



THE PEACEFUL DRAGON

Newsletter

SEPTEMBER, 2004



Special Announcements

NEW CLASS SCHEDULE STARTS MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6

Sifu Sbarge had three objectives for the new schedule: to provide longer classes for more intensive training and practice; to reintroduce Hsing-i and Pakua classes for those who are interested in these arts; and to start the Wednesday meditation earlier to integrate regular discussion of Ch'an and Taoist philosophy into the practice so more students will be inspired to attend. This is especially valuable for any student who is serious about developing his or her skills to higher levels.

Sifu is now teaching a 75 minute intensive Young Dragon forms class for serious black-sash-club students on Saturdays. For adults, longer shaolin classes will allow more time for instruction and sparring, while longer tai chi classes will allow students to maintain and expand their qigong. Hsing-i and Pakua are open to any internal arts (tai chi) student with a minimum of one year training. Shuai Chiao is open to all external arts (kungfu) students who wish to and are able to work throws and grappling.

A lot of discussion and planning went into these schedule changes, and we realize that some students may be inconvenienced; certainly we hope those who are will be able to work around this and get the classes they want. We expect the great majority of students will enjoy and benefit from this expanded schedule.

Sifu Bob Sbarge



As with any newsletter, sometimes the news is less happy. Most of you know that Sifu's father, Sifu Bob Sbarge, is dealing with a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. (Sifu Bob studied with his son under Grandmaster DeMaria. Many of you have met him when he has visited our school, or met his students when they have joined us for workshops – most recently Grandmaster's Xing-i workshop and before that the last mountain tai chi retreat. Sifu Bob is an excellent photographer and took the pictures of Great Grandmaster and Grandmaster that hang in studio A). A Special Fund has been created to lend support to our Sifu, his family and father as these circumstances arise. Anyone is welcome to contribute to this open fund at any time. Prayers are very welcome. Extra flight miles are certainly welcome. There is no need to feel awkward about this; these circumstances are part of the great cycle of all things we learn about in our training and try to carry forward in our daily lives. The level of response to Sifu and his family is a normal extension of *Wu-de* in our traditional school. Senior students may temporarily take on additional class duties from time to time. An all Peaceful Dragon open air bazaar/yard sale is being planned for sometime in the near future.

Workshops and Events

Fifth Annual Weekend Tai Chi Retreat

Saturday, October 9, 7am – 8:30pm
Sunday, October 10, 7am – 6pm

Tai Chi is one art that anyone can do, yet it is also one of the highest and most demanding. No matter what your level of training, beginner or advanced, you will benefit from a focused workshop. Two days is easy to manage and the price is right. Improve your overall health and fitness, learn how to reduce stress and increase your balance and coordination; discover how to begin the cultivation of the peace and harmony you've been seeking; and learn how to use tai chi for self-defense as well. Classes will include practice of solo forms, qigong, meditation, push hands (tui-shou), self-defense technique and yogic stretching. As always, there will be question and answer sessions to learn more about this centuries-old Chinese practice for mind, body and spirit. Take advantage of the Early-bird Special: **sign up by October 1, \$149 for the public, \$99 for Peaceful Dragon students. After that, add \$15.** It's a bargain no matter what. The price includes three meals on Saturday and two on Sunday!

First Annual Team Tournament Day

Saturday, September 18

Why a team tournament and why should I do it, you are probably asking. Our classes are non-competitive. You come, do your best, practice some on your own, look at Sifu or senior students or twenty-somethings, and...you compare don't you? Natural for all of us. Some of this comparing is realistic and useful. Most of it is a waste of time. A team tournament will give you an opportunity to compare for real...in an environment that is friendly, supportive, non-threatening, and as close to tournament play as we can make it. Your aging editor is not a competitor and yet I can vouch for the value of a little friendly competition. What you get with a team tournament is good feedback about what you are doing, the opportunity to foster school spirit, to share the result of your efforts with like-minded others, and of course the chance to win some cool and quirky prizes!

ALL students, beginners, old-timers, Young Dragons, everyone, is encouraged to **sign up for the tournament by Friday, September 17, 7pm. Fee is a low \$15.** Yes, that's low, please take advantage of it. Spectators, also a low fee, just \$3.

Well, yeah, we need some folks to cheer us on, don't we? The tournament begins with a lion dance and opening ceremonies at 11:00am. Competition begins at 11:15am. Okay, that'll be the absolute shortest lion dance on record! Maybe a sprig of parsley instead of lettuce! Teams have been organized so no team will have any strengths the other teams don't...but you have to get involved to help make it happen. If you haven't already done so, get one of the yellow sign up forms, pick your events and get ready to have fun! The form has details about the different divisions.

Geoff To Host Cooking Workshop

Mark November 7 on your calendar for a sure-to-be-valuable short course on a fascinating aspect of vegetarian cooking. Our talented Chef Geoff is taking a well-deserved break to visit family in Viet Nam. Details of the workshop will be forthcoming.

INTERNATIONAL DINNER SERIES



Chef Geoff's next adventure takes us to Japan, bringing his knowledge and special flair to a multi-course dinner highlighting one of the most sophisticated cuisines in the world.

Reservations are required. Price is \$30 for the dinner, tax, gratuity and beverage are not

included. Space fills up quickly so book early...and also mark your calendar for the last dinner in this year's series. On Tuesday, November 30, Chef Geoff will feature Flavors of the Middle East.

What's Up?

Peaceful Dragon Students Do Well At International Kuoshu Tournament

Several of our students took medals in Baltimore this year. Sifu hopes more students will train hard and participate next July. Of course this year was a bit special with Grandmaster in attendance; he appreciated the *Wu-de* shown by Peaceful Dragon students who helped to pay his expenses. Grandmaster also appreciates that this tournament is one of the few that still promote traditional forms. And out of about 100 schools that participated, ours is one of the few that competes in all events. Some famous teachers were there: C. K. Chu and William

C. C. Chen, both of whom Grandmaster has known for thirty years. Master Park also was there. One of the exciting opportunities of a big tournament is seeing high level demonstrations of other styles. Two that stood out were an Eagle form and a Xing-i form done by masters of those styles. Sifu observed that the level of competition was even better than three years ago. It was obvious that many people are training hard and carrying forward traditional arts in a vigorous way; and of course this is the mission of *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON*.

NEWSLETTER GOES MONTHLY AGAIN

With the amount of existing information that changes and new stuff that comes up during the month, it's been decided to return to a monthly news format. Students are encouraged to give their input in the form of personal experience, accurate advice about or commentary on the martial arts we study, ads, anecdotes, perhaps even an appropriate cartoon now and then. Send your piece to maibu@carolina.rr.com.

Young Dragons



Many of our Young Dragons participated in the overnight campout with their instructors and other volunteers. Activities included learning knife safety, and then carving cooking

sticks to roast hot dogs and marshmallows over the fire. The kids practiced self-defense against knife attacks, played games, and watched movies. And they earned their morning donuts and bagels by successfully hitting a beach ball at least 25 times without dropping it. Good Job, Young Dragons! We hope to see everyone camping out again next year!

Volunteering

FALL LANDSCAPING DAY

Saturday, September 25, 8:30am – 6:30pm. Rain date is October 2.

Bring your garden gloves, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows, ect. We'll spread compost, chip dead branches, put in new plantings, do some weeding, and more. If you have any bulbs or perennials of any sort that you want to thin or divide

at home, please consider donating them. Or if you're at a nursery and have the urge to buy an extra plant...we're going to start planting our rock garden near the road so all flowering shrubs and plants are welcomed!

Dragon Classified Ads

THE PEACEFUL DRAGON needs part-time restaurant wait staff. If you need to fill a few extra hours or know someone that does, please see George.

Simplify

Unclutter your life and spaces

Barbara Johnson
704/552-7583
704/577-1364 (c)

NOW brand Vitamins, Herbs & Food Supplements a Bargain!

Save 20% off retail for these top quality products. Carefully researched and chosen by Debra and Sifu, these 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 are generally ready for pickup in a week or so.

Order Quality Martial Arts Supplies and Weapons and Save!

Save 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.

On the Dragon Path

A Meditation On Force and Power

By Rachel Pennington

Students of the martial arts are told so often, “Don’t use force”. The idea is rather to build power. Yet the two words – power and force – are used interchangeably, leading us to the assumption that they are synonymous. Simply put, force is associated with the partial, power with the whole.

Since force automatically creates counterforce, it’s effect is limited by definition – it is a movement that goes from here to there against opposition.

Power is still, not moving. Force is incomplete, has to be fed constantly.

Power is total and complete within itself, requiring nothing from outside.

Force, always being met with counterforce, produces polarization rather than unity. This, in turn, leads to a win/lose dichotomy; and because somebody always loses, enemies are created. Always facing enemies requires constantly being on the defensive, which requires a great deal of energy.

Because power is effortless, it goes unseen and unsuspected. Force is experienced through the senses; power can only be recognized through inner awareness.

Force can bring temporary satisfaction, but only power brings us joy. Victory over others brings satisfaction, but victory over *ourselves* brings us joy.

Seeing some of the basic differences, we will want to build power, of course.

It’s very common to see how force is built – work on the outer, the physical. Build those muscles, biceps, pecs, and the abs that are so popular now. It’s all work on the outer.

But if one wants to build real power that’s going to take just as much work on the inner. The inner and outer must be unified. The very best methods by which we can do both are tai chi, yoga, meditation, breathing techniques, good posture. These avenues enable us to build real power.



Pathways

“The pursuit of simplicity, of restraint over excess, makes [one] more attentive to the beauty of the everyday. In life’s thousand and one daily details, seeing the value of one thing or another comes down to a matter of choice. Whether a martial artist is fighting for his life or grooming himself, there are no ordinary moments. If [one] transforms everything [one] does into an act of training, then everything ... becomes important. Anything that is important is worthy of [one’s] thought, effort and attention. Understanding the difference between knowing and not knowing lets [one] walk down the path with a peaceful heart.”

The Martial Way and its Virtues
by F. J. Chu

An excellent book highly recommended by
Grandmaster DeMaria



At a Glance

September 6 – New class schedule takes effect

September 17 – Last day to sign up for team tournament

September 18 – Peaceful Dragon team tournament

September 22 – International Dinner Series, Japan

September 25 – Fall landscaping day

October 6 – Lecture: Optimizing Your Diet

October 1 – Tai Chi Retreat early bird deadline

October 9, 10 – Weekend Tai Chi Retreat

November 7 – Chef Geoff cooking workshop

