



# Jitsu Canada Newsletter

January 2007

## Black Belt Promotions!

Congratulations to Alex Fairweather *Sensei* (Toronto) on attaining **nidan**, and to Mark Yourkevich *Sensei* (Kingston YMCA) on attaining **shodan**, at the black belt grading December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006.

Contents	Page
Upcoming Events	2
Yet Another Mountain	4
Tracing Our Roots	5
It's Just a Flesh Wound	9
1 <sup>st</sup> Kyu to Shodan (part 1)	11

## Special Event

We are very pleased to announce that John Hamer *Sensei*, the new head of The Jitsu Foundation, will be visiting Canada this year. Hamer *Sensei* will be doing a round the world tour, visiting all the Jitsu Foundation international associations, and Ontario will be his first stop on the tour. Exact dates are still to be arranged, however Hamer *Sensei* will be here to teach a weekend course in late April.



Hamer *Sensei* is an exceptional *jiu jitsu* practitioner and we strongly encourage all members to make every effort to attend. Further details will be published on the website soon.



## Chokushin Congratulations!

Belated congratulations to Phil Anderson (2<sup>nd</sup> from left), Karen Partington (centre), and Glen Pitcher (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) from *Chokushin Aikijujutsu*. All three were promoted to **mokuroku** (second level black belt) this past summer. Also pictured, Paul Fox, *menkyo kaiden* & head of style (left), and Brian Collins, *mokuroku*.

## Upcoming Events

Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Jan: Green & Above Course  
Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Feb: Green & Above Course  
Sun 11<sup>th</sup> Feb: Assistant Instr & Instructor Courses  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mar: **Ontario Provincial Course**  
5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> May: Club Instructor Course  
25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> May: Spring Boot Camp  
23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> Jun: Summer Course & Grading

Timetable and details  
online at:  
[www.jitsucanada.com](http://www.jitsucanada.com)

### Club courses

Toronto	Jan 26 <sup>th</sup>	Brooks Sensei
Ottawa Gladstone	Jan 30 <sup>th</sup>	Dobie Sensei
Carleton University	Jan 31 <sup>st</sup>	Dobie Sensei
Kingston YMCA	Feb 13 <sup>th</sup>	Dobie Sensei
Queen's University	Feb 14 <sup>th</sup>	Dobie Sensei
Peterborough YMCA	TBA	Brooks Sensei
Trent University	TBA	Brooks Sensei

### Grading Dates

Sat 24 <sup>th</sup> Mar:	Ottawa
Sun 25 <sup>th</sup> Mar:	Kingston
Sat 31 <sup>st</sup> Mar:	Ptbo
Sun 15 <sup>th</sup> Apr:	Calgary

### Green & above courses

Two green belt & above courses will be held this semester. These courses are designed to provide more focused training with specific themes, and to allow senior grades to train with their peers from other clubs. Details are:

Sun January 21<sup>st</sup> in Peterborough:

Sat February 10<sup>th</sup> in Kingston:

If you are green belt or above, please make every effort to attend these courses.

### Assistant Instructor & Instructor Courses

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February, Kingston YMCA

Learning to teach is an integral part of the study of *jiu jitsu*. Although both being taught and practicing *jiu jitsu* are essential, you will find when you begin teaching or helping to teach, your depth of understanding of the principles behind the techniques improves vastly. This is fundamental to progression in the art, so much so that completion of these courses is a requirement before progressing to advanced student grades. Please ask your instructor for details of these courses.

### Ontario Provincial Course

This is the one 'on the mat' event this semester which is open to all members of Jitsu Canada. Two days of training with what will surely be a memorable social event in the evening. **All members** are strongly encouraged to attend.

**March 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 2006 – Kingston**

## **Spring Boot Camp 2007**

25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May, Kinmount ON.



This weekend course provides an opportunity for students of all styles to train and socialize together in a co-operative and non-competitive manner. Training is mostly in two styles of *jiu jitsu* (*Chokushin* and *Shorinji-kan*) although a variety of other martial arts are also often taught. Training outdoors, often on uneven ground, adds a valuable new perspective to training. There are also a number of other activities - rock & tree climbing, knife throwing, and of course, swimming in the lake for those who are brave enough.

Participants are welcome to show up on the Friday evening to set up camp. After breakfast at a local restaurant, training starts at 10am on Saturday. Lunch, evening meal, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday are provided. BYOB for the Saturday evening camp-fire. Cost for the weekend including meals is only \$40.

Please e-mail Andy if you will be participating. This is a really enjoyable weekend event which shouldn't be missed.



## **Chokushin / Shorinji Kan Summer Course**

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, Peterborough ON. (*Tentative date*)

A combined course with Jitsu Canada and *Chokushin Aiki-jujutsu*.

For many years, Jitsu Canada and *Chokushin Aiki-jujutsu* have held the annual Boot Camps. Last year we decided both associations should get together 'on the mats' in addition to the camps, and held a combined summer course. This is now an annual event, open to all members of both associations with instruction in both styles - an indoor version of the boot camp!



Training will be followed by an evening BBQ & pool party (BYOB). Cost is to be finalized but will be minimal. Accommodation will be available in Peterborough.

The summer grading will be held the following day, Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June.

Please e-mail Andy if you are able to attend.

## Yet Another Mountain to Climb

**Stu Cooke, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu, Kingston.**

Auxiliary training has the potential to benefit everyone's *jiu jitsu*. Aerobic fitness, strength and flexibility all play heavily into performance on the mats. As such, cross training with other disciplines can and will help your overall fitness, making certain movements and actions easier. It could also help your understanding of the more important concepts within *jiu jitsu*. There are, of course, many choices. Climbing is just one, although it is perhaps one that many might not consider complimentary to martial arts.

At first glance, rock climbing and *jiu jitsu* couldn't be more different. One uses equipment and technique to safely ascend vertical faces while the other is a self-defense system, intertwining physical execution and philosophy for self-gain. My opinion was much the same until I spent more time climbing and gained a deeper understanding of what is really occurring on the wall. *Jiu jitsu* and climbing work well together, in ways that I never expected they would.

Balance is an integral part of any *jiu jitsu* throw and good climbing hinges upon it. Without balance, *jiu jitsu* would become a simple demonstration of strength, ceasing to be an art and become something wholly different. The same is true of climbing. While it is possible to pull yourself up the wall, gritting your teeth and fighting through pain, doing so omits the grace and perfection of movement that climbing has the potential to demonstrate. Ideal climbing is like ideal throwing; efficient and effortless. Proper balance keeps you on the wall when your grip would

otherwise fail. It allows you to move yourself comfortably, relaxed and controlled. Working with balance on the wall has helped me to understand balance on the mats from a conceptual standpoint as well as a physical one. With a true understanding and execution of balance, the wall or your opponent are less obstacles and are instead merely things that exist around you, providing an avenue toward the physical demonstration of an art.

In *jiu jitsu*, your mindset is of the utmost importance at all times. Not only should you keep your attitude in check while learning, your mind should be ready to deal with whatever occurs. Addressing a 'V' should not be tense, stressful or angry. We should be ready for whatever comes our way, reacting to it instead of anticipating, following through instead of becoming caught up. We should be in the moment, without thought, without mind. The same is true of climbing. Hesitation, worry and tension all add to the obstacles you face on the wall. They make a climb harder than it ever would be otherwise. Your mental state while climbing should be the same as it is while defending yourself. You must not act before it is necessary. You should let the experience flow in and out of itself, your only thoughts being those of complete immediacy. By practicing this attitude in different environments, it becomes easier to achieve when you really need it. Relaxing on the climbing wall has given me more experience with the state of mind I need to be in when *jiu jitsu* requires it.

There are also the physical benefits of climbing. Your upper body strength improves, allowing for greater strikes and more positive blocks. Flexibility in your arms and legs increases, which benefits everything in *jiu jitsu*. And of course, gripping holds provides better grip for *randori* and ground fighting, giving you a greater ability to affect other's balance and hold your own.

Climbing is only one disciple that mixes well with *jiu jitsu*. Whatever additional training you impart upon, you should keep in mind that you are not just learning new skills but enhancing the ones you already possess. *Jiu jitsu* is a martial art that involves the entire

body, so a holistic and mixed approach to your fitness and training will do wonders for your performance, both in regular classes and in any grading opportunity you might have. Whilst climbing is one activity that might help you, it might not be quite right for your individual needs. Whatever it is you choose to do, it is important to think about how that activity affects *jiu jitsu*, so you learn and benefit from it as much as possible. Other sports or activities are simply other ways of enhancing your skills and ultimately, making you a better *jiu jitsuka*, which is something that, I'm sure, we all strive to be.

## **Tracing the Roots of Shorinji Kan Jiu Jitsu in North America**

### **Chris Brooks, Sensei**

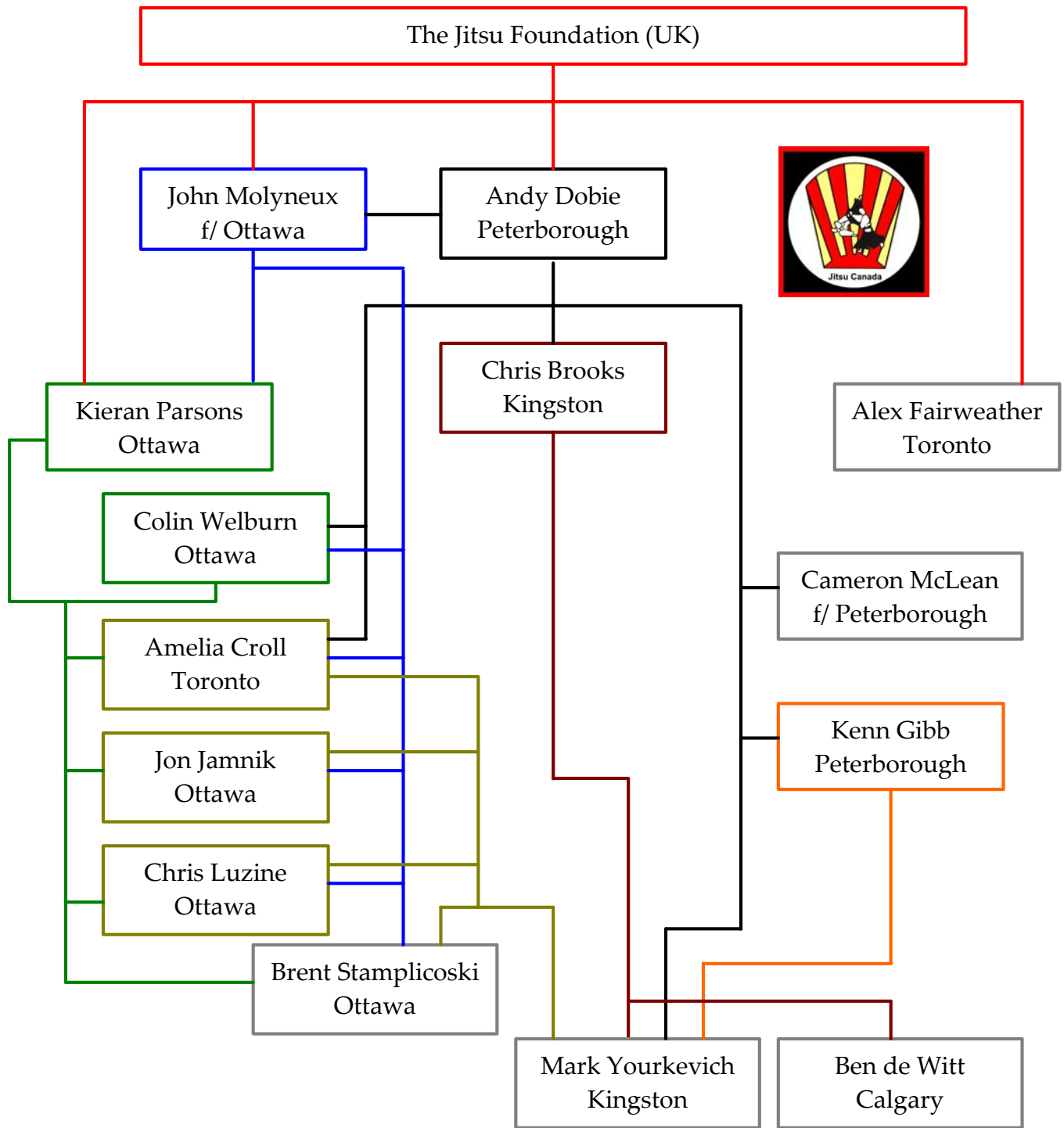
For quite some time I've been thinking about putting together some sort of historical compendium on the history and development of our style of *jiu jitsu* within North America. I believe it is important for members of an organization and a style of martial art to be familiar with the origins of the art that they practice as well as with the people who influenced its growth.

The following charts are the first instalments of what I hope will become an ongoing record of the evolution of Jitsu Canada and *Shorinji Kan Jiu Jitsu* in North America. This chart outlines the lineage of all of our black belts in Canada and the USA.

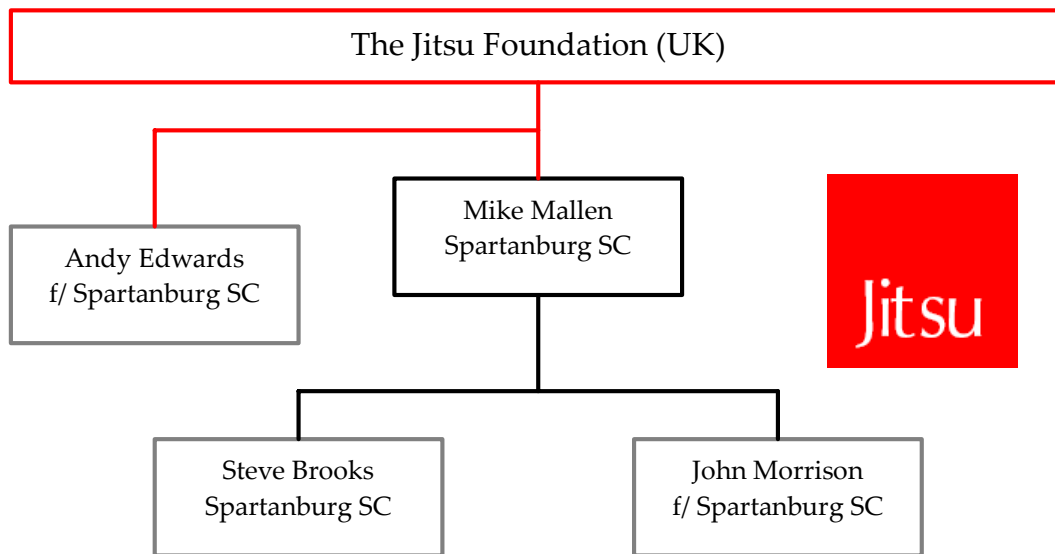
### **Some notes regarding the chart:**

- *I've used colour coded lines to connect instructors with their direct students. In some instances (to simplify the chart) I've combined instructors under one colour since they've shared the same students.*
- *Dan grades (black belts) are listed by name and primary location (where they teach/taught). The "f/" stands for "formerly".*
- *Please advise me of any inaccuracies in the lineages. It would be very easy to revise the newsletter if necessary.*

# Jitsu Canada Black Belt Lineage (as of Jan 2007)



## The Jitsu Foundation USA Black Belt Lineage (as of Jan 2007)



### Tracing the roots of Shorinji Kan Jiu Jitsu

#### **Andy Dobie, Sensei**

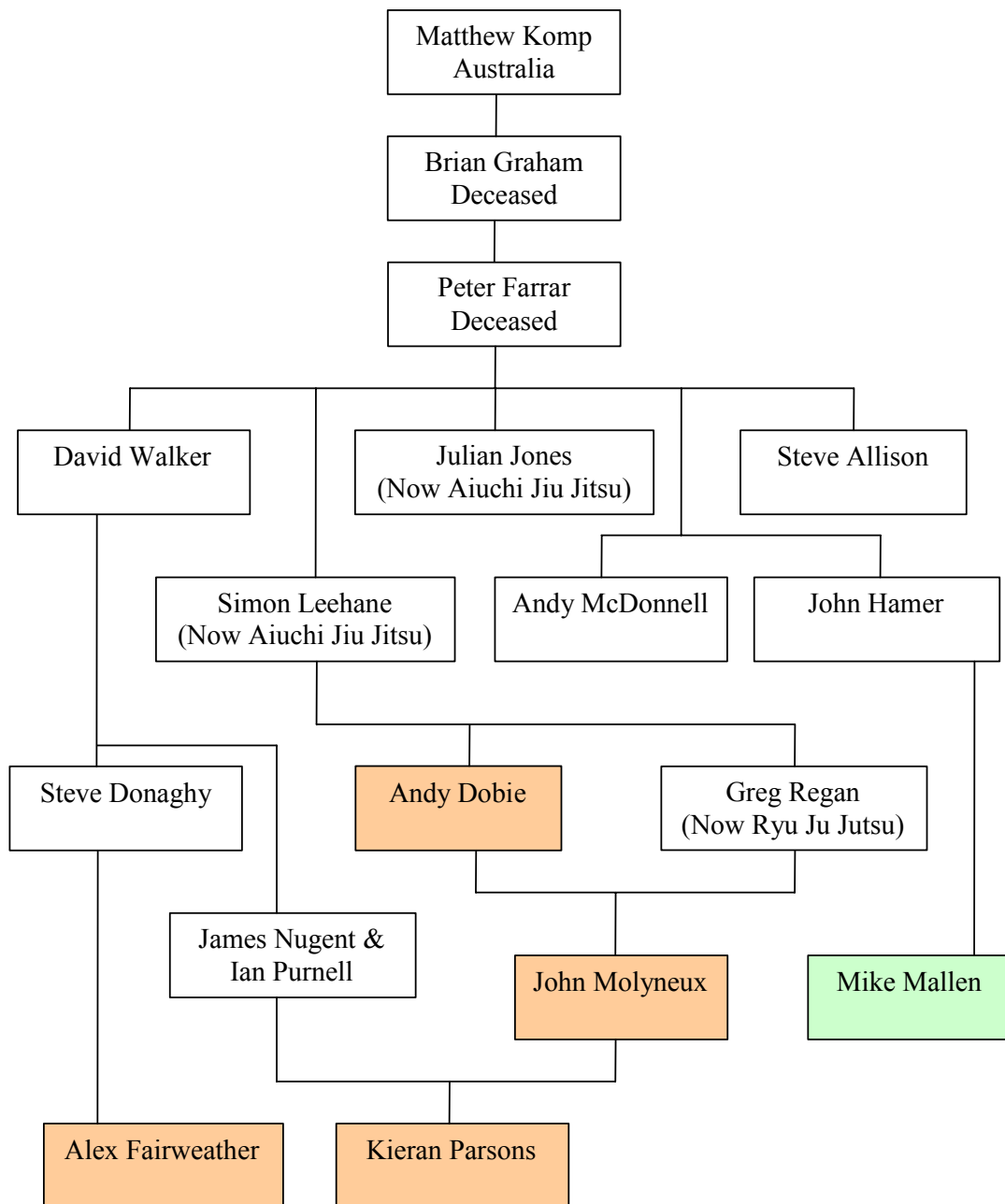
Inspired by Chris Brooks' article and lineage charts, I thought I would provide the lineages for the (now) North American instructors who began their study of *jiu jitsu* in the UK. There are obviously many more instructors in the UK than are shown on the chart, and these instructors have taught many more current instructors than are shown.

I have only included those directly connected to North American instructors, as well as the most senior Jitsu Foundation instructors. These instructors (David Walker, Julian Jones, Steve Allison, Simon Leehane, John Hamer, and Andy McDonnell) were all direct students of Farrar Sensei at the Plymouth Polytechnic club, where both Andy Dobie and John Molyneux first began their training.

#### **Some notes regarding the chart:**

- *Jitsu Canada instructors are shaded orange*
- *Jitsu USA head instructor (Mike Mallen) is shaded green*
- *Some of these instructors are no longer with The Jitsu Foundation organization, although all began their training and were at one time instructors with The Jitsu Foundation. In these cases the name of their present style is indicated in parentheses.*

# The Jitsu Foundation Black Belt Lineage (relevant to North America)



## "...It's just a flesh wound!"

**Kimberley McFadden, 6<sup>th</sup> Kyu, Kingston.**

Like any other activity that requires a significant amount of physical exertion through a wide range of motion, *jiu jitsu* entails a certain amount of risk. In fact, any type of combative activity comes with the possibility of injury due to the fact that it is a simulation of actions that if performed with the right amount of force, would result in quite a bit of damage. When presented in that way, it makes all of us who gladly engage in such activities look like masochistic fools and I'm proud to say I'm one of them! I would like to address an issue, however, that I have extensive knowledge of and that I have seen occur repeatedly over my *jiu jitsu* career thus far.

Stubbornness (which, might I add, is not the same as perseverance) is an unfortunate characteristic and it appears that when it comes to injuries many of us resort to a stubborn mentality. We love what we do and we just want to be able to keep doing what we do, which is why so many of us try to ignore pain. However, I can say from experience that neglecting to deal with an issue (and pain is definitely an issue as it is your body's way of telling you that there's something wrong) could be a mistake that results in long-term suffering.

It is necessary to point out that there are different levels of pain and that not all types of pain signify a serious injury. We've all stubbed our toes before and experienced a great deal of pain without having broken or even bruised anything, but that type of pain tends to be short-lived. The pain that I'm referring to is that which is recurrent or constant over a long period of time. For the most part, I agree that there is no value in rushing to the doctor every time we experience pain, but we should all strive to identify the different levels of pain and recognize our own individual levels that signal a serious injury. There are signs that aid us in the process of figuring out what is serious or not (popping or cracking sounds, discoloration, swelling, recurrence, etc.), and there is no excuse for ignoring these either. Not all serious injuries, however, are accompanied by visible signs, which is why we must pay specific attention to pain.

We all have our own motivations for not acknowledging pain or other symptoms. We may not want to stop engaging in the activity that we enjoy so much; we may not be willing to take the time or effort that is required to rehabilitate ourselves; and sometimes we may be reluctant to admit that we're hurt because we do not wish to appear vulnerable or defeated. However, what we must realize is that by not taking care of our bodies when they become injured, we end up prolonging the injury and put ourselves at risk of further injury.

My own experience involves an injury I sustained to my wrist due to a very fast and forceful wristlock. It did pop when it happened, but I figured it was just a ligament popping and, therefore, a few weeks of light training while paying special attention not to further damage it would result in it healing. For the most part, it didn't hurt, but every once in a while I would feel a sharp pain. Finally, two months later, I got it x-rayed and, as I had figured, it wasn't broken, so I kept training figuring it was just taking a while to heal.

I decided to grade in June with it still injured (this being five months after the initial incident) and about halfway through the grading, it became obvious that the injury had worsened to the point where my right hand was nearly incapacitated. Finally, after the grading was done, I got it properly checked by a physiotherapist who informed me that I had damaged cartilage in my wrist and it would take anywhere from six months to a year to completely heal. In the end, I had trained through pain and had an excruciating grading just so I could end up having to abstain from training for several months afterward. My physiotherapist was nice enough to point out that if I had gotten it checked in physio in January when it had first been injured, it probably would have only taken a maximum of six months to heal completely.

It's a hard way to learn a lesson, but necessary in order for people to learn that if you want to maintain some form of longevity within an activity, you constantly have to look after yourself. I have been training on and off for the past semester, but considering I was limited within the things I could do and I had to wear a very restrictive wrist brace, it was not nearly as enjoyable as it could have been. Not to mention that I was nowhere near a position to be able to grade in December.

The other issue that needs to be addressed is that of rehabilitation. Many people, myself included, like to return to their desired activity as soon as the pain is gone or as soon as their doctor gives them the green light. However, if you sustain an injury and are unable to engage in the activity for a prolonged period of time, you lose strength and flexibility within that area of your body. Therefore, before you can jump back into an activity at the same intensity level that you were participating at before, it is necessary for you to regain that which you have lost in the interim.

What is necessary to remember when faced with an injury is that despite all of our desires to excel at *jiu jitsu* and improve ourselves in the process, training with an injury, to a large extent, undermines that effort and, furthermore, puts others in danger. It's a perspective that many may not look at when facing their own injury, but the truth is that injuries prevent us from being fully capable of performing certain movements and if we try to do them anyway, the safety of others may be compromised in the process.

*Jiu jitsu* is not a race. We're not required to grade every three months or even maintain the same pace of progression as our peers. Therefore, if it is necessary for you to take some time off, do it. I can say from experience that taking the time to care for the body in which you will live for the rest of your life is much more important than sacrificing it to satisfy the desire to train...or even to achieve the next belt.

Hoping for a healthy and injury-free semester,

Kimberley McFadden

## 1st Kyu to Shodan and the Spaces Between.

**Mark Yourkevich, Sensei**

Having recently been promoted to *Shodan*, it's clear to me that a chapter of my Jitsu Canada career has come to a close. As I reflect on the experiences of the years leading up to this milestone, I feel a responsibility to share some thoughts, feelings and insights with those of my fellow *jiu jitsuka* who are currently ascending through the grades and may have their sights set on making *jiu jitsu* a life-long pursuit. If I chose to recount even a handful of the successes, disappointments, triumphs and failures that are wound up in my *jiu jitsu* history, Andy would have to release the newsletter as a novella and I would undoubtedly bore you all to tears. As such, I've chosen to restrict my writings to the progression from 1st *Kyu* to *Shodan* and to publish it in three separate segments. A small trilogy, if you will. Hopefully this piece and those which follow will offer some allegorical wisdom and perhaps a little inspiration.

### **- Part One -**

Choosing to set your sites beyond the 1st *Kyu* is no small decision. As many senior grades come to understand, progression through the senior ranks is largely conditional on one's consistent performance as an instructor. If you are a brown belt with your sights set on *Shodan*, this teaching element of your involvement with Jitsu Canada becomes paramount. Some may choose to lend their services to an established club to fulfill this requirement, while those of us with a level enthusiasm that at times borders fanaticism may take up the challenge of starting a club in order to spread their instructional wings.

I think I had been out of my 1st *Kyu* grading for approximately two hours when, over a celebratory dinner, Andy commented, "So, Mark. Kingston could use a community club." Since my yellow-belt grading in Peterborough five and a half years ago, I had felt that I would someday venture to start a club, but it was Andy's declaration that really solidified that aspiration for me. I resolved then and there to make it happen. "Yes, it could," was my simple response. I should pause here to remind you that Andy's "comments," although passively delivered, leave little room for misinterpretation, or to put it bluntly, choice, in the matter.

With the help of Thumper (aka *Sensei* Brooks) I composed a program proposal and focused my efforts on the Kingston Family YMCA, which had two locations and a third branch that served as the Physical Fitness Center for St. Lawrence College, and which seemed the best, if not the only, venue for a community club. I submitted a proposal to the YMCA administrators and was met with a flat out denial. A simple, unequivocal, "No, thanks." Now, if you're planning on starting your own club I recommend you get used to hearing this. In fact, it might even behoove you to rehearse some "cordial" responses to these rejections, as repeatedly biting your tongue proves quite painful.

I persisted, however, by phoning my way up the administrative ladder, keeping my resolve and crossing my fingers. In early January I heard back from the YMCA again. They had decided to take me seriously! Not only that, but they wanted to set up a meeting to review my qualifications and to assess the feasibility of the program. Andy and Thumper were a great deal of help during this process, and by the end of January we were confirmed for a spring start up on an 8 week trial to see if the program was viable. Easy, right? Wrong. My trials as a potential brown belt club instructor were not over.

After having convinced (or harassed depending on your perspective) several Queen's *jiu jitsuka* into signing up for my club over the summer and enlisting several to help me plaster the city with advertisements, we successfully lined up enough students for a sustainable class size. I would be remiss if I did not mention how deeply indebted I am to all those who were out there putting up posters with me and who signed up for that first session despite having only known me for a few short months.

I was ecstatic! Everything had fallen into place for a spring start and I had signed all the necessary documents with the YMCA. With the start date still a month or so off, I was presented with my *hakama* and I saw woven up in those seven folds the culmination of several years of training and several months of hard work in establishing the club. My diligence had paid off and *Sensei Yourkevich's* YMCA *Jiu Jitsu* club was going to be a reality! It was easily the most powerful and pivotal event in my *jiu jitsu* career. I was deeply honored and very, very pleased.

My exaltation was short-lived, though. Just two days before the club's official start date I received a phone call saying that the YMCA was deeply sorry, but my *jiu jitsu* program was being cancelled do to a revenue-sharing conflict that apparently rendered our arrangement in violation of one of the YMCA's key policies. I was crushed, flattened, shattered...and my tongue really hurt. The word "devastation" fails to do justice to the way I felt at that very moment, but it goes the farthest toward summing up my state of mind. My potential students, some of whom had stayed in Kinston for the summer solely on the promise of a club, would be left hanging and I would be an instructor without a club. My *haks* would hang on the wall, unused, deprived of their significance.

Devastation turned to anger in the space of five minutes and I called Andy and Thumper to break the bad news. I owe both Andy and Thumper a serious debt of gratitude for talking me down from the proverbial ledge and inhibiting the many bridge-burning (or otherwise vandalistic) responses to the news that I had come up with in the short time between getting the news and sharing it with them. After calming down, I formulated a last ditch attempt to save the "club that never was." I composed a harsh but professional letter to the CEO bluntly pointing out the major disappointment that the last-minute cancellation represented not only to me, but to the students that had committed to Kingston, and *jiu jitsu*, for the summer. I concluded it by suggesting possible alternatives to the problem they had encountered and beseeched that they not drop us from the roster. After a little more deliberation, and some creative administrative angling I had my club... again, and I had cleared the first of several obstacles I would face on the journey from brown belt to *Shodan*.

It took as much persistence, patience, and resiliency as I've ever been faced with in any of my grading examinations to finally find myself kneeling at the head of my own class, bowing to my first group of students. And it was at that moment that a realization crystallized in my mind, though I'm sure I had known it all along: the persistence, patience, and resiliency that we are continually honing in the confines of the dojo are qualities that serve to benefit and better us outside the realm of self defense and combat. Be sure to carry them with you when you *rei* off of the mats at the end of every session, as they are by far the most important and practical techniques *jiu jitsu* will ever teach you.

**End of part one – to be continued.**

### **Contributions needed!**

Grateful thanks to the contributors to this and previous issues. The next issue will be May 2007; deadline for submission is 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Contributions are welcome and encouraged from all members. These can be about anything relevant to the martial arts. Contributions can be sent electronically to [newsletter@jitsucanada.com](mailto:newsletter@jitsucanada.com)

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