

# The 'Daejeon 150' down to the 'Asan 70'

By Eileen Cahill

Katie Mines and Sarah Wolfgang are animal lovers who stepped forward to help "the Daejeon 150" in late 2007, and are now also volunteering at their new home in Asan, South Chungcheong Province.

Mines, a native of New Zealand who teaches English at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul, and Wolfgang, a student at Seoul American High School, spent last Saturday afternoon walking and playing with the relieved canines nearly three weeks after the move. The same day, a few of the larger dogs were moved to new pens on rescuer Park Hee-tae's picturesque mountain property.

It all started when zoning restrictions threatened the existence of a private dog shelter in the area and volunteers Tim Vasudeva and Annie Sauvageau launched a massive publicity campaign to save them.

Originally there were 220 dogs at the shelter, according to Vasudeva. They became famous only after a network of volunteers known as Animal Rescue Korea had taken dozens into foster care. After media outlets covered the story, supporters flocked to the shelter to adopt or foster dogs in the hope of sparing as many lives as possible — but in early 2007 a death sentence still seemed inevitable for most.

One year later, though, the remaining 70 dogs have a new home in Asan, after a successful adoption drive and prolonged negotiations with local authorities.

Plans to relocate the dogs north of Seoul fell through at the last minute, but Park, known to friends as "Jane's Grandpa," accepted them in exchange for financial assistance from ARK. The volunteers paid 15 million won (\$11,456) up front and committed another 2 million per month until 50 dogs are adopted. The funds allowed Park to hire an extra caregiver and build spacious pens for the dogs.

Park was a race-car driver for 10 years, having attended racing school in San Diego long before the sport became popular in Korea. Three years ago he saved 23 dogs when a poorly run pound had to close, and he has rescued many more since then.

Friendly Jindos, shih tzus, schnauzers, cocker spaniels and Yorkshire terriers are among the 250 dogs available for adoption at Jane's Grandpa's House, which also shelters 50 cats. Park supports the animals with his savings, as well as assistance he receives from family and friends.

Jung Nan-young, the former owner of the dogs, said a tearful goodbye to her babies in December — some had lived with her for years in the rented greenhouse. A pensioner who has spent her life savings on rescue work, she needs back surgery and could not keep even one dog.

About 25 volunteers made the trip to Daejeon on "moving day" and followed the trucks to Asan along with Jung. Some traveled by car, others by KTX, and the group spent most of the day loading and unloading dogs.

After returning to the empty property, Jung had an accident while burning trash and had to be hospitalized for facial burns. A nightmare prompted her to leave the hospital and visit the dogs in Asan one week later.

Jane's Grandpa's House already has a team of local volunteers who visit every Sunday to spend time with the animals; now the former

Daejeon volunteers are organizing Saturday visits to provide the dogs with extra attention. Mines urges potential volunteers not to be discouraged by the prospects of getting "smelly, dirty and cold" on a weekend when they'd rather stay home.

"It's really amazing to see what a difference it makes to a few lonely dogs just to have someone sit with them quietly for five minutes, give them a pet and say a few nice words," she said. "It's worth it just for that one dog's face."

Although Mines has lived in Korea for five years and rescued at least 24 dogs, it was only through media coverage that she learned of an organized effort to help homeless animals. "Tim (Vasudeva) and everyone have made it much easier," she said. "There are so many people wanting to help."

Wolfgang's story is similar. Since hearing about ARK, the 15-year-old student has visited the Daejeon dogs almost every week, fostered about 10, and found homes for many others. She is happy to see them enjoying better living conditions in Asan, and agreed with Vasudeva that walking them up and down the mountain is good exercise.

"It keeps you fit," they both said on the train ride back to Seoul.

Sauvageau has observed behavioral changes in some of the dogs, now that they have more space to run around.

"Some of the dogs have come out of their shells," she said. "For example, Maya now greets people as she runs right to you, suddenly stops and licks your hand, waiting for some petting. It brought tears to my eyes the first time I saw it, only one week after she moved to her pen."

Another dog, Piggy, recently allowed Sauvageau to pet him for the first time.

"He climbed on me and just wouldn't stop rolling on me, begging for attention, for the first time since I first started going there in the summer of 2007," she told Expat Living.

"You can't believe the feeling it gave me. Not only are their lives spared, the dogs are now improving. It seems like they feel more stable sharing their pen with only about 15 dogs (rather than 200) and no cages. The emotions are overwhelming — to me anyway, but maybe I'm just a big crybaby."

Park Hyun-joo, another volunteer who helped relocate the dogs and has visited every week since the move, said that Jung and Park "feel tremendously thankful for ARK's consistent devotion to helping the dogs. They really do want you to know that."

Four fundraising events covered about two-thirds of the initial amount needed to build the new pens, and an account has been established at Nonghyup Bank for the Daejeon dogs. The account number is 483023 51 044053, and the account holder is Park Hee-tae (ARK); donors are requested to notify ARK so that records can be updated. In addition, volunteers meet every Saturday at Seoul and Daejeon stations at 10 a.m. and at Cheonan-Asan Station at 11 a.m.

To join the weekly visits, inquire about adoptions, or donations, please contact Tim Vasudeva (010-8940-5233; tim.vasudeva@gmail.com) or Annie Sauvageau (010-4566-2322; ansauvage@yahoo.ca). For more information, visit www.animal-rescuekorea.org (ARK), http://cafe.naver.com/noorungyi (the Sunday volunteers) or http://blog.naver.com/autocafe ("Jane's Grandpa"). (cahill\_eileen@yahoo.com)



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# The black belt of courage

There are a few things the male ego needs in order to thrive. For his own self-image, he needs to know that there's something he can do very well. For his self-esteem, he needs those he works with to know it too. Life probably won't be complete, either, unless there's a woman who can see that special gift and appreciate it.

There are a few things the male ego considers optional, but how his ego would thrive if they were true of him. Chief among these options would be making the other men he interacts with aware that he could, using little more than his ring finger, put them in the hospital. It's not actually necessary for him to put such an ability to use, just for them to know he could.

Master Hong at the taekwondo institute where I used to train has such skills. Over lunch one Friday afternoon, he told me that he has a fifth-degree black belt in taekwondo, a third degree black belt in hapkido, another in judo and special certification in self-defense and bodyguarding. When I recounted this to my wife later that day, she said, "I think you should be careful around him."

One of the surest signs that he is capable of doing great damage with his hands and feet is his personality: He enjoys listening to Korean pop songs sung by teenage girls, and every time he calls me on the phone he says, "Hello, sir!" and then starts giggling. It takes a man seriously secure in his ability to inflict pain to act this goofy in public.

Despite several years of study in the United States (when I gave him my business card, he gave me one of the ones Arnold Schwarzenegger uses in his capacity as California's head of state; apparently he not only knew the Governor, but knew him well enough to have a collection of his business cards), one

By Rob York

thing he had not mastered was English.

That's why he came to me. He sought a niche in the Korea's saturated market for martial arts studies (Let's put this to rest right now: Not every Korean is a master of the martial arts, but judging by the number of taekwondo institutes one sees on practically every block of every municipality in Korea, I'd say the proportion of martial arts masters to the total populace is about one in five).

His institute's name may be translated into "Korea-America," and in his school he sought to impart English along with his martial art, so that not only would his students be able to say "I can put you in the hospital with just my ring finger," they'd be able to back it up. I was to assist him with teaching at his institute in Chuncheon every Friday, one of only two days I don't have to work in Seoul.

This seemed ideal to me: As long as I can remember I have wanted the males in my vicinity to know that I could, if necessary, do them great physical damage. I never found the time, however, to study a means of causing them such harm, as I've been too busy with more literary or journalistic endeavors.

Happily, though, I am of greater than average height, and these endeavors have put me in contact with special classes of males, such as middle-aged journalists and graduate English majors, who have tended to make me feel pretty good about own physical capabilities. I might have some trouble if I ventured out of those circles, though.

Master Hong even tossed in free taekwondo lessons every

Friday before his students arrived. I spent one hour every week learning complex maneuvers (and fearing for my life for brief moments of time whenever he demonstrated how do these maneuvers in too-close a proximity to my face) which I was then supposed to be able to teach his students only hours later.

He even provided me with my own taekwondo outfit, plus a belt with my name on it.

All the while, he assured me that with private lessons I could be worthy of a black belt within a year. Then, he said, I could have my own institute in Korea where students would come to me and I could put them on the road to both English fluency and the ability to hospitalize their peers. There was only one problem with the plan: there's no limit to what the human mind can forget in one week.

It might have worked out had I a place to practice, but neither a newspaper office or a subway are ideal places to practice punching and kicking routines, and these days those are the two places I tend to be when I'm awake. Eventually I had to find a way to tell Master Hong that we were going to have to postpone my participation in the taekwondo institute until I had more time to spare.

The question then becomes: How do you tell a man who can severely injure you with one of his smaller digits that you can no longer assist him? After all, maybe he only acted goofy in my presence because he never had a reason to be disappointed.

My advice is a) Do it over the phone, and b) have someone else relay the message, someone like your wife. Hey, she's the one who told me I should be careful with him. Until I have enough time to become a living weapon, I plan to take her advice. (rjamesyork@heraldm.com)

# The new war in Gaza Strip

EIN-VERED, Israel — The current Israeli-Palestinian clash in Gaza is only the latest episode in a theme that has been central to recent Middle-Eastern history.

A letter from Israel

By Edward Stern



Whatever the origins of this particular clash, an understanding of the recent history between the two peoples involved is crucial to a basic understanding.

Each side — both Israeli and Palestinian — brings its own script to their intertwined history. It is the seemingly irreconcilability of these two scripts that leads to tensions between these two peoples. Those tensions are deeply involved in the current outbreak of violence.

The Palestinian script revolves around their displacement from the land that is now Israel. A war was fought in 1948 in what was Palestinian territory, leading to a sizable exodus in the indigenous Arab population.

Palestinians claim that Israeli policy in 1948 was one of deliberately "cleaning out" the Arab population. The Israeli claim holds that the Arab refugees left under their own accord, spurned by promises from other Arab states that they could return once the violence subsided.

The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle.

Part of this population became refugees in Gaza. Outside of others that became refugees in Gaza through conflict with Israel, it is the offspring of those 1948 refugees that now reside in Gaza.

## The Palestinian perspective

The Palestinian script further indicates that from 1948 to the present, Israel has been attempting to suppress Palestinian rights and attempts at statehood through occupation and warfare. In this light, the Palestinian script says that any resistance by killing Israelis represents the legitimate action of a suppressed people.

Even though Israel had pulled out of Gaza three years ago, Palestinians of Gaza see that Israel is occupying them by other means.

From the Gaza Palestinians standpoint, the Israeli occupation never really ended.

Israel controls all access to Gaza, and through this control, has already reduced a poor entity to a desperate entity, from an economic standpoint.

## According to Israel

The Israeli narrative has evolved over the years, but it is based on a few premises.

First of all, whatever the legitimacy of the claims of Palestinian displacement, Israel's claims to legitimacy are two-fold. Israel was granted a state in 1948 by the United Nations. It accepted the land given to it, but Israel's script says that it was attacked by various Arab forces. The outcome of the war — which displaced many Palestinians — was basically the fault of the Arab world and not Israel.

Israel claims a type of special status as far as its statehood is concerned. Due to the

massive slaughter of European Jews in World War Two, it was imperative for Jews to have a state they controlled. That state is Israel. In counter to the Palestinian claim that Israel occupies land of displaced Palestinians, the basic Israeli claim is that any Palestinian state will be a direct threat to Israel.

The reason for this is that — from the Israeli perspective — the real goal of any Palestinian state will be the destruction of Israel. Hence, any occupation of a potential Palestinian territory represents a means of Israel preserving its own security. Therefore, the Israeli script maintains that only a weak, well-controlled Palestinian state should be allowed to exist.

## Current outbreak

The current Israeli-Palestinian war in Gaza should be viewed in the prism of the aforementioned history.

Gaza, until three years ago, was occupied by both the Israeli army and Israeli citizens living in communities within the borders of Gaza. These communities were withdrawn from Gaza. The withdrawal was extraordinarily controversial in Israel. Many Israelis viewed it as "Israelis throwing Israelis out of their own homes."

Whatever the reason for this withdrawal from Palestinian territory, most Israelis felt that the move represented an extraordinary compromise to the Palestinians.

Israelis expected a peaceful response from the new Gaza entity. The fact that the response from Gaza was continuous violence — through missile attacks — only reinforced the perception in Israel that the occupation of Palestinian territory had nothing to do with the dispute with the Palestinians. Even though Israel pulled its troops out of Gaza, missiles continued to rain down on Israel.

Now the perception in Israel is that Israelis would be attacked by Palestinians regardless of Gaza being occupied. The fact that Gaza is governed by Hamas — a radical Muslim political entity, whose declared aim is the destruction of Israel — has not helped to allay Israeli perceptions as to the intentions of Palestinians in Gaza.

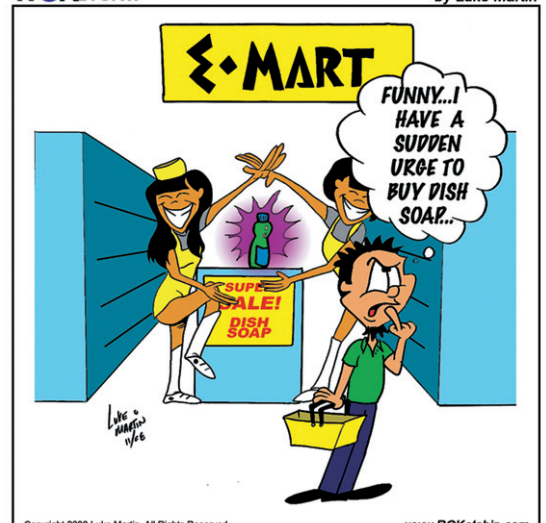
The Hamas leadership in Gaza views this siege as an attempt by Israel to remove it from power. Israel has done nothing to alleviate this perception. The missile barrages on Israel are then seen as an issue of legitimate self-defense from the standpoint of Gaza Palestinians.

It is in this context that the present violence was spawned.

The opinions presented here are those of the author, not necessarily The Korea Herald. To comment on this column, e-mail mattlamers@heraldm.com — Ed.

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