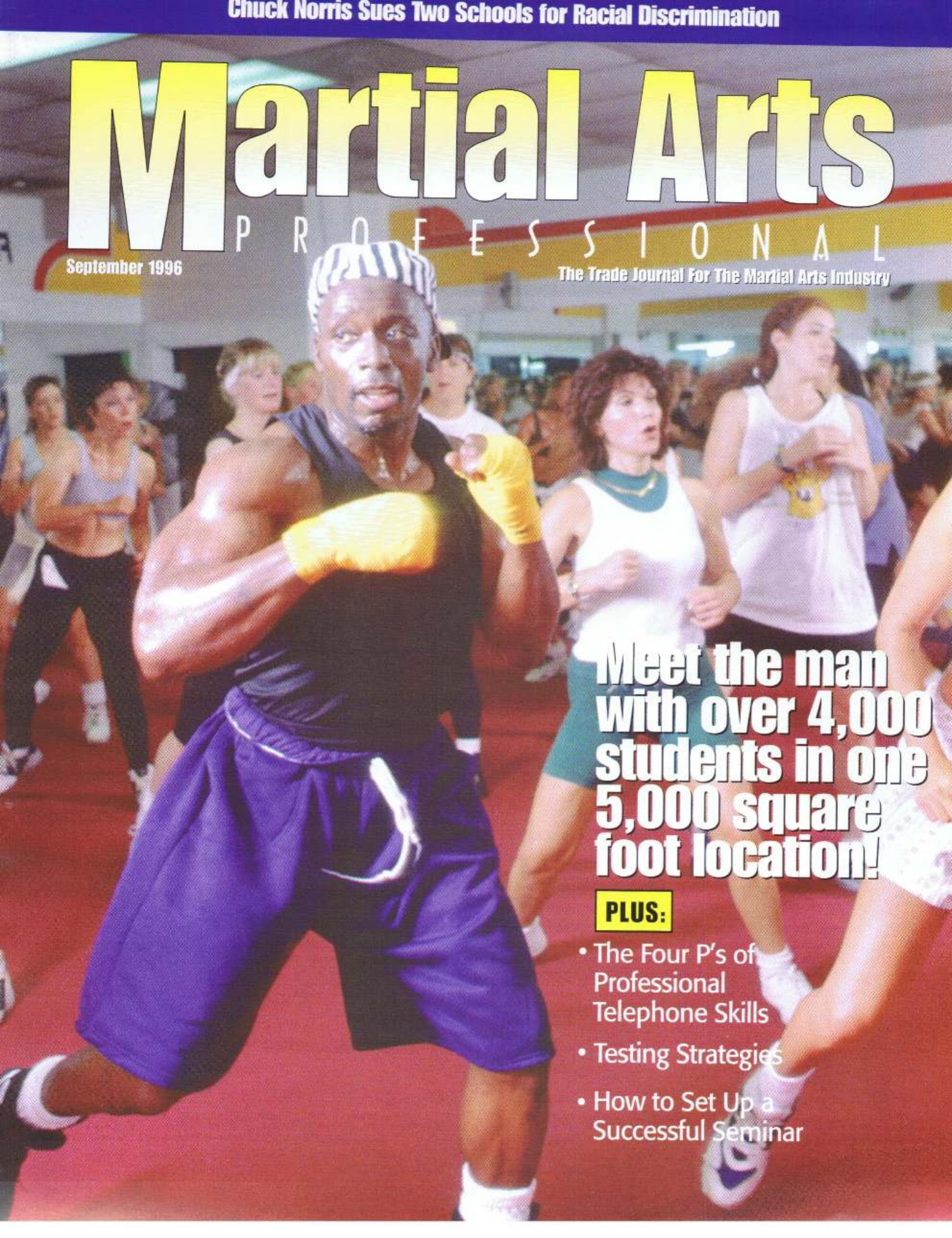
Chuck Norris Sues Two Schools for Racial Discrimination

Martial Arts PROFESSIONAL

September 1996

The Trade Journal For The Martial Arts Industry



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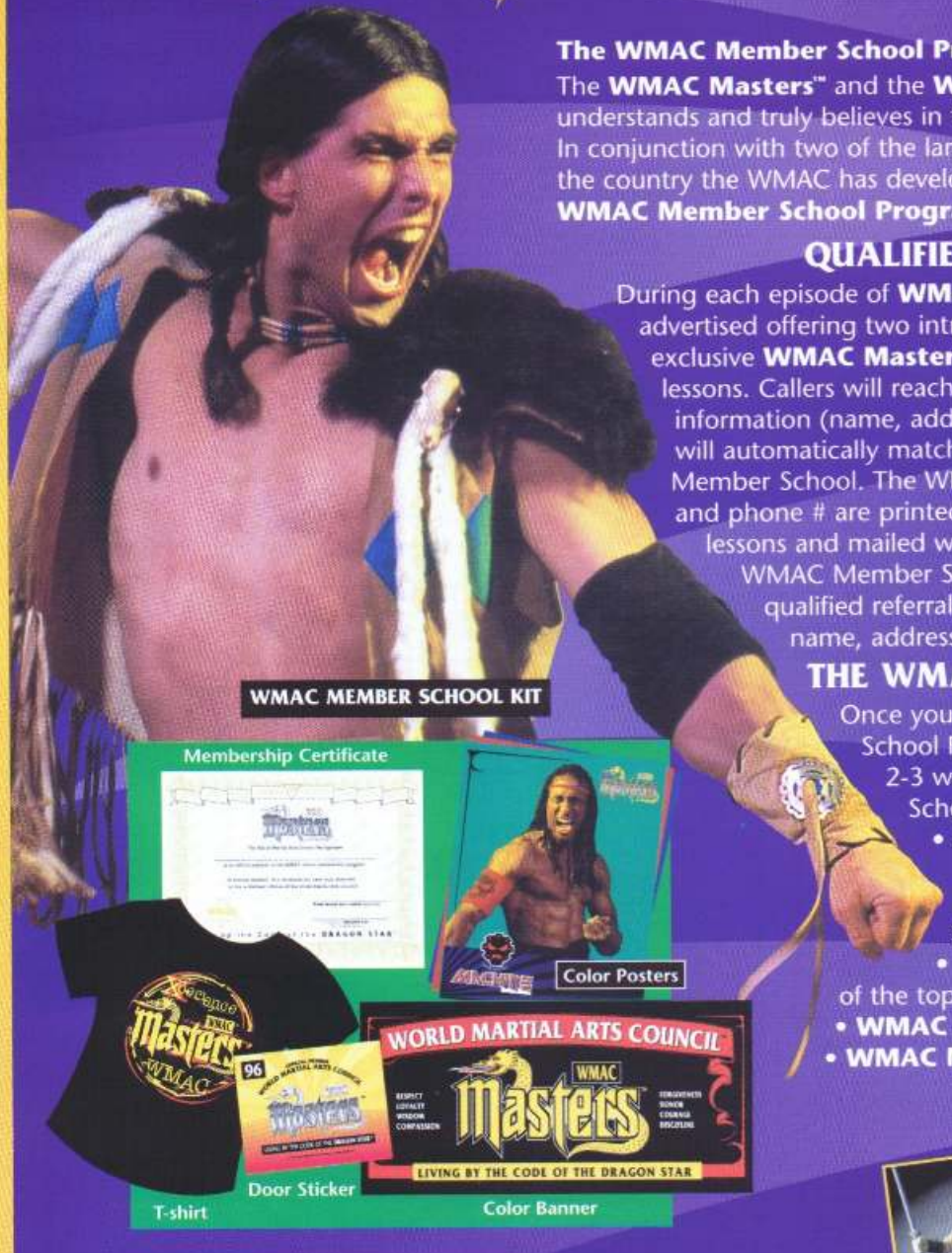
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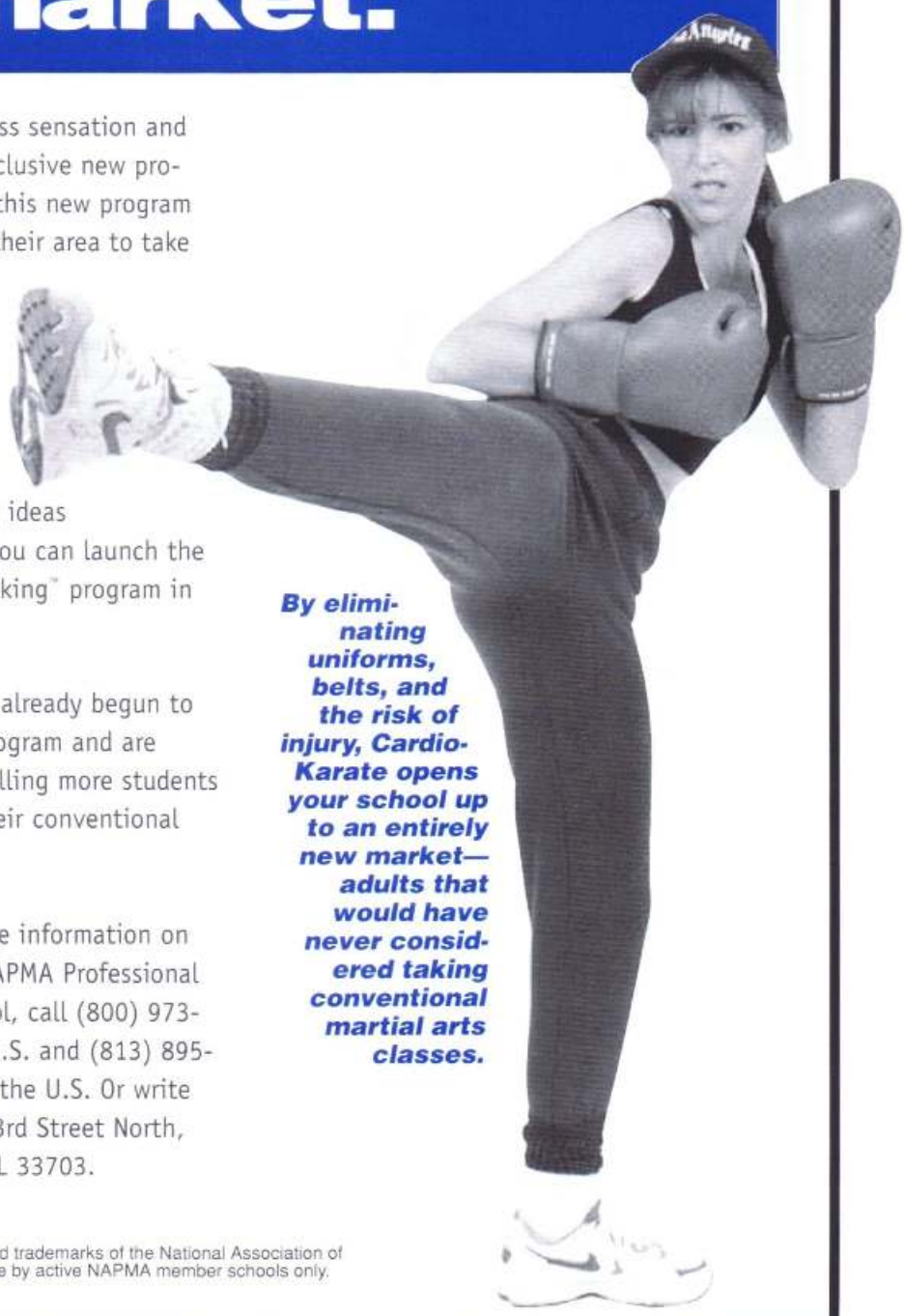
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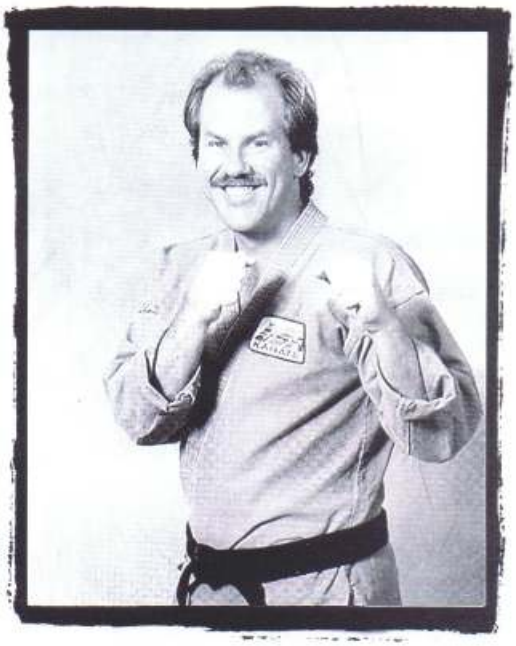
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AS I SEE IT

letter from the editor



It's Not What You Say, It's What You Do

An associate of mine said he recently heard First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton say on television that, because of excessive violence, martial arts themed TV shows are unsuitable for children.

In Canada, the outrage over violence on television resulted in the distribution of the V Chip. The V Chip allows parents to block out programming to prevent children from watching unacceptable material. The V Chip debate was largely centered around The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers and other martial arts-related programming.

What I find very interesting about this political revolt against martial arts programming is that WMAC Masters and The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers both exercise conscientious efforts to provide positive lessons within each show. Recently I caught the end of the WMAC Masters. Our good friend Hien Nguyen was saying that, "Nothing is impossible." It was a good lesson. I've seen similar lessons on all of these programs.

Yet, despite the positive messages, these shows continue to suffer from a violent perception because they are missing the most important lesson of all: it's not what you say, it's what you do. A punch is a punch and a kick is a kick no matter how much you sugar-coat it with well-meaning lessons.

In many ways, our industry as a whole is missing the same point. Martial arts schools promise to teach self-discipline, self-confidence, goal-setting and other positive benefits that should make a student more successful. Yet, it doesn't take long to discover that many school owners don't practice those qualities themselves.

Many don't use self-discipline when it comes to doing what it takes to help their school grow. They don't even start or end classes on time. But, they will embarrass a student or make them do push-ups for a wrong answer. Is this the discipline that was promised?

Self-confidence? Self-confidence should give you courage. However, the courage that people need is not the courage to throw a reverse punch against a good defensive side kick. What people need is the same courage that many school owners lack. That is, the courage to try new programs until you get it right and your school grows. The courage to accept that the way your instructor taught you may not be right for today. The courage to realize that, outside of your inner circle, the community views you as a businessman with a unusual occupation and nothing more.

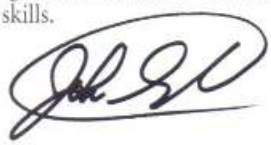
Nevertheless, we always have the belt system to help us teach goal-setting, right? That's good because we shouldn't rely on the instructor to teach it. Sure, when he's teaching a side kick, he knows what he's talking about. You can tell he's used a side kick for years in many different situations. Yet, when the subject switches to goal-setting, we keep getting this belt thing. Sure, the belts are a good goal-setting example. But could it be that the instructor doesn't set goals himself and simply uses the belts as a crutch?

Just like the martial arts TV programs, the martial arts industry suffers from an incongruent message. We seem to think that by providing a positive lesson in a TV show people will overlook the fact that the characters are still kicking each other head's off.

Likewise, we seem to think that by listing positive benefits in an ad and espousing on them in class, people will overlook our unkept schools, our glaring lack of professionalism, and our own low expectations of success as illustrated by our situation.

The general public will continue to ignore what they hear from us and make their judgements based upon what they see instead. Which only makes sense. The public is not stupid. The public has seen more martial arts than just about any individual activity in the last decade. People are simply responding to what they see. We cannot expect them to change their perception of what we are about until we change.

That change towards a higher level of professionalism will take self-discipline, self-confidence and goal-setting. Maybe we should look in the Yellow Pages to find someone to teach us these skills.



JOHN GRADEN
Editor-in-Chief

Vol. 1, No. 5

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Breakfast with Billy—Billy Blanks leads his 8:30 a.m. class. (Photo by Ed Ikuta)
The publisher and editors will not be responsible for unsolicited material. Manuscripts and photographs must be accompanied by a SASE.

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INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

MARTIAL ARTS ON THE WEB



http://www.centuryma.com

ST. PETERSBURG, FL — While the Internet has limited, if any value, for advertising individual schools, national organizations like Century Martial Art and the National Association of Professional Martial Artists (NAPMA) are utilizing the Internet to promote their organizations.

Century's site offers everything from an online catalog to employment opportunities.

The NAPMA site is designed to provide information for its 700 plus member schools. ■



http://www.avaloncity.com/NAPMA

DIRECTOR LEAVES SET OF LATEST SEAGAL PIC



HOLLYWOOD, CA — Director Uli Edel has left pre-production of the Steven Seagal action movie *Fire Down Below*, citing "creative differences." Though Seagal has a reputation for being difficult to work with, a Seagal spokesman said the split was amicable.

Seagal is now in talks with TV director Felix Alcala ("ER," "NYPD Blue") to make his feature directing debut. Alcala's pilot for DreamWorks' *For the People* was persuasive, Seagal told Daily Variety. He added, "We share the same vision for the movie, and I'm very excited about working with him."

Fire is now set for a mid-August start on location in Kentucky.

Seagal's last film appearance was a brief one — less than five minutes — in the box-office hit *Executive Decision*. Edel's credits include *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and the recent HBO production of *Rasputin*. ■

BLACK BELT MICHAEL WORTH SCORES LEAD IN INTERNATIONAL TV SERIES

HOLLYWOOD, CA — Actor and black belt Michael Worth has been signed by Balenciaga Productions to reprise his role as Tommy in the syndicated action TV series "Acapulco H.E.A.T.," only this time he's the principal star of the show. Worth and gorgeous Alison Armitage are the show's only original cast members, and are joined by Lydie Denier (Jane in TV's "Tarzan").

H.E.A.T. is an acronym for Hemisphere Emergency Action Team, a highly mobile group of special, uniquely talented young operatives. Each member of the team specializes in an individual skill that supports the efficiency of their mission. Worth plays a character with expert martial arts skills and is considered the team's "lethal weapon." Worth dubs the show "Baywatch" meets "Mission: Impossible."

The show is noted for its escapist adventure. Based in a luxury hotel in beautiful Puerto Vallarta, the stylish, high-octane team tackles a different dangerous mission each week.

"Acapulco H.E.A.T." will debut in its second season as a two-hour TV movie this fall, with 24 additional brand new one-hour episodes to follow. At press time, the series had not yet completed a distribution deal for the U.S. market, but has signed distribution pacts throughout Europe and parts of Asia. The series was the number-one show in France in its first season.



The charismatic Worth has starred in a handful of films, and just barely missed nabbing the role of Robin in 1995's *Batman Forever*. ■

INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

CREATIVE CASTING LINKS VAN DAMME AND B-BALL SUPERSTAR DENNIS RODMAN



HOLLYWOOD, CA — According to *Variety*, Dennis Rodman, the tattooed NBA superstar, has closed a deal for a reported $2+ million to make his motion picture debut starring opposite Jean-Claude Van Damme in *The Colony*. Principal photography for the thriller, in which the six-foot-9 Rodman will play Van Damme's sidekick, is slated to begin August 19. The Colony refers to a place where the greatest spies of all time are sent after their covers are blown.

Rodman's colorful persona on-court and controversial antics off-court — like his highly-publicized fling with singer/actress Madonna — belies his business savvy. The basketball star has been a corporate spokesman for Nike, McDonald's and Carl's Jr., and his candid celebrity autobiography, *Bad As I Wanna Be*, graces the nation's nonfiction best-selling book list.

Dwight Manley, Rodman's manager, told *Variety* that "while other athletes are taking no chances [by] doing kiddie movies and animation," Rodman was "laying across the tracks" by taking a riskier, high-profile role in his debut. The deal also specifies that the film be edited for a PG rating, he added, to accommodate Rodman's young fans.

The last basketball star to be teamed with a martial artist in a film was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who was hired by his instructor, Bruce Lee, as a co-star in *Game of Death* (released in 1979). ■

A NEW KIND OF SHAQ ATTACK

By Jeffrey Jolson-Colburn

LOS ANGELES, CA — B-ball superstar Shaquille O'Neal is developing a third feature film, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*, and is the second basketball star in one month to announce his participation in a martial arts film.

The new motion picture, engagingly entitled *Shaq Fu*, is O'Neal's second in a two-picture deal with Interscope, which released his most recent picture *Kazaam* as well as such hits *as Jumanji* and *Mr. Holland's Opus*. Shaq's deal comes on the heals of the announcement that Dennis Rodman would make his film debut starring opposite Jean-Claude Van Damme in *The Colony*.

Before O'Neal can begin work on the new picture, however, he has to complete *Steel*, in which he plays a DC Comics superhero. *Steel* was scheduled to begin shooting on August 7.

Shaq Fu, similar in title to his most recent album, *Shaq Fu: Da Return*, but not directly connected, is a martial arts-related film tied to a video game, much as *Mortal Kombat* was. It likely could not be shot until after the 1996-97 basketball season, according to his management company.

Odds are, Billy Blanks (see interview on page 10), Shaq's Tae Bo Aerobics instructor, will play a prominent role in Shaq's film. ■

NAPMA ACQUIRES CORCORAN MAGAZINE AND PHOTO LIBRARY

ST PETERSBURG, FL — In its continuing effort to create a national martial arts archive, the National Association of Professional Martial Artists (NAPMA) has purchased the entire magazine library of veteran writer/author John Corcoran for an undisclosed sum. The collection contains close to 400 photographs and over 1,000 magazines with rare issues dating back to 1964.

Among the gems in the library are early issues of *Black Belt*, *Official Karate*, *Karate Illustrated*, *Fighting Stars*, *Professional Karate*, *Inside Kung Fu* and *The Fighter International*, as well as a wide variety of foreign-language martial arts magazines published in Europe and cache of rare historic photographs.

NAPMA engineered its first use of the magazine library to compile a video biography of World Heavyweight Champion Joe Lewis' celebrated career.

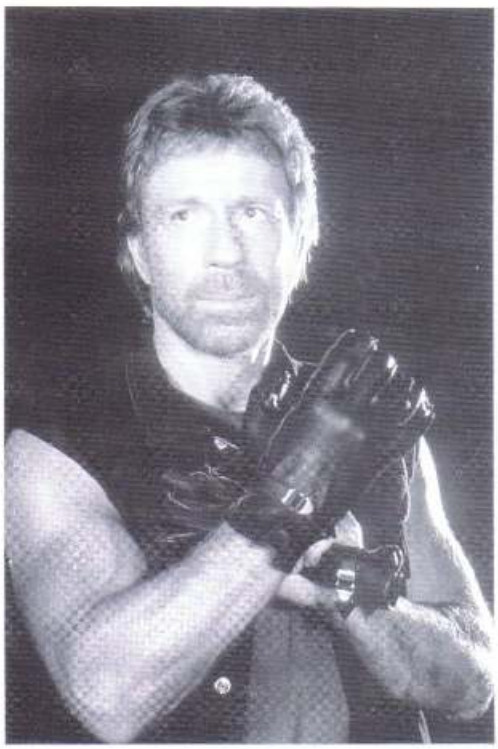
The magazines made it possible to visually and factually trace almost every important event in Lewis' life. The video was shown at the 1st Annual NAPMA Convention and was received with a thunderous standing ovation. ■

INDUSTRY UPDATE

martial arts business news, people, and places

CHUCK NORRIS FILES SUIT AGAINST TWO SCHOOLS BEARING HIS NAME

Claims schools damaged his reputation by discriminating against blacks.



NORFOLK—Jul. 29—Martial arts star Chuck Norris claims two Virginia karate studios that bear his name have damaged his reputation by discriminating against blacks.

Norris is seeking $1.5 million in damages and removal of his name from the studios in Virginia Beach and Norfolk.

Norris — using his real name, Carlos R. Norris — filed suit Wednesday in Norfolk's federal court against studio owners Cathy C. Smith of Virginia Beach and W. Harvey Laney of Chesapeake, and their two studios, Defensive Arts Inc. and Second Defensive Arts Inc.

Laney and Smith have not yet replied to the lawsuit; they have a month to do so.

In 1992, the two karate studios settled a race discrimination lawsuit filed by five black families. The lawsuits said the studios discouraged blacks from joining by offering less-favorable financial terms.

While denying the charges, the studios agreed to pay $2,863 each to 11 children, plus $1,000 to each set of parents. The studios also agreed to follow a list of anti-discrimination measures ordered by the Justice Department. Among other things, they agreed to include blacks in ads and promotional materials, and to advertise in black-oriented publications.

In the lawsuit this week, Norris said he was unaware of the studios' discrimination and would have stopped it had he known.

"Mr. Norris abhors racial discrimination and, indeed, has found that the Black community has been among some of his strongest supporters and fans," the lawsuit says. "Discovering that studios bearing his name had been engaged in such activities came as a great shock to him and caused great mental anguish for which he seeks damages."

The studios' continued use of Norris' name "causes confusion and deceives the public into believing that Norris sponsors and approves of such morally shocking and illegal actions," the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit also accuses Smith and Laney of violating a 1976 licensing agreement with Chuck Norris Enterprises in other ways. Norris claims that Smith and Laney violated the agreement by not opening five studios by 1980 and not expanding to 30 studios by 1994. There are only two today.

Norris also claims that Smith and Laney violated the agreement by not operating the studio "in a first-class manner" and by not adequately advertising and marketing the studios. ■

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SUBJECT OF SEMINARS

By Steve E. Swenson

BAKERSFIELD, CA — A new seminar topic that couples martial arts experts with other experts in law enforcement and safety training focuses on avoiding workplace violence.

According to The Bakersfield Californian, a 40-minute presentation on workplace violence here so enraptured a local audience that they wanted to hear more about it. The thrust of the presentation was that when workplace violence occurs, it should be taken seriously. Steps can be taken to prevent it or quash it before it erupts, and both employers and employees should be trained in how to recognize warning signals leading to potential violence.

"The biggest problem is, most people do not take it seriously," said Jack Iriat, a martial arts instructor. "They basically have the same attitude [about it] as wearing a seat belt — 'I'm not going to get into an accident so I don't need it.'" ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

feedback from our readers

View From a Veteran

Dear Sir:

Thank you for sending your Martial Arts magazine, I read it with great pleasure and enjoyment. Having been in the Martial Arts since 1943 I have read just about every book and magazine available and at last there is a magazine designed to help the "Professional."

When I returned from Japan in 1954 I began teaching Karate and several other Martial Arts in Monterey, California, my home. Basics and Kata were the order of the day. Teaching was the easy part, keeping the students and keeping the business going was the difficult task that those of us in the business of a dojo faced every day. I especially enjoyed Mr. John Graden's "As I See It" letter. Again, thank you for the magazine and some day soon I hope to meet Mr. Graden.

CAL AVILA
Chief Instructor
Makoto Karate &
Jujutsu Association
Citrus Heights, CA

Kata is Clear Cut

Dear Mr. Graden:

As I see it, the answer to your question concerning Kata is clear cut.

If you wish to teach your students a traditional martial art, then the students learn Kata. As you well know, because of your experience, Kata teaches balance, focus, blocking, striking, kicking and other self defense techniques - even if the student doesn't realize it at the time.

If, on the other hand, an instructor is more interested in business than traditional martial art, then forget the Kata — but don't claim that what is being taught is Karate. Call it what it really is—boxing or kick boxing or wrestling or street fighting or aerobics.

The bottom line is that it should be the instructor, and not the student, who determines what is going to be taught and the instructor's sole measure of success should not be income.

TIMOTHY L. VOCKE
Rhinelander Tae Kwon Do
and Hapkido
Rhinelander, Wisconsin

The More Professional, The Better

Dear John;

I wanted to write and thank you for an enjoyable and informative afternoon in Las Vegas. I am sure those who attended benefited.

I was very impressed by your presentation. You were informative, entertaining and most of all, you were professional in your appearance and in your presentation. The more professional we are, the better off we all are.

PATRICK WORLEY
USA Karate
Plymouth, Minnesota

A Resounding Response

Dear Mr. Graden,

This letter is in reference to "As I See It." Mr. Graden, the question you presented: "Is Kata killing our retention?" can be answered with a resounding NO!

If taught correctly, every move of every Kata, Form, or Set should reflect that method to fighting, self-defense, and survival! Kata Boring? — NO — Kata is a fight!

Today, in this country, Karate has been changed to a 'sport' or an aerobic activity. I think that is great, but a "good" sensei teaches karate, the weapon. Mr. Graden, Kata is very important. Because one should "see" the opponent in kata; sometimes—oft' times—that very opponent is yourself!

I enjoyed *Martial Arts Professional.* The publication was well written and the format was easy to follow.

BRUCE BRENNER
Sandan,
Shobayashi Shorinryu
Freeport IL

Kung Fu Forms Too Hard

Dear Mr. Graden,

I was looking over the July issue of *Martial Arts Professional* and really enjoyed the article on aerobic kickboxing. It's absolutely true what you said in "As I See It." Kata is killing us. I'm a kung fu school and turned to my kenpo style since the kung fu forms I taught from my Wah Lum Kung Fu forms were way too hard. I've made the forms easier, but still no one likes forms and everyone forgets the moves.

Well, thanks for your time.

PABLO J. ZAMORA
American Martial Arts
Academy
McAllen, TX

Send Letters to the Editor to 3950 3rd St. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33703 or email us at: NAPMA@aol.com



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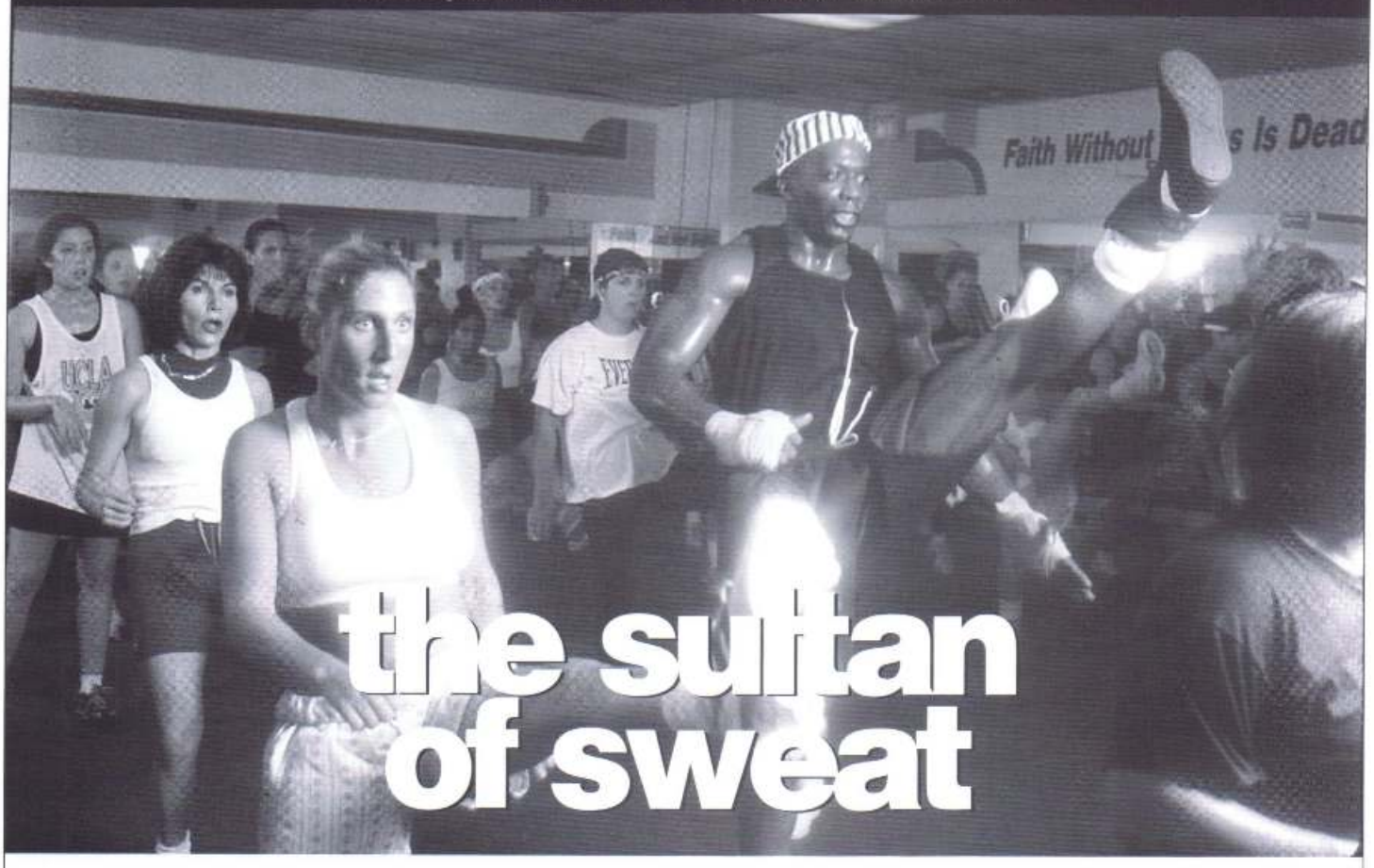
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the sultan of sweat

Here is an interesting fact. While our two previous aerobic kickboxing profiles had limited or no experience in the martial arts, Billy Blanks is a champion black belt. If it sounds like we're a little proud, we are. Billy Blanks is a great black belt, a superb athlete and probably the most successful aerobic kickboxing teacher in the world.

BILLY BLANKS WORLD TRAINING CENTER

an interview with billy blanks

Most martial artists recognize World Karate Champion Billy Blanks from his record-setting tournament career, or as a film star who works in both the martial arts and action movie genres. Billy is renowned as one of the greatest semi-contact fighters of all time — and he may just be the most successful world-class competitor to enter the martial arts instruction business.



Billy Blanks

Nevertheless, Billy Blanks could go down in history as one of the most influential figureheads of a new concept, one that can revolutionize how martial arts studios do business in the 1990s. Big business. It is a concept that he alone pioneered — coupling aerobics with karate — and it is now, many feel, the wave of the future.

At his sole location, Billy Blanks' World Training Center in Sherman Oaks, California, an L.A. suburb, Billy boasts 4,350 active students. Some 3,500 of those students participate strictly in what Billy calls Tae Bo ("Leg Boxing") Aerobics classes — over four times as many clients as those that take his karate classes! Furthermore, according to him, he has an almost 100% retention rate! When they tire of any one kind of fitness program, he

interview by john corcoran



says, he manages to cross his clients over into another kind offered at his studio.

Billy built this thriving empire from scratch in just under seven years. It is an empire housed in a modest 5,000 square-foot facility, where, Billy estimates, about 1,000 clients a day pass through its doors. Overall, his student population ratio is 70% female, 30% male. He employs 24 black belts and fitness instructors. His first Tae Bo class of the day starts at 6:30 a.m. sharp, and it is filled to the brim, mostly by women.

Over the past year, Billy Blanks has been an absolute media darling. He has enjoyed a shotgun blast of big-time publicity in mainstream magazines like People, and on TV shows like "Extra" and "Entertainment Tonight." And all the hoopla has been directly tied, not to his film career, but to his innovative Tae Bo Aerobics program.

Billy does not advertise, nor does he have a high-priced public relations agent. All of his students and all of his big-league media visibility have come, he says, through word of mouth alone. No doubt a substantial part of his success can be attributed to his celebrity clients, a roster of luminaries from Hollywood and pro sports too long to list, but including such stars as Paula Abdul, Wayne Gretzke, Shaquille O'Neal, Farrah Faucett, and on and on.

Billy Blanks has hit the big time. Success has been known to spoil many people — in particular, it produces in them an elitist attitude — but, much to his credit, Billy wants to share the wealth, so to speak. He wants to see everybody succeed.

Seldom do you get to see the future. Now, in this eye-opening two-part interview, you will. Here's Billy Blanks, your guide.

MARTIAL ARTS PROFESSIONAL: When and where did you introduce your innovative program you call Tae Bo ("Leg Boxing") Aerobics? Did you pioneer this concept of combining aerobics and martial arts?

BILLY BLANKS: Yes. I started it back in 1982 when I was still living and teaching in Boston. I called it "Karaerobics" then. But I really didn't push it as much as I'm pushing it here in California. I taught it five times a week, but mostly I still taught more karate because I was competing at the time.

MA PRO: Was anyone else offering something like your program?

BLANKS: No, I was the first person to do it and bring it out in the open. Basically, I was trying to find a way to get more females into karate. I had watched a lot of aerobic classes and I also studied some ballet. So I thought, "What if I combined karate, dance, boxing and aerobics together to music? What would I get?"

So I did that and added it to my karate curriculum. I tested it with some of my female karate students and they liked it, and they started bringing in their friends to take the class. It started bringing in women left and right — just from word of mouth. I didn't do any advertising whatsoever.

MA PRO: When did you move to Los Angeles?

BLANKS: 1989. I didn't start teaching karate and my Tae Bo program until 1990 when I opened my first school in Sherman Oaks.

MA PRO: Did you drop all the traditions typically associated with martial arts teaching?

BLANKS: No, I was still teaching karate too.

MA PRO: Do you still teach karate today?

BLANKS: Yes, I have about eight classes of karate everyday. But I wanted to get more people involved in karate, so I added a Western style of training by adding music to it to make it more fun and take away a little of the tradition so students didn't have to wear a karate uniform or bow when entering. They could be a little freer.

Basically, all I was trying to do was get people hooked on karate by adding the Tae Bo Aerobic program. I met this lady who was one of Jane Fonda's top fitness instructors. I was training her kids in karate. She got pregnant and asked me to give her private workouts to get her back in

continued on page 18

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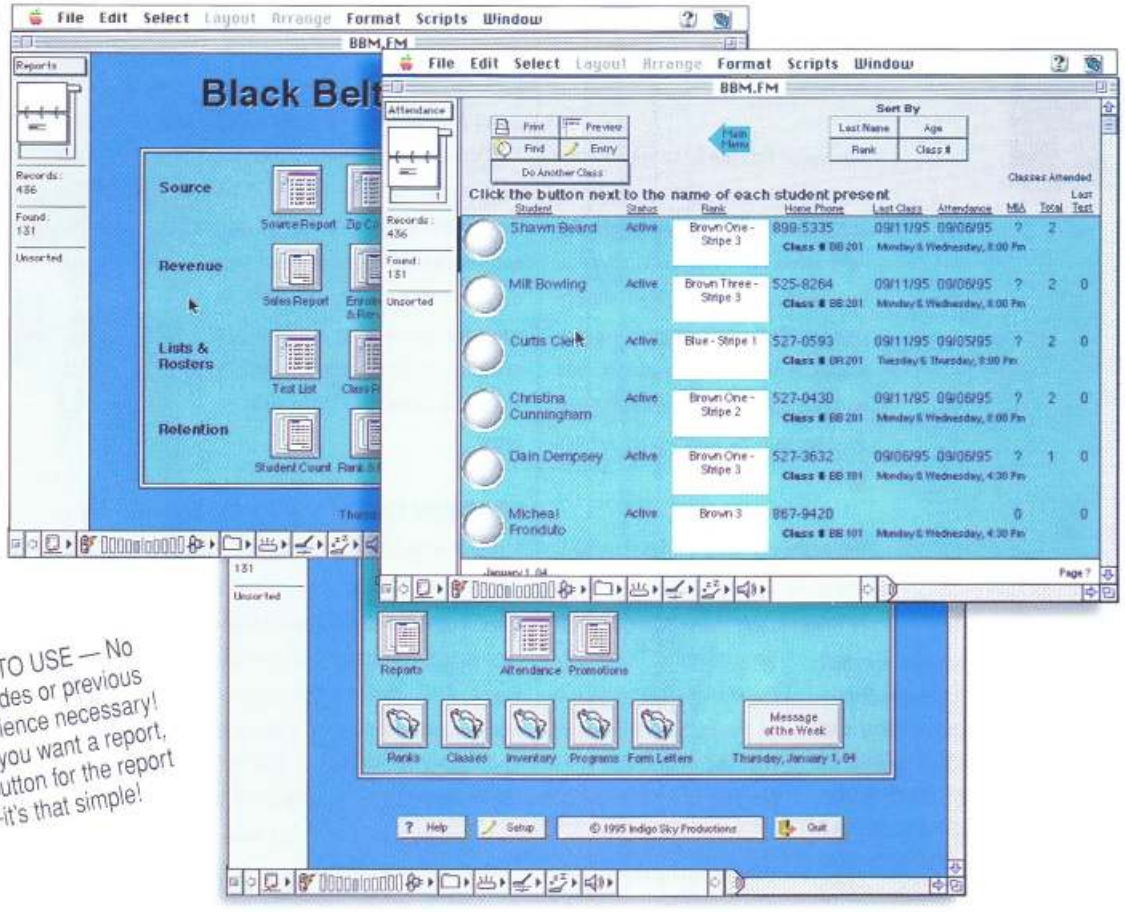
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As martial artists, most of us didn't decide to get into the martial arts business because we thought it was a quick way to get rich.

We chose this life because we love to teach and we love to train. However, the reality is that a Martial Arts School is a business, and you can't make it in this highly competitive business without growing revenues, without new students, and without constantly marketing and prospecting to make your school grow.

We understand that school owners want to focus their time and attention on the students, not on marketing. That's why the National Association of Professional Martial Artists (NAPMA) was formed.

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JIM HARRISON
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NAPMA has put together a powerful team of marketing professionals to give school owners affordable access to proven, quality marketing and advertising materials that would normally be out of reach for most small to medium sized businesses.

The response has been absolutely phenomenal! Why? Because each month NAPMA provides you and your school with the professional marketing, advertising, and operational materials to make your school grow faster than you ever dreamed possible. This allows you to focus on the area that motivated you to open a school in the first place; teaching Martial Arts. NAPMA was designed from the ground up to be so affordable that any school could afford to participate. Besides, the program is set up to pay for itself by adding just TWO new students! And the whole program is backed by NAPMA's unconditional money-back guarantee! But these are just part of the reasons why NAPMA is experiencing this incredible growth; if the program didn't work, it wouldn't continue to grow.



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Since NAPMA launched, back in January 1995, over 500 schools have signed on and are already enjoying the benefits and advantages of the latest in innovative martial arts marketing, teaching and business education. NAPMA membership gives your school a major advantage over your competition by helping you retain more students, sign up more new students, and become more successful WITHOUT selling out!

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signed to get results fast! For instance, Terry Bryan's school in Colorado Springs, Colorado enrolled over 70 students from our special NAPMA promotional tie-in with the Power Ranger film in theatres. Our marketing strategies get results, and we do all the design, copy, and research work for you, leaving you free to concentrate on providing quality training.

National Black Belt Club Renewal Program

It's no secret that in the past some Black Belt Clubs were used as a way for students to "pay" for black belt status without earning one. This is absolutely not the case with NAPMA and our program is set up entirely different. Our National Black Belt Club is designed to help you, the school owner, attract and retain quality students though their commitment to reaching Black Belt Status the right way; through hard work and discipline.

Join The Nation's Fastest Martial Arts Association

NAPMA



The National Black Belt Club is the perfect system for generating a steady monthly source of highly profitable renewals and should account for 60% of your tuition income while having a huge effect on the atmosphere and energy in your school. NAPMA provides you with all the flyers, brochures, patches, certificates, posters and most of all, national affiliation for your Black Belt Club students.

Video Training Seminars for Your Staff

NAPMA members nationwide say that this is the most valuable tool they have ever used to educate and motivate their staff. Imagine the benefits of exposing your staff to the most successful martial artists in the industry; sharing their drills, their business strategies for success, and their experiences. Our monthly video training provides you with three 20 minute seminars targeted to a specific area of the school: Instructor training, office training, and owner training.



Professional Designation

Only NAPMA member schools receive the authorization to use the designation, "Member: National Association of Professional Martial Artists" on their marketing materials, ads, business cards/letterhead, and even



on the school itself. This designation shows your affiliation with a nationally recognized professional organization and speaks volumes to the public about your commitment, integrity, and concern for your school and your students. NAPMA schools uphold the highest ethical and safety standards in the business and it's our intention to inform the public of the benefits of patronizing NAPMA member schools.

Networking: We've found that NAPMA member schools want to help each other succeed. Many school owners find this an invaluable resource; the ability to instantly have a common bond with another member school and to interact on a variety of issues, techniques, and challenges all school face in today's marketplace.

Toll-Free Consulting Hotline

The NAPMA hotline is there as your link to getting the most from



the NAPMA program material, videos, Black Belt Club program, and all aspects of NAPMA membership. School owners have told us time and time again, how important this toll-free access is.

Cutting Edge Developments:

Aerobic Kickingboxing is the new fitness sensation and NAPMA is proud to announce an exclusive new program for its member schools. With this new program NAPMA schools will be the first in their area to take advantage of this exploding new market.

"In my first month with NAPMA, I enrolled 10 students into the National Black Belt Club. Thank you!"

—SCOTT ASHLEY KARATE Kickboxing Athletic League

Our exclusive Cardio programs, provided to NAPMA member schools at no additional charge, come complete with ads, marketing ideas and video curriculum examples so you can launch the NAPMA Cardio-Karate™ or Cardio-Kicking™ program in your school right away.

As a NAPMA Professional member you will have the opportunity to implement many of the latest, cutting-edge marketing strategies months before your competition even knows what hit them. Many of these brilliant strategies and new products are more powerful and even more profitable than you can imagine. We make sure our members always get the competitive marketing edge.

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These can be very lucrative (poten-

continued on back

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- Pre-designed marketing campaigns
- Authorization to use the NAPMA member designation on your printed materials
- In-house NAPMA sponsored promotions for student retention and profit
- The National Black Belt Club
- Travel Discounts
- Toll-free consulting hotline to help you get the most from the material and much, much more..

That's really just a sampling of the benefits of NAPMA's Professional Membership.

We made NAPMA affordable for every school

NAPMA membership is an ongoing monthly subscription at $99 (+$3 shipping). There are no contracts and you can cancel at any time. If NAPMA helps you enroll just two more students and they stay in class, your yearly membership is paid for by their tuition. That's not two students per month; that just two students period! That's only $23 per week for all of the value of the NAPMA Professional membership.

NAPMA Start Up Kit

The NAPMA Start Up Kit includes a sample month's material plus two bonus books:

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Bonus #2 THE NAPMA RETENTION AND FINANCIAL CONTROL SYSTEM

This control book is designed with the retention, statistical and enrollment forms needed to interface your school with the NAPMA program.

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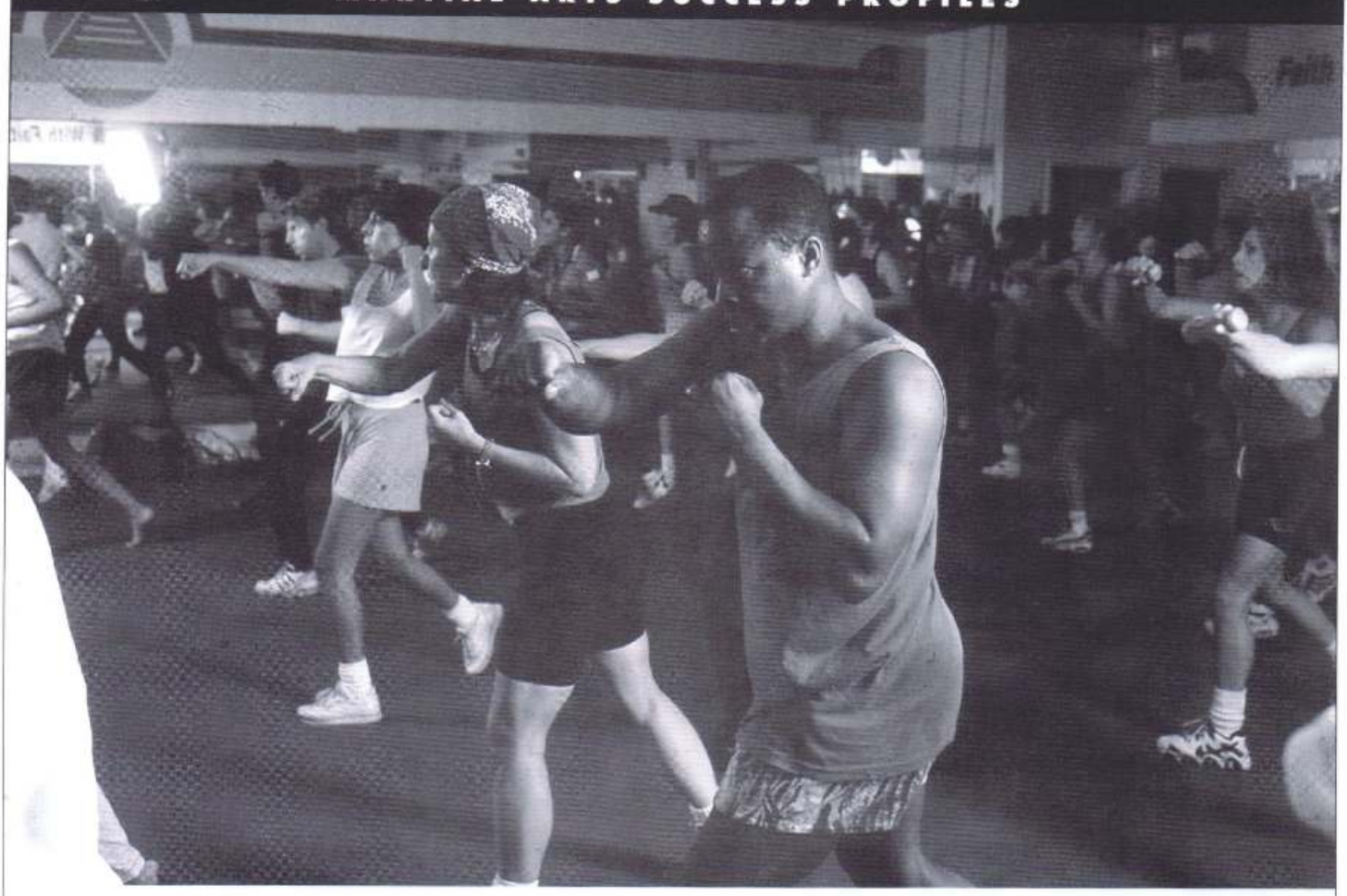
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Billy Blanks—from page 11

shape. She was my first client. I worked with her for about six or seven months and got her in really good shape.

She went out and started talking to people and next thing I knew I had 18 people in my studio, then 60, then all of sudden it really took off. My first celebrity student was Paula Abdul and now I've got dozens of celebrities taking Tae Bo classes.

MA PRO: What is the active membership at your club? How many are taking karate and how many are in your Tae Bo Aerobics?

BLANKS: I have about 3,500 active people in my Tae Bo classes, and about 850 students in my karate classes. I have at least 1,000 people come in each day. I have about 50 black belts that have been with me for seven years, since when I first started teaching here in California.

MA PRO: So your Tae Bo program, with 3,500 people, gets four times the number of clients compared to your karate classes, which have 850?

BLANKS: Yes. That's why I want to tell people [martial arts instructors] that Tae Bo Aerobics is a way to enhance their dojos.

I introduced my program to this one Korean master, Mr. Lee, in Napa, California. His son came to my studio, saw my program and liked what I was doing. So he hired me to do a seminar to introduce it to his people and to women in his area.

This was about six or seven months ago. Mr. Lee called me last week and he's drawn over three-hundred students just doing Tae Bo Aerobics.

MA PRO: Do you get Tae Bo clients to cross over to karate training? If so, what do you estimate is the percentage of cross-overs?

BLANKS: Yes. Probably about 70 percent of the people go right into karate after that. Everybody wants to try it out.

MA PRO: How long does it usually take before the cross-over?

BLANKS: After six or seven months. You know what I do. At the beginning of class, I say, "Some of you could be pretty good at this. Why don't you go to the karate class and see what it's really like?"

And that's what happens. They all really want to know what is the background — and the focus — of martial arts. I don't really get into the philosophy aspects of the martial arts when I'm teaching Tae Bo. You know, when you try to tell women about karate they can get scared; they think you have to be strong to do it. So what I do is I introduce it to them with music.

One day when I was teaching a Tae Bo class, I brought up one woman to the front of the class and had her break a board — totally unprepared. I said to her, "I want you to use the same focus that you use in our Tae Bo class and throw a side kick and break this board." This lady got up there, threw her side kick and broke this board — and she just went nuts! She felt like she could really do something.

You know what I said to one of the mothers? I was just kidding around with her and said, "Put your dukes up." She put up her hands in a fight guard and said, 'You know what Billy? I feel very confident that if someone was threatening me I could defend myself.'

Now that's all just from Tae Bo. You make them feel comfortable. Give them a nice place to come and work out in just to have fun. ■

Billy Blanks can be contacted at his studio in Sherman Oaks, California: (818)906-8528.

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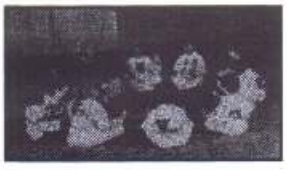
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HOW TO SET UP A SEMINAR

part one

by Lee Wedlake, Jr.



The information in this article will assist you in scheduling, promoting and presenting a successful seminar. I have sponsored many seminars with numerous instructors since 1976. The instructors have included Ed Parker, John Graden, Bill Wallace, Joe Lewis, Benny Urquidez, Huk Planas, Fumio Demura, Tom Kelly, Fred Degerberg, Jeff Speakman and others. Most have been monetarily successful.

Seminars do three things. (1) They bring knowledge to the school. (2) They create excitement within your student body and, often, within your community through mainstream media coverage, or within the martial arts community (by inviting other schools not within your own system). (3) They will usually make money.

Formats

Formats vary from one session to multi-day experiences. I have attended and sponsored both types. The easiest is the single session. One instructor comes in and does one class. You agree on a date and time. The complexity builds from there.

Next is the one-day, two-session, single-instructor arrangement. Not too tough to handle since all you do is select two time slots and build in a lunch break. It can be difficult, however, if you are not sure how to break up your target groups.

Many promoters are having kid's seminars since children often comprise 50% or more of the student body in a large number of studios. Maybe kids in the morning and adults after lunch? Or, do we have beginners in the A.M. and advanced afterwards? Different subject material in each session and make them open to all ages and ranks?

These decisions are ones you have to make based on your own student body, needs, interests, and the guest instructor's specialties and/or capabilities.

The one-day, two-session, two-instructor seminar is next on the list. It's not any more difficult except that its logistics are more complicated due to the second set of arrival times and lodging.

Multi-day, multi-instructor weekend, or week-long seminars, are the hardest. Coordinating times and subjects takes planning to maximize the effectiveness of the event. These events usually get a big draw, but it's easy to go overboard and suffer a big loss.

I attended a weekend seminar to assist Ed Parker in 1985 in Indiana. There were 10 instructors including Parker, Tadashi Yamashita, Billy Blanks, Ernie Reyes, Sr. and Jr., Aaron Banks, Ronald Duncan, Eric Lee and others. The cost was only $85 per person. I don't think there were more than 50-75 people there! I imagine the promoters took a huge loss, even with the backing of the local Wendy's franchises.

Most weekend camps today are in the $200 range and higher. Some are very successful and have run for quite some time. The following information refers to single-instructor seminars, and you would accordingly adjust your logistics and costs for multi-instructor/daytime operations.



Karate legend Joe Lewis above, and open house specialist Hien Nguyen (at top of page) are two of the nation's most popular seminar leaders.

Getting the Guest Instructor

Contact the instructor you wish to have come to your studio. Do this either through published ads or known contacts, such as the local rep for that instructor or the instructor himself. Have two or three dates in mind before you make the call or write the letter.

Be sure the dates are not on major holidays, Mother's or Father's Day or big vacation weekends like Memorial Day. Certainly, there are events that can and do happen on these days, but it's easier to draw participants when people don't feel they have to make a choice. That choice could be between your seminar and a tournament, or seminar and family, for example. So check your calendars.

Give yourself plenty of time to arrange all this. Three months is a good amount of time from conception to execution.

Before the date is confirmed with the guest, discuss exactly what you need to cover in terms of expenses. Usually, he charges a flat fee and air fare and hotel accommodations, and you can plan on paying for his meals as well. This prevents surprises for both of you. I plan a seminar with this thought in mind: I have enough money to pay for the whole deal if nobody showed up. It just makes me feel better.

Also discuss what the subject(s) will be taught and how long the sessions will last.

Fees vary greatly. There are instructors out there who will actually do the seminar for free. All you do is pay the flight ticket and accommodations costs. Some will do it for whatever



you take in. More often you will find a flat fee from around $500-$600 for a weekday seminar and it jumps to $1,000 on the weekend. One well-known instructor charges $1,500, which includes the air and hotel, but he also gets 100% of the door. So the sponsor earns nothing in terms of cash, but the public relations may be excellent and payment enough in itself.

Transportation and Accommodations

Now arrange the air and hotel. The three-month lead time mentioned earlier helps to get the best price for airline tickets. The closer you get to the date, the less availability of seats and the higher the cost. Check those arrival and departure times with the guest, considering his schedule and where he lives, as well as time-zone changes.

Put the instructor up in a decent place, not the "roach motel" just because it's cheap. True, the less you spend on accommodations the more you can put in your pocket. But if the place is a dump, your guest won't be happy and you need and want him happy because he'll do his best for you.

A welcome basket in his room is a way to score points. I want my events to be a cut above, so I'll spend the extra money. If you think the most expensive place in town will make a difference, fine. Maybe you want him to stay at your home. Ask first, then make the decision.

Promoting the Event

Send your initial flyers out 2-3 months ahead of the event. Make sure the flyer has all the bases covered. Some of the bigger "name" instructors have a "promo package" they will send you that contains a bio sheet, flyer dummy, press release and photos.

Your flyers should include who is teaching, where and when, a map when possible, how much it will cost, and what the subject is. Instructions for how to register, pre-registration discounts (a must in my opinion), additional information contacts, and any equipment necessary should be included.

Be specific on whether videotaping is allowed or not. Many instructors are touchy about that now with the proliferation of videos on the market. Make a note on the flyer as to the availability of seminar T-shirts, videos, books, a certificate of participation, or a special patch.

Mail the flyers as early as possible. Two mailings are recommended if your first batch went out more than six weeks prior to the event. The second mailing acts as a reminder and may be the only one that actually gets there if the first got lost.

Put notices in the martial arts magazines or other trade publications. The magazines need a minimum of three months advance notice to get your listing published in a timely manner. Others need a month or so. Some are dying for information and will be glad to publish your notice.

Make follow-up calls to those you sent flyers to. It helps to get a feel for turnout.

Some schools are big enough that they don't need to publicize the seminar, they just pack their own students in. Some schools have close relationships with other schools and they get together to support each other's events. But if you are standing alone on this one, you need to get those mailings and phone calls done.

Television and press releases should be sent out well in advance and phone calls made to follow up. Some media can't wait to do stories on the martial arts. Others couldn't care less. It doesn't hurt to try. The TV stations in my town come out to every event I have.

Pre-Registration

Get as much pre-registration as possible. It's money in hand that can be used to pay printing costs, airfare, etc. And it makes you feel better about the potential success of your event. Too many people will make promises to be there only to leave you holding the bag. After all, it didn't cost them anything just to say they'd be there. I've seen the old "chickens before they're hatched" syndrome before.

Get the commitments through pre-registration discounts. $5 off a $30 seminar is pretty good to most people. Make a cut-off date a week or so ahead to provide incentive. And stick to it. Don't let the late ones slide in at the pre-registration rate. It upsets those who were prompt. ■



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SAVED BY THE BELL

the 4 p's – how to turn info calls into appointments

By Rick Bell

When a potential customer calls any business in America today, that caller has come to expect a certain level of professionalism from the person who answers the phone. Sadly, most callers who dial a martial arts school are greeted by an untrained — and sometimes uninformed — assistant instructor who is well-meaning, but usually not very professional.

People today are much less tolerant of unprofessional telephone procedures because they've become accustomed to highly-trained, pleasant-sounding "information assistants" answering the phones at most successful businesses. Large companies spend vast amounts of time and money finding, training and supporting the best telephone receptionists they can afford. Corporate America knows the only direct contact they often have with their customers is by a telephone call, so they spend a great deal to insure that call is as pleasant and productive as it can be.

Martial arts schools are like many other types of businesses whose first contact with their market is by telephone. Unlike other businesses, though, martial arts schools are totally dependent upon that first phone call, and the positive impression it must make in order to get an appointment.

There is an old saying in sales that goes: "If you can't buy it over the phone, don't try to sell it over the phone." Martial arts lessons cannot be purchased over the phone, so you must resist the urge to try and sign someone up over the phone by giving them a complete history of you, your style, your prices, your mother's maiden name, etc. The goal of answering each call should not be to give information, but rather to get an appointment.

As I travel the country consulting and speaking at martial arts business seminars, I find that, besides being the weakest area in most schools, proper telephone procedure is usually the most neglected of all skills.

The good news is that since proper telephone procedure is a skill, it can be learned, just like forms, one-step sparring and weapons. The bad news is that if you don't improve your telephone skills, you're not going to be able to compete in today's market.

The easiest way to learn good telephone procedure is to approach it like a kata. The beauty of katas is that they consist of repetitive, memorable routines that can be learned and practiced over and over until performed to satisfaction. The fact that you have a "written-down" model to follow makes katas much easier to learn.

I've developed a kata-like model I call the "4 P's" to teach school owners how to properly answer the telephone and get appointments.

Over the next few issues, I'm going to share my 4 P method with you. The 4 P's are the Pivot, Profile, Praise and Prompt.

The Pivot

The first P is what I call the Pivot. Whenever someone calls you for information on your program and starts asking you questions, he/she is actually conducting an interview with you to evaluate both you and your program. Remember this: Whoever asks the questions controls the interview. You must take control of the interview by starting to ask the questions.

There is a very simple sentence that you can use to start asking the questions in any info call, and that is, "Are you interested in classes for yourself, or for your child?" This is a nonthreatening, reasonable question that no one would be offended by.



Many of you are currently using this Pivot question in your phone procedure. One of the older variations of the Pivot question is, "Have you studied martial arts before?" I do not, however, recommend asking a caller if he/she has studied martial arts previously.

First of all, it really doesn't matter if they have or have not taken classes in the past. Second, it sounds a bit condescending and could leave the caller with the impression that they need to have studied martial arts at sometime in the past to be able to qualify for admittance to your school. Most strangers to the martial arts are a bit intimidated anyway when they first call, and in the past we have contributed to that intimidation by using poorly chosen words and impressions.

Once you start to ask the questions in an info call, you will continue to ask the questions until the call is completed. With some practice, you'll learn to turn the call into an interview of the caller, to specifically determine the caller's needs.

Remember, the 4 P's are not designed to make you sound rude or evasive, they are designed to make you sound like a competent professional. You will enjoy the same success other instructors have experienced if you will learn and apply this method.

Next issue we will continue to construct the 4 P's model, adding the second P, the Profile. ■

THE SEVEN LAWS OF SUCCESS WITHOUT SELLING OUT

PART IV

the law of continuous progress

BY JOHN GRADEN

PART FOUR OF THIS series features excerpts from the top-selling martial arts business manual "Black Belt Management, a Guide to Success Without Selling Out."

The Law of Continuous Progress states very simply, *Students must feel progress In order to maintain interest.* People like to do what they feel they are good at. Ask a child to practice, what will the child do? Will he work the 44-move kata you just taught him or will he start throwing spinning hook kicks and jump kicks? Odds are most kids are going to be kicking. Why? Because they feel they are already pretty good at spin hook kicks. It's fun to do something you're good at.

Stephen Oliver, of Mile High Karate in Denver, Colorado, once said that a school must have a balance of Student Service, Student Progress and Martial Arts Spirit. I couldn't agree more. However, most schools, and I include my own school's embryonic stage in this group, were heavily weighted towards martial arts spirit. Student service didn't exist and student progress was so rare as to be laughable. Many of us can recall the days when our instructors told us that we would all test for our next belt when he felt enough of us were ready for the exam.

That's how I ran my school for the first year. That's why I can say that such an erratic progress schedule is absurd. Imagine being in high school and your biology teacher saying to you, "We're going to have a test on DNA sequencing as soon as enough of you are ready to take it." In that case, I probably still wouldn't be ready to take it even today.

Exams are your most visible method of conveying progress to a student. Exams should be held every month in your school with participation mandatory. That doesn't mean your students are going to get a new belt every month.



Belt exams are very formal which increases the event's prestige

They'll get a belt every four months. However, every eight classes they'll take a exam for a stripe and after earning four stripes they are awarded their new belt.

Here's an example of how it works for, say, a new orange belt with no stripes:

Zero to Four Weeks

After four weeks, the student takes a stripe exam. Now since this exam is only after four weeks, it should be on relatively easy material to get a grasp on, such as kicking or self defense.

Four to Eight Weeks

Four weeks later, the same student takes an exam for his second stripe. Now this exam should be on more difficult material, such as kata and since he's had eight weeks to work on it as an orange belt.

Eight to Twelve Weeks

Four weeks later, the student tests for his third stripe. This exam covers all the material in the first and second stripe exams. Technical quality should be pretty good since the student has been working twelve weeks on the material.

Twelve to Sixteen Weeks

Now the student takes the fourth stripe test. Rather than the black stripes he earned for the first three stripes, this test will be for a red stripe. The red stripe signifies that the student is ready to graduate to the new belt. The test covers all required material for the new belt and must be performed at the level of the new belt in order to pass.

As you can see in this system, the student always has a short-term goal to focus on. Every eight classes, he has an exam. That's a very compelling reason not to skip a class. This system also obligates the instructor to take full responsibility for preparing each class for the upcoming

exam. Each class should have a least 15-20 minutes of test requirements built into the lesson plan.

By conducting exams in class and keeping the students focused on these short-term goals, you will have a much higher level of progress among your student body. Also, stripes work well when it comes to failing a student (and you must fail students). It's much easier to hold a student back eight classes for a stripe than make him/her wait until "everyone is ready again for the next test."

Testing is just one of many areas of improvement your school can make by applying the Law of Continuous Progress to your classes. Students know the exam is coming up fast. If you don't cover the exam material, they will develop anxiety about the test because they will not be ready. On the other hand, if you move them a little closer to the exam each class by covering the material that will be in the exam, students will feel excited about the progress instead of anxious about being embarrassed.



Preparation is the key to a smooth exam. Belts with stripes down the center are National Black Belt Club members.

This is the mark of a good instructor. The ability to take a large group of diverse people with varying athletic skills and aptitudes and keep them collectively motivated towards earning their black belt.

On a final note, this can only be accomplished with free exams. It is a mistake and disservice to charge students to feel progress—a student's belt should not be tied to money. ■

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heavy hitters

Arlene Limas

With the Olympics permeating the airways, we thought you'd enjoy catching up with our most celebrated Tae Kwon Do gold medal winner, Arlene Limas. As sharp as ever, Arlene has channeled her drive to be the best into the operation of her school, Power Kix. With 325 active students, Power Kix is one of the largest female-owned schools in the world.

How did winning the gold medal impact your life? "It gave me the opportunity to interact and meet a lot of different people and go to places that I probably wouldn't have gone. Because Tae Kwon Do (TKD) as an Olympic sport is so new, there aren't a whole lot of medalists out there. So I think it's important, and I had the opportunity to be the first U.S. competitor to become a medalist in my sport. So it's very neat."



Are you involved in the Olympics in any way now? "I carried the torch. It was awesome! Because TKD is not in the Atlanta Games, it won't be a full medal sport until 2000 in Sydney, Australia. So it was kind of neat to be a part of these Games somehow."

As a school owner and a former champion, how do you feel about students competing in tournaments? "It's important, but it's not for everybody. Out of 325 active students, I have 14 of them going to the Junior Olympics. That's a very small percentage. I've been athletic all of my life and I've competed in many sports. It's important for young people to compete in sports because it helps them grow. It helps them to realize little pitfalls and uphill battles and feeling that they've accomplished something. A lot of what our belt system is based on, is achieving goals. Students should participate in competition, but it should be only a small aspect of their martial arts training."

So you don't require it, but you feel it can help your students to grow? "Exactly. My only concern is how much is too much. I see that a lot of kids go out there on the point circuit — not so much on the Olympic circuit — but on the point circuit they're competing every weekend; they're in the finals of these big national tournaments and they just think they're it. Unfortunately, I hate to have to put it that way, but they think that just because they've won a couple of tournaments they're special citizens of the world. And that I have a hard time with. I really feel that I have to pull the reins back on my kids so they aren't competing all of the time.

At one time you aspired to get into politics. Is that something you want to do? "I'm not doing anything at the moment, but I still do [want to get involved in politics]. I come from a family who has always been interested in political issues in Chicago. In Chicago it's inevitable, you talk about politics over breakfast.

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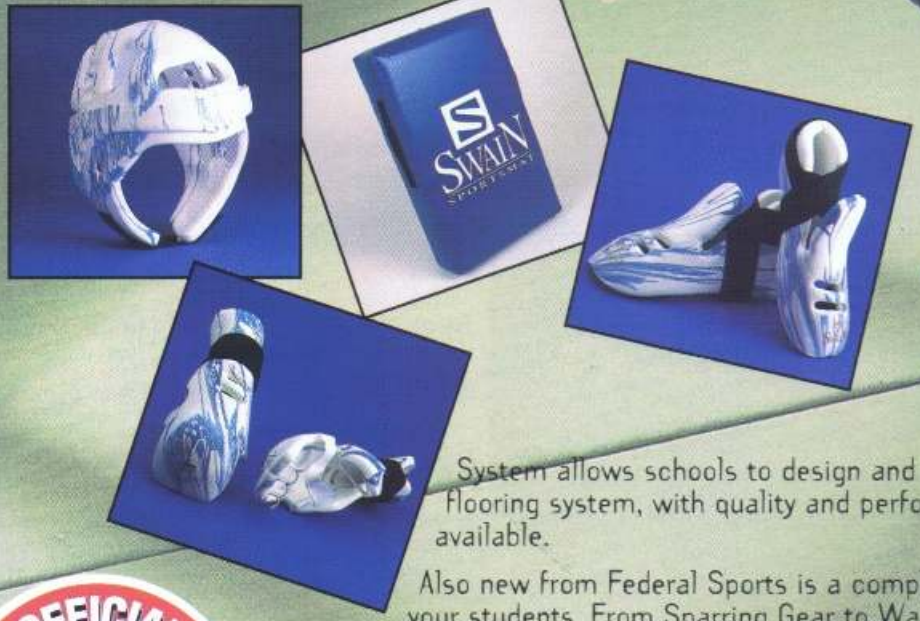
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