

Suburban Life

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Holistic martial arts

Self-defense classes that are much more than block, punch, kick

By C.L. Ruggenstein
special writer

Peter Carbone believes it's not enough to know how to break bodies with martial arts; it's also important to know how to put them back together.

Carbone teaches what he calls "holistic" martial arts — defense as it should be taught — in his Saturday class at Betty Johnston Dance Studio in Farmington.

"When you think of self defense, you think 'Hai' as he karate-chopped the air. 'That's not what it's about.'

Real self-defense martial arts is different than sport karate because it incorporates the use of "vital points," he said.

"Now, (with vital points) you're talking about something detrimental to a person's health," Carbone said. He called student Mike Meek, 19, of

St. Clair Shores out of the class to demonstrate. "There are 120 vital points on the front, and 120 on the back of the body," Carbone explained. Knowing the points and how to attack them would kill or cure, he said.

He pointed out several places along Meek's wrist and arm, pressing them to make Meek wince or collapse by turns.

"If you know how to attack, you can give someone a heart attack," among other things, Carbone said.

BUT, HE added, it's important to know how to heal as well as hurt. Though hitting certain points at the base of the skull could cause death, pressing them in another way can relieve headaches. And vigorous massage of a point on the outside of the wrist can stop a heart attack, he said.

"So you see, the study of martial arts is not as cut-and-dried as block, punch and kick," he said. His aim in teaching is to help the development of individuals, and his overall philosophy is "Attitude determines human performance."

What he teaches is the ancient way of martial arts, passed down from Samurai warrior father to first-born son on Okinawa, Carbone said. Their exclusive knowledge, except for vital points, became public when the emperor disbanded them at the turn of the century.

The emperor then introduced martial arts to the schools, where it became more of a sport, and no one taught vital points. Carbone said he

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TOM ARNETT/staff photographer

Carl Eatsick of Farmington, Rob Filoti of Novi and Ralph Zeronis of Farmington practice punches. Eatsick is assistant to the instructor for the class.

Peter Carbone demonstrates how to stimulate vital points on his student Mike Meek, a resident of St. Clair Shores.

TOM ARNETT/staff photographer

More than child's play for kids using makeup

KARA McElreath, 8, zips open her makeup bag, applies pink blush and blue eyeshadow, touches up her lipstick and dots on some lily flower perfume.

Sometimes she wants to feel grown-up like her mom. Other times, she puts on her great-grandmother Caroline's cranberry dress and pretends she's Cinderella.

"I feel like I'm an adult," she said. "Adults get to wear makeup and hoop earrings, stay up late, go shopping and use big sewing machines."

From the pink faces to their polished toes, little girls are looking more like big girls these days. They don't have to sneak into mom's drawers or borrow big sister's blush anymore.

Now there are lines of cosmetics and jewelry geared to children. They're sold at Toys "R" Us, K mart, Children's Palace, Circus World, Kiddie Land in Southfield, Farmington, Troy, Rochester and elsewhere.

They go by such names as My Sweet Sixteen; Dress and Dazzle (Toys "R" Us); Fazz (Hasbro) and Kids Nails and Faces (Kinghead).

"Little girls love to play dress-up," said Grace Shafrir, president and chief executive officer of Kinghead Corp. in Lyndhurst, N.J. "We wanted to give them something to play with that would look real, yet look off-the-shelf."

Shafrir's inspiration came from her four daughters, ages 5 to 14. "My number three daughter (then six years old) came to lunch one day wearing my fake nails. And I thought what a wonderful idea."

She hopes girls ages 5 to 8 will use the cosmetics

and nails for role-playing. "We'd prefer they be fairy princesses and movie stars rather than just like mom."

THE KIDS jewelry market is booming just quickly as kids cosmetics, according to Mitch Plotnick, editor of Accent, a trade publication for fashion jewelry based near Philadelphia, Pa.

"Kids are bombarded from TV and other media with fashion information," he said. "They're fashion conscious at a younger age."

The children's jewelry market blossomed after the advent of the Swatch watch, Plotnick said. "It was one of the few serious watches for pre-teens and teens."

"Now, kids can buy scaled-down representations of what their mothers and older sisters wear — hoops, denim and button jewelry."

Laura McElreath, manager of a Kiddie Land store, said her store carries many of the kids cosmetics and jewelry kits. "But a lot of people don't like to buy their kids makeup kits," she said. "It seems to be mainly kids with their own money."

Jennifer McElreath, 5, (Kara's sister) begged Santa to bring her a Dress and Dazzle jewelry and cosmetic set to her house in Troy. "If I didn't get this, I would keep hugging my mom for makeup," she said matter-of-factly.

But mom, Laurel, doesn't allow them to wear the makeup for more than an hour or two during playtime.

Psychologists in Oakland County seem to agree that it's OK to let kids experiment with makeup as part of the role-playing process.

"If they're playing dress-up, they're just imitating adults," said Barbara Bebout of Rochester Hills, a psychologist.

"They also know that when they go to school the next day, they aren't expected to look like that."

Sometimes kids carry the "I want to look like an adult" syndrome too far.

"A few decades ago, children dressed differently than teenagers," said Julie Lohrmann, a psychologist at the Center for Realistic Living in Troy.

"Girls couldn't wear long stockings or makeup until they were teens. Now infants are wearing designer diapers. By age two or three, many children are dressed like miniature versions of their parents."

"Girls at age six or seven have expensive makeup kits and feel undressed if they go outdoors without mascara or eyeshadow," she said, paraphrasing an comment from David Elkind's book, "All Grown Up and No Place to Go." Elkind is a nationally known child psychologist.

Lohrmann said a 7-year-old client started out playing with the kitchen set in the office's play therapy room. But after watching a TV commercial showing a little girl applying makeup, she began combing the therapy room shelves for cosmetics.

"In the commercials, the 10-year-old child looks like a 20-year-old model," the psychologist said.

This image can cause problems for some children. "An insecure or awkward 10-year-old would see the glamorous model, then look in mirror and wonder why she can't look like that."



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