



# ***Gentry Martial Arts news***

## ***March 2020***

### **Upcoming events:**

March 7 <sup>th</sup>	FAST class—Floyd Central High School
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	TKD testing 5:30
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	Demo Team 9:00-10:30
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	Black belt prep 10:30-12:30
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	Stickfighting 1:00-3:30
March 21-22nd	Dr. Yang chinna, tai chi, chi gong seminar
March 28 <sup>th</sup>	Black belt prep 9:00-10:00
March 28 <sup>th</sup>	MULAN Private Showing. Mooresville 11:00 am.
April 11 <sup>th</sup>	Demo for Korea Night, Indiana University. Details to TBA

### **New BBJ Timeslot**

To accommodate the 3<sup>rd</sup> shift (especially LEO), we are adding an additional BJJ timeslot on Fridays at 10:00 am. We actually have started a “soft opening” of the class already, and will start promoting more openly later this month. But in the meantime, other people are welcome to join us.

### **Mulan Private Showing**

You are probably as excited as we are for the new release of Mulan. We have booked a private showing of the movie on opening weekend, Sat the 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am at Showtime Cinemas in Mooresville. Students (up to two per family) will get in free (but still need to register). All other family members will be \$6.00. You must sign up/pay (cash only) at the front desk before the event. Space is limited but should be enough for everyone.

### **Spring Break Social Media contest:**

Going somewhere on spring break? We want to see you represent. We will be holding a contest over spring break. Take a picture in your best martial arts pose with your exotic surroundings (even if it is just around town). Pics in uniform or GMA swag will be given more consideration. Tag us on Instagram or Facebook. Best pic(s) will win a prize!

### **Quotes of the Week**

This month we will be going over some of our favorite sayings from Grandmaster Choi.

### **Don't forget GMA website, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.**

Want to be the first to know when the school closes for weather? Need to double check the special events calendar or pics? Check the GMA website and our Facebook group, and sign up for email announcements online. Like the GMA Martinsville Facebook page for other public announcements and promotions. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter @Gentry\_MA for lighter notes.

### **Birthdays:**

Emmett Koch	3/1	Thomas Jackson	3/2	Hope Gunn	3/3
Jenna Berry	3/3	Evelyn Kauffman	3/6	Bryan Bolin	3/7
Aleah Spires	3/14	Korbin Smith	3/18	Chloe Dodd	3/18
Ryden Dodd	3/18	Maya Mras	3-21	Randall McClure	3/23
Aidan Skopecek	3/27	Lise Roberson	3/29		

## Training Anniversaries:

Mike Dodge (BJJ 14 yrs.)	Maddox Sparks (TKD, LD 4 yrs.)	Preston Santiago (LD 3 yrs.)
Harper Floyd (LD, TKD 2 yrs.)	Nathin Plummer (TKD 2 yrs.)	Alysha Patel (LD, TKD 2 yrs.)
Bobbi Payne (TKD 1 yr.)	Shivam Patel (LD 1 yr.)	Annabelle Brinson (TKD 1 yr.)
Alejandro Tejada (LD 1 yr.)	Steve Applegate (HKD 1 yr.)	Wyatt Applegate (LD 1 yr.)

## This Month in Martial Arts History (selected from "Dates with Destiny" in *Martial Arts Success* by John Corcoran.)

- March 1, 1907 (-Feb 2 2003) GM Won Kuk Lee (founder of Chung Do Kwan) birthday
- March 10, 1940 Birthday for Chuck Norris
- March 11, 1967 Birthday for Renzo Gracie
- March 19, 1931 Birthday for Ed Parker, Sr. (famous for Bruce Lee demo and taught Elvis Presley)
- March 24, 1950 Birthday for Peyton Quinn—Reality based training pioneer, influence on FAST program
- March 10, 1921 Chojun Miyagi and Gichin Funakoshi (important to our line) hold the famous demonstration for the future Emperor of Japan—putting Okinawan Karate "on the map"
- March 20, 1971 South Korean President Chung-Hi Park declared TKD as Korea's national sport
- March 30, 1990 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles debuts in theaters—creating a craze.
- March 31<sup>st</sup> 1999 The Matrix debuts in theaters—changing the way movie fights are done, and changing perceptions of what we do!

## Boards Don't Make Good Sparring Partners but Excellent Teachers

One of the images most associated with "karate" styles is the breaking of boards. When people find out what I do, the conversation almost inevitably steers toward the question of "so how many boards can you break?" I have always found this a peculiar question, because if you have never broken a board, you have no frame of reference. If I say one, four, or eight, does it change your impression? Can I just start making up numbers, and what number will the person finally find it implausible and call me on it? But I digress.

While sensational, at first glance it seems a peculiar practice and certainly not the greatest use of environmental resources. Admittedly, it can be fun, but for many that would hardly justify the expense and the risk of injury. There are certainly detractors, and most scoffers are quick to utter the famous Bruce Lee/Bolo Yeung line "boards don't hit back." Hard to dispute that, even if they sometimes feel like they do. The superficial answer is that it is a demonstration of skill and technique. That is partly true, but there are other ways to demonstrate proficiency that saves both the tress and many a holders' fingers. Obviously we do it as part of our tests, so we still believe there is a practicality in it. So perhaps we need to explain our position a little better...and to do so, indulge me in a story.

GM Choi once told a story about a unique training experience while he was in high school. His instructor, GM Hae Man Park (current head of the Chungdokwan) took him out on a walk to the Bluehouse (the Korean version of the Whitehouse.) There was an armed guard (I believe it was an M-16) standing at attention outside a gate. GM Park told the young protégé to walk up and knock the guard out. If GM Choi failed in this task, assaulting a military guard would presumably be met with lethal force. GM Choi's life was seemingly on the line.

At this point, a little more backstory is helpful. GM Park was also the TKD instructor to the presidential guard at the Bluehouse (GM Choi went on to become a bodyguard himself, in part because of this connection). GM Park likely knew the guard in question. Perhaps this was more a lesson or test for the guard than for GM Choi. Perhaps arrangements were made in advance for GM Choi to not get shot. Or perhaps GM Park assumed he could intervene before things went south. I don't know. Perhaps none of that was the case, but I would like to think there was some type of safeguard. But GM Choi certainly didn't know that.

GM Choi likely thought that if his aim was off, he would get shot. If he telegraphed or changed his technique, he might get shot. If his confidence faltered, or if he even looked suspicious walking up, he might get shot. He had to be totally clutch, and the outcome was clearly defined. And by the way, he succeeded.

As quoted earlier, boards don't hit back, much less shoot back. But breaking still requires one to be clutch. The outcome is still pretty well defined, more so than just hitting a target. If your focus or technique is a little off, you still hit the bag. In contrast, if you're off a little, the board won't break. There is no ambiguity of "that looked decent but not great." You either break or you failed in your task, and there is discomfort from a failed try. Certainly not the stakes involved in the story above, but there is still more at risk than just the promotion: the embarrassment of not breaking, pain and possible minor injury if you don't break. There are enough repercussions to cause students to get nervous and to falter. Sometimes the students break the boards; sometimes the boards cause the students to break. Breaking requires confidence and trust in yourself, enabling you to commit fully to the technique. If you doubt, if you hold back, you won't break. I can remember having mental blocks about certain breaks going through the ranks, and learning how to "never retreat in battle," persevere, and find a way to finally break through.

If you think I am going to make this into a metaphor for life in general, then you are starting to get it. We are hardly the first to make that connection. Motivational speaker Tony Robbins (a TKD black belt in the Chungdokwan lineage) has had ordinary people break boards at his conferences as an analogy for breaking out to new pinnacles of performance. During testing, some other schools have the students "name" their board as some other barrier in their life they would like to smash through.

Yes, the symbolism can get a little cheesy—just because lil Johnny broke his board to get his green belt doesn't mean he will no longer struggle with keeping his room clean—but there is value in trusting the process of becoming more clutch. If I can quell my nerves and quiet my self-doubt in order to break a stack of boards in front of bunch of people, then giving a speech in front of crowd just isn't that big of a deal. If I can laser in my focus and commit fully to the task of breaking, then I should be able to recreate that effort in other important tasks where I only get one shot at it. When the board becomes more than just a metaphorical barrier and actually keeps us from passing our tests, then we learn to accept failure as part of the process in ultimately achieving our goals.

No, boards don't hit back. They don't make good sparring partners, but they can still be excellent teachers.