



THE PEACEFUL DRAGON

MARTIAL ARTS, Tai Chi, YOGA & MORE!



Newsletter

February, 2006



CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



There will be no Children's Classes on Saturday, February 4. Teachers will be at the tournament in Asheville that weekend and Sifu will be in New York with Grandmaster Ma Foren. Please arrange to make up the class any time during the week.

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT SEMINAR – ESSENTIAL SELF-DEFENSE Skills

Friday, February 17, 6:30 – 9:30 pm

This special seminar is open to ALL children between 5 and 13. Sometimes we explore strategies for street self-defense in our regular children's curricula, but this seminar will offer intensive hands-on training in Street Self-defense Techniques including escaping holds, what to do if the assailant has weapons, ground fighting, and much more. Master Sbarge will lead the seminar.

Fee: \$25 for the first child, free for each additional child in the family and also free for up to two friends as guests.

Registration: Participants must register at the front counter by Thursday, February 16.

Guest Requirements: Family members or friends who are not Peaceful Dragon students must be pre-registered and must have a permission slip and waiver signed by their parent or guardian in order to take part in this training. Please ask our staff for the waivers.

Parents, for little more than the cost of a babysitter, you get a break – a perfect time to enjoy the movie or dinner you've been wishing for – and your child will have a great time learning essential self-defense skills that could save a life!

- See important message from Master Sbarge under **ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- Check out the award winners among your fellow students
- Don't miss the Wisdom of Ma Foren – words there to benefit all
- Look for pictures from the workshop and banquet
- And remember to visit the websites often for new info

<http://kungfu.org/newsletter.shtml> for Grandmaster Ma's newsletter
www.thepeacefuldragon.com for your school



WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION, BANQUET AND Workshop, High Point of Year

Festival

The year of the dog has begun with a bang – from Hank’s fireworks during the lion dance, which marked the start of one of the best organized, best presented demo’s we’ve done (thank you George Lu) – and a lot of happy barking from the stray that showed up at the Guan door, and has been whole-heartedly adopted by Master Sbarge and Debra (welcome, Chauncey!). Thanks to all of our volunteers who help make these events possible.

Workshop

Our celebration weekend included a workshop with Venerable Guolin Shi who taught a two-hand Shaolin sword form that is rigorous and elegant. Students worked very hard to learn the form. Guolin is very fond of our school and said that he would look forward to returning in the future. This is praise from such a world-renowned martial expert.

Banquet and Promotions

The banquet, promotions and award ceremonies were especially significant this year. A record number of students finished their first year and received the traditional slap from Master Sbarge inducting them as formal students under the ACCS lineage. A record number of students reached the significant five year mark, kneeling and bowing before their teacher in recognition of their new role as disciples in the lineage. And, for the first time, several students were raised to the level of instructor, bowing and hugging their Teacher and receiving the diploma of *Laoshr*. All of these achievements are the result of the loving dedication of Master Sbarge to point each student to the martial path and the effort made by each student on that path.

One Year – Formal Student

Each person who was accepted as a formal one year student received the traditional slap from the Teacher. This means that they are intent on continuing their training and submit to the requirements of it, including the pain that is part of the growth and transformation from an ordinary person to a martial artist. At one year, very few would understand this and can only accept on faith, believing that they have chosen something that is right for them.

Five Years – Disciple

People who become disciples at the five year mark have worked hard and demonstrated that they have begun to adopt a martial way of life. Skill in a particular art is not the only requirement; there must also be dedication to the Teacher and the school; a desire to help others; and the ever-developing application of this new knowledge to life outside the school. Many students become disillusioned before they reach this milestone and never break through the often self-imposed barriers that prevent real growth.

Ten Years – Teacher Level

Like anything else, the martial arts are a mixed bag; immeasurable knowledge and power shoulder to shoulder with the egotistical and ignorant. To a beginner, the differences are not always apparent. After ten years of study and training, a student has just begun to know with the heart where lays the

heart of martial arts; what the battle against the self is worth; why this journey is insignificant yet the destination is profound. Eight students who have remained with Master Sbarge since the first days in the park, who worked to build the first Peaceful Dragon in 1997, and continue to be a vital part of the new Dragon, have become the first to be named *Laoshr* in our school. The eight new teachers are: Aaron Arden, Eric Mullis, Michael Ballantyne, Hank Kadel, Beth Rudowske, Wes Adams, Lyn Addy and George Lu. Their individual achievement is significant because it is rare. Even rarer is the unbroken lineage exemplified by Master Sbarge, who learned from Grandmaster Frank DeMaria, who learned from Great Grandmaster Chang Tung Sheng, who learned from the greats of a bygone era. One hundred years have brought this lineage to our day. The newly updated family tree is displayed in Studio A and will be available on-line by February 5.

Several students were singled out for other recognition as well during our special awards ceremony.

Hardest training in Children's Program

- Winner – Cole Mumpower
- Runner-up – Cody Eidsness
- Runner-up – Christopher Shalosky

Hardest training Adult Student

- Winner – Carrie Chun
- Runner-up – Kevin Deal
- Runner-up – Hameed Sanders

Most improved in Children's Program

- Winner – Kris Jenkins
- Runner-up – Charlie Wagner
- Runner-up – Hanna Eidsness

Most improved Adult Student

- Winner – Jennifer Bryan
- Runner-up – Jessica Henry
- Runner-up – Brandon Hardie

Most Dedicated New Student

- Winner – Robert Beaver
- Runner-up – Richard Towell
- Runner-up – Margaret Edwards

Most helpful Children's Program Family

- Winner – The Leneaves
- Runner-up – The Millers
- Runner-up – The Mumpowers

Best display of Wu-De

- Winner – Carolene Chun
- Runner-up – Tim Myers
- Runner-up – Gim Allen

Best Martial Arts Spirit

- Winner – Brian Weaver
- Runner-up – Nathan McConville
- Runner-up – Raleigh Chisholm II

Disciples and Children's Program teachers selected the winners and runners up in these categories from several nominees. Even to be nominated is an honor, and many of the final decisions were very difficult to make because so many of our students are worthy. So, if your name is among the nominees, you're doing very well; and if you weren't nominated this time, keep working hard! Nominees in alphabetical order were:

Hardest training in Children's Program – Cody Eidsness, Emi LeNeave, Nicole LeNeave, Cole Mumpower, Christopher Shalosky

Hardest training Adult Student – Carrie Chun, Kevin Deal, Tim Myers, Hameed Sanders, Frank Tippett

Most improved in Children's Program – Nathan Cuddy, Hanna Eidsness, Kris Jenkins, Soren Krause, Charlie Wagner

Most improved Adult Student – Severino Alvarez, Jennifer Bryan, Brandon Hardie, Jessica Henry, Katy Wright

Most Dedicated New Student – Robert Beaver, Margaret Edwards, Jeff LeNeave, Mark Pfeifer, Richard Towell

Most helpful Children's Program Family – The Cuddys, The Evans, The LeNeaves, The Millers, The Mumpowers

Best display of Wu-De (Adult Program) – Gim Allen, Jen Bryan, Carolene Chun, Kevin Deal, Tim Myers

Best Martial Arts Spirit (Children's program) – Marshal Berry, Raleigh Chisolm Jr., Nathan McConville, Justine Seibel, Brian Weaver

Congratulations to all!

COME TO A DAY of MEDITATION

Sunday, February 26, 9 am – 4 pm

You've noticed it on the class schedule, meditation class Wednesdays from 7:45 – 9 pm following tai chi. Grandmaster DeMaria states that progress in your other training will be hampered without it; Sifu admonishes serious disciples to include meditation in their training and practically requires it of any who hope to teach. Why – because meditation is the hidden jewel of martial arts. Master Eric Sbarge, head instructor at *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON*, will lead this extended session of Chan (Zen) meditation. The meditation is open to anyone regardless of experience. Take advantage of discussions about meditation including explanation of principles and methods. Deepen your established practice or find out what it's like to immerse yourself for a few hours. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Bring a vegetarian lunch – no meat in the guan please. Tea and snacks will be provided. Early bird price: \$39 public, \$29 Peaceful Dragon students. After February 23 add \$10.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLASS QUESTION/ANSWER, LECTURE-DISCUSSION ON WU-DE

Wednesday, February 1

The tai chi class before the lecture will be short, ending at 7 pm to allow for questions about the new class programs outlined in Master Sbarge's letter to students (see the following pages). The lecture-discussion on Wu-de will follow that. All students are encouraged to attend this very important discussion, not only to learn about the new class structure but to gain a better understanding of wu-de which is at the heart of martial arts.

CACMA TOURNAMENT HOSTED IN ASHEVILLE

Saturday, February 4

Several Peaceful Dragon students are planning to travel to Asheville for this competition. Details are in the fliers posted on the bulletin boards. Master Sbarge is unable to be there, but encourages as much participation as possible. Whether you compete or just go to watch and support your fellow students, you'll find the tournament experience worth your time.

NEW TEACHERS TO CELEBRATE WITH GRANDMASTER

Grandmaster is celebrating the Chinese New Year with his students on Saturday, February 4. Master Sbarge and seven of the new instructors are traveling to New York to be with him. More than a celebration, it is a traditional mark of love and respect for the lineage and for the pillars of the lineage.

FREE CLASSES FOR FEBRUARY!

You may have seen the flier, but we wish to remind you that your **family members can enjoy FREE CLASSES for the entire month!** *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON* is offering this opportunity to the spouses, parents, siblings and children of our students, who have expressed an interest in taking martial arts classes but never followed up. This is our Chinese New Year gift to you, and a perfect chance to find out how much fun you can have as you enhance your health, generate more happiness and benefit your entire life.

Children can sign up for two children's classes per week, and adults can sign up for any or all classes in tai chi, shaolin kungfu, yoga and meditation. To get started, just schedule a short registration meeting with instructors George Lu or Wes Adams, or with Master Eric Sbarge. All you will be required to buy is a Peaceful Dragon uniform, unless you are the same size as a family member student and want to share a uniform.

The best part of this wonderful New Year gift is that if you discover you enjoy classes and want to keep coming, *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON* will waive the normal \$149 registration fee as long as you register before the end of the month. This is really a gift that you can give to yourself, and we are only making it possible for the month of February. There is no obligation of course and if you decide not to join, the free classes are still yours to keep. Our bet is, if you try it, you'll like it and you'll want to stay!

WORKSHOP, BANQUET, PROMOTION PICTURES!



Many children and adult students were winners, celebrating their achievements.



Venerable Guolin drills students hard as they work to bring the two-hand sword alive.



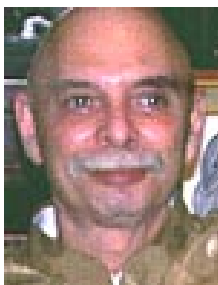
Workshop participants pose with sign presented to Master Sbarge by his eight new *Laoshr*.



Venerable Guolin and Master Sbarge share the moment with eight new Teacher Level students.

WISDOM OF MA FOREN

Why Worry? Be Happy!



Worry, worry, worry – that's all people seem to do about everything in life. In the Taoist or the Buddhist view, there is no need to worry about anything. It serves no purpose other than to worry you, and worry is like a disease that grows with more worry until it becomes an obsession.

One of the great so-called secrets of the martial arts is learning how to look at the present moment. Once a decision is made we simply go with it and let the outcome take its course without worry.

We all have to face the simple fact of life that we have little control over destiny. Things just happen and sometimes they happen for no apparent reason. Yet people will lament over their condition and brood about circumstances. First, realize nothing can really be done.

According to the I-Ching, there will always be change and, unknown to you, all events are linked to each other. Something you did ten years ago may not manifest until ten years later, but it will in time. Everything is linked. Even at this very moment you are shaping another change, in some way, by your actions. Why spend the rest of your life worrying about this natural occurrence? What will be, will be and the only recourse we have is to do our best at the moment and then move on.

We like to think our problems are unique, but in reality they are common to most human beings. We all share the same experience – namely life - and life is the same for everyone. Yes, some have better lives than others, but that is the result of karma. We sow our own seeds for our future lives. What you nurture, you harvest.

We should try to make the best decisions we can in life, but other than that, what else can you do to guarantee things will come out as you plan? There are no guarantees in life except that life will be life. It may be a great life or it may be a terrible existence. It is because of what you have nurtured from past existence that is the cause. In essence, your life is of your own design.

Just live for now, think for now, act for now, and whatever the outcome deal with it and then move on. You will always make mistakes – that is why they put erasers on pencils. Don't be afraid of mistakes; they happen to all of us and they always will. But don't let them depress you either. Just try your best to resolve a mistake and move on. It won't be the last mistake you ever make. You can spend your life worrying, or you can live free of worry by enjoying the moment and realizing you have only a certain amount of control. We are affected by all kinds of karmic conditions – not just our own – but also world karma.

Worry is a needless act that causes suffering, and I am sure you will agree you don't need more suffering. So let it go after you have done your best to resolve the problem. We can learn from the animals in the world; they live in the moment and, in doing so, live in accordance with nature, happily, with never a complaint.

Can you do as much?

Buddha bless

This is the fifth installment of selections from Grandmaster's email. Any student who wishes to receive email directly from Grandmaster Ma Foren should visit <http://kungfu.org/requestform.shtml> and include a brief thanks for Grandmaster's generosity. Make sure the punctuation and spelling on your email address are correct. And very important, don't forget to add Grandmaster to your approved senders list. If your computer is blocking email, get help from someone locally; Grandmaster Ma cannot help you with these matters.

SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM MASTER SBARGE

Dear Students,

Happy Chinese New Year! I want to thank each and every one of you, and family members, who made the recent weekend so special with your participation in our action-packed festival, our lively dinner celebration with student awards and promotions, and the fantastic workshop with the Shaolin monk, Master Guolin. While we are all so impressed by Master Guolin's incredible martial arts skills and his generosity in sharing his art, he has once again expressed how impressed he is with the great Wu-de he sees at our school and the continued hard work and improvement of our students.

As great as this weekend was for all of us, I believe that it is just the beginning of what will be a great year for all of you in your training. I'm pleased to announce five major improvements to our adult program for this coming year. I am confident that these improvements will substantially help you to excel in the arts you are studying, and to better enjoy your training here. As you'll see below, we've scheduled a discussion time for you to bring up any questions you may have about these important changes.

1. Standardized Curriculum

For the first time, the full curriculum for both our tai chi and Shaolin kungfu programs has been standardized and written up (now posted on our web site) so that every student can see at a glance what will be covered from beginner level all the way up through the ten-year instructor level.

2. Rotating Block System

Starting February 1, we are instituting a Rotating Block system in our tai chi and Shaolin kungfu classes, modeled very much after the successful system we've used for the past year-and-a-half in our Children's Program. There will be four block levels (A - D), going from beginner to advanced student. Each month, there will be a pre-set curriculum for each block, so you'll be able to learn more efficiently with students at your own level, and you'll know ahead of time exactly what you and other students at your level will be covering in each class.

3. Testing and Promotion Ceremonies

To encourage your best possible progress in your training and to make sure you are proficient in mastering the material for your level, for the first time we will be offering Testing and Promotion Ceremonies for adults. This is again modeled after the success of our Children's Program. Though the testing is not required for adults, it is recommended as a means for you to enhance your motivation, set benchmark goals for your continued steady progress, and to ensure the integrity of the arts that you may some day wish to pass on to others.

4. Enhanced Members Web Site

All of the Adult Program orientation materials, as well as the complete Tai Chi and Shaolin Kungfu curriculums, have just been posted on line. You'll find vital information on the Rotating Block System, the testing requirements and procedures, and much more, all at <http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/students.shtml> . I encourage every adult Peaceful Dragon student to put time aside and thoroughly read every entry in the Adult pages of the Members section.

5. Monthly On-line Lessons

Periodically in class, or at our monthly Wednesday night discussion group, we discuss important teachings of Shaolin and Tai Chi that are vital for advancing your skills and understanding in these arts. Unfortunately, not every student can be at every class or discussion group, so a lot of information never reaches many students. To help overcome this, I will now be sending an interactive on-line lesson to every student each month. The lessons will be sequential and on-going. They are designed to provide you with information but also to provide hands-on exercises and activities that will help bring the benefits of your training into your daily life, with emphasis on the philosophical and meditative benefits of martial arts training. All current students start with Lesson One; all future students start with Lesson One their first month, so that each student gets the benefit of the entire sequence.

Important: A Chance to Answer All of Your Questions at February 1st Student Discussion Group

February's topic of Wu-de, the ethical code of the martial artist, is a vital one, especially for newer students. But since understanding the above changes to our Adult Program is equally vital for all students, we will hold a Question and Answer session immediately preceding the Wu-de discussion at our next Monthly Discussion Group, on Wednesday,

February 1. Normally the discussion starts right after Tai Chi or Shaolin at 7:45 pm. But because we have so much to cover, we will have an abbreviated class and start the Question and Answer Session at 7:00pm sharp, to be followed by the Wu-de topic. I sincerely hope every adult Peaceful Dragon student will make every possible effort to be there.

Wishing you all the best in this New Year,

Sifu Eric Sbarge

ON THE DRAGON PATH

On Meditation

By Kathy Crowe, disciple

With due acknowledgement and heartfelt thanks to Master Eric Sbarge



As challenging as it can be to learn our forms and techniques, many times it's even harder to keep our concentration. Paying attention to every move of the tai chi solo form over a half hour is not so easy. But if your mind is not behind your movements, you won't have flow and energy. It's like an actor on stage that loses concentration and "drops" character. And if you "lose your mind" in kungfu, you could very well end up with your partner's fist where you don't want it to be!

That's one of the reasons martial arts training includes meditation. It's a tool to stop the monkey mind from jumping from "What will I eat when I get home" to "I wonder if my boss is mad at me" to "I wish I were in Paris." We use focus techniques, like counting the breaths or chanting, to give the monkey a banana to keep it occupied. Unfortunately, no matter how delicious the banana, the monkey can still get distracted by the thought parade. To achieve a calm, focused mind is the work of years, and even then it comes and goes. But sometimes this problem can be an opportunity. A friend suggested that when thoughts float up, to try to disengage, or dis-identify with the passing parade. Instead of becoming emotionally involved, just observe. Become the watcher, or what I like to think of as the Wise Watcher. Then very interesting and valuable things start to happen.

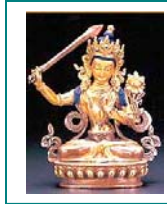
First, I don't follow the really extraneous thoughts down the garden path. If I find myself thinking about my favorite Parisian bistro, I simply say, "No, this is not the time for that," and gently bring myself back to my meditation. There is no blame, just a little course correction. As the Wise Watcher gets better at dismissing these superficial distractions, I find such thoughts actually come less often, and when they do come they often go pretty quickly.

This seems to leave room for more important thoughts to rise up. Sometimes I'll suddenly know the solution to a design problem I've been thinking about, or I get a psychological insight, or even better, a spiritual realization. For instance, we all have a negative tape that runs inside our heads: "You're a failure. You're a fake. You're selfish." If I'm in that Wise Watcher mode, I can catch those thoughts without taking them to heart, and see them for the negative, really stupid things they are. Just the other day I realized that if I spoke to other people the way I sometimes talk to myself, I wouldn't be a very nice person.

One time I found myself thinking about someone who had been very cruel to me, and because I didn't emotionally engage in reliving that experience, I could see the person as someone who deeply suffered and was acting out because of pain. That opened my heart towards him because of course I know what

it's like to do less than lovely things out of pain. I felt a rush of compassion, and I was absolutely released from the bonds of fear and anger that held me to him.

For me, the best meditation the heart with an inspiring figure or technique where you try to identify you admire. I'm not a Buddhist, but recognized by the sword he holds for inspiring image! If I can hold the identify with courage, I really can feel



experiences come when I try to connect from idea. The Buddhists have a meditation with a particular deity who represents a quality I've always been drawn to Manjushri, who is smiting through obstacles. That's quite an image of Manjushri in my heart and try to a shift in energy.

Every time I eliminate something that's not true from my thinking – an illusion, false belief, or emotional attachment – or fill myself up with something that's higher and truer, I get that much closer to seeing things as they really are, closer to the Dao. Such "Aha!" moments don't come every day, or every week, or even every month, but they do come.

All this is great for martial arts. Being more in the moment, seeing more clearly what's really happening and having more courage are all essential. But meditation is even more valuable for the rest of my life. First, I find the Wise Watcher is becoming more a part of my daily life. This surely saves me a lot of grief. Also, becoming less of a lunatic and more a being of compassion means lower stress, a more kind and generous nature, and more self-confidence. Most of all, it means I can be of service with better motivation and more skill.

I've been meditating daily for over 30 years as part of a spiritual practice, and there are still plenty of times I'm just sitting taking up space. But when I look at the person I was back then, so lost in a morass of emotion and so closed-in spiritually, I can see how much has changed. We live a long time in my family, and I may have another 30 years left. I'm still too emotional, and enlightenment is a bunch of lifetimes away, so I hope and plan to keep striving and meditating, and to make some more progress!



DRAGON CLASSIFIEDS

NOW brand Supplements a BARGAIN!

Save 20% off retail for these top quality vitamins, minerals and food supplements. Carefully researched and chosen by Debra and Sifu, NOW products are an exceptional benefit for students and invaluable to combat stress and enhance overall health. Orders are placed the first of each month and ready for pickup in a week or so.

Your ad could be here; text and graphics, a scan of your business card, or artwork you submit. The cost is \$5 for students, \$10 for the public. Give your copy to George, or email maibu@carolina.rr.com. Pay at the front counter.

SAVE on Quality Martial Arts Supplies and Weapons

Get 10% off retail for high quality martial arts supplies direct from Martial Arts Mart and waive the shipping and handling fees. Many items are on display for you to try sizes and styles, and any item can be ordered from their extensive catalog.

Fill out one of the Order Forms at the display area near the restroom and give it to our staff along with a 50% deposit at our front service counter. Orders will be placed the first of each month and merchandise will usually arrive within one week and be ready for you to pick up.