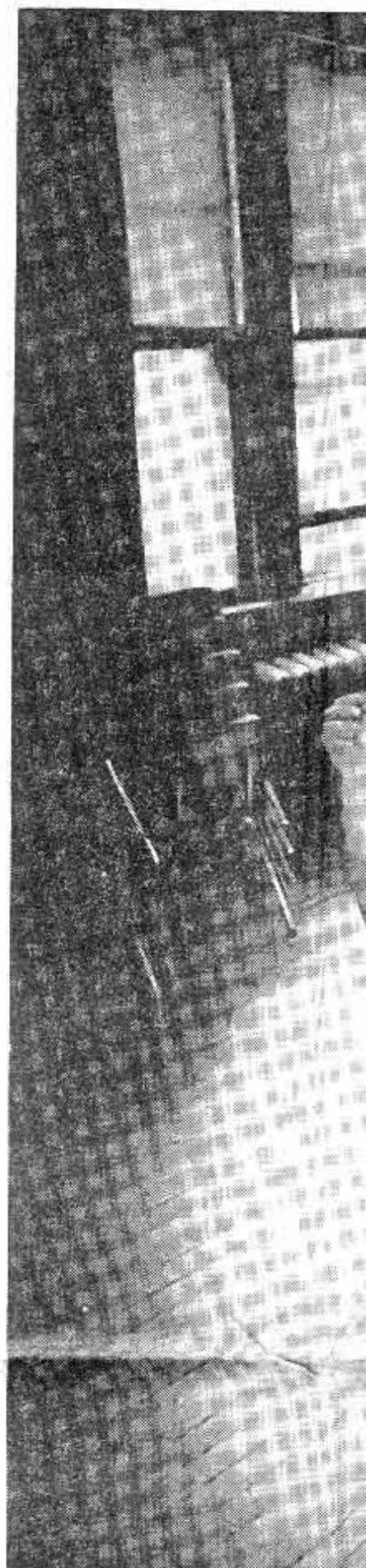


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Tom Murray, owner of Diamond State Tae Kwon-Do in Hockessin, helps Erica Domingo, 5, to execute a kick.

Staff photo by Donaghey Brown



Melissa Smallbrook, a ballet studio director of the New Dance Studio

Artistic training

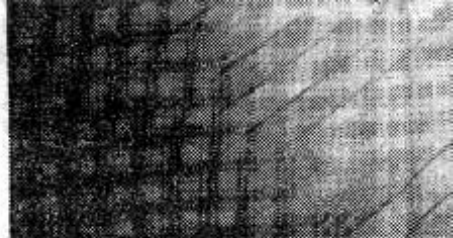
Martial arts proceh

Ballet up



Staff photo by Donaghey Brown

Tom Murray, owner of Diamond State Tae Kwon-Do in Hockessin, helps Erica Domingo, 5, to execute a kick.



Melissa Smallbrook, a ballet studio director of the New Dance Studio in...

Artistic training

Martial arts preach self-control, defense

Ballet up for prope

By CAROL CHILD

Special to the Sunday News Journal

STUDENTS OF the martial arts say the practice may not be what you think it is. "It's artistic rather than self-defensive," says Tom Murray, owner of Diamond State Tae Kwon-Do in Hockessin and a third-degree black belt.

"It's a good way to appreciate life, to learn about yourself and others. If you learn the art properly, self-defense is the last thing that will happen."

"It is a technique disciplined by time and effort," says Charlie Harb, a second-degree black belt and senior student of Master Masaharu Sakimukai at Chintokan Karate-Do in Wilmington.

"Fighters don't stay with it. They take up boxing or guns instead. The master teaches 'guard against impetuous courage. You have nothing to prove.' When you have confidence, you are not easily shaken.

If attacked, you don't attack. You end it."

Self-defense is, however, one of the reasons to take up one of the martial arts. "I had just gotten a divorce," says Murray's wife, Janis, a first-degree black belt. "And I thought, 'What if someone attacked me?' So I decided to learn a self-defense technique. My self-image was low. But now I've learned respect for myself and others."

If you are contemplating studying one of the martial arts, finding the right studio and style might prove an exercise in time and patience. But it is important, since improper instruction can injure you mentally as well as physically.

When selecting a studio, check the instruc-

tor's qualifications. "The instructor should be certified," says Doug Stewart, a first-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and certified instructor at ATA Fitness Center in Newark. Stewart says national and international organizations operate certification camps where instructors undergo a written test and a physical drill one week each year.

Pat Catuto, a fourth-degree black belt in Kenpo karate and owner of American Karate in Wilmington and Newark, advises, "Be sure the studio has the proper instructional tools, such as targets and practice pads. Watch how classes are run. Look for both discipline and fun."

Perhaps most important is to choose a style that suits you. "Look at the art itself," says James Hall, who has earned black belts in several of the martial arts and teaches Shotokan karate at his Hall School of Martial Arts in Wilmington. "Diagnose the art."

Hall explains that among the styles, although the katas (stances) may be the same, the application and

the sequence of movements within each may differ. Some styles use all parts of the body, others only specific parts. Some combine circular and linear movements, while others use one or the other. Kenpo karate, originating in China, is the root of all other martial arts.

If you are a martial arts novice, you may need some help sorting out the kinds of disciplines. Here is a brief explanation of some of the styles.

There are two schools: External, which comes from the Shao-Lin Temple, and Internal, from Wu-Tang Mountain. Karate, the choice of

A second-degree black belt instructor says fighters don't stay with karate. They take up boxing or guns instead.

By CAROL CHILD

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TWO LONG ROWS of lithe bodies in conservative, solid-color leotards and tights, hair pinned up on the backs of their heads, move regally — one behind the other — lining the barre along the mirrored wall of the large, high-ceilinged room. Silence. You could hear a hairpin drop.

"Preparation . . . and . . . one . . ." says the teacher. The pianist begins a sweet, measured Schubert adagio. In unison the bodies bend their knees in *plies*, and another classical ballet class for youths begins.

Whether you're interested in having your child learn ballet for enjoyment or as a possible career, it is important to choose a studio that will give your child proper training. Improper ballet training can cause permanent physical injury and damage your child's outlook on life or the art of ballet. It might also rob your child's chances for a professional career.

Consider studying ballet with your child. Many studios offer adult classes.

Even "if the children don't go on to become ballerinas," says Rita Katz Farrell, teacher at the American School of the Dance in Wilmington, "they will gain an understanding and knowing audience that will care enough to insist that their performance be fine."

If you don't know a plie from a pirouette, can you find a good teacher for your child? First, realize that you might have to look a little farther than just down the street.

Even if your child doesn't go on to become a ballerina, they will gain an understanding and knowing audience that will care enough to insist that their performance be fine.

Martial arts

• Continued from H1

Wu-Tang Mountain. Karate, the choice of students who like to compete, was recently accepted into the Olympics and is of both schools.

The External school teaches a "hard" style. The movements involve strength, speed and power to strike the opponent off-center, and emphasizes the hands and feet, employing circular and/or linear movements. Included in the External school are:

Chintokan karate: "The tradition extends from the Samurai class," says Harb. "You are taught how to fight and behave in the world." At Chintokan Karate-Do school, you learn from the source, Master Sakimukai, a seventh-degree Japanese instructor. Harb says Sakimukai studied Japanese dance, even though it is no longer a traditional requirement of Samurai training, and he occasionally performs the karate katas mixed with a dance he created to music.

Shotokan karate: James Hall, a fifth-degree black belt, whom "Karate Illustrated" recently rated the No. 1 fighter on the East Coast and No. 3 in the United States, says Shotokan karate, an evolved form of Kenpo, is a hard style but taught as a soft style.

Tae Kwon Do: Originating in Korea, "it is a more modern fighting style," Tom Murray explains. "The tenets are 'courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit.' Tae Kwon Do is a growing rather than a static art. With Tae Kwon Do, the technique is constantly refined; there is change within continuity."

The Internal school, says Alan Tillotson, T'ai Chi instructor and owner of Twin Willows T'ai Chi in Cedarcrest, "teaches soft style: relaxation, flexibility, coordination, development of a serene, calm attitude, meditation — to learn how to feel and be sensitive to the inside of your body."

Among the styles in the Internal school are:

T'ai Chi: "T'ai Chi uses circular, twisting motions coupled with relaxed breathing, thus increasing the blood supply and strengthening

joints by softening and strengthening the connective tissue, the ligaments and tendons," says Tillotson. "It takes nine months to a year to learn the sequence of the 108 complex forms [with poetic names like "embrace the tiger" and "the stork spreads its wings"] and 23 minutes to execute them in slow motion from beginning to end. Learning the 400 individual movements equals a black belt in Tae Kwon Do.

"T'ai Chi teaches you to neutralize an attacking energy, to move gently out of the way, to use the opponent's energy against him in counterattack by finding out where he's off-balance and then pushing him away. This gets him out of your space. It takes four ounces to deflect 1000 pounds of force," says Tillotson, who also has a master's degree in Nepalese herbal medicine.

"T'ai Chi requires no special age or physical skills. With T'ai Chi you improve with age. So at age 60 or 65 you are better. Your movements are relaxed, integrated, flowing, beautiful. The end result is that you grow older more slowly.

"In the advanced forms of T'ai Chi, two people work together pushing hands [neutralizing], and you work with weapons: double-edged sword, broad sword and spears. It is beautiful acrobatic, jumping, leaping."

Kenpo karate: This style uses all parts of the body and circular and linear movements. Sue Thomas, a first-degree black belt, has been studying ballet for 20 years and teaches at Anna Marie's Dance Studio in North Wilmington. Thomas, Catuto's wife, began her study of Kenpo karate because she wanted to learn the Oriental way of life and because she likes to compete.

"Kenpo is softer, more for women," she says. "There are lots of circular moves and pretty kicks." Thomas says Kenpo karate and ballet work well together. Ballet gives her rhythm, coordination and timing and helps her with balance and kicks. Learning the dance combinations in turn helps her with the karate forms in which she competes.

"There is more stretching in dance class," says Thomas. "In the martial arts you have to do more of the stretching on your own."