

The art of self-defense

by Hal D Coffey
News Editor

Every Saturday morning, about 12 present and former Behrend students descend to the Niagara Hall basement.

In some ways they do this to get away from the outside world. No, they are not an underground terrorist group.

They are the Behrend Martial Arts Club.

The sensei of the group, David Graves, said the early morning meeting time is a form of discipline.

"By having these people get up at 9 a.m. for class on a Saturday is a form of discipline," Graves said. "They discipline their mind and body."

As each person enters the basement, they bow in the doorway as a sign of respect.

"It (the bow) is a sign of respect," Erik Marshall, club president said. "This is to show that this is a very special place."

After about one hour of calisthenics and stretching exercises, the group performs some timing drills.

One such drill involves two lines of people facing each other.

The one person is called the uki and all he/she does is step and punch at the other person, the tori.

The tori just has to defend him/herself by blocking the uki's punches.

Other than the two-person drills, there are also some timing exercises that are done solo.

The kata is the prearranged form of self-defense done by oneself. The participant follows a set pattern of fighting an imaginary opponent.

After the timing exercises, the group usually straps on foot pads, hand pads, and mouthguards in order to do some fighting and self defense.

However, Sensei Graves emphasizes that the class is not about fighting.

"Sparring is least important. Discipline and balance are more important," Graves said.

Graves has a three-point method for self-defense that he professes to the club.

"One, talk out of the confrontation. Two, don't get hurt, and finally, hurt the other person the least in order to get out of it," Graves said.

The club members are learning their lessons, as exemplified by Chrisfield Johnson.

On a visit to New York not too long ago, he and his friend were approached by some guys, including one who seemed to have a gun, Johnson said.

Remembering what he learned from class, Johnson avoided confrontation by "talking" his way out of it.

"The class is not all punching and kicking, it is also interacting," Johnson said. "How we cope in situations, deadly or otherwise."

The two women who were present at the class this past Saturday attended for basically the same reason—self-defense.

Diane Gartner, 52, has been in the Behrend Martial Arts Club since its beginning nine years ago.

Not only is she the highest belt-ranking member of the club in Goshin Jutsu, but she also holds a black belt in Dan-Su-Du (a Korean style).

"Because I am small, I lacked a lot of self-confidence. I didn't know what I'd do before. Now I have the ability to self-defend," Gartner said.

Gartner takes her new found knowledge a little further. She gives demonstrations and teaches church and women's groups.

"I now have the ability to teach other women what to do in crisis situations," Gartner said.

Denise Freeman, who spent three and a half years at Behrend and now is at UP, originally joined for exercise and an aerobic workout.

"This is pretty non-aggressive. The university discourages too much fighting."

The participants agree with Graves in that this martial art is a mental as well as physical thing.

"As you go through different ranks, it goes from defending and learning to fight, then to conditioning the body," Mark Bozenhard, a PSU graduate, said. "I am doing things I couldn't do before. After a while it becomes mental."

"The mind controls the body, so the mental aspect is very important," Freeman said.

"The latin phrase 'healthy



Jen CoMn/Photo Coordinator
HIIYAAHHI: President of the Martial Arts Club, Erik Marshall and Diane Hubert practice together.

mind and healthy body' really applies to this class," Dan Sanza (sophomore-biology) said.

Graves summed up the experience of the class as, "I teach that the body is a vehicle which must be taken care of."

"I had felt pretty helpless as a

woman," Freeman said. "It has grown into a self-defense experience."

Sensei Graves said sometimes people come in expecting to go out and fight.

"We usually get some tough guys who want to come to fight, but that's not it," Graves said.

Students talk about their sex lives

'Queer Talk'

by Bridgette Jesek
Collegian Staff

Imagine you are having a normal date with the someone you are very attracted to. The evening is going incredibly well.

"You're holding hands, showing that you like each other and everything is great. You look at your friends and you want to introduce them but...you can't!"

Becky Durkin opened Monday evening's lecture, "Queer Talk," with this exercise to emphasize how hard it is not to be how you want to be.

Durkin was joined by six other panelists who were also Behrend students. They were asked to respond to questions about their first encounter with their own sexuality.

All agreed that their sexuality hit them in the grade school years. One even as early as kindergarten.

Surprisingly enough, these answers matched those of the second set of panelists who found their sexuality at about the same age, but they found different attractions than the first set of panelists.

This second group openly disclosed their sexual preference to be homosexual.

As similar as the findings of their discovery of sexuality, the panels agreed on the definition of "normal sex" as being "something that is right for me or something that I make the decision to do."

The homosexual group of panelists were also asked if they ever had a heterosexual relationship. Most of them did, but as one panelist said, "I was just pretending."

The remaining panelists followed his response and said that it only confirmed their feelings for the same sex.

They also pointed out that no one really pulled them aside and told them that being gay was wrong but that it was learned through society. For example you never see two men holding hands on TV.

One of the touchier subjects that came up in the discussion was the proposed question, "Is it fair to raise children between two gay parents?"

Many of the homosexuals said that they wanted to have children and asked why any child should not be raised with love.

"If we take children away from gay parents, we should take children away from poor parents or disabled parents," one panelist said. "Where will it end?"

Bringing the discussion to one final point was Durkin's comment about the feeling of the group, whether gay or straight, "It's not fair to let your kids live in ignorance."

Measles Alert

The Erie County Department of Health informed the Health and Wellness Center that last weekend Rutgers University in New Jersey confirmed that there is a measles outbreak on their campus. In view of the geographic proximity of New Jersey to Pennsylvania and the high possibility that Pennsylvania colleges were on spring break during the same period, we are on alert to closely evaluate any rash type illness for possible measles.

The symptoms of measles are: (1) generalized rash lasting three or more days; this rash usually begins on the face and then spreads all over the body, (2) fever greater than or equal to 101 degrees Fahrenheit, and (3) cough, runny nose, or irritated eyes.

Currently the Center for Disease Control and the Erie County Department of Health recommend that all persons under the age of 37 receive two measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccines.

For further information or questions, please call the Health and Wellness Center at x6217.