

Youth

Area sixth-grader gets kicks from discipline of martial arts

By Rob Cullivan

Kids do a lot of things for kicks, whether it's shooting baskets, skateboarding in a neighborhood school lot or blasting apart alien space-ships at the local video arcade. But ask Dena Alberti, a sixth-grader at St. Theodore's School in Rochester, what she does for excitement, and she may say that Kicks are for kids — especially if they involve roundhouses and reverse punches.

The 11-year-old Gates resident spends four afternoons a week at Jennings Karate Academy at the Westgate Plaza in Chili. Although she stands only waist-high to her instructor, Curt Sawyer, she's well on her way to being head and shoulders above her peers in the Japanese art of self-defense.

"She's the top of the class as far as enthusiasm and dedication goes," Sawyer said. "She's very serious. I'm sure she's going to be a great black belt someday."

Sawyer has plenty of reasons to be confident. Last Nov. 12, Alberti added the sixth to a series of trophies she has won since she first started taking karate two and a half years ago. Competing against other Jennings students from around Monroe County in a tournament at the Rochester Institute of Technology, she took the second-place trophy for sparring in her division, which was made up of students whose ages ranged from nine to 11. She defeated three other students, including a boy who was a black belt. Alberti wears a brown belt which is one step below a black belt, but said she was not scared

when she competed against the boy.

Such victories don't come easily, Alberti said, noting that it takes many hours of practice to get to her level. "You've got to be really interested in it," she said. "You can't just fool around." Her motivations sound as serious as her commitment. It wasn't the glamorous fist-cuffs of a Bruce Lee that inspired her to take up the discipline. Her reasons were more practical — exercise and self-defense. Besides, "the movies show you all the fancy things," she noted. "It's just not like that in real life."

Before her daughter attended Jennings, Karen Alberti wanted to know if in real life girls take karate. Fortunately, when they went to Jennings for the first time, Sawyer answered affirmatively, and Karen now hopes her daughter will keep at karate for the rest of her life.

If she does, she'll serve as an example to girls and women who, according to Sawyer, are studying karate in increasing numbers. Currently, Alberti is using skills to assist a beginners' class on Mondays and Thursdays. She also plans to keep competing, and eventually she hopes to become an instructor herself.

Her enthusiasm for learning all she can about karate includes a love of the Japanese terms used in her classes, a terminology she wants to become more familiar with as time goes on. Ultimately, she'd like to travel to Japan. If she does though, she may fly there herself, since her main ambition is to become an airplane pilot. Until then, Alberti will have her feet on the ground, or perhaps kicking a few feet above it.



Linda Dow Hayes, Courier-Journal

Dena Alberti, a sixth-grader at St. Theodore's, holds a brown belt in karate. She demonstrates a roundhouse kick with the help of sensei Curt Sawyer.

By Amy Wheeler

Our Lady of Mercy High School

I was one hour shy of age sixteen a few months ago when I received a ticket to FREEDOM. I passed my road test and — hold the applause — am now a full-fledged driver.

I'll never forget my maiden voyage to the local Big M for milk and cereal. It was breathtaking in more than a positive way. With Dad's sincere words in the back of my mind, whispering, "Don't trust anyone to do the right thing, Amy!" I set out on my journey.

He was right. I used to laugh out loud at his lessons on defensive driving — Humph. Be REAL, Dad ...

However, my eventful trip to the store and every subsequent trip has proved him right.

I took driver education at school, where I diligently sat for hours watching filmstrips, examining diagrams, reading chapters and occasionally dozing off for a minute or ten. It was a driving experience with Mr. Instructor that taught me how differently the road looks from the driver's side, with fellow drivers occupying the road — drivers who didn't want to be in front of, behind, next to, or anywhere near a vehicle with that orange safety sign proclaiming the student's inexperience and lack of skill.

The initiation into the real world of the "fast lane" was cruel and insensitive. Everything I had learned from my teachers and from observing other drivers was buckled tight into my mind, but a surprise awaited me.

People roll through stop signs, pass on solid lines, pass on double solid lines. People drive 30 miles per hour and 30 miles an hour over the speed limit — no matter how fast you're going, it's just not fast enough. People ignore yield signs, take the "It's my turn!" approach at

Speaking Out

four-way stops no matter whose turn it really is, ignore their directional signals or leave them blinking even when they're not planning on turning within the next ten-mile stretch, drive recklessly, drive intoxicated, ignore the little yellow-and-white lines painted on the pavement that tell them which lane will take them where (yes, it is a logical system), cut each other off on the expressway, tailgate, tailgate with their brights on, take up four parking spaces with one car ... The list never ends.

I know mistakes happen. The world is an imperfect place, and, yes, it takes excellent driving to be a perfect driver. But when teenagers learn to drive the right way and finally get on the road with adults who seem to have forgotten what they learned, it's a little discouraging and extremely frightening. It's hard enough to have to drive for yourself, but when you have to drive for everyone else, it makes your destination take second priority to getting there in one piece.

I think the next time an adult criticizes teen drivers, he or she had better reevaluate his or her own ability as well. This morning I read a quote on the tag on my tea bag which put it clearly: "Drive like your child is in the next car." I might be.

And I eat my words. My license is a far cry from a ticket to freedom. It is the biggest responsibility I have ever had to put in my own two hands.

Nazareth Academy What are the advantages for you in attending an all-girls school?

DONNA JENKINS, Junior

One of the benefits of attending an all-women's school is the ability to be yourself — not just what society stereotypes us with being. We also can prove our leadership abilities instead of being followers of males. We can be our whole, true selves.



TINA CRANDALL, Junior

Attending an all women's school is probably the best choice I've ever made. There is less competition, more individualism and more attention from the teachers. You don't have to feel like you must be one of the crowd and just like everyone else. You can be yourself.



VONETTA JOHNSON, Junior

Attending an all-women's school gives women a chance at being the best they can be in specific subjects such as math and science. There is no male-female competition, which can allow men to dominate over women. Women can concentrate more on their work with fewer distractions.



As Teens See It

MAUREEN DEVINE, Junior

I feel there are many advantages in attending an all-girls high school. It allows a girl to grow and develop freely without the competition of boys. Because it is a single-sex school, it is possible to be yourself. Academically it is also an advantage because statistics prove that women score higher on tests in a school for women. Ideas and topics not talked about in a co-ed school are more easily discussed in an all-women's school.



KIM EDWARDS, Senior

There are many benefits in attending an all-women's school. Being here the past four years has taught me so much about myself, others and my future. I think I learned more here than if I went anywhere else. I received more attention from the teachers. I was accepted not only because I am me, but because I am a woman.



'He was lost and is found'

By Mick Conway
NC News Service

Not all stories of chemical dependency have happy endings. I recently wrote a story about a young man whose chemical dependency was treated successfully. But, although alcoholism and drug addiction are among the most treatable of diseases, there are individuals whose addictions continue in spite of heroic efforts to arrest them.

A young man I'll call Jim, from an upper middle-class family, is experiencing such an addiction.

When he was in high school, Jim started drinking beer with his friends. Although his parents warned him not to drink because he was not of legal age to do so, he defied their advice and continued to drink beer.

They had a deeper fear which they wisely shared with Jim. His grandfather had been al-

Coming of Age

coholic, and although he did find sobriety in his later years, a great deal of suffering had taken place in his life because of his alcoholism.

Jim responded angrily by suggesting to his parents that they were overreacting, saying that they thought everybody who drank was an alcoholic.

The allegation was untrue, of course, and the ensuing family argument ended in an unhappy deadlock.

As Jim's high school years progressed, he

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HOUSE OF GUITARS

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We received 16 correct entries identifying Rick Springfield as the singer who had the 1981 hit "Jessie's Girl."



The winner was Jessica Norton of Fairport

MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:

What group did the Wilson Brothers form in 1961?

A:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip Code _____
School _____

Rules:

Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.

If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at The House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.

All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal
Music Trivia
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