



# MASTERS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS



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Week of September 11, 2000 50¢



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# BAY NEWS

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INSIDE:

# Oriental World of Self Defense Show On September 13

By Gary Buiso

A martial arts extravaganza returns to Madison Square Garden this week, this time hosted by one of the discipline's greatest stars—Chuck Norris.

Norris will join "Oriental World of Self Defense" creator and director Aaron Banks and Brooklyn's own bare-knuckle brawler Carl Albright at the September 13 event.

Great Grandmaster Banks, 72, is gearing up for the spectacle, which is the 32nd annual event. The show will feature martial arts masters testing their respective disciplines in full contact competition.

"The Oriental World of Self Defense is an event that encourages, motivates and stimulates the people to do something for themselves—martial arts style," Banks said. "A person can watch others doing things for the rest of their lives."

"There is nothing more stimulating than being involved," he said.

Challengers from across the globe—United States, Africa, Japan, China, Korea -- will all do battle inside the ring.

Hollywood star Norris, a former karate middleweight champion, can now be seen on television's "Walker, Texas Ranger."

"Of all the people in motion pictures," Banks said, "Chuck was the most authentic. He was a real champion."

Banks first met Norris in 1967, at Banks' America vs. Orient shows. "Chuck Norris, in my estimation," Banks said, "was the great

est middleweight karate champion that ever lived. One of the most disciplined, most compassionate human beings I've ever met."

As for a comparison between Norris and legend Bruce Lee, Banks said, "Bruce was never on the front lines. Chuck was in the trenches, he competed in many of my tournaments."

Aside from kickin' butt on the big screen and in the ring, Norris is also an active philanthropist, Banks pointed out.

Attendees can look forward to a real battle of the sexes—cross-gender bouts, as well as weapons bouts. Another feature will be disciple vs. discipline bouts: karate vs. kung fu; kung fu vs. judo; judo vs. wrestling, and kickboxing vs. boxing.

Over a billion spectators have seen this event, which Banks debuted in New York City in 1967. "On television, in movies, what you see is staged...they're hoaxes," Banks said, "But here, everything is up front, everything is real."

Since then the show has traveled to Europe, Asia and South America. And

it's played such venues as Radio City Music Hall, Nassau Coliseum, Studio 54, The Ritz and the Beacon Theater. This September will be Banks' 13th appearance in the Garden.

Banks said that at events past, World Wrestling Federation owner and part-time wrestler Vince McMahon "used to sit in the front row...and take notes."

But make no mistake—Banks is no fan of wrestling. "It's a total disgrace," he said. "Wrestling is a farce."

Banks said wrestling, while wildly popular, is a slap in the face to the true "gladiators of the ring," people like Joe Louis and Chuck Norris, who sometimes fought for little pay and very real consequences.

"All they see is people hitting each other...it's terrible," Banks said. "It goes against any kind of civilization. Men battering women, it's absolutely ridiculous."

The goal of his show, Banks says, is to

entertain as well as educate the public about the dedication that is necessary to become a student of the martial arts.

Banks shows no signs of slowing down. "When I retire is possibly when I drop dead in the middle of one of my shows," he confessed. "Because what the world needs is martial arts—for its discipline, for its [beneficial] health purposes."

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Chuck Norris will guest host the 32nd Annual Oriental World of Self Defense.



Martial Arts Daredevil Maurice Elmalem makes quick work of thick slabs of glass.