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Roswell's Pukish decks the Hall of Fame

By Jennifer Sami, North Fulton Neighbor Staff Writer

Watching him serve Gatorade and filling paper plates with Pepperidge Farm goldfish for a group of children, it's hard to believe Alpharetta resident Pete Pukish is the same guy who trains FBI and Secret Service agents.

He is also the same man who holds a fifth degree black belt in karate, a fifth degree black belt in ju jitsu and the title of Renshi, or polished expert, which is only awarded to master instructors.

But don't be fooled — the art form isn't about violence and destruction, but about healing, integrity and the integration of mind body and spirit.

It was May 16, at the 16th annual Great American Outdoor Camp in Sarasota, FL, when Pukish was inducted into the AJKAI Martial Arts Hall of Fame, an honor given to only one person a year.

"You're nominated by the present members and it has to be unanimous. You are recognized for what you're doing for the art and the community. It's not only dedication to the local community, but also with government groups and law enforcement agencies," said Pukish.

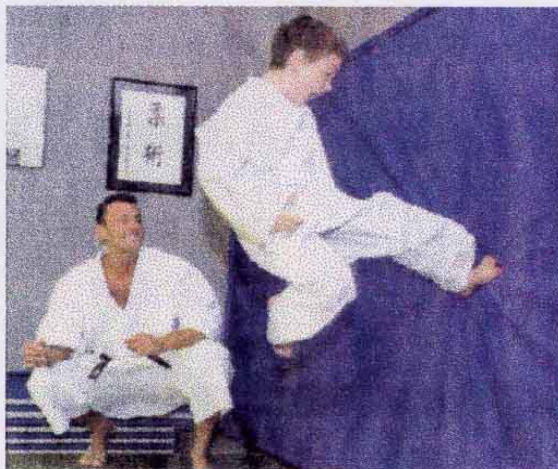
While his commitment to training around the United States and Europe has earned him international admiration, his dedication to north Fulton is what earned him the recognition from nearly 300 students he has trained.

As owner and operator of Satori Martial Arts & Healing Center in Roswell, Pukish decided to use his skill in the art form on a smaller scale, only traveling out of the area a few times a year.

"There's more of a reward doing things at home and investing in the people here on a daily basis than going somewhere and giving them a sample and leaving them to practice it alone. I'd rather spend my time here teaching on a daily basis," said Pukish as he gave the signal for another protein shake from the protein pump and iron pro shop up the hall.

Pukish said he survives off the protein shakes he drinks between his six meals and gallon of water a day. He begins every morning with a Tall Americano from Starbucks, a blend of two or three shots of espresso and water.

"I call it Italian rocket fuel. I hit two or three of those a day, that's my one vice, well, that and Ben and Jerry's Cherry Garcia ice cream. If I can have some coffee in the morning and some ice cream at night, it's been a good day," said the vegetarian.



Stephanie Roebuck/Staff
Aaron Peterson, 8, practices a karate kick under the supervision of Renshi Pete Pukish

In addition to close to a dozen yoga, Pilates and kickboxing classes available at the center, Satori offers 35 martial arts all taught by eight certified instructors. Instead of sleeping in Sundays, Pukish's instructors are up and at Satori by 8 a.m. for a mandatory instructors' training workshop.

"I want them to improve their teaching skills, but I also want them to advance their own personal level of

training to the next level," said the Queens, N.Y. native. "They say you learn more by teaching than training, but the training is the type of thing that never ends, it just becomes a way of life. Every day I wake up, there is something new to me. It's exciting and it's better than it was the day before."

To find out class schedules, register for a class or take a free class call (770) 521-1152 or visit the web site at www.SatoriRoswell.com.