

Dal Profiles



Name: D. Kirk MacLeod.

How do you feel about technology? A friend of mine last year dubbed me a techno peasant. It's not that I'm afraid of technology. I just don't like it. People are replacing social interactions with technology too often. I'm kinda a Neo-Luddite.

How did your trip to Indonesia come about? I went through Canada World Youth, which is a cultural educational exchange program. It was a duo exchange, half the year in Quebec, and half the year in Indonesia. It was wicked. We were basically ambassadors of Canada. We had the opportunity to meet all the important officials. We lived with this family [who adopted Kirk] in a small town. We did things like dig ditches, build buildings.

I assume this was a rather poor culture. It depends on how you define poor. I didn't call them poor at all. We didn't have any running water, we didn't have any electricity. Everything we ate was from the jungle, which was your backyard. They weren't poor in a community sense or a family sense. Word of mouth was the only way messages were passed, so you had to be in constant contact with everyone around you. I ate the food they ate (rice for breakfast, rice for lunch, rice for snack, rice for supper), and wore the clothes they wore. I even fasted for an entire month — no food, no water, no sexual activity, no vices at all. You fast from before sun up until after sun down.

[The trip] just gave me a totally different perspective. It really broadened my scope of the world and my scope of understanding just how different other people are, and just how much more to the world there is than just what we have here. There are so many different ways to live and so many different ways to be.

You've dedicated a lot of your time to working with and helping youths. Yeah, it's made me realize how lucky I was to have the things I did while growing up. I was really lucky to have parents, to have a middle class background where I was never wanting for food. There was always big family support. Working with others who don't have the same advantages seemed to be the right thing to do. I can't imagine living in this world and not doing something helpful and useful. I can't imagine going through your life and being so self-focused — it's just so sad. There's so many things people can be doing to help other people.

You have a black belt in aikijutsu. Why the interest? When I was young, I was really sick, I had bad asthma. I used to get picked on a lot because I was the small, nerdy kid. I did well in school because what else was I going to do. I hated being picked on, so I started training in martial arts, and I got healthier. I've got belts in five martial arts. I've had some really great coaches. I've been doing this for about 12 years. In the beginning, I did it more for defense, but now it's kind of way of life. It teaches you a lot of life skills like concentration, perseverance. It really complements any sport. It's really a good discipline, training your body and mind to work in a way it's required to do. Martial arts gives you that ability to focus and a time when you can stop worrying about what's going on in the rest of the world.

What are your goals? I want to go back to Asia. I'd love to work on lots

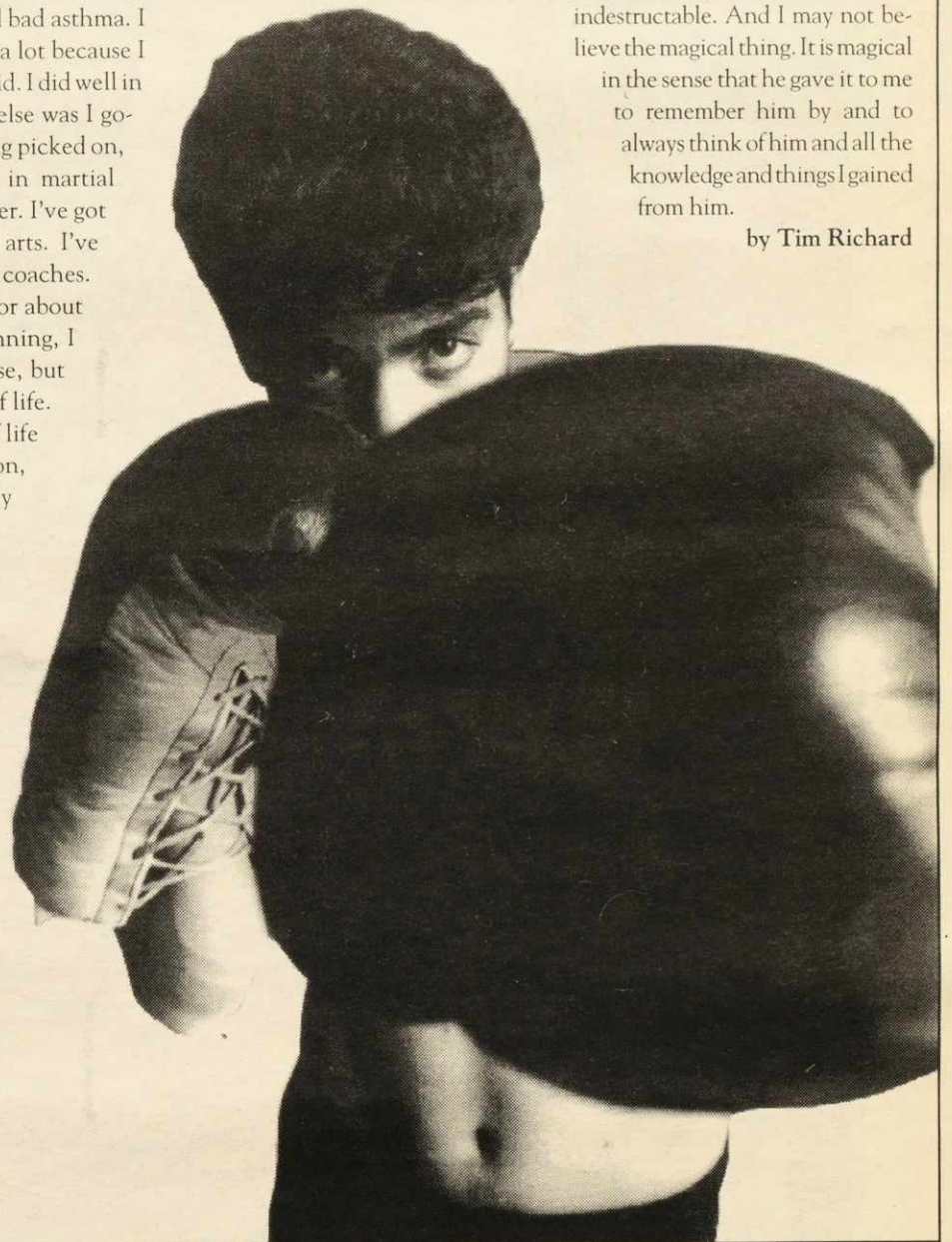
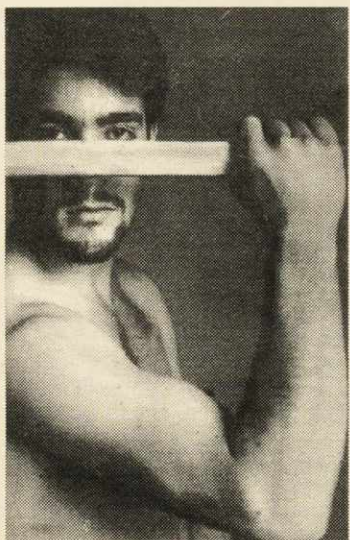
of projects including ground-level development: development from the bottom up. I don't agree with people who go in there and don't consider what the people want or really need. They don't consider that these people already have knowledge.

How do you balance everything? Probably the most important thing to me is having time to live a balanced life. There's a Japanese term called Tatsujin, meaning "balanced" or "complete person." In order to be a complete person, you can't be good at just one thing. Instead of being a jack-of-all-trades mastering none, you want to attempt to be a jack-of-all-trades mastering all. You want to be the best you can be in doing eve-

rything in your life. I want to be a good martial artist, a good student, a good son to my parents, a good brother to my brother, a good friend to my friends. I want to be a good boyfriend to my girlfriend. You have to focus on everything you're doing. For example, when you're with someone, you're with them a 100%; you're not thinking about someone else. You want to give everything significance.

Any treasured possessions? I have this silver bracelet that I wear on my left wrist with kind of a wave pattern on it. I got it from my counterpart, Pony, when I was in Indonesia. He gave it to me because he was worried about me and it's supposed to be magical and make me indestructible. And I may not believe the magical thing. It is magical in the sense that he gave it to me to remember him by and to always think of him and all the knowledge and things I gained from him.

by Tim Richard



B.A., M.A., B.Comm., B.B.A., M.B.A., B.Sc., M.Sc., B.Eng. You have a degree, but do you have a career?

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