

Summer 2008

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# Inner Strength

## now

A *Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts* PUBLICATION  
FULFILLING THE NEED FOR PERSONAL SAFETY & WELLNESS

*Toughness exemplified: Thomasina Robinson, at 68, refuses to give in to her severely arthritic knees and continues to experience improvement.*

## Unusual Toughness

There are those who go through life and see everything as a struggle. Regardless of the real difficulty, any inconvenience becomes a problem. Handling anything outside of the average day, to some, is traumatic. Be it the need to climb the stairs at the mall because an escalator isn't working, or having to change a tire at the most inconvenient time, they complain and moan through the whole process. Others may relish the different challenges that life brings. They step up when things get tough rather than

crumble. "It is what it is and I'll do what I can" is a healthy motto of the tough.

### **Handling adversity**

How you handle unexpected interruptions to your plans for the day says a lot about your ability to respond to adversity. Do you get all flustered and lose yourself, focusing on the inconvenience, or do you maintain your center and deal with the situation to the best of your ability?

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## What Others Think

Why are most of us so concerned with the opinions of others? How many choose careers or make decisions based on how you think it looks to others or the prestige it brings? True maturity and wisdom is shown in how we live our lives. We tend to make so many things matter that really don't in the grand scheme. The more importance we give to petty things, including the opinions of others, the further removed we become from who we really are.

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# Toughness



If looks could kill.

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A physical attack happens just like that in many cases. You're distracted, and the next thing you know you're in the middle of a crime, or you awaken in the hospital, or worse - you've just become a statistic. Expect the unexpected is an important trait of a true martial artist. The journey of the martial arts student parallels life itself. And the best students learn through their practice how to respond to life's

many challenges. Adversity is a part of life, and those who learn to handle it will always be better prepared than those who do not.

## Our cover girls

The first three issues of this newsletter have featured three exceptional women on the cover: Charlene Brewer (May '08), Mindy Greenfield (June '08), and this month's Thomasina Robinson. These are not women of great physical strength, these are women

with great *inner strength*, who are learning and training in the complete art of Ba Gua Zhang. This includes the vigorous workouts of the Kung Fu class and the mentally challenging, deeper strengthening of the slower Chi Kung (Qi Gong) class.

They don't make excuses, they make progress.

## No stress? No strength

There is no way to develop

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***“During my first year, through rigorous practice and hard work, I was able to progress... My knees became progressively better.”***

# Commitment To Succeed

When I first started, I couldn't fully participate because of the condition of my knees which were stiff and arthritic. During my first year, through rigorous practice and hard work, I was able to progress. I attended the Qi Gong class at least three times a week. My knees became progressively better. For two years I practiced Qi

Gong. Shifu recommends that we should practice both the slow and fast sides of the art, so I now also practice Kung Fu.

Through my strenuous practice and commitment to succeed, my knees continue to improve. I have also begun acupuncture treatments. Although I am young at heart, I will be 68 this summer. Normally, the arthritis

might have taken over, however, it has mostly been controlled. I attribute this success to my work at the Blue Dragon School.

P.S.— I have studied Tae Kwon Do for 10 years, Tai Chi Chuan on and off for 10 years, and Capoeira for 8 years. I got the ultimate satisfaction and totally enjoy Ba Gua Zhang at the Blue Dragon School.  
—Thomasina Robinson

# What Others Think



Just do your thing.

*(Continued from page 1)*

People are so entwined in their own lives and perceived issues that they really don't care about you or what you're doing nearly as much as you think. We make these things a big deal all by ourselves,

and suffer unnecessarily for it.

The highest goal of the practice of martial arts is in recognizing the illusion of who we think we are and breaking that down so we can move closer towards the Higher Self, or who we really are. There is no hierarchy of importance, only

One, or the other. There is peace, or there is suffering. Regardless of the circumstances, life can be fully experienced for what it really is, rather than what we think it is, once every thought, feeling, and action reflects this Truth.

# Q&A

**Q: How do I find the motivation to practice when it just isn't there?**

A: Remember when you first thought about learning martial arts? What was it that got you excited? What did you hope to get out of the practice? We must each find our own reason, a purpose, for where we decide to put our time and ef-

fort. Without this reason, motivation will be short lived. Anyone I've ever known in the martial arts has at one time or another considered quitting. This is nothing new or out of the ordinary. What is extraordinary is when a person sticks to something, through all the trials and tribulations, and continues to move forward. Find your reason to practice: Is it to be fully confident that you can handle a physical threat to

you or a loved-one? Is it to stay in great shape, to look and feel your very best, even into your 50s, 60s, 70s and beyond? How about the challenge of overcoming personal limitations, becoming mentally stronger and better prepared to handle adversity? Or maybe you'd like to conquer your inner demons and experience inner peace? Get clear on your "why" and the passion will follow. The decision is yours.



**"Wheresoever  
you go,  
go with all your  
heart."  
Confucius**

## Toughness

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strength, be it physically, mentally, or emotionally, without some form of stress or resistance.

Take it easy, lay around, be lazy, and both your body and mind will deteriorate. Use it or lose it.

Our training is all about that. Gradually we can hold stances a

little longer and more perfectly. Movements that were difficult become easier over time. What seemed impossible for you to withstand or accomplish at one time is now in your past as you move on to newer challenges. That is progress. That is growth. It doesn't happen overnight. Through this process inner strength and toughness become

a part of you.

### Real confidence

Confidence doesn't come from avoidance. We can talk about confidence and say we're confident until we're blue in the face, but the only real confidence come from experience. Tougher experiences lead to a tougher, more emotionally stable, person.

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## updates

### The Surprise? Our First Annual Kung Fu & Qi Gong Retreat:

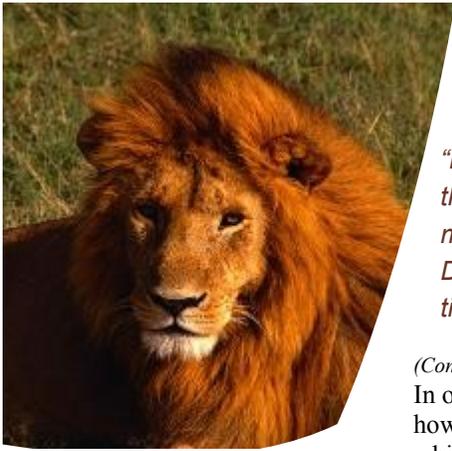
This September 19-21, 2008, (Fri. to Sun.) we're going to have our first ever Kung Fu & Qi Gong Fall Retreat to be held on the beautiful Nichecronk Lake at Camp Speers-Eljabar YMCA in Dingmans Ferry, PA.

Expect an experience unlike any you've had before! Lots of meditation in nature and Qi Gong practice. Plus, enhance your knowledge and experience of Chinese martial arts with a taste of Ba Gua Zhang's sister arts: *Xing Yi Quan* (Hsing I Chuan) "Shape The Mind Boxing" and *Tai Ji Quan* (Tai Chi) the "Grand Ultimate Fist". Training will include some Tai Chi Short Form and partner drills like the famous *Tui Shou*

"Pushing Hands" of Tai Chi and *Wuxing Dui Da* "Five Elements Matching Set" of Xing Yi. The Fall Retreat is all-inclusive (meals, room and board). More details coming. Call or email for more information.

**First Annual Kung Fu & Qi Gong Fall Retreat**  
For more info Call 201-385-3130 or email  
[ms.moschetto@BlueDragonKungFu.com](mailto:ms.moschetto@BlueDragonKungFu.com)

**Attention Blue Dragon School Students**  
Is your martial arts practice positively impacting your everyday life? Have a story or experience to tell? Others could benefit so help spread the word! Email a few sentences or paragraphs to [isa@BlueDragonKungFu.com](mailto:isa@BlueDragonKungFu.com)



# Toughness

*“Hold that stance a little longer. Allow yourself to feel the burn as your muscles learn about the new demands you’re asking of them. During meditation, stay still a few more seconds, letting go of that urge to move...”*

*(Continued from page 3)*

In our practice we can learn how to deal with a struggle while still maintaining an inner calm—a relaxed and focused state of mind. Hold that stance a little longer. Allow yourself to feel the burn as your muscles learn about the new demands you’re asking of them. During meditation, stay still a few more seconds, letting go of that urge to move, scratch an itch, or simply

give up. A few more seconds. Then a few more. This is how we learn to be tough. “I can” rather than “I can’t.”

**“Toughness is a choice during any challenge.”**

Shifu Ahles

Suck it up and continue forward. It’s all we can do, other than making everything in life a big deal and striving for nothing more than more convenience. Convenience, though enjoyable, makes us weaker. Take the extra time to pay attention. Try a little harder consistently. Toughness is a choice during any challenge.

**“Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.”**  
Abraham Lincoln

Visit us on the web at: [www.BlueDragonKungFu.com](http://www.BlueDragonKungFu.com)

# Our Philosophy

**We believe that real martial arts were designed to stop the fighting, both within and without.**

**Not for violence, but for peace.**

**Not to beat down, but to build up.**

**Not to compete, but to work together for understanding.**

**Not for tournaments and trophies, but for discipline and respect.**

**To master the mind, by training the body.**



## Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts

53 S. Washington Avenue  
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

“ There would be a large void in my life without the Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts. I would miss the hard training, the expert tutelage of Shifu Ahles and the friendships that have been created with some of the other students. Attending class always has a positive affect on me no matter how tired I am or how difficult my day has been. Because of the training I have become stronger, healthier and fitter. How can I argue with that? With the meditation and the hard training I have become more productive at work and perform at a much higher and calmer level. Also, my wife Jennifer has seen a positive change in my duties as a husband and a father. ”  
**Gerry Picardi, Saddle Brook, age 48**

**Have a friend or family member interested in trying a Free Introductory Lesson? Let us know.**  
Call 201-385-3130

# events

## **Ch'iang Shan Pa Kua Chang Summer Training Camp:**

June 11 - 15 2008 we had a new record showing from NJ—36! We’re very proud of our students’ attitudes and efforts at camp. Blue Dragon students have a very positive reputation in the Ch’iang Shan Pa Kua Chang Association, worldwide.

## **Bergenfield Family Fun Day Kung Fu & Chi Kung Demonstration:**

The Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts was invited to demonstrate at Memorial Park in Bergenfield, NJ on Sunday, June 22, 2008. With thunderstorms in the forecast all day and a torrential downpour nearly canceling the whole thing, the skies opened up and the sun was blazing just in time for a wonderful event. We were pushed back an hour but the

students hung in there and gave it their very best. Feedback was very positive and we were even invited to do another in July (see below). All ages, genders, sizes, and abilities were represented by the Blue Dragon students. Mr. James O’Leary, Ms. Suzanne Moschetto, and Shifu Ahles each showed what consistent effort over time can accomplish with their solo performances.

**Next Kung Fu & Chi Kung Demonstration:** We’re invited to demonstrate at the Little League Family Fun Day in Memorial Park Sat., July 26, 2008. Call for time and more info.

**For Our Big Surprise Being Planned For This Fall, See “Updates” Inside!**