



2020 June News Letter

Mission Statement

The Western Tang Soo Do Federation has been founded for the purpose of instilling discipline and respect in all its members who are willing to endure the sacrifices required to obtain the rank of Black Belt. We are committed to hand down the traditions and techniques of traditional Tang Soo Do karate.

The training is designed to benefit the individual practitioner and also to build a team. This will help the members to develop camaraderie and learn the importance of working relationships with all of their associates, both in the martial arts and in other endeavors.

We will stand out in this world as leaders, setting an example to others of what can be accomplished physically, mentally, and morally.

Federation members will learn, teach, and demonstrate respect for others in all their associations. This respect influences family, business, and other relationships, and promotes a healthier lifestyle for all those who are associated with the Western Tang Soo Do Federation.

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Editor's Note:

This **News Letter** is a great forum to share information regarding: promotions, tournaments, school events, seminars, etc., or any special training or experiences you may have had and would like to share with other members of our WTSDF family.

We have a tremendous pool of knowledge, talent, and experience in the WTSDF and each of us has skills and information that could benefit everyone in the organization.

Let's use this forum to share what we have learned over the years and continue to grow together.

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1st World Open Tang Soo Do Virtual Championships

By: Master Kluge, Mrs. Bartnik & Mrs. Nelson

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the **Cheezic Tang Soo Do Federation** and the **Polish Tang Soo Do Federation** decided to organize the **1st World Open Tang Soo Do Virtual Championships**. It was truly an international event with 416 competitors from 19 different countries submitting 452 videos for review.

The tournament was sponsored by **Grandmaster Robert Cheezic** 10th dan, one of the pioneers of Tang Soo Do in the United States.

The tournament committee was likewise international consisting of:
Master **Adam Gorski** 6th dan (USA) - Tournament Director
Master **Marcin Kostyra** 5th dan (Poland) - Tournament Vice Director
Master **Marek Czapka** 4th dan (Poland) - Technical Vice Director
BKSND **Vladimir Volchkievich** 1st dan (Belarus) - Assistant Director
(contact in Russian) Our very own newly minted 1st dan, **Joanna Bartnik** was invaluable in helping to organize the event by serving as an English/Polish interpreter for the committee, and was given special recognition by Master Marcin Kostyra for her assistance.

The competition consisted of a traditional forms division as well as a weapons division. Any Tang Soo Do or Soo Bahk Do form could be performed and any traditional martial arts weapon (bo, sai, kama, nunchaku, tonfa, etc.) could be used. There were 28 traditional forms categories based on age and belt level with 143 competitors participating. The weapons division had 19 categories and 309 competitors. Fifty three volunteer judges from different countries viewed the videos and ranked the competitors in their respective categories.

Five finalists from each division competed live via the internet on May 24th and were scored by eight judges selected by the tournament committee.

Judges:

Rodger LaFrance 8 th dan – USA	Lyne Landry 7 th dan - USA
Harry Needham 8 th dan – USA	Tobias Kurkowski 5 th dan – Germany
Rodger Quinlan 8 th dan – USA	Tena Houser 5 th dan – USA
Gregory Hart 7 th dan – Africa	Joe Celotto 5 th dan – USA

Forms Finalists:

Iro Gani 3 rd dan – Greese	58.4	Grand Champion
Aris-Nektarios Vlastos 3 rd dan – Greese	58.05	
Nahuel Luis Lopes 3 rd dan – Argentina	57.6	
Eric Levesque 3 rd dan – USA	57.2	
Angle Meydan 2 nd dan – England	56.4	

Weapons Finalists:

Josh LaCourse 5 th dan – USA	59.2	Grand Champion
Damian Gebal 3 rd dan – Poland	58.2	
Reece Godbold 2 nd dan – England	57.6	
Angle Meydan 2 nd dan – England	57.4	
Geoffrey Leatham 2 nd dan – South Africa	57.0	

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**1st World Open Tang Soo Do
Virtual Championship > Group
1st World Open Tang Soo Do
Virtual Championship**
Posted by Marcin Kostyra
49 mins · 📷

Joanna Bartnik, 1st DAN, is a practitioner of TSD in Western Tang Soo Do Federation – she is the next person who helped create our Virtual Championship. She's Polish, living in the US for the past 25 years. She translates statements and posts from Polish to English, and she keeps an eye to find the smallest mistakes. An adviser without whom we couldn't organize the 1st World Open Tang Soo Do Virtual Championship on this level. The woman, who has watched all nights our page, group, and e-mailed posts to help you find information. Selfless, empathic, and amazing...

Joanna, thank you!

*1st World Open
Tang Soo Do
Virtual Championships
Cont. from page 1*

The WTSDF was well represented in the competition with five participating as judges and twelve as competitors, several placing in the top three of their respective categories:

Judges: GrandMaster Monte Bledsoe – 9th Dan
Master Tena Houser – 5th Dan
Master Dave Malehorn – 5th Dan
Master Ken Newton – 5th Dan
BSBN Leonard Henderson – 3rd Dan

Competitors:

Liberty Solomon (age 5) performed - *Nunchuck #1* (weapon) **Score: 26.14 - 4th. Place**
Amber Overcast (9th Gup) performed - *Giecho Hyung Yi Bu Sang Gup* **Score: 26.75 - 2nd. Place**
Ryder Solomon (age 9-3rd Gup) performed - *Pyong An Cho Dan* **Score: 27.20 - 2nd. Place**
Jett Solomon (age 10-3rd Gup) performed - *Pyong An Sa Dan* **Score: 26.69 - 10th. Place**
Jett Solomon (age 10-3rd Gup) performed - *Giecho Bo Hyung* (Weapon) **Score: 26.32 - 8th. Place**
Nicole Solomon (4th Gup) performed - *Gee Hyung* (Weapon) **Score: 28.35 - 2nd. Place**
Mrs. Bartnik (1st Dan) performed - *Ro Hai* **Score: 27.01 - 11th. Place**
Mr. Solomon (2nd Dan) performed - *Chin Te* **Score: 28.60 - 7th. Place**
Mr. Solomon (2nd Dan) performed - *Na Mu a Podam* (Wind in the Wood)(Weapon) **Score: 29.02 - 2nd. Place**
Mr. Henderson (3rd Dan) performed - *Geong* **Score: 28.63 - 6th. Place**
Mr. Newton (5th Dan) performed - *Geong* **Score: 27.38 - 7th. Place**
Grandmaster Bledsoe (9th Dan) performed - *Bassai* **Score: 27.97 - 3rd. Place**

forms, Masters, +50 yo

COUNTRY	NAME	NUMBER	PLACE	POINTS
Morocco	Fouad Irakraken	F01-013	1 st	28,58
Spain	Gustavo Cortés	F01-012	2 nd	28,03
USA	Monte Bledsoe	F01-006	3 rd	27,97

forms, 6-4 gup, -9 yo

COUNTRY	NAME	NUMBER	PLACE	POINTS
Belarus	Uladzislau Liavitski	F18-009	1 st	27,2
USA	Ryder Solomon	F18-013	2 nd	27,2
Greece	Vasilis Nikolaidis	F18-001	3 rd	27,05

forms, 10-9 gup, 18-39 yo

COUNTRY	NAME	NUMBER	PLACE	POINTS
Belarus	Vanyukevich Margarita	F25-001	1 st	26,82
USA	Amber Overcast	F25-008	2 nd	26,75
Chile	Andres Felipe Rojas Navia	F25-006	3 rd	25,9

weapons, 1-3 dan, 26-39 yo

COUNTRY	NAME	NUMBER	PLACE	POINTS
Poland	Damian Gębal	W03-013	1 st	29,15
USA	Brad Solomon	W03-012	2 nd	29,02
South Africa	Wesley Baleta	W03-006	3 rd	28,63

weapons, 6-4 gup, 21-39 yo

COUNTRY	NAME	NUMBER	PLACE	POINTS
Poland	Dominika Majewska	W13-002	1 st	28,65
USA	Nicole Solomon	W13-004	2 nd	28,35
Poland	Mariusz Idziak	W13-001	3 rd	27,85

The following is a message from the organizers of the 1st World Open Tang Soo Do Virtual Championship:

"Dum pugnas victor es"

"As long as you fight, you are the winner"

All of those who were not afraid to compete are already winners!

The wonderful Tang Soo Do community around the world - It worked! We're the first to create a history that will change global tournaments forever!

There is talk of a 2nd World Tang Soo Do Virtual Championship.

We hope to see you there!



WTSDF July Seminar

By: Master Dave Kluge



On June 23rd the WTSDF Board of Directors held a special meeting via *Zoom* to decide how to proceed with the July gathering in lieu of the on-going coronavirus lock down and subsequent social distancing requirements.

Although those requirements are easing, and the location for the seminars is now in a “Yellow Zone” in regards to the social distancing requirements making it “possible” to legally hold the seminars, there were still multiple other considerations to take into account. The logistics of meeting the social distancing requirements in regards to occupancy density and sanitation, insurance coverage, liability exposure and consideration of the participants well-being all had to be taken into account.

After much discussion it was decided to alter and limit the activities from what normally transpires at our gatherings.

Mr. Solomon had been scheduled to test for his 3rd degree black belt and that will happen, albeit with some modifications to the testing procedure. There will be four black belts in attendance to administer the test: Grandmaster Bledsoe, Masters Newton and Searle and Mrs. Nelson. The remainder of the testing board will be viewing the test via *Zoom*. Following the test, the testing board will convene, again via *Zoom*, and determine the results of the test. The board members present will then convey the results to Mr. Solomon. WTSDF members will be able to watch the test via *Zoom* - see below.

Following the black belt test, the testing board members present will be presenting some in-house seminars to Mr. Solomon’s students at his studio. Since these students already work out together on a regular basis, there is little chance of introducing the students to the COVID virus by exposing them to outside sources.

All this means of course that our usual summer campout and gathering of students from various karate schools within the WTSDF will NOT be happening this July. Disappointing no doubt, but the Board felt this precaution was in the best interest of our WTSDF family members, and the organization.

Hopefully things will change enough by November so we can resume our usual gatherings and workouts; time will tell. In the mean, time keep your own individual workout schedule going and encourage others to do the same. *See: Karate Training Text Group - page 6*

July Black Belt Testing

Time: July 11, 2020 @ 8:00 am - Mountain Time

To watch the test:

1. Log in to Zoom – link to “Monte Bledsoe’s personal meeting room”
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2513836771?pwd=cXc4Y1JDdnNwcXFjNUdBVUc5bVI3QT09>

If you have Zoom on your computer, select: “launch meeting”

If not, select: “download and run Zoom”

(It’s a free app. that limits your meeting time to 40 min. – should be enough to view the test.)

Note: If the link doesn’t work you can open Zoom’s website and use Mr. Bledsoe’s I.D. 251 383 6771 and Password: tangsoo

While waiting for the meeting, test your computer’s audio settings.

2. Following the test, the testing board will convene in a separate meeting to determine the results of the test. Mrs. Douglas will email the Board members that contact information.

3. Because we are not having our regular convention, there will be no general Black Belt Meeting following the test.

Congratulations Gordon & Christy

By: Master Dave Kluge

Mr. Gordon Chicoine and his lovely wife Christy shared their vows during a small ceremony on June 27th. at *New Life Fellowship* in Rifle, CO.

To accommodate those unable to attend in person the ceremony was available live on the internet via youtube.

A reception followed the ceremony at Mr. Chicoine’s parents residence in Eagle. CO.

Your WTSDF family extends its congratulations to you and your lovely wife, and wishes both of you a fulfilling and blessed life together.



“The COVID Dans”

By: Master Dave Kluge

Due in no small part to the COVID virus the past few months have had a few firsts in Tang Soo Do, and the WTSDF. This May was the first time Tang Soo Do has had a World Open Virtual Championship (see page 1), this March was the first time we have had to cancel our spring convention, and it was the first time we have had a mother and daughter test for their black belts at the same time.

Joanna Bartnik and her daughter Gabi successfully tested for their 1st Degree Black Belts on Friday, March 13th (so much for that superstition) at Brian Mable Karate Studio in Glenwood Springs, CO.

Because the March convention had been canceled due to the COVID virus the testing board was smaller than usual, consisting of Grandmaster Mable and Masters Clark, Newton, Malehorn and Klokman. Mr. Chicoine was scheduled to assist the candidates with their tests, but couldn't make it because of travel restrictions caused by the COVID virus, so Joanna and Gabi adjusted to the situation and did their one and three steps with each other. The test was also moved to Friday evening in stead of Saturday morning. Because of all the testing changes caused the COVID virus Joanna and Gabi jokingly refer to themselves as: “The COVID Dans.”

Their journey to black belts started some ten years earlier when Joanna's son Kuba started taking karate lessons from Grandmaster Mable. Joanna said “it looked like so much fun” and she “wanted to stay in shape” so she joined the class. She was followed a short time later by her daughter Gabi who said she “just wanted to be scary.” Joanna's husband Mark even joined for a while until injuries forced him to drop out; so it really was a family activity.

There was a friendly “competition between each other, especially when the kids were younger,” with “Kuba probably being the most competitive,” but mostly they were just “pulling each other up” as they trained together. Kuba earned his black belt in November of 2014 which helped inspire Joanna and Gabi to continue their training.



The Bartnik family (l. to r.) Mark, Gabi, Joanna and Kuba

Joanna said that the most important lessons learned on her way to becoming a black belt were “perseverance,” and that you need to “enjoy the journey.” Gabi she said she learned to “find self-confidence” and “trust that she could respond” to situations if necessary. She also said her training gave her an “awareness of how to recognize other's aggression.”



Testing Board & Candidates

(l. to r.) Master Ted Klokman, Ms. Gabi Bartnik, Master Dave Malehorn, Grandmaster Brian Mable, Master Dave Clark, Mrs. Joanna Bartnik and Master Ken Newton

They said they really hadn't planned on testing together, it just worked out that way. Joanna had to take some time off due to a knee injury and subsequent surgery, and Gabi had activities outside of school that limited her practice “but honestly, it was not planned, it just turned out like that.”

For Joanna, her advice to others seeking their black belt is “to stick with it, it's worth the effort.” Gabi said, “you might get smacked in the face, but that's OK,” you'll be smarter and tougher because of it. That reminded me of a line I heard in the movie *Steel Magnolias*, “*That which does not kill us, makes us stronger.*”

Congratulations Joanna and Gabi, your perseverance and dedication are an inspiration and a welcomed asset to our WTSDF family.

Meet The Board

By: Master Dave Kluge



Master Newton's 5th. Dan Test - March 2017
(l. to r.) Grandmaster Monte Bledsoe, Master Ken Newton
And Grandmaster Brian Mable

*In this section we feature a member of the Board of Directors so you can better know the people who help give the organization direction, and keep it running smoothly. In this News Letter we are introducing **Master Ken Newton - 5th. Dan.***

Master Ken Newton began his martial arts training in September 1981 through classes offered by Colorado Mountain College (CMC) in Glenwood Springs, CO. He said he didn't particularly like attending exercise classes, but wanted to get in shape to become a more functional caver (spelunker) and have some fun.

Grandmaster Mable was teaching Tang Soo Do through CMC at the time so Master Newton joined. He said he really liked the camaraderie with the other students and the way Grandmaster Mable taught; no egos, just learning and traditional karate values.

Despite the changes in the school's affiliations over the years, he appreciated how Grandmaster

Mable always kept those traditional values paramount in his classes.

In addition to his Tang Soo Do training he has attended multiple seminars from a litany of Masters like: Pat Johnson, Bill Wallace, Howard Jackson, John Natividad, etc. He also attended many sessions of Kobudo training with Fumio Demura and Sensei Stanford. He said he really liked the practicality of the Bo as a self-defense weapon, readily available and eminently functional.

His suggestion for beginning martial artists is to be patient and persistent. It's something you can do your entire life no matter what your physical limitations. Having had osteoarthritis, and consequently two hip replacements, Master Newton is well aware of how physical limitations can effect your training. Despite these setbacks he continues to "keep making it work" for him. "We all have limitations, you make adjustments and continue on. If it were easy, everybody would be a Black Belt."

He said martial arts training has given him the ability to become a better caver by staying focused, being very precise with every movement and dealing with his fears.

(Caving can be a very dangerous activity at times.) It's a whole different application of your martial arts training than self-defense. The training isn't just physical either; he said it's improved his academic skills, taught him how to focus and pay attention to details as well as how to become a more functional leader and instructor.



Whitewater canoeing is one of many activities he enjoys.

When asked about the highlights of his karate career he said being able to teach his son Cole and daughter Keneka at the *New Castle Karate* school (which he ran for nine years) was extremely rewarding, and doing it as a family meant everything. Another highlight was winning the "*Grand Championship*" as a Red Belt competing against Black Belts at the *Fall Karate Nationals*. He also said being part of a martial arts family that accepts us as we are, with our strengths and limits, regardless of gender or age, has meant a lot to him.

His words of wisdom to others are to be patient with yourself, lighten up, none of us are perfect, but we can always keep trying to get the most from what our limitations allow. Stay involved, not just in your own school, but also in the WTSDF organization, we all have something to contribute, and we are all important to its success.

Karate Training Text Group

By: Master Kluge & Mrs. Nelson

With the social distancing restrictions implemented because of COVID-19 traditional karate workouts are temporarily on hold. To encourage students and black belts to continue their training **Bledsoe Karate Club** has started a *Karate Training Text Group*. The purpose of the group is to provide encouragement, motivation, accountability and a way to connect through texting during this time of separation.

Students and black belts should post what they are doing to keep up their karate skills, build strength and maintain their physical and mental health. The activities may be karate, strength building or cardiovascular activity like long bike rides, jogging or hiking in the hills. Sharing pictures and stories can help inspire others to join in and keep fit until we can return to our more traditional karate classes.

Text Group Goals: 1. Encourage and support
2. Motivate
3. Accountability

These activities don't have to be big events to be beneficial or inspiring. Mrs. Nelson says she may take an evening and focus on one or two details of a particular form, then share that with others to remind them of those details. The important thing is for each of us to individually improve and to encourage others to do the same.

Mrs. Nelson said that so far they have 22 participants in the Karate Training thread. *Bledsoe Karate Club, Vegas Tang Soo Do*, Mr. Clark's group and a few other black belts from around WTSDf.

One of the greatest advantages of an organized training schedule in any activity (and especially so in the martial arts) is to maintain a disciplined, uniform and progressive approach to improving one's knowledge and skill.



Mr. Brad Bledsoe and Mr. Monte Bledsoe.
Father and son at the top of the hill.



Emmitt Villezcas practicing round kicks
on a bag in his backyard.

If you study the history of martial arts you will find there have been multiple times in the past when public training has been curtailed, either by law or due to circumstances. This pandemic is just another bump in that long road.

History has proven; it's the individual constantly challenging himself to improve his knowledge and skill and sharing that with others that has kept the martial arts alive and progressing no matter the circumstances.

We have technological advantages that previous generations couldn't even imagine, let's use those to share our knowledge and encourage each other to become the best that we can be.

As Grandmaster Mable has often said, **"Never give up. . . Never quit!"**

If you would like to be added to the Karate Training Text Group you can contact Mrs. Nelson by email at: mtn@mvdsl.com or by phone at: 702-397-2699 (h) or 702-378-5359 (c).



Ms. Savanna Howard (black belt)
sharing her treadmill workout .

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Karate Training Text Group

continued from page 6



Mr. Clark doing kettlebell swings in the mountains while searching for a new WTSDF campsite for 2021.



Blackbelt Ms. Katie Barlow and her family walk around the reservoir. Her youngest, Willow, was just born in March. Congratulations to Ms. Barlow and her family.



Mr. Newton on one of his spelunking (caving) expeditions.



Alex and Jacob Villezcas working on kicks. Alex is training for his black belt test in November



Mr. Kluge doing hay bale swings in the barn while preparing for the '20-'21 winter.