



2021 February 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 maintaining and handing down the traditions, philosophies, 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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WTSDF November Convention

By: Master Dave Kluge

Plans for the November convention were made by the WTSDF Board of Directors via Zoom on September 25th taking into account the restrictions and safety guidelines established by the state of Nevada.

Because of the restrictions on gatherings and accommodations in Las Vegas, it was decided to hold the activities in Overton, NV. This allowed the WTSDF to hold the Board of Directors meeting at Bledsoe Karate Studio Friday evening, and the testing and workout at the Old Overton Gym on Saturday, thereby minimizing exposure to public facilities. The traditional after workout gathering was to be held at Grandmaster Bledsoe's Quail Hollow Farm.

Due to the change of venue new lodging and dining accommodations needed to be found, directions and maps were drawn up and activity scheduling finalized. For those unable to attend in person arrangements were made to view, and/or participate, via ZOOM. The Bledsoe Karate group, and Mrs. Nelson in particular, did a fantastic job making all the necessary arrangements.



Black belt testing candidates and "in house" testing board

Friday afternoon two WTSDF black belts tested for advanced ranks. Grandmaster Dave Clark earned his 8th Dan and Master Eden Bejarano earned her 7th Dan. Congratulations to both for a job well done.

Saturday morning three candidates tested for their 1st Degree black belts. The in house testing board consisted of Grandmaster Bledsoe, Master Bejarano, Mr. Newton, Mrs. Nelson and Mr. Soloman. Testing board members present via ZOOM were: Kwan Jang Nim Mable, Grandmaster Dague, Grandmaster Clark, Master Kluge, Mr. Olds, Mr. Leibundgut, Mrs. Houser, Mr. Klokman, Mr. Henderson and Mr. Chicoine.

But alas, as Robert Burns observed in his poem *To a Mouse*, "the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry." Such was the case with the November convention. Just prior to the event the Nevada Governor placed the state under "Round Two" of home restrictions limiting the size of public gatherings and forcing the cancellation of the afternoon workout activities. We were able to conduct the black belt testings however under very restricted attendance requirements.



Benny Bejarano demonstrating breaking during his test

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WTSDF November Convention - cont. from page 1

The testing was held at the Old Overton Gym in Overton, NV. A small group of close relatives and friends were able to attend the testing; but again, state restrictions severely limited the number of spectators. In the interest of safety, all testing board members and spectators wore masks and practiced social distancing. To minimize exposure for the candidates, family members from the same household were used as testing partners.



**Master Eden Bejarano awarding
Mr. Benecio Bejarano his Black Belt**

Following the testing the board convened via ZOOM and determined that two candidates had passed to their 1st Degree Black Belts.

Congratulations to Mr. Benecio Bejarano and Mr. Alex Villezcas for a job well done, and welcome as the WTSDF's newest black belts. We'd also like to thank their instructors and fellow students who helped them along the way. Achieving a black belt isn't just an individual accomplishment, but as anyone who has gone through the training will attest to, a team effort by everyone involved in the karate studio.

Unfortunately, due to the state restrictions the scheduled afternoon workout had to be canceled, so that concluded the day's activities.

Despite the encumbrances of the current pandemic, as per our *Mission Statement*, the Western Tang Soo Do Federation is committed to continue to advance the traditions, philosophies and techniques of traditional Tang Soo Do karate.



**Mrs. Cynthia Nelson awarding
Mr. Alex Villezcas his Black Belt**

WTSDF March Testing & Meetings

Saturday, March 13, 2021



In lieu of the nationwide pandemic restrictions we have had to make considerable alterations to our traditional March testing and workout. We will not be having a physical gathering at Glenwood Springs, CO as usual, but instead will be conducting all of our activities virtually, via ZOOM.



Additionally, the normal schedule of activities will be altered to accommodate differences in locations and time zones – see ***Schedule of Activities*** page 3.

Access to the scheduled activities will be through Grandmaster Bledsoe's ZOOM account. To access his account click on the link below. As ZOOM host Grandmaster Bledsoe will admit you to the meeting following your log in.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2513836771?pwd=cXc4Y1JDdnNwcXFjNUdBVUc5bVI3QT09>

NOTE: When logging in to watch the tests, **PLEASE MUTE YOUR MICROPHONE.** ZOOM is programmed to display/broadcast to the rest of the viewers anyone who is talking (or making noise). Muting your microphone prevents ZOOM from broadcasting you to the other viewers instead of the test.

March activities will conclude after the *WTSDF Black Belt Council Meeting*. Hopefully these restrictions will end soon and we can resume our regular gatherings and workouts. I'm sure we are all looking forward to the time when we can get together again for some "butt kicking, sweat and blood workouts." Until then, let's do our best to help each other continue progressing in our skills, and promote the art of Tang Soo Do.

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WTSDF March Testing & Meetings - cont. from page 2

Schedule of Activities

Mountain Time	Pacific Time	Activity	Location & Viewing
8:30am-9:30am	7:30am-8:30am	Grant Anson Test	Glenwood Springs, CO Open To All
11:00am-12:00pm	10:00am-11:00am	Mr. <u>Klokman</u> Test	Overton, NV By Invitation Only
12:00pm-1:30pm	11:00am-12:30pm	Board of Directors Meeting	WTSDF Board Members Only
2:30pm-3:30pm	1:30pm-2:30pm	Arthur <u>Villezcás</u> Test	Overton, NV Open To All
3:30pm-4:30pm	2:30pm-3:30pm	WTSDF Black Belt Council Meeting	WTSDF Black Belts Only



Bledsoe Karate Club News December 2020

We have just completed a GUP testing cycle. It took a couple of nights to finish due to COVID restrictions. December 3rd was Zoomed so grandparents and extended family could watch and so that other black belts could join in on the testing board. A follow up test was conducted on December 10th for those unable to attend on the third due to COVID issues.

The following gups (colored belts) have advanced:

Jacob Villezcás to 2nd RED
Chaya Bejarano to 2nd RED
Emmitt Villezcás to 4th GREEN
Azael Bejarano to 6th BLUE
Samantha Blaber to 9th ORANGE

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Now is a good time to start training for the upcoming March test. Take the necessary precautions and come back to class as soon as you feel safe and able.



2020 Dick Douglas Black Belt of the Year

By: Master Dave Kluge

Originally selected and presented by Kwan Jang Nim Mr. Dick Douglas, the **Dick Douglas Black Belt of the Year** award is now chosen by vote of the WTSDF Board of Directors. Nominees for consideration can be submitted by any Black Belt within the organization, and any Black Belt is eligible. The recipient is then selected by vote of the Board of Directors.



Mrs. Joanna Bartnik
2020 Dick Douglas Black Belt of the Year

Congratulations to Mrs. Joanna Bartnik for being chosen as the 2020 **Dick Douglas Black Belt of the Year**.

WTSDF: Were you surprised to be chosen Dick Douglas Black Belt of the Year?

Mrs. Bartnik: Yes! It knocked my socks off. Being recognized by such an outstanding group of people really is one of the greatest honors of my life. It's hard to express my deep felt gratitude and appreciation.

WTSDF: 2020 was a very busy year for you: testing for your 1st Dan Black Belt in March, being instrumental in organizing the **1st World Open Tang Soo Do Virtual Championships** in May, keeping your restaurant – **The Daily Bread** – open and profitable despite the pandemic shutdowns and restrictions, along with a whole host of other volunteer activities you've manage to squeeze in. **How do you find time for all of that?**

Mrs. Bartnik: With all the things that are going on with the pandemic and everything else, I have to stay busy to keep my sanity.

WTSDF: What made you decide to get involved in the Tang Soo Do Virtual Championships?

Mrs. Bartnik: While I was visiting my family in Poland I wondered if they did Tang Soo Do there. I found a school taught by Master Kostyra and worked out with them. I helped him with some translations and when he decided to organize the **1st World Open Tang Soo Do Virtual Championships** he asked me if I would like to help.

WTSDF: By all accounts the **1st World Open Tang Soo Do Virtual Championships** were a huge success, with 416 competitors from 19 different countries. **Were you surprised with the international interest and participation?**

Mrs. Bartnik: We really didn't know what to expect. We just started taking entries as they came in and they really started to add up. It was amazing how well it was received. I want to thank every instructor and student from the WTSDF who participated in the tournament. It gave me great pleasure to have the WTSDF so well represented and involved in the event.

WTSDF: What lessons did you take away from your involvement?

Mrs. Bartnik: It feels good to do something for someone else; it takes your concerns away from your own problems. What surprised me is how big the Tang Soo Do family is, and how easy it was to connect with other people who practice Tang Soo Do. It really is an international organization.

WTSDF: Do you plan on helping with future "Virtual Championships"?

Mrs. Bartnik: Yes. I'm in constant touch with Master Kostyra and they're getting things organized for next year. We should have an even bigger turnout with more participants from more countries than last year.

WTSDF: Have you been able to keep up your martial arts training during the pandemic?

Mrs. Bartnik: The pandemic has really made our restaurant business hard, it's taking a lot of our time. We can't work out in the dance studio anymore, but we found a place in the West Glenwood Mall where we can meet once a week. We have to do special disinfecting and can't have more than ten students, but we are able to work out. Hopefully things will get better.



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Black Belt of the Year - cont. from page 4

WTSDF: *What are some of the highlights of your martial arts career?*

Mrs. Bartnik: Of course getting my black belt and now being chosen “Black Belt of the Year.” Also helping with the “Virtual Championships,” it’s been a really busy year.

WTSDF: *What are some of the most memorable moments of your martial arts career?*

Mrs. Bartnik: Every test, because of the stress. I really don’t like testing, my under belt tests were very stressful for me. It wasn’t until I tested for my black belt that I felt so well prepared that it was actually enjoyable. I just sort of went on autopilot. My mother [who’s a music teacher in Warsaw, Poland] doesn’t know about karate so when I told her about what it was like I said, “It was like getting a high 5 from the coolest kid on the playground.”



*Kwan Jang Nim Brian Mable
daughter Gabi, and Mrs. Joanna Bartnik*

WTSDF: *How has your study of the martial arts affected your personal life?*

Mrs. Bartnik: It made me realize that you’re never too old to have new goals and pursue them. It gave me better control of my emotions. It’s helped me to focus on my goals and stay calm when things upset me.



*Mrs. Joanna Bartnik
practicing kicks in the back yard.*

WTSDF: *Have you ever used your martial arts training? How?*

Mrs. Bartnik: I’ve never had to physically defend myself, but that’s probably because I’m more aware of what’s going on around me. It’s given me more self-control and helped me keep my emotions in check. It’s made me realize that other people don’t control me, that I control of my response to them.

WTSDF: *What suggestions do you have for other martial artists? Beginners and/or advanced?*

Mrs. Bartnik: Always keep having fun with it, because that’s what keeps you going.

WTSDF: *Do you have any advice and/or words of wisdom you would like to share?*

Mrs. Bartnik: I just want to thank everyone who got involved and helped me along the way. Mr. Mable and the other black belts were so helpful and encouraging.



*Daughter Gabi, Joanna &
Mrs. Pam Whittington one of the
WTSDF black belts that was
“so helpful and encouraging.”*



1st Dan Testing Board & Candidates

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

WTSDF: This past year has been unusual to say the least. So I guess it should come as no surprise that the **Black Belt of the Year** honor was awarded to Mrs. Bartnik in the same year she earned her black belt. But then there’s a lot about this immigrant from Poland that isn’t usual, and the WTSDF and the community of Glenwood Springs are both better off because of her uniqueness.

Thank you for all you have done for the WTSDF and the community, you’re more than deserving of the award.

Meet The Board

By: Master Dave Kluge



**Grandmaster Dave Clark &
Kwan Jang Nim Dick Douglas**

*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 **Grandmaster Dave Clark - 8th. Dan.***

What got you interested in martial arts?

When I was 12, a bully kept taking my lunch money on the way to the school bus stop. My older brother got tired of walking with me to keep me safe, so my mother enrolled me in a Tae Kwon Do class at a nearby studio. After a couple of fights with the bully, he stopped bothering me.

Because I was the smallest kid in my grade until my junior year in high school, I was constantly a target for bullies, so that early training helped me through a number of fights as I stood up for myself.

What kept you going?

I actually stopped training in high school. I always wanted to get back to it though. In 1990, I started training again with my friend David Douglas to help motivate me to do the physical therapy required for my knee and back injuries.

I would say that my first ten years as a Black Belt with NTC/WTSD, I was driven to learn everything, become a great martial artist, and be able to protect my family in any situation. The next ten years, my love of teaching kept me going and involved. The most recent decade, it has been the friendships with other black belts and students that have kept me training, teaching, and participating in WTSD. Besides, it's fun.

What training have you had?

I trained in Tae Kwon Do in middle school. My foundation has definitely been Tang Soo Do. While I have had the opportunity to train for periods with experts in boxing, judo, jiu-jitsu, escrima, and other disciplines, Tang Soo Do has always been my focus.

What suggestions do you have for other martial artists in their training?

If you love it, you'll stick with it. It takes too much commitment to train, teach, and test if you don't love it.

How has the study of martial arts affected your life?

I would say that training has given me a sense of confidence that has carried over, into and had a positive impact in other areas of my life.

Training with Grandmaster Douglas has had a significant impact on my life. He burned into me the lesson to never give up. Any time in the past 30 years that I've wanted to give up on something, I've heard his voice telling me to keep going. I learned that on the mat, and it has stuck with me.

Have you ever used any of the training you have received?

While I've only been in one street fight as an adult (a guy full of road rage pulled me out of my car at a stop light and forced me to dent my car with his head), I feel certain that the confidence I carry from my training has stopped dozens of confrontations from happening. The lessons from training also translate into other areas of my life. Also, professionally I was able to develop a therapeutic program for adolescents in foster care, as well as develop and teach a safety program for flight attendants at an airline after 9/11.



Grandmaster Clark Demonstrating knife defenses

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**Master Bejarano, Grandmaster Clark & Grandmaster Dague
at their induction into the Masters Hall of Fame 2009**

What lessons have you learned from your study of the martial arts?

Again, that would be to never quit, stay focused, dedicate yourself to what ever you are doing and that will develop confidence.

What are some of the highlights of your martial arts career?

1. When a teenager who had resisted all other treatment started working with me effectively as a therapist because I taught him some self-defense techniques.
2. When my son was able to stand up to some bullies with skills I had taught him
3. When I was able to stop the road rage guy
4. All the tournament fighting and King of the Hill fighting with good friends or future friends
5. All the friendships forged in blood and sweat that have lasted decades
6. Breaking 7 bricks in Ro Hai for my 7th Dan test
7. Passing my 8th Dan test and becoming a Grandmaster
8. Standing up to every bully that wanted to pick on the little kid since I was 12

Do you have any advice and/or words of wisdom you would like to share?

We have obvious goals in martial arts – belt ranks and tournament wins. However, it's the process of working towards those goals where we learn, live, and improve. Commit to and enjoy the process.



**Grandmaster Clark demonstrating
flying sidekick at his 3rd. Dan test**

Finally, Mr. Douglas asked one thing more than any other from his Black Belts. Pass on and teach what you have learned to others.

I want to make sure that the new generation of Black Belts understands that this legacy is theirs as well. Others have given of themselves to teach you. When the time comes to teach others and share your skill and knowledge, honor that legacy and pass it on.



**Grandmaster Clark breaking seven bricks
in preparation for his 7th. Dan test**



**A younger Grandmaster Clark with his
Daughter Sariah 1994**

The Winning Edge

By: Grandmaster Dave Clark

Editors Note:

This is an article Grandmaster Clark wrote for Black Belt magazine that appeared in their January 1999 issue.

the winning edge

The Psychological and Physiological Reasons for Practicing

by David F. Clark

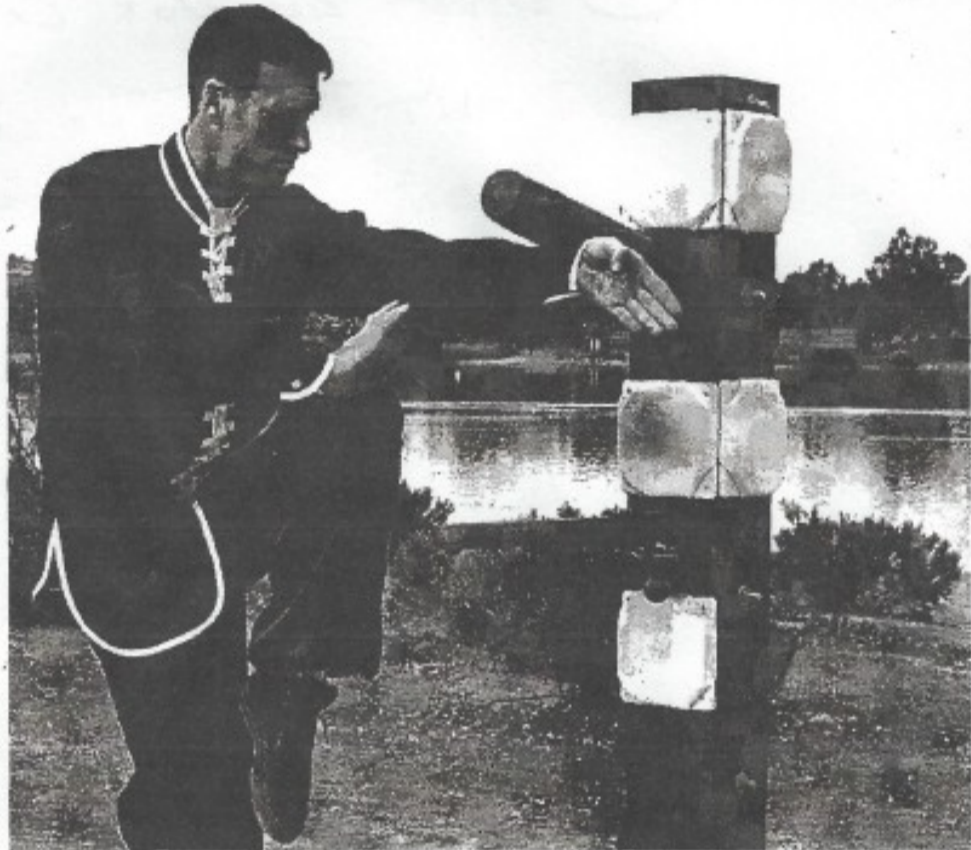
How many side kicks have you performed? How many thousands of punches have you thrown? Why did you do so many?

While simultaneously pursuing a master's degree in clinical psychology and a black belt, I found psychology's answers to many of my martial arts questions.

One reason for repeating a technique many times comes from physiological learning theories. When we perform a technique, a small electrical charge is conducted through our brain in a pattern that is particular to that activity. Each time we repeat the technique, the same pathway is followed. Just as a trail in the woods becomes more defined with use, so will the electrical pathways in our brain. The more we practice a technique, the easier it is for electrochemical processes in our brain to repeat the pattern. In short, our brain will perform the cognitive, or mental, portion of the technique more quickly, thus enabling our body to perform the physical portion of the technique more quickly and efficiently.

Another relevant psychological theory is that of behavioral conditioning. Behavioral theorists support the notion that physical practice leads to more efficient performance. For instance, if you want to teach a student to stand his ground and counterattack an opponent, shouting for him to do so is not the most efficient teaching method. Instead, have him practice his counterattacks with you or a focus pad, and do so slowly at first. Reward successful efforts with verbal praise or by withholding push-ups, depending upon your style. When the student is proficient at counterattacking at a snail's pace, slowly increase the speed of your attack. He will increase his response skill and become more confident. Finally, practice continuously at full speed, intermittently rewarding him for good work.

The payoff comes during sparring sessions when the student automatically counterattacks his opponent. The repeated practice conditions the student



Repeating a martial arts technique thousands of times in class helps your brain form electrical pathways that allow it to function more efficiently.

to instantly counterattack when he sees an attacker coming toward him. With enough practice, or conditioning, the technique becomes a reflex, bypassing conscious thought. At this point, the quickness and efficiency of the technique take an exponential jump, which is well worth the time spent practicing.

Social psychologists have also researched individual performance levels in pressure situations. They have found that a person's performance can either improve or decline under pressure, depending on the complexity of the task being performed. For instance, if a person is asked to wind a fishing reel as quickly as he can, he will wind it more quickly under time pressure and in view of others than if he is alone in a room. If you ask the same person to solve math problems, however, his performance will decrease under the same pressure.

How can you use this information to aid your martial arts practice? The trick is to simplify the performance of complex tasks through repetitive practice. Clinical psychologists have found that

black-belt students perform kicking drills more efficiently when they are being watched and graded, whereas color-belt students perform less efficiently under the same conditions. Why? Because the black-belt students have practiced the technique so many times that it has become a simple task, whereas the drill remains complex for the color-belt students. The reason Larry Bird made a higher percentage of free throws in pressure situations is because he had practiced the free throw so many thousands of times that it had become a simple task for him. Others would choke in the same situation because a free throw is not an automatic, simple task for them.

A reverse punch, however, is something that you have practiced often enough that your performance should increase under pressure—whether fighting for points in a tournament or for real on the street.

About the author: David F. Clark is a freelance writer and martial artist who lives in Las Vegas, Nevada.