

Member starts fundraiser

By Alexandra K. Bennett

On February 25th, one of Maine's finest restaurants, Slates (in Hallowell) was badly damaged in an electrical fire. I was so sad upon hearing that over 60 employees lost their jobs and at least 6 tenants lost their homes and belongings. I decided that, rather than sitting back and watching from Wilton, I wanted to help in any way I could. Slates was a one-of-a-kind place that, once you've been there, you never forget. You noticed the artistic décor and the charming atmosphere. The menu was always creative, and the food amazing. Slates will always be special to me because it also happened to be the place I introduced the man I would later marry to my mother.

I have been collecting donations with bins I've set up at over a half a dozen businesses in Farmington: Liquid Sunshine, Howard's Rexall, Sears, Calico Patch, Everyday Music, and Farmington House of Pizza. I have successfully raised a little over \$260 thus far. I urge everyone who can to donate and help the people of Slates get back on their feet. You can do so by stopping by one of the aforementioned businesses, or at the front desk at Fitness Stylz. Even a small contribution helps. I thank those of you who already have or will donate for your generosity.



Alexandra Bennet

Ask the Instructor: Jim Flagg

Q: *I have a Combat question. I seem to lose balance at times during combat especially during kicks. Side and rear kicks are the worst. Do you have any idea how I can do these better and not lose balance? I don't feel I am getting all I should be getting out of the program. Could I be bringing the planted foot in too far and throwing off my balance?*

A: First, don't worry about feeling uncoordinated. I still do sometimes when they throw something new at us, like the evasive side kick on this release. The best thing to do for your balance is to **check your foot position**. Make sure that your feet are in a good Combat stance and when you transition to a kick, really focus on weight placement. Before you throw the kick, make sure that you have transferred the weight from being equal on both feet to your planted foot. **Do this before the kick is thrown.** Any time you throw a kick, you want it to be under control. As my Kenpo Instructors use to tell us, "Put your foot down because you want to, not because you have to." This is the same in COMBAT. If you are throwing a kick and your momentum is forcing you to bring your foot back to the ground, it is because you are off balance. The best way to solve this is practice the kicks slowly. Find a wall or a pole to hold onto and do the kicks v-e-r-y slowly. Remember, "you have to learn to walk before you run." Your muscles will become stronger this way and you will begin to form a very solid base. By doing them slowly, you will have to stay balanced. Once you get the form of the kick right, try to do them slowly without the wall or pole. If you can do the kicks like this, once the music gets going and you are doing them faster, it is going to be much easier to stay balanced. I had a very hard time keeping my balance on the back kicks when I first started teaching Combat, so one day I started doing them super slowly and after throwing a bit of a temper tantrum, refocused and worked on my form and balance throwing a back kick slowly. Before I knew it, I was keeping my balance in class during the back kicks much better.



Jim Flagg

The other thing that would be very beneficial would be to work on these kicks with an instructor...I can work with you on them sometime if you would like. That way I can check how your feet are placed and what you are doing with your upper body. It is very common to feel like you're just throwing a kick and the next move is already starting. That is because our legs do not move as quickly. Here are some tips for staying on pace.

Throw your kicks lower - Sometimes we try to throw a kick too high and it slows us down, making it harder to stay on pace with the track.

Count the beats to the music in your head - I was in band when I was in school so it is almost second nature for me to count beats in my head while teaching class.

Everything we do is on a 4 count. If you can keep the count with the music and figure out when I am picking up my leg and throwing a kick, it may help you to be right on the beat as well when you throw your kick. I can elaborate on this if anyone wants help with this. Sometimes I will count out loud in class to keep everyone on the beat.

Snap your kick back - We all like to throw the kick with speed and force, but sometimes we forget to bring the kick back quickly. In a real fighting scenario, if you threw a kick and didn't retract it back quickly, your opponent would grab your foot, spin your foot around, and probably take you down. Then he would laugh at you and take your wallet. In all seriousness though, concentrate on bringing that foot back quickly...this may help you stay on the beat throughout the track.

You can find more answers at www.fitnessstylz.com

Plan ahead with our events calendar

May 12th **Swing Dance**
Live Music featuring **DC & Company**

Mother's Day Show her she's special
May 13th with elegant dining.

May 25th **Wine Tasting**

Check out our NEW banquet facility.



Carriage House Café
FINE DINING & SPIRITS

Route 4, I Invermore, Maine • 897-5880
Reservations Recommended ~ Walk-ins Welcome