

Suburban Life

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Karate kids

Sisters are 2 of the youngest in the state to earn black belts

By Noreen Flack
staff writer

WHEN IT COMES to self defense, there are two young Farmington sisters who can protect themselves in dangerous situations.

Rebecca Dea, 11 and Maria Dea, 9, are two of the youngest black belts in Michigan.

"The best strength they have is that they look like cute little girls who are very small and weak," said Nick Colling, the girls' Tae Kwon Do instructor. "They can be very surprising when they start sparring and slink a shot in."

The girls took an interest in the martial arts when their father, who is also a black belt, began taking classes with the American and Korean Tae Kwon Do program in Farmington YMCA three years ago.

"I found that it became very helpful to them," said Vita Dea, the girls' mother. "The mind has a lot of capabilities and their ability with memorization has increased significantly. It has helped them in school with things they could never do before."

Classes at the Y offer a combination of traditional karate patterns of movement for total mind and body control.

Tae Kwon Do promotes awareness, self confidence, body balance, concentration, and respect, Colling said.

"IT IS IMPORTANT not just to respect others, but to respect yourself," Colling said. "If you have self respect, you can control a defensive situation and not let yourself be abused."

The girls have attend classes three times a week at the Y with instructors Colling and Bill Chunn.

They became black belts with their father in May.

"Most of the time they will put us against a taller or heavier person," Rebecca Dea said. "They make us use our mind on how we can get in on them even if they are bigger."

The girls have also participated in women's self-defense classes at the Y which works with the Tae Kwon Do school by using certain moves and altering karate techniques to be more beneficial for women, Colling said.

"The girls were quiet and reserved when they began classes three years ago, but they have become more outgoing and confident, Colling said.

"I think it has done a lot for me," Rebecca Dea said. "I have become more confident with my classes."

"We train them so their mind is always at work, active and aware," Colling said. "They are much more aware of what to do in a dangerous situation. They can recognize the situation and leave."

THEY HAVE performed demonstrations for special groups and events. They have both won a number of trophies by participating in tournaments throughout Michigan and in Illinois and Indiana.

"Once I had to compete against Maria," Rebecca Dea said. "We were competing for third place. Maria won. I came in fourth."

"I like the back fist and elbows technique where you raise your elbows to strike," Maria Dea said.

"We don't fight in class," Colling said. "We practice by sparring which is a technique used without making contact. We prepare students to be aware of how to react in a desperate situation without fighting unless it is necessary."

"I enjoy it," Rebecca said. "But a lot of times it was a drag because I had to miss a friend's party or some-

thing because I was in a tournament."

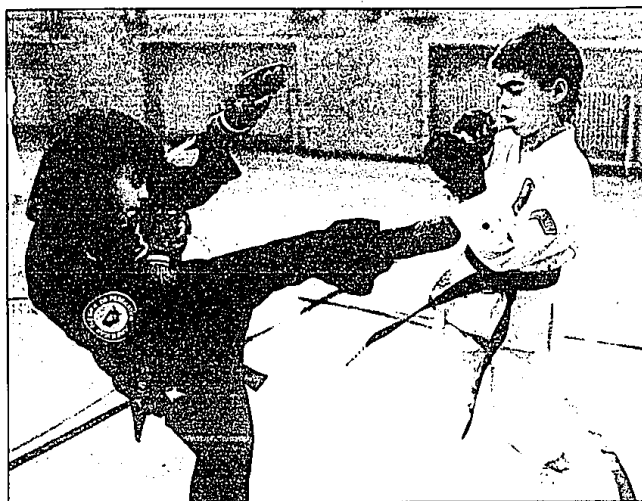
The Y holds classes for all ages with sessions that combine adults with children. They also run sessions separately.

"Juniors have so much energy," Colling said. "They make the seniors more active. And the children get to work with someone with more wisdom and patience."



BRIAN TOOVALIAN/staff photographer

Sisters Rebecca and Maria Dea (above) help one another with stretching exercises before their lesson begins. At left Rebecca, who was 10 when she earned her black belt, spars with Marc Smith, a 13-year-old brown belt who lives in Farmington. The patches on their uniforms read "American Tae Kwon Do Association."



Writers fill gaps for TV viewers

By Shirley Ross Iden
staff writer

Journalists don't do windows or fixtures. And they're not in the solution business, says Ellen Goodman, author and columnist.

"I'm in the 'what it means' business, and that's an increasing part of journalism. People who get their information from television need writing and newspapers."

Goodman was addressing the National Council of Jewish Women, a Southfield organization with long-standing credentials for social action. She writes opinion in a column called "At Large," syndicated through the Washington Post. Writer's Group in more than 400 newspapers.

"Making sense is not like making bread," she writes in her most recently published book "Making Sense." There is no cookbook to study, no recipe to follow. The attempt to make sense of the personal and public world in which we live is a high risk business."

GOODMAN DEFINED her task as columnist as chronicling and understanding the tenor of the times from her vantage point as associate editor of the Boston Globe.

After a two-year stint at Newsweek in the early 1960s, she spent 1965-67 as a reporter on the Detroit Free Press.

"My first husband's job was here, and I slipped up and down the freeway to Ann Arbor for two years," she said.

Currently, she lives near Boston with her husband, Bob Levey. She

has a grown daughter and two stepchildren.

"I WRITE opinion," she told her audience. "An opinion grows out of your experience and understanding of the facts."

"A columnist has to figure out what's happening and also put themselves on the line."

Goodman's journalist bag contains "a lot of national politics, the interaction between political and public life, and so many topics made political in today's world."

"The most mundane of subjects such as eating, dressing, drinking, and sex are examples of private issues now politicized," she said.

SPEAKING OF POLITICS, Goodman said it's difficult to discern whether President Bush is accomplishing anything.

"Dave Broder (syndicated columnist) called him 'the Eisenhower of our day.'"

Of former President Reagan she said, "He left the government in financial shambles" and "Today, kids are politics."

"Reagan was interested in children from the moment of conception to the moment of birth."

Her own career as a parent began with the birth of a daughter "in the usual way" and a six-week stay at home.

"AFTER THAT I became the only mother of a preschooler in the newsroom. Today, more than half of women with kids under 18 months are working."

Contemporary women are trying to keep the best of family life along with the best of work life, no easy task, Goodman said.

"What used to be referred to as Superwomen are now tagged by younger women as 'Superdrudges,' gals who wanted it all so they got stuck with it all."

"Women still earn only 70 cents to every \$1 a male earns. And there are limits to the kind of success you can dress for."

GOODMAN, who wore a red suit with slim skirt and double-breasted jacket with drawstring waist, said women have been successful at making their agenda important.

"But will Bush support day care? There have to be changes, both because child care is necessary and it's right."

In the same year that Goodman covered the Republican National Convention in Detroit, she won the coveted Pulitzer Prize which, she said, "thrilled her."

"I had to submit about a dozen columns, and the prize was for 'distinguished commentary.'"

"When the New York Times wrote it up, they referred to me as a summa cum laude graduate of Radcliffe, but I was just cum laude."

"I CALLED the editor, and he said 'Well, you're the first person in history to get a Pulitzer and a summa on the same day.'"

"The thing about the Pulitzer Prize is, it's different than other honors, the next day you have to do it all again."



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Ellen Goodman's writing talent and her down-to-earth view of the meaning of social change won her a Pulitzer Prize in 1980.