

Katrina

and the Sa Bum Nims

Living the Tradition of Tang Soo Do

Usually cover articles begin with a brief history of the featured personality or personalities. This time, however, the first question asked must be of Hurricane Katrina and experiences of Sa Bum Nim Michael Tullier and Sa Bum Nim Michael McGee who live in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a metropolitan area approximately 60 miles north of New Orleans. The area of approximately 400,000 doubled in size in the wake of the devastating hurricane and affected everyone living there, including the two International Tang Soo Do Federation instructors.

Master Zac Szabo, who is in charge of public relations for the Federation, conducted the interview.

Photos by Joseph David, Kathryn Carlson and Scott Blackburn



Scenes such as these were found not only in New Orleans but throughout the Gulf Coast where Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita caused inconceivable damage. It is estimated that it will take not years but decades to rebuild the affected areas. Both Sa Bum Nims have family and friends whom were victims of Hurricane Katrina.

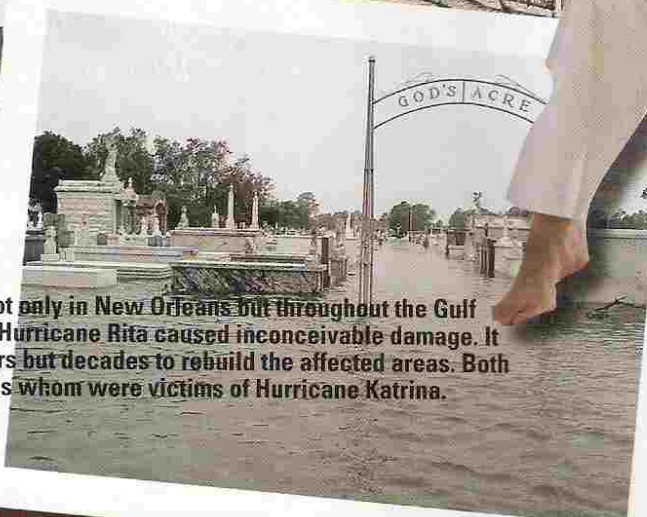
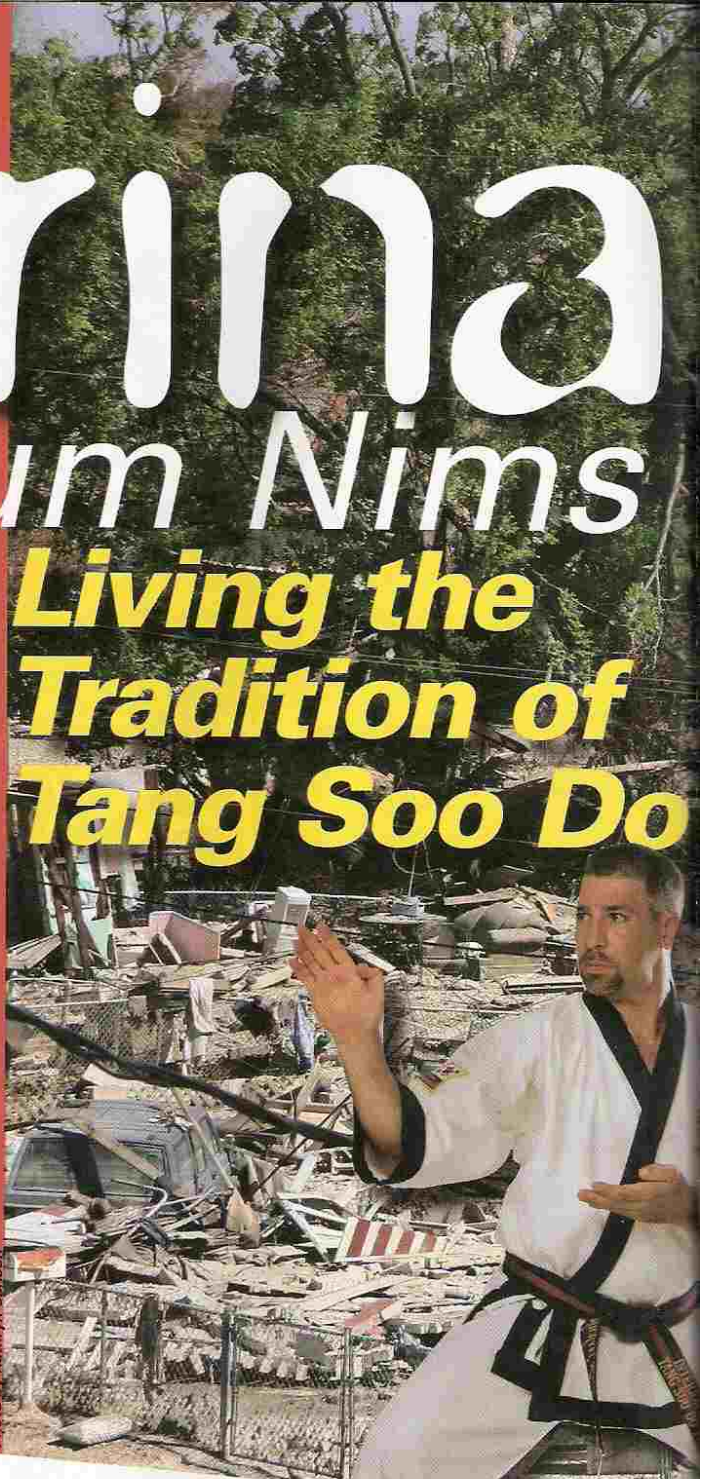


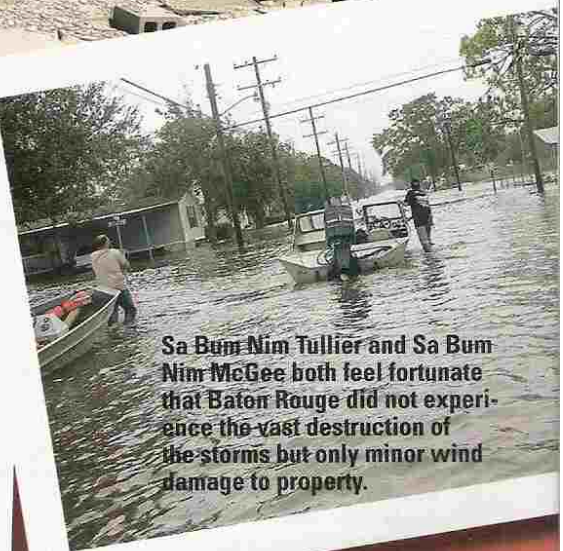
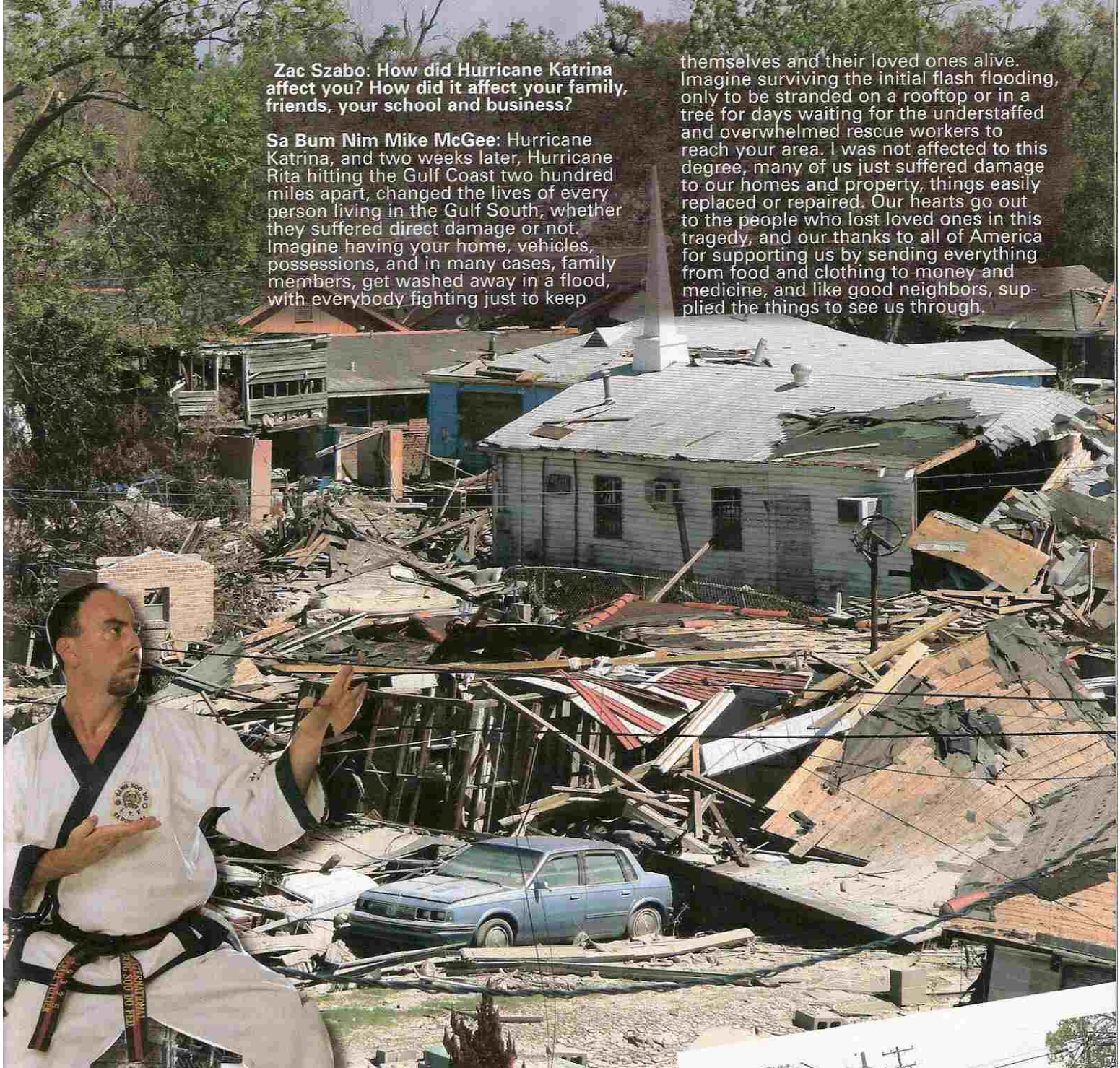
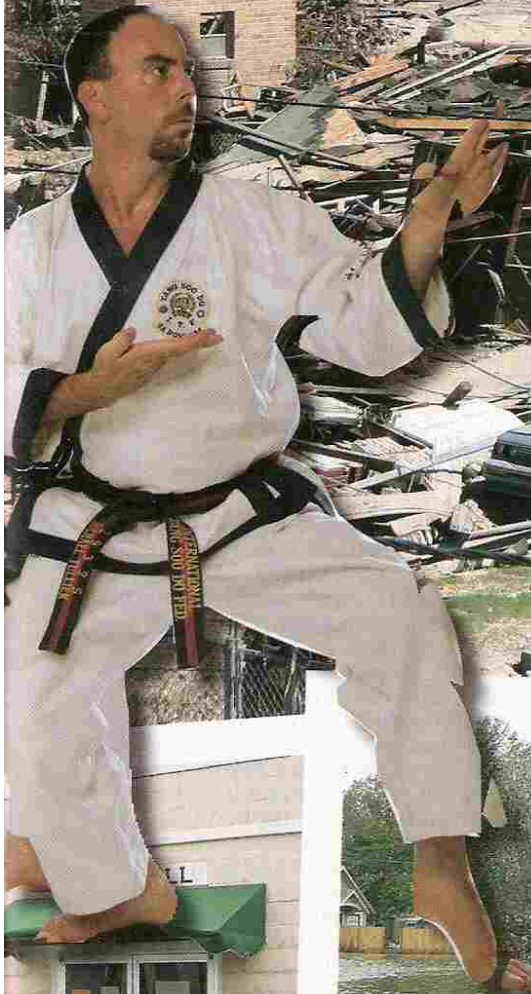
Photo by Kathryn Carlson



Zac Szabo: How did Hurricane Katrina affect you? How did it affect your family, friends, your school and business?

Sa Bum Nim Mike McGee: Hurricane Katrina, and two weeks later, Hurricane Rita hitting the Gulf Coast two hundred miles apart, changed the lives of every person living in the Gulf South, whether they suffered direct damage or not. Imagine having your home, vehicles, possessions, and in many cases, family members, get washed away in a flood, with everybody fighting just to keep

themselves and their loved ones alive. Imagine surviving the initial flash flooding, only to be stranded on a rooftop or in a tree for days waiting for the understaffed and overwhelmed rescue workers to reach your area. I was not affected to this degree, many of us just suffered damage to our homes and property, things easily replaced or repaired. Our hearts go out to the people who lost loved ones in this tragedy, and our thanks to all of America for supporting us by sending everything from food and clothing to money and medicine, and like good neighbors, supplied the things to see us through.



Sa Bum Nim Tullier and Sa Bum Nim McGee both feel fortunate that Baton Rouge did not experience the vast destruction of the storms but only minor wind damage to property.

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For most of us living away from the Coast, the effect was more of a logistical nightmare than anything else. The population of the Baton Rouge area more than doubled over night, in a surge of humanity like you've never seen before. My best friend and best student, Kyo Sa Nim Sean Kennedy had an extended family living in his dojang for a week because all of the family from New Orleans came to live with the son and daughter-in-law (mom and both sons train with Mr. Kennedy), but their power and water were out for days, and with multiple families living in every house and every hotel room, the Central Karate School, with padded flooring and air conditioning, was looking pretty good.

Sa Bum Nim Michael Tullier (pronounced Toolyea): *Wow, prior to Hurricane Katrina my business was thriving. I had just had the best two consecutive months ever at the school. I was in the midst of a very aggressive marketing and enrollment campaign and the school was bursting at the seams. Things were going so well that I was considering having to move to a larger location. Then Hurricane Katrina struck. As a Louisiana native I, along with the other Louisiana citizens, am no stranger to major storms in the Gulf of Mexico. Through the years we have seen our share of threats from these storms and have grown to take them in stride, passing them off as just another day or two off from school or work. To many, the inconvenience of evacuating seemed equivalent to the little boy who cried wolf once too often. It had been so long since a hurricane had really impacted our lives that many people were lulled into a false sense of security in the Gulf region. Our friends and family from New Orleans and the surrounding area would evacuate to Baton Rouge, visit for a few days and go home once the storm passed. However, this was NOT the case this time.*

My school was closed for the first week simply because the power was out at the dojang. Like many other people, we spent the week glued to the TV watching the sights of devastation and destruction. Not only New Orleans but also the ENTIRE Gulf Coast of Mississippi was wiped out. I think what gets overlooked by the national media is that we have two entire parishes (counties) that lost over 60% of their homes and structures. Over night the city of Baton

Rouge, which is only 60 miles from New Orleans, doubled in population. Suddenly the infrastructure of our city became taxed beyond its means. Eventually the power returned to my business but not all of my students could get to the school in a timely manner. What used to be a 10 to 15 minute drive could now take anywhere from an hour to two hours. All the roadways were so incredibly congested that people were unwilling to leave their homes for what used to be a short drive, like attending a Karate class. In an attempt to make things more convenient for my students, I changed my class schedule from one-hour classes to 45-minute classes and added an extra class each evening. This seemed to help some students who were stuck in traffic and could not get to class at the regular times.

SBN McGee: *My wife, Allison, and I have been blessed to own more than one home, and my second home is used as a rental property. It just so happened that I was between renters, which normally would be a bad thing, but when Katrina hit, we were able to use it as a shelter for several families, allowing them to regroup and find friends and relatives, gather medical and other supplies, and get organized and ready to move back.*

One of the families who stayed with me was the family of my friend Sam Zito, who works in the emergency rescue and recovery profession. Within the first two days of Katrina, Mr. Zito had gotten his extended family out of New Orleans to my house, and once assured that they were safe, he was headed back to the coast, going into what looked like a war zone, with one goal in mind, to help as many people as he could. He has worked every single day since, only taking off from helping others long enough to repair his own home and move his family back to New Orleans. It will take the efforts of hundreds of thousands of people like him to restore the area, and make South Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas feel like home again.

SBN Tullier: *As news of this catastrophic disaster spread, martial art instructors from across the United States started calling me to ask what they could do to help. Due to power outages, downed cell towers and overloaded systems, it became very difficult to get or*

Photo by Scott Blackburn

to make cell phone calls. When calls did get through, I suggested that they hold a blood drive at their schools through the Red Cross or through local hospitals. One instructor, Master Dan Paulson, a Hapkido instructor from California (whom I met while doing the photo shoot for *Tae Kwon Do Times* in Bettendorf, Iowa) called to check in on my family and my school. He stated that the students of his school were interested in helping and were wondering what they could do to contribute. At the time the local news was reporting that the area shelters were in need of pillows, blankets, personal hygiene items, and daily life necessities we often take for granted. I informed Master Paulson what our local news had requested for the shelter and that's when he and students really made things happen.

Three weeks later the first of three 18-wheeler trucks arrived at my school, courtesy of Master Paulson and his students. By this time the Baton Rouge shelters had more donations than they could handle and were not accepting more at that time; however, Hurricane Rita, our second major storm in just under a month had just struck Louisiana. Fortunately, I was able to redirect the trucks to evacuation shelters about 60 miles west of Baton Rouge to another shelter that desperately needed the goods on these trucks. My thanks and admiration goes out to Master Paulson and to his students for their incredible generosity. It just goes to show you that no matter what style of martial art you study, you are really part of a greater community.

I think that many people overlook or are unaware of the sacrifices that the families of Baton Rouge and the surrounding areas endured for months after the storm. I can't tell you how many families I know that had houseguests (evacuees) for months on end. Many people are still housing relatives and extended family at this time. My parents housed my sister-in-law, her two children and their dog for a month, along with her grandmother from New Orleans who lost the entire contents of her home. My brother Paul, who is a first sergeant in the Army National Guard and served 14 months in Iraq and Afghanistan, was activated just hours after the storm passed. He and his men remained on active duty (away from their families) in New Orleans at the Super Dome and the downtown Convention Center until the week after Thanksgiving. There are others who were without electricity for weeks and lost all of the food in their refrigerator and freezers. When the power was finally restored at my home, I was able to help one student who was about to lose the entire contents of his deep freezer. As I witnessed the chaos unfold, I couldn't help but think how blessed I really am.

About a month after Katrina hit, I started getting phone calls from displaced Karate students out of New Orleans and the surrounding parishes who were looking for a place to train until they were able to return home and get back to their own Karate schools. I am happy that I was able to help a few students during this time by allowing them to train in my dojang. My

Photo by Scott Blackburn



Churches, such as the Florida Boulevard Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, helped secure and unload supplies for the influx of disaster victims in Baton Rouge. Master Dan Paulson of California (who met the Louisiana instructors at a TKDT photo shoot) sent three truckloads of supplies to Louisiana.

guest students were allowed to wear their own Karate school uniform and belt at my school, regardless of the style of martial art they studied. We would all perform basics together and spar together as a school. But during hyung and one-step practice, I allowed our guests to train on their own while I worked with my 1 students on their standard International Tang So Do Federation material.

While it is unfortunate that so many good people were uprooted from the storm, looking back on this experience I feel I am better person for it. I had the opportunity to help some people gain some normalcy in their lives, and I was fortunate to witness the generosity of many others to people they did not even know.

It is now late January 2006, some five months after Katrina and I am just starting to see some semblances of normalcy return to my school and to the Baton Rouge community. Even for those of us who live here, it is still hard to fathom that entire neighborhoods of homes and businesses are gone. And there are towns with no standing structures. Parts of Louisiana and the Gulf Coast won't be able to rebuild in a month or two like we usually do after a hurricane, it will be years and easily a decade or more for many of the hardest hit communities. But I am optimistic about our future here on the Gulf Coast.

What are your martial art backgrounds?

SBN McGee: Martial arts are all full of references to the circle of life, from the Um-Yung and Yin-Yang symbols and all they convey, to the forms or hyung which, after moving all around the room, often end exactly where they started. So it is fitting that my martial arts story has unfolded in a big circle, bringing me back to the beginning.

When I was six or seven, I saw Bruce Lee and other martial artists on television and told my mom, "I would like to do that!" She looked into it, but there was only one school around, and it was many miles away. Our family did not have much money so I could not attend classes, but I did not let that discourage me. While my friends would see only the crazy costumes of the Kung Fu Theater, and hear only the bad accents and dubbing on martial arts movies, I was studying moves and listening to the words of the masters.

My father was a great athlete in his day, winning many basketball and track and field honors in high school. Later he played football and ran track for the army and competed in the high jump, long jump, and triple jump. He competed at and around the world record level, so it was just natural for me

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to take after him and play many sports. By the time I was a teenager, I had played every sport available, as well as hunting and fishing, and found that I was good at all of them, but none seemed to be the one thing that I could really dedicate my life to.

In 1979, at the age of fifteen, I was reading the newspaper and saw there was a Karate class starting at the local park, and having a part time job, and my own car and money, my mom said it was okay if I tried it. Thinking that Karate would be more fun than basketball and a perfect way to cross-train for football and baseball, I decided to give it a try. A young lady not much older than me named Sherri Wolsefer was teaching the class, and she began my training in Tang Soo Do. She soon sent me to her older brother to take classes, and he sent me to his instructor soon after that. By the time I was eighteen, I was winning kickboxing matches and tournament sparring matches all over South Louisiana and Texas while teaching a couple of classes each week to help my instructors.

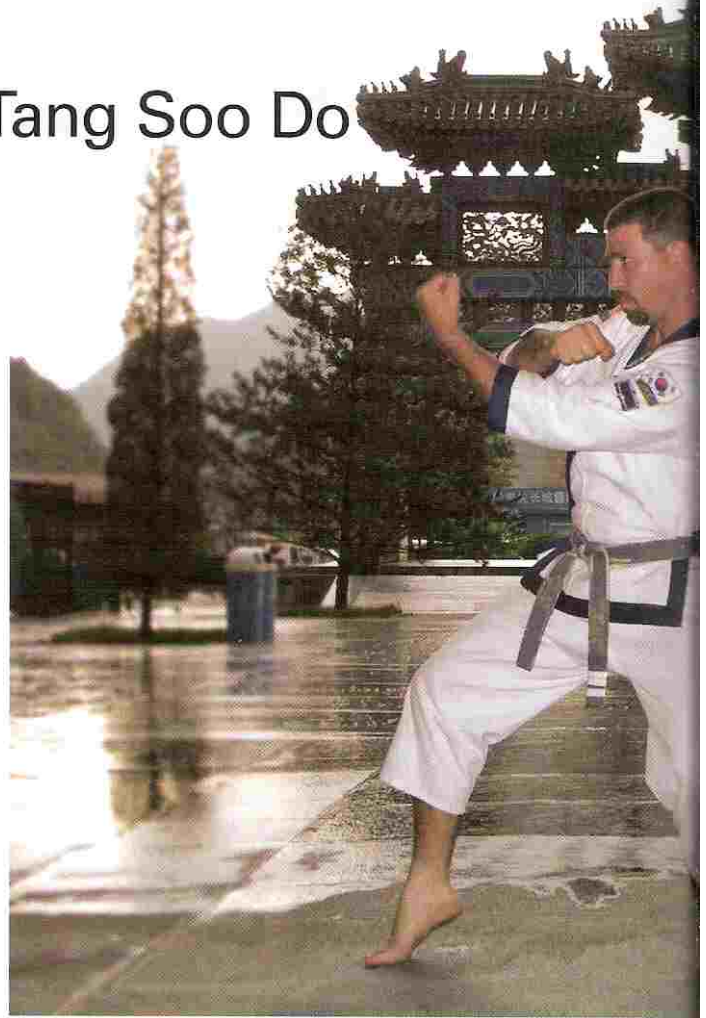
This trend continued into my twenties with my training time eating into my study time to the point of my dropping out of college to pursue "my dream." I did not feel I needed math or language and literature classes, or for that matter forms class either; I felt that I only needed to train and to fight. During the next ten years I put together a record of 7 and 0 in kickboxing, 11 and 1 in boxing, and 5 and 0 in bare knuckle fights. But with each win, I fell more out of love with the fighting and more in love with the actual training time. The hours of hard work in the dojang and the relationships with the people I trained with became much more important to me than winning a fight.

My old instructors had physically and spiritually moved away from me at this time, and I had started teaching one day per week at the same park that I used to go to for classes. I also taught a couple of people at my home. During this time I trained under many different masters and instructors, spending time with each one then moving on, not knowing what I was looking for but finding that each time I trained with someone, I would soon grow bored, or find a fundamental difference in philosophy that would convince me that it was time to move on. During this time, I trained in Tae Kwon Do, Judo (a little), Jujitsu, Pa Kwon Kung Fu and Tai Chi Kung Fu, and American Freestyle Karate as well as continuing to study Tang Soo Do.

SBN Tullier: My training began with a friend; his brother was moving to Baton Rouge to open a school with him. I had always been interested in martial arts but until this time had never had an opportunity to enroll in a class. Like most beginning martial arts consumers, I had absolutely no knowledge of the martial arts except what I had been exposed to on television and on the big screen. My friend invited me to the opening of his new school. So, on June 13, 1989, I took my first martial arts class, (along with seven other new students), and began training as a white belt in the International Tang Soo Do Federation (ITF) at the age of 25. Later, the brothers confessed to me that they thought I would only last a few months, maybe to orange belt. After studying for four years I became an ITF black belt at the age of 29. The other original seven students were no longer training.

Fourteen years after my first Tang Soo Do class, I tested for Sa Bum Nim (fourth-dan) in the country of Panama and was promoted on November 2, 2002, by Grandmaster C. S. Kim.

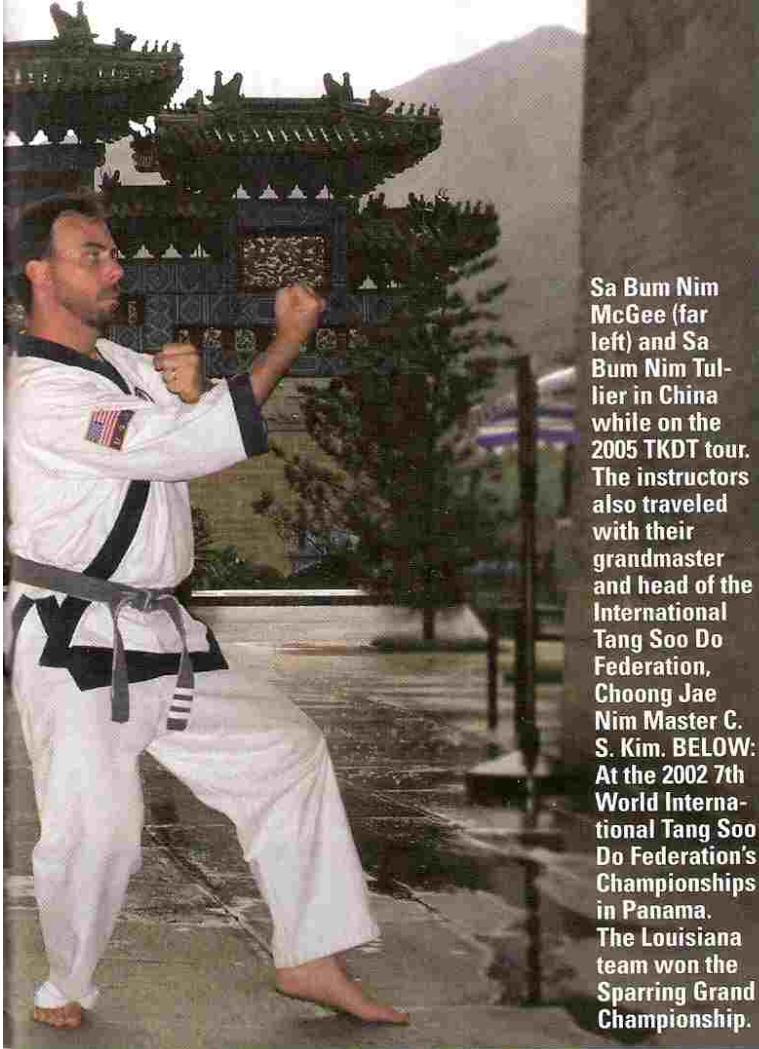
I feel very fortunate to have only studied one style of



martial art and to have remained in the original organization where I began my training as a white belt, my original roots. Too often in today's society people don't seem to value their roots as they did in the past. They find it easy to quit when things don't go their way. In life we are always going to encounter some friction, no matter what you do, especially in martial arts. For me, finding Tang Soo Do and the ITF turned out to be a true blessing. Grandmaster C.S. Kim and all the phenomenal instructors in our organization have forever changed my life and made my martial arts journey very special.

What made you decide to teach?

SBN Tullier: I had never really planned on teaching Tang Soo Do as a profession. I had an 8 to 5 job as an electrical designer/inspector and had started teaching Tang Soo Do four nights a week and Saturdays in a Karate school (30 miles away in another town) for a fellow instructor who was moving to Dallas. At the time my plate was rather full. So, in 1997, when I was asked by the owner to purchase the main Louisiana ITF School, I was a bit reluctant. The owner had become very ill and felt as though he was unable to continue teaching. As his most senior black belt, I felt a certain obligation to all the other Tang Soo Do students in this area to help them continue in their training. However, if the truth were known, it was my wife, Jacky who really had the vision and foresight to persuade me to purchase the school. I just could not see how I was going to run two schools, work full time and remain married. But together we came up with a plan to make it all work. The plan was to sell the first Karate school, quit my full time job and just teach Tang Soo Do full time at the main Karate school. Simple enough, right? In hindsight, it ended up working out well for all the area ITF instructors by cutting



Sa Bum Nim McGee (far left) and Sa Bum Nim Tullier in China while on the 2005 TKDT tour. The instructors also traveled with their grandmaster and head of the International Tang Soo Do Federation, Choong Jae Nim Master C. S. Kim. **BELOW:** At the 2002 7th World International Tang Soo Do Federation's Championships in Panama. The Louisiana team won the Sparring Grand Championship.

out most of our travel time to schools in other towns or out of the way places and making life simpler for all of us in this area.

SBN McGee: The circle of life does not happen all at once, it sometimes slowly closes, and if you are busy you may not even notice it. My becoming a teacher was like that. One day I was a fighter who had had many different jobs over the years, and taught two days a week to supplement my income, and the next day I was a Tang Soo Do instructor who had not fought a match in a couple of years, and who had students who had caught me in rank, and could not progress in rank unless I found a master for us to follow. I was also a person who needed to start my own business because teaching at a local park was not going to cut it anymore. Do you feel that old circle closing?

Suddenly, without me noticing exactly when it happened, math, reading, and language skills had become the most important skills I could possess in the search for a place to open my school and in setting up of accounts and billing systems. Hyung and the perfection of technique had become the most important thing in the dojang; not to mention the search for a master. What master would want a grown student who has no business skills, and no dojang of his own as well as students who look sloppy because their forms practice has been neglected?

It was at this point in my life, (1994) that I met Choong Jae Nim Grandmaster Chun Sik Kim, and somehow, he saw past all my weaknesses, and into my heart, and decided to take a chance on me. At this time I also met and became friends with Master Tullier, who had just made Cho-Dan under Grandmaster Kim at the time, and who had inherited a dojang in Zachary (my home town)

from his best friend, Jeff Pelltier. I soon made an agreement with Mr. Tullier to buy out the school in Zachary, giving me the beginning of a home for my school.

What were your professional backgrounds before teaching Tang Soo Do?

SBN Tullier: Before I started teaching Tang Soo Do as a full time instructor, I worked for an electrical engineering firm and had obtained my Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology from Southeastern Louisiana University. Prior to my job at the engineering firm, I worked as a pipe fitter in chemical plants along the Mississippi River. I was and still am a card caring, journeyman pipe fitter out of Local 198 in Baton Rouge.

I attended college all through my 20's. On average most people graduate college in five years. It took me longer than the average student to graduate college because I would work for one semester in order to earn money for my next semester of college. During my college career, I apprenticed out of the pipe fitter local where I attended their school in Baton Rouge. I also lived about 45 miles from the dojang where I trained, but I made it a point to be in class at least twice per week, often as many as four to five times per week.

SBN McGee: I have had many jobs over the years, always having been good with my hands, I was able to find work in many fields including carpentry and cabinetmaking, several driving and delivery type jobs, substitute teaching, coaching, building custom cars, vans, boats, and motorcycles, I even spent a year building fire trucks. I had many jobs but left most of them for the same reason. When I would hire on, I would tell the foreman or owner about the Tang Soo Do classes I taught and give



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S. Kim and joined the International Tang Soo Do Federation, and when I called him to ask his advice about the move, he dropped everything and flew to Louisiana to come and look over the building with me. He spent the day with one of the building owners and me, discussing decorating the dojang, as well as how to advertise and other means to help my new location grow.

By the time Choong Jae Nim left, I knew I had found a new home for my school, and a master I could follow for a lifetime. Over the last six years, I have used my carpentry skills and with the help of my family, friends, and students, have transformed my building from the ugliest, most run down building in town to a thriving business at the center of the Christmas block party, parade days, and other town wide events. One of my students, Gwen Bennett, is a professional artist, and helped decorate the school with a beautiful wall mural. This combined with other decorative touches has made it an instant landmark. It is commonly referred to when giving directions, "go one block past the Karate school, then take a right."

SBN Tullier: *As an instructor, I set the tempo and create the atmosphere of each class. It is always a balancing act between being energetic, disciplined, informative, educational, practical and traditional. As with all ITF schools, I follow a specific curriculum of information for each rank. In doing so, the attitude of the school is easy to mold and maintain because the foundation is already in place. There are times when the atmosphere can be quite tense and very rigid, at other time jovial, to remind us that we are all human and constantly prone to making mistakes.*

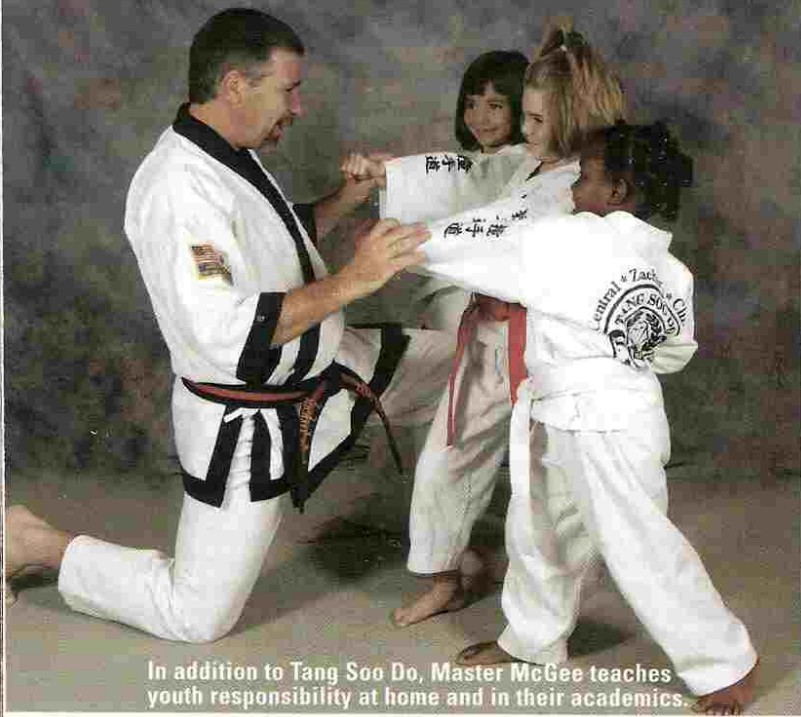
While I know that it is important to be serious and respectful of our art, I am also aware that it is just as important to laugh and outwardly display that we are enjoying the time we spend training. For the most part, I try to follow the guidelines of Grandmaster Kim. "On the mat,



teach like a Korean; in the lobby, smile and be friendly and; in the office, do business like an American." This is a philosophy I have embraced.

Your student body consists of...

SBN Tullier: *At this time I have 130 students enrolled at the main school. They are men, women and children ranging in age from 4 to 69. As with most schools, children predominantly make up the student body.*



In addition to Tang Soo Do, Master McGee teaches youth responsibility at home and in their academics.

him or her that schedule, but invariably, they would ask me to work overtime on a night I would have class, and I would have to choose between the two. Teaching my classes would always win, and soon overtime would dry up, I would get passed over for promotion, and I would be on the job hunt again. Over time I developed a remodeling and renovations company, where I could set my own schedule, and work jobs around my martial arts schedule. This allowed me the freedom to open my first school and have a positive income for those first few years while my school grew.

Describe your schools.

SBN McGee: Once I made the commitment to teach full time, God blessed me with a wonderful opportunity. The owners of an older building in my hometown of Zachary, Louisiana, contacted me, (I was teaching in a 1200 square foot building) and told me if I would like, I could have their ten thousand square foot building on Main Street. And if I would be willing to do the renovations the building needed, I could have it for the same rent I was paying on the smaller building. Finally all those years of remodeling came to good use! This happened shortly after I had met Choong Jae Nim Master C.



Sa Bum Nim McGee
"completing the Circle..."

But I am not on target with the national average ratio of most martial arts schools. Nationally, most martial arts schools average 70% children and 30% adults in their classes. My numbers are more like 55% children and 45% adults in my student body. I have doctors, lawyers, no Indian chiefs but the former vice president of a motorcycle gang. I enjoy the diversity and life experiences all my students share and bring to the dojang.

Over the years I have taught several special needs students including a blind man, several children with Down's syndrome and all of the ADD and ADHD children I would ever think of meeting. Currently, I am teaching a child with Asperger's syndrome, which has been compared to high operational autism. Recently, I have become a registered leisure class with Louisiana State University and have classes inside two of the Baton Rouge YMCAs. I have students who train with me privately and I have Karate classes at an elementary area charter school. And I also work with a private high school football team for eight months out of the year teaching Tang Soo Do. During the summer months this class can have as many as 120 students per class.

SBN McGee: At my main school in Zachary, we have over 150 regular students, (100 children and 50 adults) and an after school program and summer camp that average around 25 children. We have two nearby branch schools in Central and Clinton, (all three towns are north and east of Baton

Rouge). I also have started a branch school in Centerville, Mississippi, a town about 30 miles north of Zachary, each of these branch locations has between 25 and 50 students, and with all of these towns' population swelling to double their former size after Katrina, we see nothing but growth in our future. I am also blessed with a branch school in Bal Stein, Germany (near Stuttgart), where my student Kyo Sa Nim Annette Salles moved in 1999. She is from there originally, and moved back to open her own dojang and bring the beautiful art of Tang Soo Do to the people of Germany. Annette has about 75 students and is ready for her Sa Bum Nim test along with her best friend, Ko Su Nim Kathryn Carlson (the primary photographer for this article) as well as my best friend and their first teacher, Ko Su Nim Sean

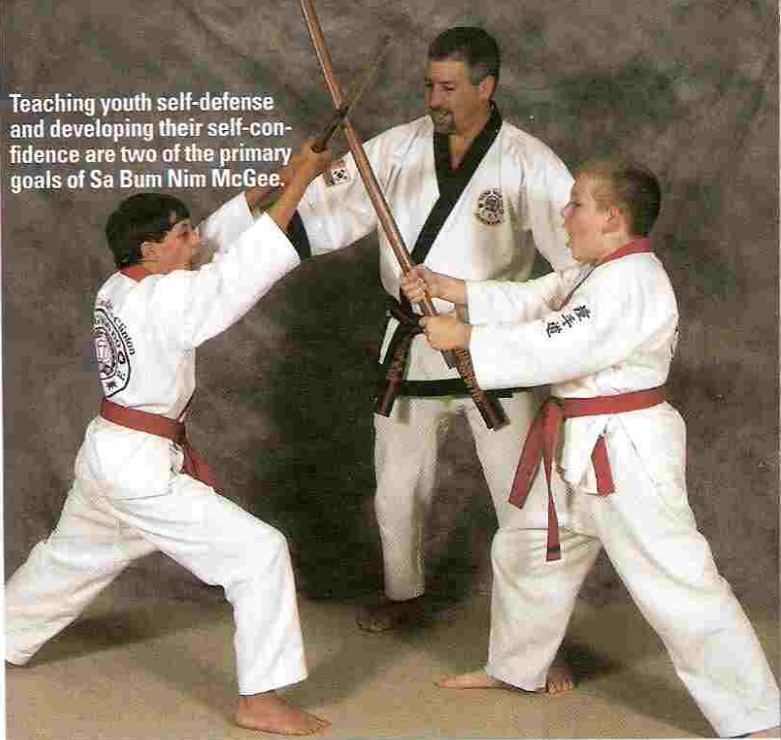
Kennedy, owner of our Central Karate location.

I have also been blessed to have been hired as an off-season conditioning coach at Southern University in Baton Rouge where I get to train athletes in the mornings, working with whichever group is in the off-season, teaching them flexibility and speed drills. By far, their favorite activity is traditional Tang Soo Do training time, which we use as a reward, "If you all reach your lifting and running goals, I will teach you combination three and four on Friday." It is usually met with a cheer and redoubled work effort.

What is your philosophy on teaching?

SBN McGee: The Circle is complete. I spend 90% of my teaching time concentrating on the exact things I thought weren't important all those years ago. We work diligently on the students' basics and hyung, and require honor roll grades to qualify for testing. A student can start with bad grades, but must show

Teaching youth self-defense and developing their self-confidence are two of the primary goals of Sa Bum Nim McGee.



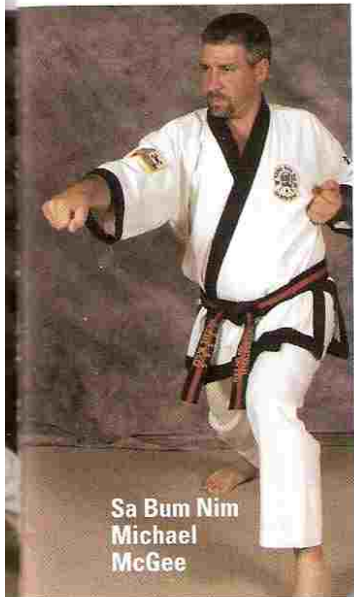
improvement each report card to test and participate in tournaments and demonstrations. Of my students young enough to attend school, we have almost 100% on the honor roll. Other than that, my emphasis is primarily on self-defense and self-confidence, I want my students to feel they can achieve anything they set their minds to, and believe the belt system in martial arts is the perfect way to teach setting goals and working to achieve them.

SBN Tullier: I think that while every instructor brings his or her own philosophy to the classroom, we are all deeply influenced by the people and methods we were exposed to in our first years of training. What I have done through the years is to adapt as many of the positive teaching methods I have learned from all my instructors from college, from Tang Soo Do and from life and integrate these methods into my own teaching style in my classroom.

Currently, I am strongly emphasizing the philosophy of respect to my students as well as putting their heart and soul, not only into training but also into everything that they value or do in life—from Tang Soo Do to homework to personal relationships, I try to impress upon them how important it is to show respect for their training and for themselves by giving 100%, no matter if they are in the classroom or wherever. I constantly remind my students that after training they should not leave respect at the door as they head home. Time is the most valuable commodity that we as humans have and to waste it by being half-hearted in your actions is the same as being disrespectful to oneself. While this is a good lesson for both children and adults, young people especially should be mindful of this lesson as it will be very beneficial throughout their lives.

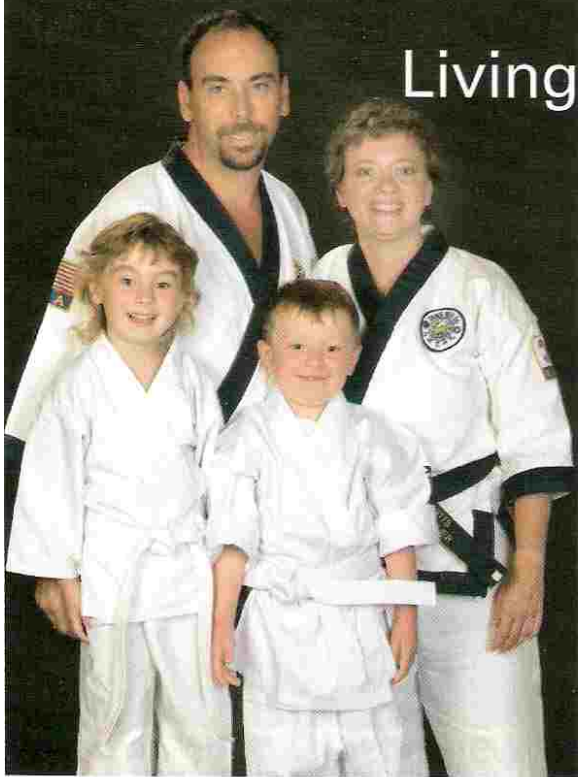
Do you have personal training schedules?

SBN McGee: I try to do at least one-half of what each class does each day beginning with college athletes in the morning, private lessons during the day, after school students, and nighttime classes. I usually teach about ten hours a day, equaling five hours or more of working out, but the body soon gets used to that. I am constantly looking for some new exercise to add to my workout. My wife, Allison, loves lifting weights, hiking, running, and bicycle riding, and I try to do these things with her when our busy schedules permit it. I love all sports, and am always up for a



Sa Bum Nim
Michael
McGee

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The Tullier family: Master and Jacky Tullier, and children Rachel and David. In the International Tang Soo Do Federation, fourth-dan is master-level.

SBN Tullier: As a married, small business owner with two young children, (Rachael, 5, and David 4) finding time for personal training can be difficult. I make it a point to do basics with my young children's classes in the evening or in the early morning with my private lesson student. After my weekly morning classes, I often do some lightweight

training and have begun a walking program with my wife. However, when it comes to hyung, I make time each day to practice. I also incorporate sit-ups and push-ups into my classes so students get more strength and conditioning in their practice and so that I get a workout too. On Tuesdays and Thursdays I get the chance to work with my two highest ranking sam dans on black belt self-defense and other black belts material such as the pyong ahn one-steps or hyung. One of the great things about teaching full time is that you always get to practice your foundation material on a weekly basis with the beginner and advanced student of your school.

Do you have a personal relationship with your grandmaster, Choong Jae Nim Master C.S. Kim?

pickup game of basketball or football at the park, or skating, swimming, tennis, golf, and baseball with my summer and after school campers, (dodge ball is their favorite!). I also get to train several times each year with Choong Jae Nim Master C.S. Kim, and these workouts consist of twelve to fourteen hour days of constant training on hyung and other aspects of Traditional Tang Soo Do.

SBN Tullier: I met Grandmaster Kim in Atlanta in 1989 at my first Tang Soo Do tournament where I had an opportunity to compete in the men's yellow belt division. I am constantly amazed and inspired by his energy and love of "this Tang Soo Do" that we practice. Since my purchase of the school in 1997, I have been in constant contact with him on a weekly or monthly basis. I make it a point to train with him three to four times per year, even if it means driving 8 or 10 hours one way to meet him.

My instructor, Choong Jae Nim Kim, has been very encouraging and helpful throughout the years, guiding me in business decisions and through difficult personal times. There have been times when he has scolded me for not following his direction and times when he has praised me for my accomplishments. I appreciate his interest in my students and me.

I aspire one day to be as charismatic as Choong Jae Nim Kim. Over the years, I have met many grandmasters from many different styles. Grandmaster Kim is one of the few that I have ever met that has such a strong vibrant presence when he enters a room. Even if they don't know who he is, people immediately respect his energy and personality. I am very lucky to be able to call him my instructor.

SBN McGee: Choong Jae Nim Master Chun Sik Kim met me, took me under his wing and effectively adopted me into his Federation when he barely knew me. And where other masters would have said he's too far away (we live about 1,000 miles apart) or he's too much trouble (I was), he just welcomed me with open arms, and said, "What can I do to help you make your school successful?"

Choong Jae Nim Master C.S. Kim is a perfect example of what a master is supposed to be, calm and humble, an excellent martial artist and smart businessman. Add war hero, special forces trainer, coach of world champion fighting teams, member of several different Martial Art



Sa Bum Nim Tullier has a higher rate of adult students than most martial at facilities in the United States. Here he is pictured with Jason Price and Mitzi Madere.

Halls of Fame, impeccable dresser, husband to a beautiful wife, father to three successful and brilliant children, a five-handicap golfer, a good dancer, a great singing voice, and a wonderful sense of humor, and you start to scratch the surface of this great man. Bring your fantasy top fifty martial artists together in one room, include your favorite movie star action heroes and historical figures as well, and I feel I could walk with pride into that room, because I have trained with the best of them all.

I have had people ask me why I stay with the ITF and not venture out on my own. And my response to them is that I value the support, structure, integrity and leadership provided by this organization. One

Sa Bum Nim Tullier with some of his enthusiastic white belts!



of the main strengths of the ITF is the quality of instruction demanded of each instructor in the federation by Choong Jae Nim C.S. Kim. Schools in our organization are visited regularly and instructors and students inspected and critiqued, so that we are all on the same page and are teaching material, such as forms and one-steps, the same across the board from school to school. Choong Jae Nim also gives school owners business advice during his visits. This also gives us feedback on our schools and teachings so that we don't become isolated and stagnant. I think this is something many independent school owners could benefit from.

ITF tests, tournaments, and clinics give me the opportunity to go places I probably never would have gone. From a two week trip to China and Korea, to a family vacation in Disney World, to the country of Panama, to a weekend in Austin, Texas, these are places I might have never gotten

around to visiting.

I am looking forward to the upcoming world tournament in Acapulco, Mexico, at the end of July 2006. It is always wonderful to see my Tang Soo Do brothers and sisters and spend time not only practicing our wonderful art but getting to spend time together and socialize with people that I admire and respect.

Having spent more than ten years traveling about, training in different styles under different masters and different organizations, I feel that the International Tang Soo Do Federation is one of the best. The masters who make up our technical advisory committee, Masters Joe Goss Sr., Joseph Bruno, Marion Gregor, Marcus Murtaugh, Richard Collins Sr., Winfred Williams,

Richard Leach, Joe Goss Jr., Richard Collins Jr., Zack Szabo, and many others, are all great martial artists in their own right, and could easily have their own federations and do well running them. It is a testament to Choong Jae Nim Master C.S. Kim that they will never leave him, and all work together to make the International Tang Soo Do Federation one of the most prestigious martial arts organizations on the planet.

Where do you see yourselves going with this profession and what are your goals?

SBN Tullier: *Teaching Tang Soo Do is my passion. Few people have the opportunity to turn their hobby into a profession. Much less do it profitably. I have been blessed to have this opportunity in my life. Currently, my primary school goal is to reach 200 active students at the main school. My wife recently started working full time with me at the dojang and I believe that with her help she will enable us to reach that goal along with others that we have set. Working together during the day gives us a chance to spend time together that we haven't had in the past, since running a martial arts school primarily requires me to work nights and Saturdays. In the long run, I feel this will only strengthen our mar-*

Sa Bum Nim Tullier with some of his high-ranking students



riage and our business. We are also planning to expand into other Baton Rouge area YMCA's and are working on tapping into the home school market. Eventually, I would like to add a few more private students to my roll along with an additional high school or college sports team to teach Tang Soo Do to during the off-season. Once I make this happen, it will give some of the senior students the opportunity to teach classes on their own and learn first hand how to manage a dojang for future ventures. I am in the midst of spreading the seeds of Tang Soo Do and anticipate a healthy and hearty harvest in the near future.

SBN McGee: This is the hardest question to answer, as my story has come full circle, and after over 25 years of living and teaching martial arts, I sometimes wonder what the next thirty years will bring. I know that as long as we keep our quality high, my school, Zachary Karate, and my branch schools will continue to grow. And if this is all I accomplish in my career, it will be enough. But I did not get where I am by just waking up and teaching, then going home, I have always been the kind of man to seek out new challenges, and I'm not going to change now. I think I would like to take my private lessons to the next level, perhaps training professional athletes, and wish to direct some of my time to developing a program to help combat childhood obesity, mixing Traditional Tang Soo Do with plyometrics as well as several fun children's exercises I have developed over the years. Projects like these should keep me busy for the next couple of years, and it will be interesting to see where this new circle leads me. I have a feeling that this circle will end with me sitting at the feet of Choong Jae Nim Master C.S. Kim asking, "Can we practice low block just one more time? I think I almost have it right." ●

Sa Bum Nim Mike McGee can be contacted at (225) 654-6762, or, McGeeTSD@aol.com or at Zachary Karate, 4729 Main Street, Zachary, LA 70791.

Sa Bum Nim Michael Tullier can be reached by e-mail at mtullier@cox.net or by phone (225) 272-5425 or visit the web site at tsdkarate.com. His mailing address is Tang Soo Do Karate College, 11224 Boardwalk Ste E2, Baton Rouge, LA 70816.