

Back to the basics at the ASN Seminar



Grandmaster Burke focused on learning the basics at the 2012 ASN Federation Seminar held in beautiful Richmond VA.

Grandmaster Burke says that many nunchaku practitioners put too much focus on swinging the weapon and thereby forget the footwork. It is the footwork that gives the forms their characteristics and it is just as important as learning how to swing the nunchaku really fast. There is a natural progression in learning the American Style Nunchaku and this is what GM Burke wanted to emphasize at this year's camp.

It is a beautiful day in Richmond Virginia on April 25th. Grandmaster Burke decides to teach the class outside in the sun. The focus of this year's training camp is the learning curve of the American Style Nunchaku. GM Burke feels that many practitioners are very good at swinging the nunchaku but not all have the same skills in footwork. Efficient footwork is an essential part of any martial art. When faced with an opponent you need to be able to create distance or move in for an attack. American Style Nunchaku is no exception to this. The challenge for the nunchaku practitioner is to keep the weapon or weapons in constant movement while doing footwork. The brain has to handle the complicated movement of the weapon and the footwork at the same time. GM Burke wants to see the footwork spread out using a large area when doing the forms.

Grandmaster Burke explained the learning curve which he uses when instructing. First you need to train swinging the nunchaku so that you can do the techniques safely. The

goal is off course to make the weapon an extension of the body and the techniques second nature so that the body can execute them without any conscious thought process. This requires thousands and thousands of repetitions. When the techniques are at the level where you don't risk hitting yourself you progress with adding footwork. The focus for a high level nuchaku practitioner is mainly on the movement of the body. Swinging the weapon should come naturally and automatically.

During training GM Burke displayed several new and exciting techniques and combos, and structured the teaching so that it would incorporate the learning curve. This was an important experience for the instructors so that they can take this knowledge back to students. Grandmaster Burke explained that the ASN is constantly evolving and he wants to keep developing the style together with his students. At the level of black belt you are expected to be a part of that development. Therefore it is so important that you understand the foundation of the style - the basics.