



NWMAF July 2021 Newsletter

News for Our Members, Friends, and Supporters

"Empowering women and girls to achieve personal and collective strength, safety, and well being through martial arts, healing arts, and self-defense education"

Events - We Persist 2021 starts Friday!

By Natalie DeMaoribus, NWMAF Events Coordinator

WE PERSIST 2021 STARTS THIS FRIDAY! The first weekend is mostly (but not all!) Self-Defense Instructor Content. (Sunny Graff is teaching her popular alignment class on Sunday morning!) The second weekend is going to be a little more crowded, with some concurrent classes. There are so many choices! Whether you favor sticks, guns, or yoga, there's something for you.

REGISTRATION IS STILL OPEN! Sign up today at nwmaf-we-persist-2021.org. Besides registration pages, there's a cool filterable schedule and instructor bios. Massive, colossal thank-you to Amy Eckert for helping get this set up!

That also means **it's time to sign up to help!** Here's what we need right now:

- **Zoom coordinator** - Help organize Zoom assistants into shifts and make sure they're comfortable with Zoom
- **Zoom assistants** - Two per class. Keep in mind that you can't be *totally* wrapped up in the class if you do this... [Sign up on this Google Doc!](#)
- **Purple Ribbon and Conflict Resolution volunteers** - Provide emotional support or mediation (respectively) to participants as needed. (Format TBD)
- **Conflict Resolution coordinator** - Help organize volunteers and make sure they're comfortable with the job.

Why don't you sign up? Yes, you! Remember, this event is 100% volunteer-run. Please help us out! Email Events@NWMAF.org with questions or to sign up.

We still need more acts for the performance on Sunday night! (Live or pre-recorded are OK.) Let's pack it with everything we're proud of! It doesn't have to be mind-blowing black-belt

stuff - maybe you finally nailed that long intermediate-level form you've been working on. Show us! (We promise to cheer our heads off.)

And next year... Buffalo!

From the Chair: This is Not Your Grandma's NWMAF

By Lisette Delgado-Fitzgerald, NWMAF Board Chair

In case you haven't noticed yet, times a' changin'. Since its original Special Training events in 1976, the National Women's Martial Arts Federation has provided a home for women, girls, and gender non-conforming people to train martial arts in safe, welcoming environments in which they not only see themselves fully represented in the student body, but in the leadership and instructors, holding high rank and innovating the arts in the mostly male-centric martial arts community. For those of you doing the math, that is 45 years of community.

As with everything, though, knowledge bases, ethics, training methodologies, and community standards evolve, hopefully for the better, but always looking ahead. The arrow of time is swift and moves only into the future; those things that do not change and grow with it get doomed to extinction.

We can rest assured that the pioneering women who 45 years ago saw the need for empowerment and liberation could only dream about the accomplishments of this generation and still dream of what is yet to come. The road is long and we, NWMAF members, allies, leaders, instructors, and students, must remain at the forefront, paving the way.

Every Board and Member before us has done their part; now, it is our turn. And I have news for y'all, this Board is unlike anything you have seen before!

We are dedicating our tenure to the work of preparing this organization to meet the challenges of this decade and re-launch in 2022. We are working toward a more modern, self-reflective organization that can service all of our members across generations, pivot quickly and seamlessly as new information becomes available, and encourages full member-body participation in decision-making processes, leadership, and steering this ship toward our centennial in 2076 and beyond.

Our annual NWMAF Conference starts in just a few days and its title of We Persist is not one chosen at random for its pithiness. It speaks to the entire history of this organization, all of the ups and downs, every hardship and every joy and every conflict, from political unrest to pandemics, we are still here. Together, We Persist.

This is why we have chosen the All-Member Meeting that typically takes place during the Conference as the perfect place to introduce you all to our plans for growth. That is what this letter is about. This is my personal invitation, on behalf of our entire Board, for each of you to join us and become a part of the changes we are making. Join us for the All-Member meeting on July 23rd, 7:30PM EST, and become that critical piece of the change-engine.

We need your insight and your help! As you know, all board members are volunteers, and there are very few of us. We can use a hand in bringing all of the changes we have planned to fruition. So, participate in the meeting on the 23rd, volunteer for committees, when Board positions become available, volunteer to step up for a couple of years and help us make things happen. Get involved in ensuring that the NWMAF is still here, years from now, in the way it has been for all of us -- only even better.

You will not be disappointed.

In health,
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Member Spotlight - Why I Train

By Cheryl VanHoosen, NWMAF Treasurer

Why do you train (in the martial arts)? This question was put to me at my second NWMAF conference about twenty years ago by a very senior black belt. At the time I was a color belt in Tae Kwon Do and had only been training a few years.

I had never been asked to put this into words, plus I was a bit intimidated by my questioner. After a moment's thought I answered "because I like who I am on the mat." She told me "Great answer" and turned to speak with an old friend.

"Huh, wonder where that came from?" I thought. I had never considered that I might be a different person on the dojo floor, but when I had time to really think about it, I realized how true my words were. When I'm training, I feel empowered to make mistakes and learn from them. I realize that I can mess up and not feel embarrassed. I feel powerful, not just physically, but emotionally. I feel confident and can make my voice heard.

This is not who I am inclined to be. I am naturally an introvert. I have a hard time at parties and in groups. I grew up being told "perfection is barely adequate." It's tough to learn if you can't make mistakes and hard to feel confident because you know that you will never be perfect.

I continue to check-in with myself. Do I still like who I am on the mat? Over the years, I have tried to carry the person I am on the mat into the rest of my life. One of the thoroughly terrifying things that I have done is volunteer to be the treasurer of NWMAF. Guess what? I survived!

Even though my face was flushed from stress during every board Zoom meeting, I contributed to an organization that I love.

See you...on the mat.

--Cheryl

Self Defense in Action

By Martha Thompson, NWMAF Self Defense

We have an exciting line-up for the 2021 NWMAF Self-Defense Instructors Conference (SDIC)! You'll find sessions on pedagogy, adapting curriculum for different populations, community connection and outreach, physical skills, weapons, voice, big picture issues, and so much more. For a list of the 21 SDIC sessions, email Martha selfdefense@nwmaf.org.

We invite you to contribute your own self-defense stories, either to Martha at selfdefense@nwmaf.org or directly to the newsletter at secretary@nwmaf.org.

Youth Members

By Jes Macalear, NWMAF Youth Program Director

Do you have questions, comments, or suggestions regarding improving the NWMAF's youth program? Whether you're a student, parent/guardian, or instructor, the NWMAF would love to hear from you. If you're under the age of 18 years old, please write an email (with your parent/guardian or instructor) and send it from their email address to youth@nwmaf.org.

Upcoming Board Meeting

The next NWMAF Board meeting is **August 15**. Board meetings typically take place on Sundays at 2 pm central time, via an online meeting site. If you are a member interested in attending, contact Liz, chair@nwmaf.org, and she will provide you with log-in instructions.

Call for Submissions

Have News and Information to Share with the NWMAF Community?

We welcome your submissions of news, opinion pieces, fiction, or other writing related to our practices of martial arts, healing arts, and self-defense. We also accept art, photos, and comics! Our editorial board reserves the right to edit for space or content considerations. The deadline for the next issue is **August 13**, and will be approximately every four to six weeks thereafter. Send contributions to secretary@nwmaf.org.