



국제무도협회

**AIMAA**

*News*

## **ACTION INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATION**

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### **2007 AIMAA Instructor's Boot Camp**

by Karim Belgacem  
Scotland

The 2007 AIMAA Instructor's Boot Camp was another excellent addition to an endless list of exceptional AIMAA events.

Grandmaster Cho had invited all AIMAA Instructors, brown belt and above, to the AIMAA World Headquarters for what was to be an extensive and challenging week.

The event also culminated in the 25<sup>th</sup> AIMAA International Testing and the naming of two new AIMAA Masters.

As always with any AIMAA event it is the gathering of members and friends from throughout the World that makes the events truly special. Not to mention the amazing classes taught by Master Ameris, Master D'arcy and of course Grandmaster himself.

Throughout the week everyone in attendance at the camp was able to take first hand advantage of the vast knowledge of Grandmaster Cho. Grandmaster taught many classes covering every aspect of the AIMAA curriculum. No stone was left unturned as the gathered instructors were led through line work, patterns, fighting techniques and one steps.

It is becoming a commonly quoted statement but I will recite it none-the-less; Grandmaster Cho, nearing 70 years of age, was phenomenal! No technique, no pattern, no one step, was ordered without Grandmaster Cho firstly demonstrating with vast power, accuracy and speed.

Classes at the 2007 Boot Camp were ran each morning and finished around 2pm, allowing everyone to gather on the beach, sightsee and enjoy the company of the afore mentioned friends. With the AIMAA World HQ situated in the beautiful state of Hawaii it was not hard for everyone to enjoy another amazing AIMAA experience.

Each class within the camp was challenging both physically and mentally. Grandmaster Cho and the AIMAA Masters demonstrated and talked extensively about every aspect of Tae Kwon Do and the AIMAA curriculum.

A major part of the Boot Camp was the introduction of additional black belt testing materials that was designed by Master Ameris and Grandmaster Cho. Master Ameris spent a full training day introducing everyone to what must be the most complete and comprehensive testing curriculum in the world. Many new techniques have been added, along with new pad work and self defence sections. As always, adding to the vast array of knowledge that each AIMAA student is able to learn and qualify in.

## 2007 Boot Camp continued .....

The 25<sup>th</sup> AImAA International Testing was a very special testing indeed with Grandmaster Cho promoting two new AImAA Masters. Master John Kirkwood of Scotland and Master Amrit Kulcutt of England are our new AImAA masters and they join what is a very small and exclusive group.

Both men made the long journey from the UK to test before the Grandmaster and the other AImAA masters, which before they even took to the floor showed their conviction and desire – a point that was actually made by Grandmaster Cho after the testing.

Master Kirkwood and Master Kalcutt were amongst a large group of AImAA members testing from all over the world. They were all put through their paces by Grandmaster who viewed each individual's patterns, line work, self defence and all forms of sparring. The testing culminated as usual with destruction with all participants required to break up to 10 boards. Master Kirkwood was especially impressive showing exceptional power and accuracy.

As mentioned before the AImAA Boot Camp was amazing for many reasons. As always the Tae Kwon Do training is at the forefront of this list, however, as we always say the AImAA is a family and it was the gathering of this family of martial artists that's will stand out amongst the many memories we will all keep for many years.

## A Meditation

by Mr. Pat Meagher, 4th. Degree Black Belt.  
Ireland

Each one of you is unique. That statement is both simple and profound. There has never been and there will never be another **you**. **You** are the only **you** that will ever exist. It follows then, that you are the only person who can travel the path of life that is laid out for you. You are the only one who can make those decisions in your life that positively affect those with whom you come in contact.

Have you ever considered how much of your life is spent in the dojang perfecting the various techniques of our art, strikes, kicks, blocks, stances. Yet, if we look at what Tae Kwon Do aims to achieve, what do we find? - modesty, courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self -control and indomitable spirit. There is no mention at all of kicking or punching. Why? The ancient wisdom that gave rise to our martial art saw it not simply as a craft to be learnt, but as a way of life to be lived. Therefore, that wisdom drew on those elements of the human spirit which it saw as essential to promoting a truly human existence.

If we think of each of the aims as building blocks with which we must build a house, which would you use as the foundation ? My choice would be integrity. For me, integrity is being true to oneself and to the art of Tae Kwon Do; it is abiding by your word; it is reaching out your hand without looking for any reward; it is me knowing that your hand will be there when I need it.

Indomitable spirit would be one wall of my house. There is no better example than what we witnessed during the '03 summer camp in Kiski. We were all aware that Grandmaster Cho had a serious and painful shoulder injury. We may not have been aware that Master Ameris, and Master Darcy sought to persuade Grandmaster not to attend both seminars. But when Grandmaster Cho came to the hall, what did he say to us? *"Yes I have a shoulder injury, but both my legs are fine and my left arm is fine so let us begin the class."*

Perseverance would be the second wall of my house. Perseverance has a physical manifestation which we call sweat! While Grandmaster Cho or Master Ameris or Master Darcy train, there will be no shortage of same! **cont ..page 4**

# Message from the President

Dear AImAA Members:

We are quickly approaching our highly anticipated AImAA Summer Camp 2008 in Orlando, Florida. We have had an exciting time with high responses for our Summer Camp and various activities taking place in the AImAA bodies around the world.

I would like to take this time to thank each and every one of you for your consistent and dedicated support for the AImAA. It is truly due to your contributions and efforts that this organization can uphold such a reputation as a tightly-knit family of martial arts practitioners who love their art and find their drive off of training together – learning, teaching, and refining each other in technique and in character. The AImAA Summer Camp event will undoubtedly be another fantastic opportunity for you all to reunite and rekindle your friendships that have crossed borders, especially with all the fun tourist activities that Orlando has to offer for the entire family.

I also extend my personal thanks to Instructor Karim Belgacem of AImAA Scotland and Instructor Alan Corupe of AImAA USA in Arizona for working so diligently to put together our AImAA Newsletters. Their hard work is deeply appreciated as they volunteer their time to put this project together in order to serve their fellow AImAA members with up-to-date news on the organization and useful articles for training and personal development. It is my hope that all of us will offer our support to them and this publication by submitting photographs, articles, and feedback.

I look forward to seeing you all at our AImAA Summer Camp 2008 and wish everyone and their families the best of health, joy, and prosperity.

Sincerely,

Grandmaster Hee Il Cho  
AImAA President and Founder

Self- control is my next wall. We generally think of this as avoiding trouble and controlling both our emotions and our actions. While this is correct, for me, self- control is closely allied to perseverance. It keeps us in the game when disappointment tends to overwhelm us. And disappointment is often a sharper pain than any physical one. It keeps us going when we look for the light but the stars refuse to shine.

Modesty is the final wall. There are many interpretations of this virtue. In my interpretation, modesty shows us where we are now and how far more we have to travel on our journey through life. It is full of hope and excitement. We have a saying in Gaelic which I will translate for you: “*How lonely it is to know the mind of God.*” God never has to ask a question because He already knows all the answers. But we stand on the shore and look at the horizon and we say “let us get in our boat and sail to the horizon.” And when we reach it, what do we find? A new horizon lies before us. We are forever asking questions and opening doors.

Courtesy defines how we deal with all the people we meet in the course of our life. Ours is a position of strength which must never be confused with arrogance. It is like a stone which is thrown into a pond. The ripples spread outwards and gently touch the shore. We may never see how our sense of courtesy affects others but we may be sure that it does.

**You** are unique. There has never been and there will never be another **you**. But being a martial artist makes you different. Why? **So that you can make a difference. Being a member of AIMA makes you special.** I have received many gifts from my participation in AIMA. Not the kind that come wrapped in fancy paper. Rather have I received gifts of the spirit: the gift of encouragement; the gift of knowledge; the gift of friendship. In return, my gifts to you are my words. My hope is that my thoughts find resonance with your thoughts.

And so the journey continues.  
 The Lord knows; Oh He knows  
 He knows all  
 What you think, what I think  
 When sparrows fall  
 If you knew what He knew  
 Oh sorry hour!  
 Hunger to lose; wonder to lose  
 And passion's power.

(M.Walsh 1935)

## AIMAA Newsletter

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## **The Importance of Loyalty**

by Karim Belgacem

Scotland

If you spend any amount of quality time, as I have, with Master D'arcy you quickly come to realise how powerful and endearing the trait of loyalty can be. I have met thousands of people throughout my time in Tae Kwon Do but none with the same dedication and loyalty as Master D'arcy has for Grandmaster Cho.

This loyalty is something which must surely benefit Grandmaster Cho, however, the thing is – and this is something far too many people forget – showing loyalty in such a fashion can bring immeasurable rewards for the person who is bestowing.

Too many people in today's martial arts society are quick to profess their loyalty to this master and that. It is easy to be loyal when things are going well. Easy to show loyalty when everything in the garden is rosy, but what about the bad times? What about when there is a disagreement, a quarrel or a clashing of ideas. It is those time (or excuses) that people usually use to escape to become their own self professed master instructors or association chairman or as the newest craze goes – 10<sup>th</sup> dan Tae Kwon Do professors!

I was recently along side Master D'arcy and many more Scottish and Irish members; including Master Kirkwood and Master Byrne, during a trip to AImAA Jersey. One evening the conversation came round to loyalty and Master Byrne commented on how loyal he thought I was to Master D'arcy, Master Kirkwood and the AImAA in general. I was very honoured and thanked him for his kind comments. I did however state that if he could say the same thing to me in 10 years then I would be worthy of such accolades.

I suppose that is the point of this short article. We must all unite behind our Grandmaster and the AImAA masters. Not just today, or tomorrow, but for the rest of our lives. It is the whole basis of the Instructor-Student relationship and in turn the whole basis for the martial arts.

Master Kirkwood has been hugely influential in the growth of the AImAA in Scotland. I stand alongside him in trying to build a similar model to that of AImAA Ireland. We have had many good times but we have also had disagreements (I tend to moan a lot) but one thing is for sure, we will always be united with the benefit of Grandmaster Cho and the AImAA at the forefront. As I said, it is ok to be loyal when things are great. Loyalty must be shown at all times.

We can not be martial artist some of the time. It must be all of the time.

Loyalty to my instructor, my school and the principles of my art! One Grandmaster, One Association... and most importantly, one family.

Thank you

## **IT Takes Time and Hard Work !!!**

by Master Philip Master Ameris.  
Pittsburgh

To truly benefit from Taekwondo, it is imperative to work hard and be consistent in your training. If you are aiming to get into better shape, you have to do more than talk about it. You have to workout and watch your diet. There is no secret, it is very simple. However, as easy as it sounds one must have the discipline to persevere when temptation of that piece of cake or candy appears. In order to develop discipline, one must commit to a goal, and not waiver off the path, no matter what. If you are busy at work, or you have extra homework, get up earlier, make the time, do not make excuses. If you hurt your leg, work on your hand techniques. There are always ways to improve. You will never develop discipline in anything, if you do not have discipline in the small things. Let me give you an example. I read a great book about the Marines. In this book, it talked about how the drill sergeant was so strict, regarding the cleanliness of his platoon. He made them be sure that their beds were made, so a quarter could bounce when thrown on it. Their shoes had to shine and their uniforms had to be clean and pressed. When questioned why he was so strict with things that seem so trivial, he said that in order to develop discipline and self reliance, you had to make sure your daily routine was one of order. To forget even the smallest task when in combat, by forgetting or not doing your best, could cost the soldier or someone else his or her life. How right he is!

I am a firm believer that the art of Taekwondo is one of the most effective methods to instill discipline. However, the student must do their part. It takes way more than coming to class. Below I will list elements that will enhance developing an iron will that is rooted in discipline. Please always remember, Taekwondo is a positive metaphor for living. And that each day, you should be using your Taekwondo discipline in everything you do. Just like the soldier mentioned above.

### **Be consistent in your training.**

Grand Master Cho states “one drop of water over time will penetrate a rock.” In order to achieve any worthwhile goal, it takes time and repetition. Remember that repetition is the mother of skill. The more you do something, the better you will get.

*Special Note for Parents:* In order to teach your child how to develop good work ethics, they have to learn to keep working at things, and reach their goals. Taekwondo teaches a non-quitting spirit that will keep them going, and push through obstacles, even pain. For this benefit, it is essential that parents reinforce all of our school policies, and make their children come to class regularly. As a parent, it is your responsibility to have your children do things you know will improve their lives. Please do not forget - YOU are the boss, not the other way around.

### **Set goals.**

Set realistic goals, and do not quit until you reach them. Do whatever is necessary. If it means coming to more classes, do it. If it means getting private classes, by all means schedule one. You have one life to live, live it. You can get what you want, if you are willing to work for it. Read, listen and study. Put in the effort, and the results will come.

### **Give back.**

This one is for high belts. To teach is to learn. As a black belt, it is your responsibility to pass on your art. This shows respect for Taekwondo, and your instructor. All brown belts and higher should teach

at least one day per month. That is a very doable schedule, with the number of high belts we have. As an instructor, you will not know the positive impact you may have on someone. Make the time to teach. You will improve, and at the same time you will be fulfilling your obligation to your Do-jang.

### **Be patient.**

Again, anything of value takes time. Know that you may have setbacks with injuries, or whatever life may throw your way. Also know that every class you may not feel your best. However, you can put forth your best effort, and there is always the next class. Realize that Taekwondo is not a seasonal sport. It is a way of life.

**Stay Sharp.** Another one for high belts. Many people make black belt and then quit training. They reach their goal. Many feel what more is their to learn? A few more patterns? More one step sparring? Different ways to kick? Who needs to continue if they feel they are done, and that the skills they learned will always be there. Thinking this way is the same as never sharpening a knife. After time, the blade will become dull and not be able to cut through the thinnest of paper. In order to be a Black Belt, you have to BE A BLACK BELT and train! You must constantly and repeatedly sharpen your blade.

**Respect and Loyalty.** Last on the list, but surely the most important. Respect yourself number one. If you do not respect yourself, and live by the standards you set, no one else will respect you. Respect everyone. Remember the golden rule, treat others how you would want them to treat you. How simple this is to say, but how hard it sometimes is to do. My dad used to tell me, "treat me nice, and I will treat you better. Treat me bad, and you will be treated worse".

Loyalty, I mention this because today in the Martial Arts world, many people have lost the respect and appreciation for their instructors or masters. I have seen it over and over. Loyalty is somehow mistaken for worshiping or being subservient. Loyalty is appreciating the gift your master has given you. Grand Master Cho has been my instructor for over 25 years. I cannot express my sincere gratitude for all he has taught me - not only in the Marital Arts, but in my life. To turn my back on him would be the same as changing my last name. That is bow serious I believe a student and masters relationship should be. When my time on earth is finished, I pray my legacy will be that I was a good father, a good husband, a good son, a good brother, a good friend; that I cared about my union brothers, and sisters and did my best to represent them; and that I stood for what I believed. That I was Grand Master Hee Il Cho's student, and taught with the same passion that Grand Master Cho taught me. That I passed on my knowledge and passion to my students, and made their lives better through the gift of Taekwondo.

## **Portrait of a Taekwondo School**

### **Cho's School of Tae Kwon Do Nenagh**

by Mr. Pat Meagher, 4th. Degree Black Belt.  
Ireland

While membership of AImAA is a unifying factor in the life of each school, there are also factors that make every school distinctive such as the instructor/s and the individual members; the history of each school; the location; certainly the aims of the members; the efforts of each to make their school a success; their relationship with the Masters of the art. These are some of the elements that go into making Cho's School of Taekwondo, Nenagh, Tipperary, Ireland, different.

Nenagh is a small town with a population numbering 7,500 approximately. It's Gaelic name: "An t-Aonach" means "The Marketplace." It was a town where the local farmers sold and bought livestock and where at one time the only local industry was the making of aluminium utensils. Overlooked from

the south by a range of hills called *The Silvermine Mountains*, while Ireland's second largest lake, Lough Derg, lies six miles to the north-west, the town is situated in the midst of some beautiful countryside. In the 1200's, the Norman invaders built a fine castle on a hill and a remnant of their endeavour remains standing.

The town's first taste of prosperity came when, during the 60's and 70's, a Canadian mining company stripped lead and zinc from the hills where pre-historic man had searched for silver, (hence the name). Interestingly, this was the first influx of "foreign" workers experienced by the local people. Today we have Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Chinese and Africans all happily living in the town.

Sport has always had an integral part in the life of the townspeople. Hurling, football, soccer, rugby, tennis, golf, handball, fishing, hunting, sailing swimming are all catered for. Martial arts came late. Our school was originally founded as Nenagh Taekwondo Club in 1988 with a single third degree black belt instructor. Many of us who joined did so without any great understanding of the martial arts or even any clear idea of what we required or could contribute. In 1995 we were introduced to Master Darcy who presided over the first black belt grading. I do not know what impression we made on Master Darcy at that time but I still recall his address to us when he spoke of the importance of Grandmaster Cho to the art of taekwondo, and of the significance of respect – respect for oneself, for one's instructor, for one's school and for the art. Fate was to play a part when our original instructor bowed out for personal reasons and we were left somewhat rudderless for a number of months. Some members departed and the person on whom we had pinned our hopes seriously injured his knee during a training session. Luckily, one of our members who was due to grade for black belt remembered Master Darcy and made contact. The rest is history. Both Master Darcy and Master Byrne took us in hand and showed us what it meant to be part of a vigorous association which had its roots in tradition but was accommodating of new ideas and accepting of new skills. To both are due our thanks.

Being members of AIMAA has afforded us many opportunities to train with the best. We were first introduced personally to Grandmaster Cho and Master Ameris in 1997 when both travelled to Ireland to oversee a grading and to offer seminars. It was our first experience of both masters and it left a lasting impression. Doors were being opened which would allow us access to experiences of which we had never dreamed. Mr. Finn paid a visit to America with the Irish group that travelled to celebrate the opening of Grandmaster's school in Albuquerque in 1999. This also marked the beginning of a relationship between AIMAA members from America and Ireland which has grown in warmth and respect. Then in 2000, Ireland hosted the First World championships. What a spectacular event that was. The first official summer camp was organised by Master Ameris in Kiski, 2001. Both Mister Finn and Mister Meagher attended. Grandmaster Cho again travelled to Ireland in May of 2002 where more than three hundred martial artists benefited from his tuition and experience. On that occasion, Grand master Cho was presented with a piece of bog-oak sculpture. Bog oak is several thousands of years old and so the sculpture represented a link with the past and with the people whose memory we honour when we perform each of the patterns. The second summer camp at Kiski took place in '03 and again both members attended.

'04 saw the Second World Championships hosted by Ireland and which again proved a huge success. In '06 Mr. Meagher travelled to Flagstaff to partake in the third summercamp. AIMAA members from Phoenix, Arizona, spent eighteen days training at the various schools around the country during what passed for an Irish summer. A fabric is being knit and we are all part of the weave and what an inspiring thought and emotion that is!

Let us now concentrate on the individuals who form the core and heart of our school. Our oldest member is Mr. Pat Hynes, 2<sup>nd</sup>. degree black belt and a mere 78 years young. Mr. Hynes began his journey in martial arts when he was 59 years of age! A renowned crafter of wood, he is a perfect example of one who regards age as immaterial. Life for him is like the wood which he so skilfully carves – taking the rough and making it smooth with patience and knowledge, a clear eye and a steady hand, and so, in time, revealing the hidden beauty of the grain within. He has been a source of inspiration to the members for many years, though no doubt, he would be embarrassed by such a sentiment. He is further proof that age is not a negative factor when engaging in martial arts. His is an outlook that is always positive. In him are made alive the five principles of AImAA.

Next is Mr. Meagher who began his Taekwondo journey in 1991 at the age of 41. A school principal by profession, he is very much taken with the sense of spirituality/morality which he finds within the art. A frequent speaker at AImAA gradings, he stresses the importance of commitment to the core values of the art and of the Association and uses as a theme the taekwondo aims. He is also taken with a sense of the parallel stories of Korea and Ireland – both have ancient histories, both were riven by internal struggles, both were overcome by more powerful neighbours, both endured baptisms of blood in their struggle for freedom and both are still divided. The Korean personalities and events celebrated in the patterns have their counterparts in Irish history. As well as instructor, Mr. Meagher holds the twin offices of school's treasurer and public relations officer.

Another mature student of the art is Mr. Tom Stanley whose thesis is elsewhere on this newsletter. He came to taekwondo while in his late thirties. A fisherman of note and a teller of tall tales he is committed to the idea of the energies that exist within the tradition of taekwondo and the need to explore these energies fully to partake of their positive force. We, in turn, must contribute to this flow of energy that is taekwondo through practice of the art, through meditation and through teaching. He is regarded as the school's expert on board breaking and has numerous titles to his credit. Mr. Stanley's positive outlook is amplified in his phrase "the best is yet to come."

Finally our chairperson is Mr. Mike Finn. Mike is an expert on fitness and holds qualifications from two universities. He is the school's chief instructor, its architect, its visionary and its driving force. His enthusiasm and single-mindedness have brought us to where we are today. We have partaken in numerous AImAA events and we have won our share of trophies but it is in our mental outlook that the greatest transformation has taken place. Nothing is impossible and we get better with every passing day. AImAA/Taekwondo is woven into the fabric of Mike's life. He trains every day in his own purpose-built dojang. Each time he trains he wears his do-buk and belt. This is his inspiration.

Mr. Finn, Mr. Stanley and Mr. Meagher graded successfully for fourth degree black belt in July '06. A school with three fourth degrees is probably unusual but then the ages of the four senior members exceed 230 years, and that is probably unusual too! A lot of living and a lot of life's experiences are packed into those years. Such living and such experience give one a finer appreciation of what is of true value in this world. That is why we are AImAA.

This has been a very brief glimpse of our school. There are many other elements I could write about and other members I could mention, but I have only offered the briefest snapshot. It's time to go training– after all, grading for fifth degree is only three years away! Slán.

## **Phoenix Cho's Tae Kwon Do Promotes it's first Black Belts**

by Mrs Ene Corupe  
Phoenix

On Sat May 10<sup>th</sup> Phoenix Cho's Tae Kwon Do promoted its first white belts to 1 Rec Black Belt. 5 students; Kevin Kane, Rick Marshall, Amy Paulson, Emily Paulson and Brian Roberts tested for their 1 Rec Black Belt. All students trained hard, overcame individual struggles and put out a tremendous effort on testing day. They did an awesome job and made us very proud. We feel that they will be a credit to Grandmaster Cho and AImAA.

Mr. Kane was to have tested last September, but tore his right shoulder rotary cuff on both sides, punching for a white belt. He never got to the floor. This combined with a bad knee had him in for 2 surgeries. Doctors and therapist told him that he would never be ready for a May testing. He proved them wrong.

Mr. Marshall has had his own personal demons to overcome. But, what I would like to comment on was his essay. The moment when you know that the student understands the DO. To hear how he has been able to translate what he has learned from Tae Kwon Do into his daily life and work. How his understanding has enabled him to attain an inner peace and self confidence.

Mr. Roberts came to us with serious injuries from his rodeo days. Both ankles were fused and one foot partially gone. Mr. Roberts trains at virtually every class and then every evening at home. He has gained balance and has been able to train for almost 2 years now without wearing supportive shoes.

Both Amy and Emily always get lumped as one – “Amily”. The are sisters who are close to each other, joined at the same time and have maintained the same belt level through out. Amy being older became bolder first. She in fact is one of our schools top sparrers and even competed in Albuquerque, New Mexico against 16 year old boys in a full contact armored sparring division. No other girls would join this division so she went up against the boys. She was smaller than the boys, but she kicked butt. Emily has always been the shy one, falling into her sister's shadow. But she has come into her own. Her kiups were loud, she had power and focus. She set the bar by breaking first. 2 board elbow strike and her brick on first attempt.

Spectators were overwhelmed by their abilities and discipline. Parents and high rank students were in awe of what was to come at their child's / their own Black Belt test in the future. They were on the floor for over 2 ½ hrs. Students demonstrated all techniques up to and including their belt level, self-defense, 1-steps, all patterns, pad work, grappling, 1 on 1 sparring, 2 on 1 & 3 on 1 sparring, 4 station board break, multiple board breaks, singly supported breaks and to finish with breaking a brick. Emily, the youngest at only 13, set the bar by breaking her brick on the first attempt.

These students set the bar high. It is their job now, as full instructors, to ensure that the next wave to test for 1 Rec Black do better than they did.

## **Back for Good**

by Alex Walker

Belgacem's School Of Cho's Tae Kwon Do  
Scotland

I recently returned to Tae Kwon Do after a long period of time (approximately 13 years), the reason for the absence was a misdiagnosed back problem. The condition was originally diagnosed as Arthritis, when in fact it was two trapped nerves, unfortunately it took a very painful and extremely uncomfortable thirteen years to arrive at, and correct. But I'm delighted to say that problem is now behind me, and I now have a lot of training to catch up on.

I started my Tae Kwon Do training with an instructor called Mr. Joe Mclear around 25 years ago. The reasons for starting to train were simply to get fitter and lose some weight. I very quickly realised how fortunate I was in finding an excellent instructor, running a very well organised school. There was a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere and there was always someone available to explain or demonstrate a new technique, this was a definite advantage to a 25 year old, uncoordinated, overweight builder.

I, as most people of my generation had played football at every opportunity from a very early age, and there for had absolutely no experience of kicking anything other than a football, on that first night of training, the patience shown by Mr. McLear in trying to teach me a simple front snap kick deserved a medal. I knew on that first night of training that Tae Kwon Do was exactly what I was looking for, please don't think for a moment I was either flexible or fit, I was neither, it was the challenge that appealed to me.

Then before you know it, you are training for the first grading, and by this time you are staring to realise that this is not just an exercise regime, and that, there is a very important spiritual and philosophical aspect to Tae Kwon Do.

Mr. McLear's work obligations made it impossible to give the continued commitment required to run the dojang and a very good Tae Kwon Do practitioner, Mr. Pat Mallon took up the reins, the school was now affiliated to the T.A.G.B, we spent quite a few weekends travelling to England and Wales taking part in tournaments (usually unsuccessfully)and seminars.

At that time Grand Master Cho was still at the forefront of the TAGB. I was extremely fortunate to attend seminars held by Grand Master Cho, I thought it would be almost impossible for Grandmaster Cho to live up to the expectations of the students at these seminars, but not only did he live up to it, he demonstrated that he is, without doubt, the best in the business. I am very much looking forward to train at this years A.I.M.A.A. summer camp with Grand Master Cho and the other A.I.M.A.A. Masters and students.

I felt very honoured to test for my first and second degrees under Grand Master Cho and always felt that the TAGB lost something important when it separated from Grand Master Cho. (I don't know the reason for the split whether commercial or otherwise)

I now train at Mr. Belgacems School in Larkhall alongside my youngest son, and again realise how fortunate I have been in finding another dedicated instructor. I am now in the process of relearning the patterns (after all the time I took to learn them previously, I still find it hard to believe how much I have forgot). I cannot thank Mr. Belgacem and his assistant Miss Shaw enough, for their time, effort and encouragement given to me, in trying to get me, to at least resemble a second degree

A.I.M.A.A Scotland's students are extremely lucky to have Master Kirkwood as Scottish director of A.I.M.A.A. I have known Master Kirkwood for a few years now (put it this way, he was still a coloured belt) I doubt if there is a better example of dedication to the art in Scotland, his practical ability and enthusiasm have never wavered.

In the good old days I travelled with Master Kirkwood to a quite a few tournaments, I used to come back regularly with either black eyes or a broken nose (sometimes both) while Master Kirkwood had collected another trophy, don't think that these trophies came easily, to go and compete in open tournaments, especially when it may have been a rival associations competition, you had to win very convincingly indeed to get the decision.

As I said earlier I am now committed to training as often as I can, when I was discussing this with another student, I was quite pleased to announce that I was now attending classes four times a week, he then stated the obvious that I was actually only training for four hours a week and if I hoped to ever test again, I should leave my newly found comfort zone and start pushing myself a lot harder. This reminded me of the old adage of only getting out what you put in, so along with everyone else committed to improving their Tae Kwon Do, I'll need to make time to increase my training.

### **Everyone wants good kids, but we have to work at it.**

by Master Philip Master Ameris.  
Pittsburgh

The Martial Arts claim to teach discipline, focus, responsibility, self-control, a non-quitting spirit, respect, and courtesy. These life skills are definitely more important than punching and kicking. However, they take time, patience, and consistency to achieve. As your child's instructor, it is my mission to make these life attributes stand out and be strong characteristics of your children. I NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Parents should encourage the teachings and principles that we advocate in our do-jang at home. All children at one time or another will be discouraged with learning and training; they may feel bored, they will make excuses, they will give the parents a hard time about coming to class. As a parent and an adult, you know the value of our program. I cannot instill discipline and all the other attributes in your child if they are not here.

My philosophy in today's society may seem to be "old school" but respect for parents, achieving goals through hard work, taking responsibility, getting up when knocked down, persevering through difficult times, is Life. Tae Kwon Do is a positive vehicle to give one the tenets they need to succeed.

I tell the children several things in class:

- 1) **Your parents are your boss.** Respect and Honor your parents. Your parents are not wrong. The children are not the boss, the parents are.
- 2) **Respect teachers.** All teachers. Don't make excuses that you have bad grades, poor performance because of the teacher. Work harder, and keep quiet.
- 3) **Respect Yourself.** Do not do anything that will hurt or abuse or humiliate yourself or your family.
- 4) **Never Abuse the use of your Tae Kwon Do skills** by hurting another person without cause and never disrespect our school by boisterous and improper behavior.

I thank you all for your support.

## Just as Strong at 67

by Jasmine Cho  
Hawaii

When you are near him, you can feel the weight of his presence. His eyes hint at an aged wisdom, yet there are hardly any lines on his face as you would expect. Instead, his countenance glows with remarkable youth and passion. Nearly six decades have passed since his journey in Tae Kwon Do began. Now, at 67 years of age, Grandmaster Hee Il Cho stands before his students, living up to and completely exceeding beyond his reputation as a “living legend” of the martial arts.

Grandmaster Cho, who now lives with a large scar in the middle of his chest from a sudden open-heart surgery he underwent two years ago, still exists in the minds of many loyal fans as a young martial artist who embodied the power and explosiveness of martial arts and took the martial arts scene in America by storm throughout the 80s. His signature moustache and long locks of hair that whipped through the air as he performed his renown back spinning kicks that were heralded as the “world’s fastest” are likely what comprise the image of Grandmaster Cho in many people’s minds. His moustache is now seasoned with whites and grays, and his long locks are now gone; but the power and explosiveness are still there, only even more impressive, as he proves that you can keep going and keep improving even when you’re way passed your prime and approaching 70.

People are constantly amazed and blown away by Grandmaster Cho’s level of health. His students in Hawaii are eye-witnesses of just how awe-inspiring his dedication and strength are as Grandmaster Cho walked back into the gym on the fifth day after his triple bypass operation and began teaching again just three days after that. Most people take several months to recover from such a major surgery – Grandmaster Cho restarted his training regimen within a week and with his chest scar still bleeding!

How does he do it? Is it possible for us to emulate the example that he has set? Grandmaster Cho’s answer is simple and directly to the point: it is all a matter of how much effort and dedication you are willing to commit.

“Your health must be your priority - your absolute first priority. Ambitions to make money and to live a happy life are all fine, but you can’t enjoy those things if you don’t take care of your health first. Money, you lose and can gain back. Happiness is the same; it can fluctuate depending on the stress of your circumstances. Once you lose your health, it is an uphill battle to gain it back and in some cases, you’ll lose it for good. Without your health, you not only have to deal painfully with the physical hurdles, but your abilities to achieve your very dreams become paralyzed.”

Grandmaster Cho keeps up a daily training regiment in addition to his teaching schedule that includes weight lifting and cardio. “Weight lifting is very important for maintaining muscle tone and overall strength,” says Grandmaster Cho. “Especially as late into my age, your muscles just naturally start to deteriorate. That’s why you usually see older people who are healthy and fit, but their skin no longer holds any elasticity and their muscles appear limp. Keeping up with a consistent weight training program has definitely helped in preserving my muscular structure to be as youthful as possible.” Grandmaster Cho, who used to easily bench twice his weight, now uses much lighter weights especially due to the limitations brought on by his heart surgery and shoulder injuries. “It doesn’t matter how much you can lift, it is more important to be consistent and challenge yourself just enough to keep improving.”

Grandmaster Cho’s cardio routine includes equal parts Tae Kwon Do training and light jogging. Jogging for an hour a day has helped Grandmaster Cho keep his unparalleled stamina, while his Tae Kwon Do training provides a unique anaerobic/aerobic workout that proves to be especially effective in maintaining and building endurance and coordination. Grandmaster Cho’s Tae Kwon Do workout

covers a broad range of exercises including patterns (*hyungs* or *poomses*), bag workouts, shadow boxing, and kicking routines.

Grandmaster Cho has also had to adjust his diet upon his heart surgery. Any fatty foods and foods high in sodium had to be completely eliminated. His meals now are heavily Korean-influenced, with rice, fish, and vegetables being staples of his diet. Grandmaster Cho does minimize the intake of white rice (carbs) in order to help him stay in a healthy weight range. Yogurt, fruits, and nuts (*esp.* almonds) as well as keeping hydrated with plenty of water help keep Grandmaster Cho energized throughout the day. “At my age, taking vitamins and minerals also becomes crucial, especially for my immune system.”

When you watch Grandmaster Cho teach, you will often see his students, who are all much younger than him in age, huffing and puffing as he glides swiftly across the floor with a rapid succession of roundhouse kicks. “Only trained 15 minutes!” Grandmaster Cho yells out as he encourages his students to push harder. It is rare to see Masters of his experience and stature still in the training hall teaching and actively engaging with his students. What pushes Grandmaster Cho so hard to keep going at it at 67, when most people have long since retired?

“For my students,” says Grandmaster Cho. Grandmaster Cho reminds us that it cannot just be a desire to simply be healthy or to look attractive that drives us to push. You must have a deeper passion and a more meaningful purpose of serving others in order to bring value and reward to the efforts you commit. In order to be successful in your journey in the martial arts and in pursuing your health, your motivation must be in the right place – not of egoism or materialism but of unselfishness and a determination to improve your character and others.

## **Using your Taekwondo skills everyday**

by Master Philip Master Ameris.  
Pittsburgh

Life can be hard at times, an unexpected illness, the loss of loved ones, losing a job. In the US we are experience a recession, gas prices are at a record high and the housing market along with the stock market is dropping in record numbers. Yes life can throw some hard blows. However when all seems dim now is the time to put your Tae Kwon Do Skills to work. One may ask how my Tae Kwon Do training can help with the economy or a problem in my life. I will give you a personal example, Years ago I was training for a US Champion Kickboxing title fight. I was going to fight the champion John Longstreet. The fight was schedule for nine rounds and was possibly going to be shown on ESPN. If I won a world title fight was just around the corner, I left my home in Pittsburgh to train with Grand Master Cho in his Los Angeles Do-jang. Everything was going great I was living my dream. Each day I trained with Grand Master Cho in preparation for the upcoming fight, it was like dying a going to heaven. Having Grand Master Cho everyday teaching me was something I will always cherish the rest of my life, I remember running with Grand Master Cho, hitting the pads, heavy bag and taking class in the evening. I felt great I was getting ready. Nothing, I thought, would stop me. Then we went over to Benny the Jet Urquidez Training centre to get in some sparring. At that time Benny Urquidez gym was the Mecca of Kickboxing in the US. With Benny being the best fighter in the world every fighter wanted to go and train there. Grand Master Cho arranged for me to go and spar. It

was again my life's dream. I have spared thousands of rounds and had my share of fights this was no different, so I thought.

The first round of sparring was going fine, came back to the corner to get Grand Master Cho's experts advise and I was out for the second round. During the second round I was caught with a light round kick behind my ear, all of a sudden my vision went blurry. I have been hit very hard before but never had I experience the blurred vision before. When I came back from that round Grand Master Cho asked me if I was ok, I never would quit and said I am fine. I went out for the third round and can not tell you what happen, all I remember is that Grand Master Cho told me that we should go to the hospital that I was really off balance and looked like I may be hurt. I pleaded with him that I was ok but he would have none of it. Like a parent with their child he new what was best for me. We went to the hospital and they told me that I may have a blood clot in the brain. I was devastated, I begged Grand Master Cho not to cancel the fight, I ask him to just let me go out for a few rounds and if I look hurt then he could stop it. He would not even consider this; he told me that my health was more important than any title. To this day I can not thank him enough for his love and concern.

Grand Master Cho contacted my father and told him what had happen and I was coming home. On my arrival my dad who was a pro boxer told me how much he respect Grand Master Cho, he said any other trainer, manager, or promoter would have let me fight. He said Grand Master Cho is without question a true friend. Being totally disappointed I went into self pity, My dad took me to the best doctors in Pittsburgh they discovered that I damaged my vestibular nerve and with time I should be ok. I still wanted to fight; I still wanted to achieve my childhood dream. As time went on thank God I was back on the road to fighting. Things were again going in the direction that I thought would lead to a title fight. Then again life threw be a curve, I was working for the Pittsburgh Post Gazette and one night while I was working I went off the road and crashed. It was serious I broke my neck and right arm, I was put in a striker bed and then into a halo which is screwed into your skull to prevent your neck from moving. I thought it was over; any dreams of fighting were now for the most part gone. When Grand Master Cho heard the news he immediately contacted me and told me to be patient to use my Tae Kwon Do skills to get through with this. Never doubting Grand Master Cho I said Sir, I can not train, I am in this halo that restricts all my movements it is unbelievably uncomfortable. He said use your Tae Kwon Do skills, again I said sir how can I? I can not move. Grand Master Cho being the teacher that he is told me Tae Kwon Do is more than kicking and punching, it is a way of life, he told me until now you have only experienced the physical, you must become a true martial artist and be complete. Not knowing what he was talking about he began to explain. Tae Kwon Do should be a positive metaphor for life. It should make you a better person, more understanding always striving for self improvement. He told me that if I was going to be a REAL martial artist that I should use this time wisely and make the best of it. He told me not to sit in self pity and make everyone around me life miserable, he said read, study and get well. I started to think WOW this is making sense why did he never really say anything about this before, however when I look back now some 20 years later he always said it but I was not ready to receive his wisdom at that time. During the course of my recovery Grand Master Cho contacted me every week each time he would remind my " You are a Champion for a day, but a Martial Artist for a Lifetime" It really stuck with me, this time in my life sincerely taught me the value of Tae Kwon Do. With Grand Master Cho's teaching I was beginning to learn what a positive effect Tae Kwon Do can have no matter what life throws your way.

It has been many years since my injuries, I thank God that today I am healthy and well. Over the years Life still threw some real curves but from this experience I learned that no matter what I have my Tae Kwon Do Skills to fall back on. From Grand Master Cho's teaching I learnt that no matter what if we apply the tenets of Tae Kwon Do to our daily lives there will always be a way to cope with

life. I am now 46 years old I have been training for the past 39 years I can now see that Tae Kwon Do has made me strengthen my faith in God, made me a better father and husband and in my work has given me the ability to handle stress and be compassionate toward people. The Tae Kwon Do Skills that Grand Master Cho taught me were complete. I now use my Tae Kwon Do Skills everyday to become the best I can be mentally, physically and spiritually.

## **My First Lesson**

by Thomas Boyle - Green Belt  
Cho's Hamilton  
Ireland

Just before Christmas 2007 Mr Farrell a 1<sup>st</sup> degree black belt was getting ready to sit his 2 degree testing. Mr Farrell had written a thesis to support his application for the grade of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, I was present at the time when Mr Farrell submitted this to Mr Belgacem our schools head instructor.

Curious as to what a thesis was due to the fact I have never written one, I consulted Mr Belgacem on travelling home from class that night and Mr Belgacem suggested I write a thesis for my next grading. In this thesis I want to tell you about an important life lesson I have experienced as a student of Tae Kwondo which is relevant to us as martial artists as well as in our professional lives and even home life.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2006, with the company of fellow students, parents and the guidance of Mr Belgacem and senior student Miss Shaw we travelled to Dublin to participate in a tournament. This was my first tournament as a martial artist and as if nerves were not already enough it was also my first journey on an aeroplane, something which was a big enough challenge.

On our arrival we were greeted by Master Darcy, a man I had only met twice before at seminars he had taught here in Scotland. Regardless of my rank Master Darcy had a warm smile and a strong handshake to welcome us to his country. After taking in some sites of Dublin city we attended dinner in the Masters company, he told us stories of his childhood and spoke fondly of times he shared with Grandmaster Cho. It was from here that I started to appreciate what Mr Belgacem told us in class about the humility and modesty Master Darcy has. I could see he is a fantastic role model first hand.

The next day we set out for the tournament which was situated in a picturesque village called Swords. Every one was buzzing, there were so many people some spectators but most were students from all over Ireland and of course the big Scottish group. This made me nervous, all these people and it was a patterns tournament, something I know Master Darcy holds dear.

I watched as many people compete as possible to see what I could pick up on. I had confidence in the fact my pattern was rehearsed many times and that I could give everything I had. The longer time went on the less nervous I became until I heard my name being shouted across the hall to make my way to the area. I was competing against a fellow student from Scotland, Billy Reid. I knew Billy from class and squad training, he had competed before and even though we were up together he gave me so much support. My time came and I was to show Dan Gun, the Pattern of my grade. It was difficult with everyone watching but you kind of just switch off to your surroundings and sink into a state of mind with concentration. I struggled to find a fluency and made a mistake, I returned to the start and set off again only to make a second mistake. I was embarrassed but I calmed myself and asked for a

third attempt. I went through my pattern with lots of emotional content and made a slight mistake again but continued through it.

I was disappointed, especially after trying so hard and coming all the way over from home. Billy took his place and he performed well, he even took a trophy. Billy taught me how to be humble in defeat and also how to be humble in winning just by his actions. His support made me realise that even if we do not get the prize, it is the journey we undertake, the challenges we know we have to face even in adversity, the indomitable spirit we show that makes us the winners. We challenge ourselves and if we can achieve a little bit more each time then we are richer in spirit. That's what makes us martial artists and not just fighters or sports people.

I hope that this is what a thesis should be and that anyone who reads this can see that what we do even in the subconscious we can have a positive effect on a person's outlook.

## **UPCOMING WORLDWIDE AIMAA EVENTS**

JULY 14th -18 <sup>th</sup>	AIMAA SUMMER CAMP – FLORIDA – CONTACT AIMAA HQ
JULY 16 <sup>TH</sup>	AIMAA INTERNATIONAL TESTING
SEPTEMBER 7th	AIMAA SCOTLAND INTERCLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS – CONTACT MR BELGACEM OR MASTER KIRKWOOD
SEPTEMBER	MASTER KIRKWOOD SEMINAR SCOTLAND – CONTACT MASTER OR MRS KIRKWOOD
SEPTEMBER 27 <sup>TH</sup> -28 <sup>TH</sup>	AIMAA IRELAND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS – CONTACT MASTER D'ARCY, MISS WALSH OR MR FARRELL

## **A.I.M.A.A SCOTLAND STUDENT AWARDS 2007**

by *AIMAA Scotland National Secretary Mrs. Kirkwood*  
Scotland

The annual Student Awards for 2007 took place at the prestigious Banqueting Hall in Almada Street, Hamilton on Saturday the 29th of March 2008. Master Kirkwood had asked his Instructor and Mentor Master John Darcy to attend the annual awards as well as hold a seminar for A.I.M.A.A Scotland the following day. Also in attendance was his friend Master Peter Byrne. Both Masters flew in for the occasion to support Master Kirkwood and A.I.M.A.A Scotland Instructors and students.

Grandmaster Cho and Master Ameris kindly sent letters of their support to A.I.M.A.A Scotland Instructors and its student body. These letters were in the Award Night brochure for all the students to take home with them.

The night started with a special presentation compiled by Grandmaster Cho for AIMAA Scotland Instructors and Students. The presentation honored Master Kirkwood for his dedication to A.I.M.A.A and A.I.M.A.A Scotland. Grandmaster went on to give a warmth speech to those being honored that evening. The presentation also had an explosive video attached showing Grandmaster teaching his Jnr and Snr students in his Dojang in Hawaii. The video showed a martial artist in his prime at the age 67 years old. This video can now be viewed on You Tube and the A.I.M.A.A Scotland Bebo Site.

The demonstration started with the awesome pattern from Master Kirkwood's Black Belts "Team Fusion" who undertook a complex mixture of traditional patterns to music. This was followed by Master Kirkwood, and his younger students undertaking a street self defence scene. Student Jack Reid showed off his weapons skills in the "BO", while his father showed off his weapon skills in Nunchuka.

The demonstration had many highlights, from the creative group pattern "Celtic Connection" to the Technical Destruction by Instructor John Kirkwood Jr. Miss Shaw undertook a creative pattern with one of her senior students to music. Also Mr. Belgacem students from Larkhall and Hamilton undertook a group pattern, showing synchronisation and skill, followed by Mr. Belgacem showing the four zones which was developed by Master Ameris. Mr Lawson and Mr McLear also took part in the demonstration showing off their own and students skills.

However the highlight of the night was "The Old Men" scene, performed by Master Kirkwood and his Senior and Junior students. It was extremely funny and it had many people in tears of laughter. The demonstration came to a close with Senior and junior students undertaking destruction with Master Kirkwood, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Belgacem, Mr. John Kirkwood Jr and Mr. McLear. The destruction was spectacular and fast paced! The demonstration was excellent and the team did not disappoint us on the night.

The demonstration was followed by the annual awards, which honored students from Blantyre, Hamilton, Larkhall, Glasgow and Bellshill. Master Kirkwood also presented his Instructor and friend Master Darcy with an award for his support, friendships and dedication to himself and A.I.M.A.A Scotland; this was followed by an award to Master Byrne and Mr. Gerry Long for their support and friendship to himself and A.I.M.A.A Scotland Instructors and students.

Instructor Mr. Kevin McLear was awarded with the "A.I.M.A.A Scotland Instructor of the Year" This was presented for his dedication to his club, A.I.M.A.A Scotland and Master Kirkwood. Mr. Mc Lear has had a pretty tough year through illness; however he has shown great determination and diversity in his training and teaching through such a trying time in 2007.

Lastly Master Kirkwood was presented a special award from Mr. Belgacem on achieving his 6<sup>th</sup> Degree, as well as an award from his students from Cho's TKD Blantyre. The students awarded Master Kirkwood for his Instruction and dedication to them throughout 2007, and for his commitment to push them to excellence in everything they do.

The night finished off with students and parents dancing the night away until 1 am, with everyone enjoying themselves until the wee small hours. Master Byrne took to the dance floor with students and had a ball.

Master Kirkwood and Mrs. Kirkwood would like to thank all Instructors and students for their demonstrations and their commitment throughout 2007. Master Kirkwood looks forward to next year's event when we once again honor the best students within AIMAA Scotland.