

INTERNATIONAL KARATE CONNECTION ASSOCIATION NEWS



NEWSLETTER #6

1st QUARTER 1996

"Hey Dummy!"

Not politically correct, but in this case perfectly applicable. We're referring of course to the **Life Size Dummy** you work with. Did you say you don't have one? **You should**, absolutely and positively.

First of all, it gives you life-like targets to strike and to do it with power. It lets you know if you've really hit the target or missed. And if you missed, by how much.

When we learn the basics of the Art, we learn them in the air, not striking anything. We learn proper form, balance and all of the principles involved in accuracy, speed and power. In time you gain a rhythm and as you progress into the techniques your rhythm becomes smoother and more sophisticated. It's the way the Art is taught and always has been.



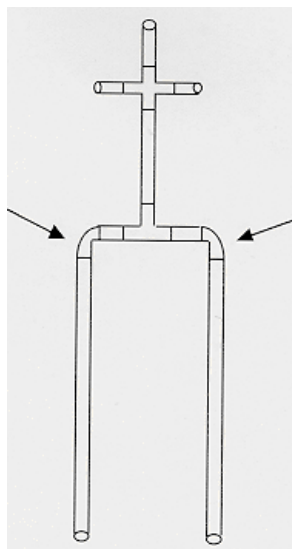
Remember the first time you took a combination you learned in the air and then tried to apply it to the body of your workout partner? Everything changed, didn't it? Suddenly most of the movements had to be altered from what and where you thought they were. But in time they smoothed out again and through disciplined, repetitious exercise you were eventually able to whiz through these movements with blinding speed. Naturally you couldn't make contact or you would be minus one workout partner. But it's still a good way to learn and perfect the movements.

Somewhere along the line you've got to hit something with resistance, something that stops the blow, something that lets you know if you're on target, something that disrupts the flow, something that challenges your balance. In other words, something that changes just about everything. But what? How'd you guess? A **Life-Size Dummy**. They're great and they don't hit back. Actually, that's the only drawback. However, you

can **make** them hit back if you put a person behind the dummy and he takes a swing at you so you are forced to block, which is the reason they were intentionally designed without arms.

Let me give you a little background on our dummy building history. The first full size dummy I built was somewhere back in the sixties. He was constructed of wood wrapped with old discarded clothes and bound with cord. He took a couple of days to build and lasted less than a couple of hours in the dojo. He was pathetic. His name was Frank N. Stein. Later, came Frankie the second. He was constructed out of galvanized pipe, wrapped with cut-up moving pads and again bound with cord. You have to remember, this was before duct tape was available. Frankie the second was screwed as tight as a couple of pipe wrenches could tighten a series of threads, but it didn't take the "animals" at the dojo long to loosen him beyond usefulness. He fell apart and died. Then came "Crazy George", dummy number three. Actually Crazy George our student came first, then dummy number three, who picked up the name for the same reasons the student did. You couldn't seem to hurt either one of them. Even at that, Crazy George the dummy didn't last nearly as long as Crazy George the student, even though he was welded at the joints. The dummy that is, not the student. Crazy George the student was welded somewhere between reality and a spinning heel kick. One of Ed Parker's old Black Belts, Randy Steator, kicked Crazy George, the dummy, so hard he broke one of the welds in the chest. The same kick to Crazy George, the student, would probably have gotten a grin out of him.

After Crazy George (the dummy) was killed not much happened in dummy building until PVC pipe and duct tape came along. With glue that literally welds the joints it became feasible to try it again and enter Mr. Silverman. This dummy was finished so completely with duct tape he was totally silver, thus the name



If you recall from the Orange Belt Video we showed the PVC skeletal structure of the dummy we were using at that time. I looked about like the drawing to the left. There was a built-in flaw in this design where the arrows point. The hip joint couldn't take the tremendous torque put upon them by the kicks and eventually broke, each and every time.

There was another problem with the way the dummies were mounted on the plywood bases. Initially they were mounted permanently and there was no easy way to dismantle them for storage and they took up quite a bit of space. Thanks to the ingenuity of one of our students, we can now store several of them in a relatively small space.

We have also solved the problem with the flaw in the design of the hip joints. Figure #1 shows the new skeletal structure. You'll notice among other things that we are now mounting at the edge of the plywood base. This eliminates having to negotiate the edge of the three-quarter piece of plywood and the dummy is never going to fall forward anyway. There are other considerations for front mounting you'll see later. The real advantage in this design is having eliminated the use of a PVC elbow joint at the hips. Now the line runs straight up the legs, through the hips and into the torso. With the new mounting system we can also incorporate the use of galvanized pipe through that area.



Figure #2 shows the lower extremities wrapped as well as the head attached to the shoulder cross-member. We found if you wrap the entire torso before building the head, the only thing that will be holding it on is duct tape and eventually you'll tear it off and possibly break his neck, as we did. Notice also in figure #2 the pipes standing alongside his legs. This is the reinforcement system that screws into the flanges secured into the plywood base, the dummy is then slipped over these pipes.

For esthetic reasons you'll want to build the hips out a little further as we did after this photo was taken. Figure #3 shows the finished product with one more addition. We've made him four inches taller by slipping PVC spacers onto the pipe before we slipped him on. This way people of varying heights can use the same dummy.



Figure #4 is a close up of the kind of flange you'll be using for easy mounting and removal of the dummies.

Material-wise we have found that PVC is feasible and very practical, especially when it comes to price. As far as durability is concerned, we have been beating on this guy for some time now and he's holding up beautifully. The cost of putting a life-size dummy together made out of PVC, excluding the plywood base but including everything else; PVC, glue, flanges for the base, screws, nuts and washers for the flanges, the pipes for the mounting and about 3.2 miles of duct tape is very affordable. We've found that the best wrapping is used carpet. We got ours free from a local carpet store. They really have no use for it and just gave it to us. **But be advised...** a dummy made out of PVC **is** going to break! No matter what you do to reinforce him, in time, he's going to break and repairing them is no simple matter. We have found that when it does break it's best to throw it away and build a new one from scratch, saving the hardware of course. But there is an alternative.



Enter **ULTRA-MAN**. For a modest investment of time and money, depending on your resources and what kind of contacts you have, you can build what we call **ULTRA-MAN** (Figure 5.) He's .068 gauge, one and a quarter inch square tube steel, four-way welded at all joints, on twelve inch long pegs of one inch square tube steel, four-way welded on to a 9" x 26" quarter inch thick steel plate; with another plate drilled and tapped for 6 quarter-inch #18 hex head bolts. The second plate goes under a plywood base. He's clean, he's simple and above all he's virtually immortal. This guy is never going away. He'll be here long after we're gone.

ULTRA-MAN has more weight than a PVC dummy and by using a mounting peg one quarter inch smaller than the square tube you used for the internal structure, you'll get just the right amount of movement

when you strike him. You don't want him as the rock of Gibraltar. The material and dimensions we used are:

- Two – 54 ½" vertical lengths of 1 ¼" square steel tube
- Two – 8" horizontal lengths of 11 ¼" square steel tube
- One – 7" neck and head piece of 1 ¼" square steel tube

For mounting:

- Two – 12" vertical lengths of 1" square or circular steel tube
- Two – 9" x 24" x ¼" steel plate
- One – 4 X 4 sheet ¾" plywood

Drill the holes in the top plate larger than the ones on the bottom, which will be drilled and tapped to accommodate ¼" hex head bolts. To determine the length of the bolts you will have to measure the thickness of your plywood base plus the steel plate. For added strength, we doubled our plywood base thickness to 1 ½". Drill the holes in your plywood base much larger than the holes in the steel or you'll go crazy trying to line them up. We made them ¾" and they still just narrowly worked. You can tighten the plates, using the bolts, to eliminate any unwanted movement between them.

The above dimensions will build a dummy approximately 5' 9" tall when mounted on a double ¾" plywood base. You can also use the same height adjustment system described earlier by having a series of 1 ¼" square tube cut for spacers. In the final wrap it's a good idea to incorporate a layer of foam over the striking surfaces. Your students will thank you and you will thank yourself.

Figure #6 shows how we built the hips and shoulders out and established the head before he was filled in and the face was built on. The photo on page one shows all four



respond to them. I have made bold and underlined key words within certain passages in your letter and will respond to each as an individual item.

Item #1
THE RING

Good idea, we'll look into it.

Item #2
IMPRESSIVE

The man was impressed by the tapes because he saw a dedication to detail within the basics, that it's doubtful he saw even while learning them himself. I don't say this to demean his background. It's simply a sad fact that in most schools the head instructor does not teach the basics to the new students. That duty is turned over to a lower belt because most Head Instructors find it beneath their status and boring. The theory is, the more advanced students require the most advanced teacher. Nothing could be further from the truth. The most important phase of a student's Martial Arts training is the foundation and a Blue Belt can't give it to them, although in many schools it's delegated to an even lower ranked person. I have personally walked into dojos and seen a purple belt teaching basics, while the head instructor sat in the office reading the latest issue of Black Belt magazine. It's commendable to give your students the opportunity to learn by teaching, but great care must be taken as to how it's done and turning low ranked students loose on beginners is not the way. Furthermore, a practice of that naturally dilutes a system after just a couple of generations of the **blind leading the blind**, even if eventually the head of a school does perform that task himself.

I had the advantage and privilege of learning the basics directly from Ed Parker himself and even as early as that was, I was among the **last** to learn them from the **source**. When Mr. Parker asked me to begin teaching, he confided in me that he could no longer teach beginners. I told him, "I enjoy teaching beginners the most, because that's where it all really happens." He said, "I'm glad you feel that way chuck, but you won't for long, nobody does." **So help me**, those were his exact words and he was wrong. I still feel that way about the basics, to this day. I feel it most when I have to take a Black Belt back to the basics and re-teach him because someone taught someone, who taught someone else, who taught his instructor, what had been learned from some Purple belt in the first place; what a wonderful legacy.

Item #3
Katas

What was the original purpose of katas, forms or sets? Kenpo Forms were created for the purpose of remembering and being able to practice your basics and techniques in a solitary environment.

In the late fifties and early sixties the only **Forms** that existed (Kata is a Japanese word which was not used in Kenpo at that time) were: form One, Form Two, Form Three, the Finger Poke Set and the Black Belt Set. You'll notice I didn't specify Long or Short. There were no Long forms at that time and there was only a small handful of techniques, almost half of which were escapes, and basics. **We had basics** and we did them until they were so ingrained into the fiber

added since that first few dozen original techniques, as were taught to those first students. We made very, very few modifications to the basics themselves, they stood almost entirely intact, as taught to me by Ed Parker.

There are only so many **principles** applicable in Kenpo. There are only so many bodily **weapons** to be utilized. There are only so many **targets** to **strike**. There are only so many **angles** to consider. There is only so much **footwork** to employ. When you begin categorizing needs and requirements against movement, weapons and targets, considering distance and juxtaposition you begin seeing a pattern emerge. Techniques become shorter, because opponents cannot rationally be controlled beyond a reasonable point. Things that we learned and had taught, that were **forced** and not physically natural, were speedily and without ceremony discarded and the theory of borrowing emerged. By strategically applying all the principles to a limited number of techniques, which can be interwoven into the fabric of combat upon demand, we gain a compounded effect that becomes tenfold, with one-tenth the baggage to carry.

What we ended up with is **fifty-five techniques that employed all of the above and more**. Some concepts, from sources outside Kenpo, that we thought too important to be left out, were also included. The more important question here, is why anyone creating a system, they themselves have to rely upon and teach, would deliberately leave out anything of value. Believe me when I tell you, it's a lot easier to **include**, than to **exclude**.

The Challenge

We would like for anyone who genuinely feels the IKCA system is lacking to show us one **BLOCK**, one **STRIKE**, one **WEAPON**, one **TARGET**, one **ANGLE**, one **MANEUVER**, one **BASIC**, or one **PRINCIPLE**, that's being taught in any Kenpo school in the world **that is not included** in the IKCA system of KENPO KARATE. Of course that would require that they learn the system first, in order to make a competent judgment. You can't evaluate what you don't know, can you?

An Invitation

Take the Karate Connection Orange Belt test and see if you can do it with no corrections on your single move basics. If you are an Ed Parker Black Belt with documented certification, we will **EVALUATE** it and **RESPOND** to it, free of charge and with total confidentiality. You will find the test requirements on the Karate Connection Orange Belt tape.

Regarding the concept of cutting the system down, to make it workable, let's employ that old axiom, "Practice makes perfect." I think we can concede that finding time for personal practice is difficult. If you were to make time to practice all of the thirty-two techniques per belt level required to Black Belt, **three times each**. You would have done twenty six techniques more than if you had practiced the **entire IKCA system, ten times each**. Figures don't lie.

In conclusion, a question comes to mind. How come Mr. Parker, very shortly before his untimely demise, cut the requirements from 32 techniques per belt to 16 techniques per belt? **Were the winds of change once again sweeping across the Kenpo landscape?** We'll never know.

Item #5
THE MASTER FORM

Your friend conceded that he was impressed with the Master form. Thank him for us Keith, because what impressed him was the fact that he recognized, within the Master Form, Kenpo basics done with meticulous attention to detail. The techniques, while not known by him, still had a total familiarity and fit into a perfect Kenpo environment because of those basics and the principles concerning them.

Allow me to deviate for just a moment. Here's a short story about a lesson **we** learned concerning the basics, the Master Form, teaching by video and the system in general.

In the early days of our video experience a student from the east Coast wrote that he was a ranking Kenpo Black Belt who just wanted to cross-test. He said he didn't see the necessity of going through the entire system because it was all Kenpo and if he learned the Master form he would be getting the techniques at the same time, so why not just learn that and perform it to show his proficiency? At the time the request sounded reasonable to us, so we said fine. The man obviously skipped our basics, feeling them unnecessary and went directly to the techniques and the form. When we viewed his performance we were shocked. What we saw was a man without the slightest suggestion of a stance, doing a system based on not only a stance, but a **strong stance**. Without a basic stance you cannot possibly have any semblance of a **stance change** and without a stance change there is no such thing as **rotational force**, which is one of our most employed sources of power. His kicks were all done on a stiff, straight supporting leg with virtually no cock, re-cock or plant, he just fell forward onto his kicking leg throwing his face into the action, every time. Furthermore his kicks slapped with the top of the foot instead of penetrating with the ball, with no consideration to target. These were, by far, not **all** of the problems and this was, unequivocally, the most dismal over-all performance of the Master form we had seen. The only other performance that came close was another student, this time from the west coast, who didn't bother to ask if he could cross-test. He just shot his video of the Master form, sent it to us and requested his rank.

Our response to both of these men was the same. We told them they would have to start over, with the basics. In our video response we went over some of the problems which stemmed from the poor, to the complete lack of basics. Then we proceeded from there. It was a very difficult thing to have to do, because we instinctively knew what to expect. Nothing, and that's exactly what we got. No response at all. There have been a couple of other cases in which the results have been similar. These cases involved Black Belts from other styles and even two from Kenpo who did start from the beginning but became so disillusioned with the difference in requirements between their basics and ours that they decided to shine it on. Consequently, since those learning experiences, we have made it a hard and fast rule that we must see everything from the beginning to the end, from everyone. Nothing gets passed over.

We've had to reexamine our own expectations several times to make certain our requirements weren't too stringent. But now, we've been justified too many times to wonder. Our students have shown us, by their performances, that the balance is right. For some the "kitchen" really is "too hot" and they've had to get out. By-and-large, we've turned up the heat to just the right

degree, because we're producing **really hot students**, but there were bound to be a few to get **burned up**.

Item #6
RESPECT

Edmund K. Parker was one of the most highly respected men in the history of the Martial Arts in the United States, but not always. In the very beginning he was seriously criticized for "**Prostituting the Art**". Meaning, teaching it for money. At that time the only people teaching were doing so exclusively for close friends and family members. In 1959, when I began, all of Mr. Parker's students were asked to sign an oath that we would, in turn, teach what we were learning to members of our families and close personal friends only. Where would the Art be, had we been forced to honor that pledge?

If Mr. Parker and others of his time had not taken the Art public, we wouldn't be doing it today. It seemed reasonable at the time because it had always been so. Thinking has changed over this past four decades. The world has grown and shrunk at the same time. Technology has enhanced our way of life in too many ways to list and you can **buy** it. But **respect** is something that must be **earned** and that takes time. It's doubtful, if at this point in time, something as revolutionary as **teaching** by video, being **tested** by video and being **corrected** by video could have gained the respect of the Martial Arts community. In time, there's no doubt the Karate Connection will be hailed as the first in history to **teach** by "**Interactive Videocommunication**". Not quite as dramatic as going from "whore to hero" but the "Old Man" always did have a flair for drama.

Let's examine teaching for a moment. Here's how my dictionary defines the word **teach**:

1. To impart knowledge or skill to.
2. To provide knowledge of; instruct in.
3. To condition to a certain action or frame of mind.
4. To cause to learn by example or experience.
5. To advocate or preach.
6. To carry on instruction on a regular basis in.

That pretty well says it. That's just what we do in the Martial Arts isn't it? Now let's take a closer look at how it's applied to a Martial Art. How many ways can it be taught?

The first is one-on-one, which is probably the most exacting method there is. Next would be semi-private lessons, one instructor with a couple or a few students. More cost effective but less personal. Then of course comes with the most popular method of teaching, which is in a class. One instructor (with possible assistants) for many people. **We've done them all.**

We've taught private lessons, we've taught semi-private lessons and to be sure we've taught class upon class. We have seen private students who were wasting their time, as well as ours. Some never got it and never would, others whizzed through it. We have had semi-private students who had their co-student drop because they were getting it so quickly and their partner wasn't getting it at all. We have had champions and clowns in our classes. All hearing and seeing precisely the same thing with diametrically opposed results. Well, guess what? We've seen exactly the same thing teaching by video, except that we've found that video gives us a

dimension you don't have, in even the normal, one-on-one situation. We have **slow motion and exact repetition**. We can **analyze** the student's problems until we have a **exhaustive understanding** of it, before tailoring a correction for him. The student on the other hand, has an instructor who is absolutely tireless, repeating a move a thousand times without complaint. One who can be viewed in regular motion, slow motion, or even frame by frame.

How many professional sports can you think of where video isn't used to check performance? Baseball uses it from pitching to batting and everything in between. Tennis, from the serve to the volley. Golf? Of course. Let's not belabor it but there's not a professional skater, gymnast, bowler or anyone who truly wants to win, whose coaches haven't used video to analyze and correct performance. Recently, the defensive coaches in pro football began using video to show their guys how to enhance their performance or correct mistakes right during the game, while their offensive team is on the field.

If you think about it, the widespread use of video is actually coming late to the Martial Arts. We recognized its potential years ago but had to wait for technology to catch up with popular demand. All the Karate Connection did was take a technology that finally became available to the average household and employ it, to do what we had been doing right along. Which is:

1. **To impart knowledge or skill to.**
2. **To provide knowledge of; instruct in.**
3. **To condition to a certain action or frame of mind.**
4. **To cause to learn by example or experience.**
5. **To advocate or preach.**
6. **To carry on instruction on a regular basis in.**

Exactly, to teach, **but most important of all**, we took it one step further, the next **logical** step, **video correction**, making it **the complete tool** for doing all of the above. As we've said, countless times, "**A mistake left uncorrected, can only compound itself.**" So, if there are Martial Artists who haven't the foresight to recognize the future while it's becoming the past, it doesn't bother us. It just leaves them in the dust, while the Karate Connection roars past.

We'll argue the benefits, advantages and other positive aspects of interaction through video with anyone. Because now that we have the background and experience of doing it, for the length of time we have, we're not guessing. **We know**. There are negatives concerning anything in this world, as we admit there are, in our method of teaching. But experience has taught us, the positives outweigh the negatives ten to one and that's a ratio we can live with.

Item #7

THE NEWSLETTER

Your IKCA Newsletter is published quarterly; look for it in April, July, October and January.

IN CONCLUSION

This started out being a series of answers and comments to a **Letter to the Editor**. It wasn't intended to become the **Tao of the Karate Connection**. It became rather elongated because we felt the questions were valid and should be addressed in full. In no way did we propose to justify our system or methodology, we've never felt the need. We were doing the "Dance of Death"

when there were only three techniques with names in Kenpo. We have unquestionable knowledge of **what the system is** and **what it isn't**.

One last observation on respect.

As stated earlier, one of the most respected men in the Martial Arts was Ed Parker and his untimely departure left a vacancy that nobody will ever fill, **nor should anyone try**. However, time marches on and inevitably people will seek council and direction from the senior and more seasoned members of the Art.

The question Keith isn't who respects our methodology and system. **The real question is, who's methodology and system do we respect?**

Most Sincerely,

Your Brothers in Kenpo,



Chuck Sullivan, 8th Dan Kenpo



Vic LeRoux, 7th Dan Kenpo

