

Pine Lake TrueNews

October 2011



Happy 28th Birthday True Martial Arts!

TMA's beginnings can be traced back to October of 1982. Our founder, the late Thomas Zoppi developed a passion for martial arts by training and achieving 2nd degree black belt at Choi Karate Institute of Los Angeles. Mr. Zoppi, his wife Laurel, and their children moved to Bellevue, and had to leave his training behind.

But Mr. Zoppi never stopped talking about or practicing his martial arts, so it wasn't long before his son was begging to learn. Thomas' son shared the same interest. As a 5th birthday gift, in October of 1982, Mr. Zoppi took his son, Skyler, out to the garage and taught him his first martial arts lesson. The lessons continued and a month later, a family friend showed interest and became Mr. Zoppi's first paying student.

One by one, other students joined including Laurel. In December of 1982, Thomas moved from the garage to his first rented location and True Martial Arts was officially off and running! The location was an empty space behind a doctor's office on Bellevue-Redmond Road in Bellevue.

After many years of growing the school in the Overlake area, the Zoppi's opened a second True Martial Arts location up here on the Sammamish Plateau in April of 1995. Although Thomas Zoppi passed away in 2001, the schools have continued to thrive under the leadership of his students and his family for the past 10 years.

For more history of TMA visit www.truemartialarts.com and click on "About TMA" and then "TMA History"

Black Belt: What is Sa Bum Nim Looking For?

By SBN Skyler Zoppi

To me, a Black Belt is someone who demonstrates passion for training, commitment, and a high degree of competence in the martial arts. At TMA, the minimum age to test for 1st degree Black Belt is 13 years old. If a student demonstrates readiness, an exception can be made to this rule if his 13th birthday falls closer to the upcoming test than the next scheduled test.

We adhere to this age requirement because I believe a Black Belt should have enough maturity and life experience to understand and live by the principles that we teach. I also believe a Black Belt should have the ability to handle or, as a last resort, defend herself and others when her safety is being threatened.

I want Black Belts at our school to dedicate themselves to the martial arts lifestyle that we call "The Black Belt Way". This is to approach everything we do with 100% effort, a positive attitude, and indomitable spirit.

I want all Black Belts at our school to meet or exceed the standard that has been set by all the previous Black Belts at True Martial Arts in their skill, attitude, and toughness. Black belts should show that they can push through any obstacle, physical or mental. These attributes take time, perseverance, maturity, and in some cases patience to develop.

Special Halloween Schedule on Monday, October 31st:



- Classes will be held for all ages and all ranks 4:00-4:40 PM and 4:45-5:30 PM.
- Students may attend either or both of those classes. No other martial arts classes will be held that day.
- Students may wear Halloween costumes to class as long as they don't get in the way of their training or make a mess on the floor.
- If Monday is your regular training day and you're unable to attend during the special classes, find a makeup.

Student of the Month

Name: Luke Sala **Age:** 12 years old
TKD rank: Advanced Brown belt **Arnis rank:** Brown belt
How long have you been training? 6 years
Favorite Martial Arts move: Jump double front kick
Favorite thing outside of Martial Arts: Soccer and robots
Martial Arts goal: Reach 1st degree black belt
How has Martial Arts helped you?: Martial arts has helped make me stronger and helped make me more flexible.

Instructors of the Quarter

Name: Allex Ballata **Age:** 13 years old
TKD rank: 1st degree Black Belt **Arnis rank:** Black Belt
How long have you been training? 9 Years
Favorite Martial Arts moves:
Reverse jump crescent kick and flying reverse side kick
Favorite thing about Martial Arts:
You get to learn a new style that didn't originally come from America but it came from Korea.
Favorite thing to do outside of Martial Arts:
I love to do soccer just like how I love to do Tae kwon do
Martial Arts goal:
My goal is to become a 3rd degree before I go to college.
How has Martial Arts helped you?: It has helped me become a leader and responsible and be able to have self discipline.
Favorite thing about teaching Martial Arts: Seeing how your students grow and learn and progress on to new ranks.

Name: Sammy Ballata **Age:** 13 years old
TKD rank: 1st degree Black Belt **Arnis rank:** Black Belt
How long have you been training? 9 Years
Favorite Martial Arts moves: Crescent jump crescent kick
Favorite thing about Martial Arts:
You get to develop leadership skills and respect. You also get to have fun with your friends.
Favorite thing to do outside of Martial Arts:
I love to do soccer just like how I love to do Tae kwon do
Martial Arts goal:
My goal is to become a 3rd degree before I go to college
How has Martial Arts helped you?:
It has helped me by improving my leadership skills, responsibility, and respect for everyone.
Favorite thing about teaching Martial Arts: Having kids look up to me and getting to know their personalities.

NOTEWORTHY

Taekwondo Promotions

Advanced White: Rhona Maciver, Katie Sorrel
Yellow: Deam Mardenly, Zachary Watkins, Angie Zoppi
Advanced Yellow: Nickie Alexander, James Hollinworth, Andre Lagron, Garv Maheshwari
Green: Alyssa Bothwell, Samuel Cardwell, Heather Cardwell, Carlos Gonzalez, Daniel Gonzalez, Martin Sy-Quia, Indu Vanteru
Advanced Green: Shayla Gutmann, Nisha Kent-Dobias, Garima Maheshwari, Cole Ogren-Butail, Michael Padilla, Srilasya Reddy, Saumya Sahay, Vanessa Tang
Blue: Samantha Vidos
Advanced Blue: Jonathan Chu, Cole Pickering, Phillipa Poznanski, Greg Sparks, Jackson Sparks
Brown: Rishi Kavikondala, Peter Moe-Lange, Alaka Rao
Red: Neel Sahay, Madison Willis

Arnis Promotions

Yellow: Gracy Ahuja, Shiksha Arun, Sahil Gupta, Zachary Watkins
Green: Ryan Alexander, Mehal Ashwin, Alexander Fleming, Charles Pickering, Saumya Sahay, Douglas Winegarden, Sam Xiao
Red: Niveda Ganesh

Happy Birthday!

Sabah Aldossary, Shiksha Arun, Cameron Baird, Trisha Ballata, Rahul Bothra, Clara Brewer, Zavier Brown, Samuel Cardwell, Anumita Chopra, Yan Correa, Michael Donovan, Connor Driscoll, Easton Elsbree, Rachel Graham, Aarya Gupta, Matthew He, Spenser Horne, Shreyas Jagalur, Jacob Kicha, Charles Liu, Jackson Marley, Surya Narayanan, Riddhi Patel, Luis Ramirez, Rahul Remany, Leonardo Ribeiro De Brito, Noah Rosenberg, Sean Saxe, Meena Sethuraman, Fadel Sukoco, Rithvik Tirumala, Leila Uomoto, Kush Verma, Oliver Zhang, Leah Zoppi, Skyler Zoppi

Welcome New Students

Michael Donovan, Tristan Alexander, Risha Ashwin, Josh Cleland, Sarah Donovan, Mallory Donovan, Ian Drapp, Arshinav Gopinath, Aditya Gopinath, Weston Graham, Kauda Haddad, Matthew He, Harloe Hockett, Jamil Islam, Aagney Iyer, Anirudh Koya, Shannon Ouzts, Ruslan Romanenko, Stefan Rosen, Connor Sherwood, Jack Sherwood, Jack Smith, Alexander Takeuchi, Connor Truong, Samantha Wasilewski, Aaron Zhang

TMA News Briefs

Upcoming Taekwondo Test Dates

October Black Belt Testing Weekend

- Red Belt and higher: Friday, October 14h **6:30 PM**
- All Ranks: Saturday, October 15th **6:00 PM**

November Tests

Friday, November 18th **6:00 PM** White-Advanced Yellow
7:00 PM Green and higher

December Test

Friday, December 16th **6:30 PM**

October Pro Shop Special

Bag Gloves are 10% off

Fitness and Health News

Core Fusion class, which is a blend of three popular and complimentary types of movement: Core Strength, Booty Blast and Yoga, has moved to Thursday mornings from 6:00-7:00 AM.

Core Strength is now known as **hardCORE** and has returned to Tuesday nights from 7:30 to 8:00 PM.

October Makeup Class Schedule

You're welcome to make up classes missed. There's no deadline for completing makeup classes as long as you're an active student. If weekend makeup classes don't work, weekday classes are an option. Email, call, or ask at the front desk for help determining the best makeup class for you. 425-313-9680 or info@truemartialarts.com

Saturday, 8th:	All Ages	10:00 AM
Saturday, 15th:	All Ages	10:00 AM
Friday, 21st:	Teen/Adult	7:00 PM
Saturday, 22nd:	Youth	10:00 AM
Friday, 28th:	Teen/Adult	7:00 PM
Saturday, 29th:	Youth	10:00 AM

Sweatshirts

Special order your TMA sweatshirts at the front desk. We recommend you order one size up because of the fit and a small shrinkage that occurs in the wash (100% cotton). Orders will be taken until October 27th. We have many different colors available. Appropriate colored sweatshirts can be worn in class.

Board Breaking Seminar

Join us Friday, October 8th from 5:30-7:30 PM. Board breaking is a way to bring together the physical, technical, and mental aspects of your martial arts training. If under the age of 18, please get parent and instructor permission.

Instructor News

Welcome to our newest Assistant Instructor interns:

Maizy Brewer, McKenna Roberts, Kevin Do and Barath Kodungudi

Congratulations to the following Instructors who were promoted this month:

Oliver Marczynski, Oscar Marczynski, Alisa Billig, Jennifer Brewer and Sophie Clemmons: promoted from Assistant Instructor Intern to Assistant Instructor.

Lauren Wolfe, Meena Sethuraman, Darren McGraw and Lisa Carskaden: promoted from Assistant Instructor to Instructor.

Training Anniversaries

One Year: Simon Kurgan, Kyle Karupiah, Adam McAllen

Two Years: Fadel Sukoco

Three Years: Yan Correa, Thales Correa, Yogesh Banala, Roshni Patel

Four Years: Ashvin Sriram

Five Years: Zavier Brown

Six Years: Atul Madhugiri

Seven Years: Jaron Jin, Meena Sethuraman,

Eight Years: Oliver Marczynski, Oscar Marczynski, Vinny Palaniappan

Nine Years: Sammy Ballata, Alex Ballata, Ben Terry

Ten Years: Aaron Jin, Melanie Goddard

Eleven Years: Alisa Billig

Twenty-Four Years: Jon Cory

Twenty-Nine Years: Skyler Zoppi

TMA October Calendar

Saturday, 1st: **Arnis Seminars & Tests**

Friday, 7th: **Board Breaking Seminar** 5:30-7:30 PM

Saturday, 8th: **Instructors Meeting** 11:15 AM-12:30 PM

Friday, 14th: **Private Taekwondo Test**

Saturday, 15th: **Taekwondo Test** 6:00 PM

Saturday, 22nd: **Super Cardio Kickboxing** 8:00-9:30 AM

Tuesday, 25th: **Super Pilates** 9:30-11:00 AM

Monday, 31st: **Halloween Alternate Schedule** 4 & 4:45PM

Arnis Seminar Times

Yellow & Green Belts 9:30-10:30 AM (Test to Follow)

Blue & Brown Belts 9:30-11:00 AM (Test to Follow)

Red & Black Testing 9:30-11:30 AM (Test to Follow)

Red & Black Non-Testing Group 11:00 AM-12:30 PM.

Black Belt: What It Is and What It Takes

By Allen Kim

In the six years that I have been training at TMA, I have known dozens of black belts, both at TMA and in various other martial arts. All of them were deserving of the rank, not only because of their skills in martial arts, but their skills in life as well. A black belt is not only a symbol of one's mastery of the martial arts, it is a symbol of the mastery of one's self as well, and this second part of a black belt can only be achieved through discipline and experience.

When I first started out, I was in 5th grade; fairly old, compared to others I knew. I was also extremely shy, and I had very few friends. After I started training at TMA. I initially had periods where I would be extremely excited and eager to train, and then I would have periods where the last thing I would want to do would be to go and train after an exhausting day at school (I was only in middle school, but still, I pushed myself hard). Gradually, as I kept forcing myself to come and train even in the times when I didn't want to, I grew to love the routine and the benefits I received through my training. I made friends, grew stronger and more skilled, and began to learn more about myself through my training. When I was in 8th grade, I had to have knee surgery, which required me to stop training for three months while my knee healed back up. I hated every second of it. However, the knowledge that I would have to be patient to resume training and heal up properly was enough to keep me in crutches until I was deemed healthy again. When I resumed my training, I found that several of my classmates had passed me in rank, and that I had fallen behind due to my absence. This was discouraging for a while, and I despaired of ever reaching them again. However, after about two months, I set myself a new goal: To reach at least Second Degree Black Belt, without comparing my progress to that of others. With this in mind, I resumed training, and eventually caught back up to some of my former classmates.



By the time I had reached the rank of Advanced Brown Belt, I was tall, stocky freshman who had matured and developed considerably from the tiny little boy I had once been. Where I had once been shy, I was now confident and willing to speak up. I no longer ran from problems and confrontations, but instead met them head on, which had been a requirement for me way back as an Advanced Yellow Belt. I had grown stronger in body and mind, and I loved coming to TMA as I never had before. Then came the Provisional Black Belt Test, one of the most physically and mentally daunting challenges I had ever faced. Before and during the test, I was constantly fearing failure, and this nervousness was affecting my performance drastically. However, about halfway through the test, I came to a realization: I was ready for the test. I had thought I had known this before, when I had passed my pretest, but it was during the hardest part that I realized that I could actually beat this test. When I realized this, everything became much easier. I found that my confidence had returned, and I admit that I actually enjoyed the rest of the test a bit. The hardest part of the test, then, was the mental part: telling myself that I was ready, that I could beat the test, and that I would beat the test.

Now, as a Provisional Black Belt, I have realized that there is so much more to what a Black Belt really is than one's martial arts experience. One does not have to train in martial arts to have a mental black belt; the physical black belt is a representation of both physical mastery of martial arts techniques and of the mastery of one's own mind. For many people, their greatest critic is themselves. Being a Black Belt means that not only do you accept and use the criticism, it means that you can control it. It means that you no longer beat yourself up for every little mistake and error, but that you realize your mistake, accept it, learn from it, and move on. I used to be extremely harsh on myself for every mistake I made. Now, as a Provisional, I can relax a little bit, and realize that I don't have to be perfect. I can strive towards it, but I won't reach it for a while, so I can relax and enjoy the journey as well. Being a Black Belt means that not only do you have martial arts skills, but that mentally you are strong and confident, you know your limits, but that you accept them. This is the mark of a true Black Belt.

Allen is a Junior at Issaquah High School. He's an Assistant Instructor at TMA. He started training 6.5 years ago.

Annual TMA Picnic & Awards Results

True Martial Arts were invited to gather at Perrigo Park in Redmond for the annual True Martial Arts school picnic and awards presentation on Saturday, September 10th. Recognition for accomplishments of the past year were announced:

Special Recognition: For positive and selfless contributions to the school

The Carskaden Family

The Special Recognition Award goes to the Carskaden family who has been an absolute fixture at TMA. To sum up their presence at TMA, it would have to be their constant support, encouragement and enthusiasm they bring daily to the school. James, Anna and Lisa have been training for a combined 16 years between them, and teaching for a combined 4 years. In addition, Lisa cleans the school once a week, with the kids helping her when they are on school break. Jay has been the announcer at the annual TMA Championship for the last 2 years, but spent many years running from job to job on that special day. Like so many parents, Lisa enrolled James into Tae Kwon Do and began Kickboxing. Anna enrolled later, and after sitting and watching for a few years, Lisa had to give it a try “what’s good for them, is good for me”, was her motto. You will often find Jay kickboxing at night while he waits for his kids to finish classes.



Their favorite thing about TMA is the community of people they feel are amazing. “Being around inspirational, hard working, creative and caring people makes them a better family”. If they were to convince someone to try TMA, they would tell them that you don’t just gain knowledge about Tae Kwon Do and Arnis, you gain self-confidence on how to face some of life’s difficult lessons. You walk away with a wonderful sense of community and lasting friendships.

Their goals are simple. Anna wants to do her personal best in teaching and training and get her 2nd degree black belt. James wants to become a successful instructor and test for his 2nd degree black belt before he finishes high school. Lisa wants to bring creative ideas to her teaching and become a 1st degree black belt. Jay will continue to support his family in all they do with the school. Thanks Carskaden family, you are an inspiration to so many.

- Written by KBN Tami Parker

Adult Student of the Year: Demonstrated excellence in martial arts training by an Adult student

Nicole Smelson

I started teaching Nicole when she was a white belt and a high school student. Right from the start Nicole trained with a lot of enthusiasm and dedication. As she progressed, she demonstrated a strong work ethic, an eye for detail, and a desire to achieve perfection. Training in the Big Dog Class, Nicole set a high standard. I would look down the front row of extremely talented, hard-working students, and Nicole would be working twice as hard and putting out twice as much power as the next hardest worker in the class. In fact, she trained so hard that sometimes her body couldn’t take it. So Nicole had to work through some obstacles during her journey from first to second degree black belt—in fact, it took her eight years. In the process of persevering through that journey and getting her second degree this year, she inspired us all. If you saw her test, you saw that she didn’t just reach second degree, she blew right past it with authority. She looked so good that Sa Bum Nim and I declared her halfway to third degree. We at True Martial Arts are fortunate to have Nicole as a teacher, training mate, student, and—most of all—an inspiration. Congratulations Nicole!



- Written by KBN Leah Zoppi

Youth Student of the Year: Demonstrated excellence in martial arts training by a youth student

Chad Graham

Chad Graham started at True Martial Arts at the age of 8. We watched him grow up to become an exuberant, confident young man. At the age of 12 he was challenged by training in the Big Dog class as one of the youngest students. There he proved more than physically and mentally capable beyond his years. Now at 18 years old and a second degree black belt, Chad is one of the leaders of his class, admired by adults and other youth students alike. He is always working his hardest, giving demonstrations, and eager to assist his instructors. His natural competitiveness keeps the class energized and excited. Now in his last year of high school, we are excited to see where he will broaden his skills outside of TMA and excel next.

- KBN Amy Nibert

Instructor of the Year: Demonstrated excellence in martial arts teaching

Trisha Ballata

Trisha has been a valuable member of our TMA community as a student, parent and as our Administrative Director for the past 9 years. This year she took a step forward in a different role. Trisha is an instrumental part in the success of the Tuesday and Friday teen and adult class. The class has become a tight-knit group that excel in their training. Trisha often stays after class and gives freely of her time to help her students succeed by assisting them with whatever they need. Some of her students have themselves just started teaching, and are well on their way to becoming great instructors in their own right. I believe that Trisha has contributed greatly to this. My wife is a relatively new student in this class and I've never even had a second thought that she's not getting the best True Martial Arts experience.

I was so impressed with Trisha's teaching ability that I hand picked her to be a senior instructor this past year. Senior Instructors are entrusted with the responsibility to make sure things are going right at the school. They must have a superior presence as a leader. Trisha jumped right into this role and has performed her duties as a Senior Instructor as if she's been doing it for a long time. She is a go-to-gal; when things need to be done you can bet she will jump right to it before anyone has to ask. I feel like she is another set of ears and eyes for me, as I try to do my best to make sure TMA is functioning as it should be. Congratulations Trisha! Well deserved!

- SBN Skyler Zoppi

SBN Thomas Zoppi Award: For long-term dedication to the school and inspiring others through a shared vision with TMA founder, SBN Thomas Zoppi

Lynne Banki

This year the Thomas Zoppi award went to Lynne Banki. This award has been given to people that have been with the school for a very long time and have soared well beyond their Black Belt training. Lynne is such a person. She has the same spirit of lifting others up beyond what they thought they could do...like SBN Thomas Zoppi did for me and many, many other students. She has been with True Martial Arts since 1999. She is a 1st degree black Belt. All 3 of her children have trained with us. Currently her son Damian is a student (Advanced Brown Belt) and an Instructor. Together they teach a class on Sunday called SNAP. It is a special needs class, quite unique to a martial arts school. She feels that with all that our school has to offer to people, it would be best served to people with differences and various ability levels. Amazing things happen on Sundays! Some of the students are later brought in to our other classes and have done quite well. Lynne is a leader in the area of promoting education and awareness of Autism. She is one of those quiet people that do big things. We love her at True Martial Arts and honoring her felt very good to me.

- KBN Laurel Zoppi

