

Martial arts thrive at Doolittle

By Kathi Overstreet
Sentinel-Voice

Students of Grandmaster Kraiguar Smith reaped rewards for their hard work and dedication as participants in the 2004 USA World Championship of Martial Arts at the Riviera Hotel and Convention Center.

Smith's students are with the Doolittle Community Center's Martial Arts and Science Academy's Principals of Discipline class.

The competition was sponsored for the third consecutive year during the weekend of June 25 at the Riviera. The event was originally used as a fundraiser for the Women Against Rape program that Master Stan Witz co-founded.

Witz started the USA World Championship competition in 1982.

"This is the largest competition in the world, so if you place anywhere in the top 15 or 20 you are considered one of the best in the world in your competition," Witz said.

Smith, instructor of the Principals of Discipline class at Doolittle, encouraged 17 of his students to enter the competition. The results were four new world champions



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

Stewards of Grandmaster Kraiguar Smith's Martial Arts and Science Academy's Principals of Discipline class hold trophies from the 2004 USA World Championship of Martial Arts at the Riviera convention center held the weekend of June 25. Pictured are students from Smith's class at Doolittle Community Center. Back row, left to right: Bill Hall (3rd place), world champions Smith, Jacqueline McDowell, Labrishawn Hardwick, Veronica Overton and PacMan Ferguson (3rd place). Front row: Anthony Coleman (3rd place), Saunjay Meyers (3rd place), Kamal Smith (3rd place) and N'Keisha Fleming (3rd place).

and six third-place and three fourth-place finishers.

"For him (Smith) to have that many winners come out of his school, speaks volumes about him. He truly has a gift," Witz said.

The first year's event only attracted 200 competitors, while this year's tournament attracted nearly 6,500 competitors and 25,000 spectators.

The international compe-

dition features martial arts seminars and competitions such as team sparring, cardio-kickboxing, weapons and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, to name but a few. ESPN, Fox and Black Belt TV telecast the event in four languages.

Smith has been a student of the martial arts for more than five decades. He is one of the most recognized and credentialed instructors in the nation. In addition to being

creator of Kune Lop Sao and founder of the Original Warrior Association, he is also a Hall of Famer, an eight-time International Champion, 20-time grand champion and an honorary 10th degree black belt in KiJuFu and Bushido Ryu Ju-Jitsu, as well as an actor, author, historian and biographer.

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Property tax bills mailed this week

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Clark County Treasurer's Office will begin sending out tax bills for real estate property this week. Tax bills for more than 570,000 parcels have been finalized and will be mailed, according to county treasurer Laura Fitzpatrick.

Two factors determine the amount of taxes payable annually on a property: the assessed value of the property, and the tax rate for the area (tax district) in which the property is located. Any change in this year's tax bill amount is a direct result of a change in the assessed value of the property, the tax rate, or both.

Fitzpatrick said the total tax levy on real properties in Clark County for fiscal year 2004-2005 is \$1,386,558,026, an increase of 14 percent from the previous fiscal year. There are more than 38,000 new parcels on the tax rolls this year, a 7 percent increase.

The property taxes collected by the county treasurer are disbursed monthly to the state, school district, county, cities, libraries and other special districts.

"A little over half of the taxpayers will receive a 'Notice of Tax Distribution' postcard instead of an actual tax bill," Fitzpatrick says. "This means that a mortgage company has requested the tax bill for the property be sent to them."

State law specifies that taxes on real estate property are due on the third Monday in August, but also provides most taxpayers the option of paying their taxes in four installments. The installment due dates for 2004-2005 are Aug. 16 and Oct. 4, 2004 and Jan. 3 and March 7, 2005.

Fitzpatrick encourages taxpayers to review their closing documents or to call their lending institutions to get a clear understanding of who is responsible for making the tax payments. For more information, call 455-4323.

Club empowers youth to dream

By Lés Pierres Streater
Sentinel-Voice

It's Friday at 6 p.m. at the Cambridge Recreation Center.

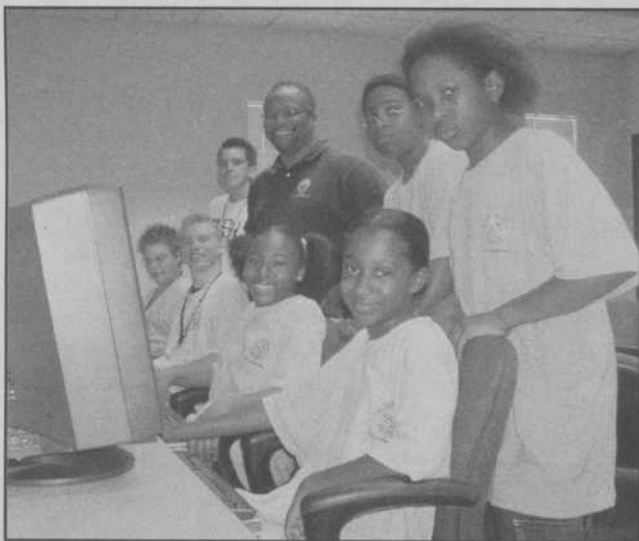
Instead of 60 young people hanging out in the streets, they're being entertained and mentored by members from the "Off The Streets" program, which seek to make a difference in the lives of young people by offering a positive alternative.

"Off The Streets" meets at Big Keith's House, 1240 W. Owens, Suite 3.

The program, which meets on Fridays, is open to middle and high school students to participate in social, cultural and recreational activities, accentuating positive aspects of being a young and crossing all ethnicity and racial lines.

The vision statement focuses on "exposing our youth to their own authenticity and reality of dreams by empowering them through a lifestyle of continual personal growth and dedication to a life-long concern for all communities."

"Off The Streets" is a component of Big Keith's House, a non-profit organization that works in collaboration with other organizations to serve



Sentinel-Voice photo by Lés Pierres Streater

"Off The Streets" program participants work on computers. Front row, seated: Kassandra Scott, Kandyce Martin, Kolio Kolen and Ben Burnett. Standing: Everett Scott, DeMahrin Manor, counselor Jerome Parhman and Nico Arthur.

youth, families and residents of the Greater Las Vegas area.

"We get together and throw positive teen parties for the kids instead of having them hanging out in the streets on Friday night," said Keith Bowen, director and founder of Big Keith's House. "I like dealing with young kids because they are our future and they can relate to growing up on the streets and having nothing to do."

"We've all been there," Bowen said. "This is an op-

portunity to give them something better to do with their lives. Living here in Las Vegas, things are mostly geared for the adults and not too many things are available for the youth."

"Off The Streets" includes having a place to hang out Fridays from 3 to 8:30 p.m., have a free meal, watch movies, open recreation, pre-employment training, peer mediation and conflict resolution.

(See Program, Page 8)

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