

# THE DRAGONFIRE



## HOT News from the Studio

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**Portsmouth, December 2025**

## Goodbye 2025

This year is almost at an end. And make no mistake, winter is here, even putting aside the few nicer days we've had. Let's take just a moment to think about the following:

1. Parking lots, sidewalks, and roads can all become slippery due to frost, ice, and snow. Be aware, and walk carefully to reduce the possibilities of falling. While every effort is made to keep the studio lot cleared, there is always the chance that some ice/snow will remain and create a hazard, particularly around the drain area. And remember—the lot is sloped. Be careful!
2. With the earlier darkness, it's not always easy to see walkers or bikers. Drivers need to be extra diligent, and for walkers/bikers – be aware you may not be visible. Kids... don't run out of the studio door without looking to see if cars are coming in or out of the lot.
3. Winter means boots. When coming into the studio, students should go directly into the black-rug area inside the training room and remove their outside shoes (boots) and place them on one of the shelves. Then change into training shoes. Please do not leave boots and shoes in the middle of the front reception room. They pose a tripping hazard.
4. Keep your training shoes clean and dry by only wearing them in the studio, and not outside. Respect the studio and your fellow students by not tracking snow or mud onto the training floor.
5. Carry a cell phone and keep it charged. If there is an emergency, being able to call for help could make a huge difference in the outcome of the situation.

Enjoy your winter sports! Remember to dress appropriately for the weather. Make good choices!

# Congratulations to our New Black Sashes!

Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Keene studio, three Portsmouth students tested for their 1<sup>st</sup> Level Black Sash. The testing group was small (that can be good or not-so-good!), but all three were great representatives of our studio, demonstrating their commitment to their craft. GM DeMasco was quite impressed!

Big kudos, congrats, and general pats-on-the-back to John, Heidi, and Ma. Y'all looked *maaarvelous!*



## Tough Choices

Many of our students (both youth and adults) are active in other activities throughout the year (music, sports, graduate school, etc.). Balancing martial arts training with the other activities can be challenging. When conflicts do arise, tough choices need to be made. If part of a team, and that team is depending on the student's participation in a game, playoff, etc., the student must balance their personal desires (perhaps for a belt advancement) with the commitment made to their team members. If college/graduate school requires more time than originally anticipated, similar choices must be made.

We encourage outside activities, as these provide experiences needed for continued growth and maturity. Our training complements many team sports (or individual sports) with the increased focus and physical abilities learned here. But, when students take excessive time off to participate in other activities, it is sometimes hard to come back to the training they originally began with us.

A missed lesson here or there will not adversely affect overall progress towards advancement – particularly if, when here, all effort and focus is directed towards doing the best that can be done. Extended absences do create challenges, but these can also be overcome with some additional attention to one's material (and possibly a private lesson or two). We're here. We want you to be here, too!

## December Birthdays!

Tilly D.      Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>

John G.      Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>



## Winter Weather Advisories.....

With winter weather soon to become a concern, please remember that the studio does not always follow the school district closures.

We try, as much as possible, to maintain our regular class schedule throughout the year, regardless of weather conditions. HOWEVER, sometimes it's just safer to remain closed. And honestly, as Master Cindy gets older, she's less inclined to challenge the road conditions.

An email will be sent out, as well as a posting put on our Facebook page. Please make sure that Master Cindy has your most current mobile phone number and/or email address.

Regardless, even if the studio is open, please make your own decision as to your ability/desire to travel in inclement weather.

# Time to Check in on Those Goals

Where are you in meeting your goals for the year? Nailed 'em?? Awesome. More to do? That's OK. Keep working at it. Gave up ages ago?? Well, then, time to rethink what those goals were.

Goals are meant to challenge you, not crush you. They should be specific, a bit tough, but attainable. They're meant to keep you on a productive track. That's all. They're not meant to stress you out to the point that you shut down.

If you find your goals are doing that, then you should determine what, specifically, is causing the stress and try to address it. Of course, it's so much easier to say this than to do it. But take some time and give it a try, particularly with the holiday season upon us. That's stressful enough!

We're coming up on a new year. *Relax!* When the time is right, the goals will fall into place. Life goes on. Enjoy it. Don't stress it.

## ***Calendar Updates:***

December 13 <sup>th</sup>	Portsmouth Belt Advancement
December 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>STUDIO CLOSED</b> Christmas Day
January 1 <sup>st</sup> '26	<b>STUDIO CLOSED</b> New Year's Day
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>STUDIO OPEN</b> Martain Luther King Day
February 14 <sup>th</sup>	Portsmouth Belt Advancement
April 11 <sup>th</sup>	Portsmouth Belt Advancement

*Psssstt.... That awesome, cool form we've been hinting at? It involves nunchucks. **Double** nunchucks! YIKES!*

*A sign-up list will be available soon. Please be aware that students interested in learning this form will need to purchase 2 sets of the weapon. We'll factor in that time element, but if you want to learn the form, you'll need the weapons in advance. Master Cindy will guide you on what to purchase or she can order them for you (a slight additional fee is involved).*

# *Season's Greetings!*

**Visit/Follow our Facebook Page:** Steve DeMasco's Shaolin Studios of Portsmouth, NH

**Webstore** <https://ShaolinStudiospa.secure-decoration.com>