

Living

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Three Karate students will train in Japan

ATWATER — Three students from the Atwater Karate School will train in Hachioji City, Tokyo, Japan this summer. Representing the United States Kenkojuku Karate Organization in Japan are Pamela Pedro, David Pedro and Ronald Lewis.

They were selected over other Karate students from California, Nebraska, New York, Florida and the Bahamas. They will study advanced Karate and Okinawan weapons with Master Tomosaburo Okano, head of the Nippon Karate-do Kenkojuku in Tokyo.

During their stay in Japan they will undergo intensive training in the use of the Nunchakum Sai, Bo, and Tonfa and also train in advanced forms of Shotokan Karate.

All three are scheduled to demonstrate their style of Karate at various schools of other high ranking Karate dignitaries and are also scheduled to compete in tournaments.

Summer training in Japan often means waking at an early hour and training outdoors in the mountains and at the beach. The high altitude along with training up and down mountain slopes improves endurance and strengthens the leg muscles.

Training at the beach often

takes students into the surf where they stand against oncoming waves. This helps develop good balance and makes stance stronger.

Last summer Okano came to the United States to inspect and teach at his many schools. After inspecting all the schools in the other states he returned to Atwater to visit and to do more teaching.

It was his observation that the students in the Atwater Karate School train hard and are serious about their Karate. I'm sure it was the discipline, the hard training, the strictness of the school that prompted Okano to invite my students to participate in his summer training program," said Sensei Richard Pedro, head instructor at the local school.

"Some people join my school and quit. Some find the training too difficult and the rules too strict. Others simply do not want to abide by the rules of any kind.

"I recently expelled two of my students because their heads got too big and they had bad attitudes toward moral conduct. More discipline and obedience should be taught to young people.

"Pamela, David and Ronald have survived the hardship, the

strictness, the discipline and now its paying off for them. Okano is careful who he invites to Japan. This is an honor for them as students and also an honor for me as their teacher. Someday I would like to take 15-20 students just like them to Japan."

"The City of Atwater can be proud of these three young people," said Sensei Pedro. "They have attained the rank of Black Belt and they continue to train and they are still interested in learning more about Karate.

"That is why I know they will do a fine job in Japan. I have no doubts whatsoever that in competition Pamela, David and Ronald can hold their own both in forms and free-style fighting. The Japanese people will be surprised when they see them in action."

Ronald Lewis is from Louisiana and in the Air Force stationed at Castle Air Force Base. He has been training in Karate for five years and is a first degree black belt. An all around Karate man, he specializes in kicking techniques and free style fighting as well as forms. He is proficient in the use of Okinawan weapons.

Pamela Pedro, 16, is a senior in Atwater High School. She has been training in Karate since the

age of 9. She has the distinction of being the first woman in the United States and Japan, to be awarded first degree black belt in the Kenkojuku Karate system. Specializing in Karate and weapon forms she is also expert in Tai-Jutsu and Karate self-defense techniques.

David Pedro, 12, is an eighth grade student at Mitchell Senior Elementary School. He started training at the age of 5. In spite of his age he trains in the adult classes and has tested for and passed all the requirements for first degree black belt at the adult level. He is proficient in Karate and weapon forms and specializes in the use of Okinawan weapons.

The local Karate-Ka will have some time for sight seeing and souvenir shopping. A ride on the 125 mph Bullet Train, a visit to the Great Buddha shrines at Todaiji Temple at Nara and Kamakura, buying souvenirs in the Ginza, Tokyo's shopping and entertainment district and riding the lifts to the top of Mt. Fuji are on their lists of many things to do.

When asked what each wants most from the trip to Japan David, the youngest responded, "I want to bring back a suitcase full of computer games." Pame-



HEADED FOR JAPAN — Chosen to study Karate, black belt and other martial arts in Japan are: from left, David Pedro, 12; Pamela Pedro, 16, and Ronald Lewis, 24, all of Atwater.

Sun Star Photo by Cynidi Mae Moore

la, a senior at Atwater High answered "I want to take my graduation picture in Japan and eat lots of food."

Ronald, the oldest, said, "Take a lot of pictures and learn more about the customs and culture of Japan."