



# THE PEACEFUL DRAGON

MARTIAL ARTS, Tai Chi, YOGA & MORE!



## Newsletter

November, 2006



[www.thepeacefuldragon.com](http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com)

704.504.8866

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CAN YOU BENEFIT FROM OUR YOGA CLASSES?



Master Sbarge is again teaching the Shaolin Yoga twice a week (Tuesday evenings and Friday mornings), and there are several additional classes led by our experienced senior students. Master Sbarge urges all students – and particularly those in their early years of training – to try to practice the Shaolin Yoga regularly to ensure good flexibility, breathing, internal strength and concentration. *Any student who has added yoga to their training, or who has stopped and then had to get back into it, knows what a difference it makes. For a complete run-down of recent schedule changes, see later article below, “Adult Class Schedule Changes”. – the editor*

### SCHEDULE CHANGE FOR MASTER SBARGE’S MONTHLY DISCUSSION

**Wednesday, November 8**

Because Master Sbarge will be out of town on Wednesday, November 1, the monthly discussion date has been changed to Wednesday, November 8 at 7:45pm. The topic is **“Cultivating Compassion and Wisdom – A Buddhist Notion?”**

### THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

**A special thanks from Debra and her brother Hugh to those of you who donated unwanted household items and furniture to help Hugh. Due to your generosity he is moved into his new home and “living the good life.”**

## Adult Class Schedule Changes

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**SCHEDULE CHANGES.** We have made five changes to improve our Adult Class Schedule. The new schedule took effect Friday, October 20th. The changes are as follows:

1. By request, we have scheduled Tai Chi and Shaolin Kungfu sequentially on Tuesday nights, for students who want to be able to do both in a row.
2. Master Sbarge will now be leading two Shaolin yoga classes each week: Tuesday evenings from 7:45-8:45, and Friday mornings from 10:45-11:45am. If you are not currently taking advantage of at least one Shaolin Yoga class per week, Master Sbarge urges you to start now.
3. In order to accommodate the Friday morning Yoga, the Tai Chi now starts a half hour earlier, at 9:30am.
4. The Tuesday night sparring class has been moved back 15 minutes -- it now runs from 6:30-7:30pm.
5. The Adult Mastery Program Roundtable has been moved forward one hour: It will now meet from 6:30-7:30pm instead of 7:30-8:30pm, still the second Tuesday of each month.

We hope these changes are positive for the majority of you, and for the few who may find any of them less convenient we apologize.

## ATTENTION All New Adult Students: IMPORTANT CHANGES TO PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTING FROM CURRICULUM Block A to Block B

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We now have formal Promotion Testing to enable newer adult students to advance from Block A to Block B. Promotion Testing will be available every two months.

The first scheduled date is Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30pm. If you are eligible to test but cannot make that date, there will be a make-up Promotional Test on Wednesday, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:15pm. **In order to be tested, you must pre-register at the front counter no later than Thursday, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>.** We do not charge any fees for testing.

Requirements to promote from Block A to B are described on the Adult section of our Members web page, but basically they are as follows:

1. You must have trained at The Peaceful Dragon a minimum of two months.
2. You must have attended a minimum average of two classes per week.
3. You must be able to perform the Block A curriculum for your chosen style (Tai Chi or Shaolin Kung Fu).

Upon satisfactorily completing your testing, you will receive your Promotional Certificate indicating that you have advanced into Block B.

## MASTER SBARGE TO ATTEND GRAND OPENING of NEW ACCS BRANCH SCHOOL in CROTON FALLS, NY

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Master Sbarge and Debra will be attending the Grand Opening ceremonies and dinner on November 5<sup>th</sup> at Sifu John Scattaretico's beautiful new ACCS school in New York. Other ACCS masters, instructors and students will be in attendance as will of course Grandmaster DeMaria. Thanks to all of you who made donations for a gift for Sifu John's school – we have purchased martial arts mats which are already in use at the new school!

## QUESTIONS FOR GRANDMASTER DEMARIA

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Grandmaster DeMaria recently began inviting students to send any questions they had about their training in particular or martial arts in general, and had said he was disappointed that he didn't get more questions. Our own Kathy Crowe commented to him that people sometimes are shy or don't want to appear silly or whatever; and also suggested that not everyone is on his list. She felt that all the schools might put something in their newsletters saying that Grandmaster invites, welcomes and really enjoys getting questions from students, so don't hold back. He loves this part of teaching the arts!

## STUDENT SERVICES LINK UP AND WORKING

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The editor somewhat prematurely announced the availability of a student services page in last month's newsletter and apologizes for any confusion caused. The page is functional now; if you want to see what it looks like, go to <http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/studentservices.shtml>. Adult students, and the parents of any child who is a student at *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON*, can request a FREE listing for their business or service. This is a nice benefit for students, and as the page grows, upgrades such as an index may be added. If you want to use this service, please email [info@kathycrowe.com](mailto:info@kathycrowe.com). Please note that acceptance of your listing does not imply endorsement. Listings and images may be edited, cancelled or refused. Ads for selling stuff will continue to be a separate column in the newsletter unrelated to this service.

## EVENTS

### PEACEFUL DRAGON TEAM TOURNAMENT A BUST!

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Those who did not register may yet be unaware that the tournament was cancelled due to very low enrollment. Both children and adults lost the chance to meet the challenge of displaying your best martial arts skills possible – at a tournament fee just 30% that of outside tournaments. Many schools that organize in-school tournaments require all students to participate. Master Sbarge is reluctant to require students to do so, but he is puzzled by the failure of so many students to register for this

important once-a-year event. He and our instructors accept the blame if they have failed to emphasize the value of the tournament to our adults students, and to the parents of our youth members. We will schedule the Team Tournament Day again next year, and we sincerely hope that this year's lack of team spirit and participation was a one-time aberration due to a lack of positive promotion by *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON*.

## FALL CACMA TOURNAMENT DATE CHANGE

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**Sunday, November 12**



If you're bummed about our own in-school tournament being cancelled this year, here's another great opportunity. The Fall CACMA Tournament in Mooresville is a major area event, hosted annually by Sifu Rick Panico. The Fall Classics CACMA (Carolinas Association of Chinese Martial Arts) sponsored tournament in Mooresville has had a date change. Instead of Saturday, Nov. 11th, it will be on Sunday, Nov.

12th. For additional information go to <http://hgkfa.tripod.com/Tournament2006.htm> Master Sbarge will be attending as a judge and referee, and he urges any interested Peaceful Dragon students to compete, or come out and support your fellow students who are competing.

## SCHOOL MAINTENANCE

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**Saturday, November 4, 9am – 3pm**

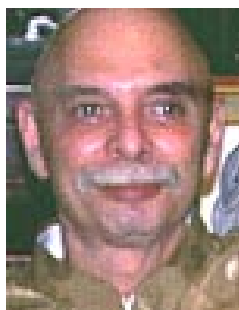


Plan now for this important work to help keep your school in top shape. Our quarterly clean up and fall landscaping day is a perfect chance to show your wu-de and get together with your fellow students to take care of the necessary building and grounds maintenance – everything from cleaning mirrors to pulling leaves. Lots of hands needed, and whatever talents you have will be put to good use. The majority of the work this time is in the building, so don't hesitate to come and help, rain or shine. If your handy,

bring tools. *NOTE: there will be classes as usual.*

## WISDOM OF MA FOREN

### Chan



I have had the good fortune to study with some of the top Masters of Chan; to mention the most famous, Rev. Master Shen Yen. When he first came to the United States I had the privilege to be one of his first American students. At that time I knew he was pointing towards greatness as a leader in spreading Chan to the American people, and now he is considered the leading authority of Chinese Chan (Zen). He is the equivalent of the Dalai Lama of Tibet, but for the Chinese sect.

He told me then that the Chan methods are not difficult to understand, but would take a lifetime of work to master. He was right. The more one meditates the more one realizes

just how difficult a task it is to make a worthwhile breakthrough to any level of true knowing. However, the more one practices, the more one can attain control over the mind.

Here are a few tips that might help.

- 1. Be consistent**, don't make excuses for not doing your practice each day.
- 2. Never stop your study of the classic writings** of the past masters.
- 3. Never for a moment should you think that you have attained anything.** The mind will fool you every time if you're not observant.
- 4. Join a meditation group**, it will help keep you on track. Working alone in the beginning years causes most to fail.
- 5. Tai Ji is a good partner to your Chan training.** The first thing we must focus on is the body and Tai Ji does just that. Once you are in command of your body then you can look at the mind.
- 6. Drop all goals.** In reality there is nothing to attain. True enlightenment is attainment nothing but, rather enlightenment is the dropping of everything.
- 7. Focus on what the Buddha taught us and where and why we fail**, namely the Seven Passions and Six desires. If you don't understand them, look them up and ponder them deeply.
- 8. Try to be aware of each passing moment** during your normal day activities.
- 9. Try to drop the "I" from your vocabulary.** In many cases you will have use the I reference, otherwise people will not understand what you are talking about, but in many cases you can drop the I and you will find that each time you do this you become more aware of the division within yourself. Refer to yourself by name, example, John is hungry, John wants to take a bath, John wants to go to sleep etc. Try to limit calling yourself "I". I want this, I am tired, I think I will go out now etc. In that way you are identifying with the false self, drop it as much as you can, even if it is being said in your mind. This will help a great deal to make the divisions that are needed for a breakthrough.
- 10. Try to make small changes in your life style before you make big changes.** Eat less meat. It has the nature of the animal contained within it, so it's best to avoid it as much as possible. Also don't punish yourself too much or you will give it all up, be gentle to yourself.
- 11. Keep your mind focused on the things in life that are worthwhile** for your breakthrough. Rid yourself of useless endeavor.
- 12. Accept the fact that you may not make it in this lifetime**, but this does not matter. You can't rid yourself of thousands of rebirths in one life time. As long as you continue to practice you will succeed sooner or later. Meditation is the only sane thing to do in an insane world. It can only benefit you, so never stop your efforts, the cost is too great.

*To receive email directly from Grandmaster Ma Foren, go to <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 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.*

# STUDENT VOICES

*Ann wants everyone at The Peaceful Dragon to know that she's getting married on December 3 – and we're all invited to the wedding! Visit the wedding website at [www.visualgrammar.com/ann&dennis/](http://www.visualgrammar.com/ann&dennis/) and get all the details. Anyone who wants to attend can email RSVP directly from the site. That will help ensure that there's plenty of food at the reception!*

**Disciple Ann Houston** writes about her experience as a Peaceful Dragon student and introduces her intended, Dennis Staples. Let's wish them All The Best!

## Ann Houston



Most people probably know who I am, since I've been a student at the Dragon for about seven years. I work for the N.C. tobacco prevention and cessation program as a media trainer/consultant. I've been there for 14 years, and work out of my Charlotte home.

My fiancé, Dennis Staples, works in the Matthews office of the NC Division of Highways. He's a civil engineer, and a motorcycle enthusiast. We are both selling our East Charlotte homes and are hoping to be close neighbors to The Peaceful Dragon before too long. Dennis and I were introduced by mutual friends many years ago. We dated back then for about a year, and then broke up. In fact, part of what brought me to The Peaceful Dragon so many years ago was a combination of that breakup and my mother's severe illness. I was suffering from depression and anxiety and needed to find some physical activity that could both hold my interest and increase my health. I found what I needed – and more. About four years go, Dennis came back into my life, and wanted to pick up where we left off. We will wed on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

During my first few years at The Peaceful Dragon, I was a day-student. Since I was a single mother with a small child, I rarely made it to evening or weekend classes. After the move to Steele Creek Road, I made more of an effort, but because of financial problems, I left for a few months, thinking I could no longer afford classes. I quickly learned that I could not afford to go without classes, as my depression and anxiety began to return. Happily, I came back, with increased commitment to my training and my overall health. I wish I could come more often, but my job requires a good deal of out-of-town travel. I'm hoping a move to the area will find me in class more often, so I can learn more. My daughter, Anna Booth, is now a freshman at East Carolina University, studying nursing. And no, I was not 12 when I had her. Like most students at The Peaceful Dragon, I am older than I look!

We have some amazing athletes at our school; I am not one of them. I call myself a remedial disciple. I've certainly been here long enough to be a disciple, but I'm not a fast learner, and I forget new material quickly if I'm not consistently practicing it. One of the main things I've learned through my training is that all of us are such unique beings, it is unfair to compare ourselves to others in our learning. Some things come quickly – some seem to take forever. I've found that the only real measure of my improvement is myself last year, last month, and last week.

# DRAGON CLASSIFIEDS

## AMAZON HAS GROCERIES, HOLIDAYS ARE NEAR!

We guess it had to happen...now you can buy groceries through Amazon 14,000 items and growing. Conveniently, you can buy good things to eat that make great holiday gifts that can be shipped anywhere. Check out the grocery page: [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/16310101/sr=53-1//sr=53-1/qid=1161528884/ref=tr\\_304351/104-4248453-7487127](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/browse/-/16310101/sr=53-1//sr=53-1/qid=1161528884/ref=tr_304351/104-4248453-7487127). Remember that anything you buy through the Amazon link **on our website** gives a little back to help support *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON*.

## INCREDIBLE Holiday MERCHANDISE Sale

**Saturday, November 25**

*THE PEACEFUL DRAGON* will host a special Martial Arts Merchandise Sale on Saturday, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>. You can special-order any item from Tiger Claw or Century Martial Arts and receive FREE SHIPPING plus 15% OFF the retail price. All items will be ordered immediately and will arrive by mid-December in time for the holidays. In addition, all in-stock remaining Asian gifts or teas from our gift shop will be marked down 25% OFF during this one-day sale. There are many top quality items remaining from the heyday of our shop, now all at terrific prices.

PLANNING TO BUY something for the house or garden, indulge a favorite pass-time, get that hot new DVD or the latest gadget? Consider shopping through Amazon first where you'll find competitive pricing on everything PLUS – through arrangement between *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON* and Amazon – a percentage of your purchase goes to help our school flourish. Get what you want and support your school too!

Go to <http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/books.shtml> and use Search Amazon.com for the products you want.



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](mailto:maibu@carolina.rr.com). Pay at the front counter, by the month.

## 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.



What could be more fun than a party right here! That special someone and guests will enjoy lots of fun and games (including the obstacle course), plus an exciting martial arts class. All guests receive a gift certificate for a FREE private introductory class and the birthday boy or girl gets a special present from The Peaceful Dragon! Read all about it at:

[www.thepeacefuldragon.com/birthdayparties.shtml](http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/birthdayparties.shtml)

## **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.