



Oct 20 Newsletter for Gentry Martial Arts

DON'T FORGET ABOUT OUR TRICK OR TREAT GUEST PASSES

For any ninja turtle, master of spinjitsu, or sword wielding trick or treater that comes to your door, we have guest passes you can give them to try the real thing. Even if you do not recognize them, if they use your pass, you still get the referral credit and receive a free month! Additionally, we will be discussing class and even better reward offer!!!

Congrats to Kai Crowe on his graduation from Lil Dragons!

Upcoming events:

***** RAK's are due at beginning of the month******

Oct 3 rd	Leadership team 9:00-10:30
Oct 3 rd	Demo Team 10:30-12:00
Oct 10 th	Stops Bullies FAST—Kids FAST class 9:00-11:30
Oct 10 th	Tweener FAST 1:00-4:30
Oct 17 th	USHF Fall seminar 9:00-5:00
Oct 24 th	BJJ open mat/lab 9:00-11:00
Oct 24 th	TKD BB prep 11:00-12:30
Oct 31 st	Stick fighting 9:00-11:30
Oct 31 st	Black belt open mat/breaking practice 11:30-1:00
Oct 31 st	Halloween party 7:00-9:00
Nov 6 th	Tentative TKD testing date
Nov 7 th	TKD black belt testing 9:00-10:30
Nov 7 th	TKD black belt stripe testing 11:00-1:00

Halloween party and parent committee news/notes

The school Halloween party will be Oct 31st from 7:00-9:00. With trick or treating (presumably) and due to covid, we are doing things a little different this year. Younger students and families are encouraged to come from 7:00-8:00, and ages 12 and up are encouraged to come from 8:00-9:00. This will allow everyone to do some trick or treating either before or after the party and keep the numbers here smaller. As always, we will need help with set up starting at 1:00 pm and take down, and more help with smores, food, etc. at the actual party. Be on the lookout for the sign-up sheets so our parents can take a shift.

Students are encouraged to bring in a bag of candy anytime between now and then so treat bags can be prepared in advance.

While we know for a fact that our students can be scary, we encourage our students to dress as heroes, role models, or something fun.

GMA Wishes Happy Birthday to:

Brandon Cox	10/4	Nate Wilson	10/10
Mr. Sieg	10/12	Holly Ann Brown	10/14
Jared Hamilton	10/21	Isaiah Hanscom	10/28
Garrett Patterson	10/30	Eric Hanscom	10/31

Training Anniversaries

Special Congrats to those who started with us a year or multiple years ago.

Nico Inman (TKD 9 yrs.)	Richie Long (TKD 6 yrs.)	Jack Higgins (TKD 5 yrs.)
Eli Thompson (TKD 4 yrs.)	John Hirt (TCC 4 yrs.)	Nassim Florestant (TKD 2 yrs.)
David Whittaker (HKD 1 yr.)		



Quotes of the Week--Perseverance

This month we have a several key events that are great examples of perseverance and offer great lessons to our students. Marching our legs off in the parade will be a real test for some of us. We also have black belt testing, which is a great example of perseverance in the martial arts, over the long haul. This month, we are hoping all our students will learn a bit more about the importance of not giving up.

This Month in Martial Arts History (selected from “Dates with Destiny” in *Martial Arts Success* by John Corcoran.

Oct 1, 1913 (-Jan 29, 2009)	Birthday BJJ founder Helio Gracie
Oct 9, 1932	Birthday Judo Gene Lebell
Oct 18, 1961	Birthday Jean-Claude Van Damme
Oct 27, 1936	Birthday HKD founder Ji Han Jae
Oct 28, 1929 (-May 4, 1938)	Birthday founder of Judo and innovator Jigoro Kano
Oct 20, 1957	Arguably the first modern Karate tournament- the All Japan Karate Champ. Is held.
Oct 14, 1972	Kung fu the TV series debuts
Oct 11, 1997	Pride Fighting Championships debuts.

Other martial arts films include *The Transporter* and *Kill Bill*.

Personal Expression and the Artistic Process in Martial Arts

Karate changes every few years. This change happens because a teacher will continue to learn and add his personality to the teachings. –Chosin Chibana

A kata is not fixed or immovable. Like Water, its ever changing and fits itself into the shape of the vessel containing it. –Kenwa Mabuni.

There are not now, nor have there ever been, any hard and fast rules regarding the various kata. It is hardly surprising to find that they change not only with the times, but also from instructor to instructor. –Gichin Funakoshi

A good teacher can never be fixed in a routine. Each moment requires a sensitive mind that is constantly changing and constantly adapting. A teacher must never impose this student to fit his favorite pattern. –Bruce lee

I have written previously about the importance and value in trying to mimic a standard archetype in forms training, * but this time I want to address some of the reasons that variation exists. Some of these reasons are detrimental, and others can be viewed as positives or progress in the art form. **

The forms taught by of some of my teachers does not look the same as it was when I started learning from them. I am sure both my TKD and Tai Chi forms look different than they did 20 years ago. I would hope in some ways it is because I have gotten better. But how much is it because of insight, and how much of it is because my body has changed? Has my technique gotten better, or have I changed it to accommodate my age, changes in my body morphology, or injuries impacting the way I move in ways I don't even understand? As I continue to age, will I have to make the same adjustments they did? Michael Jordan developed a fade away jumper when he could no longer dunk from the free throw line.... his game evolved as he aged. He was still effective, but he was also certainly different.

This certainly causes confusion in what the proper form looks like. People who study with the same teacher at different periods will all swear that their way is exactly the way the master did it, and perhaps they are



all right. The real question is whether the change is an epiphany or a conscientious choice, or a more gradual shift in outward form without much changing in principal or concept on the inside. And that of course assumes the student not only received the memo but interpreted it properly.

If you question how easy it is for that information to be corrupted, look no further than the telephone game, where a simple sentence cannot be transmitted among multiple people without breaking down. Admittedly, the telephone game doesn't have self-correction built in, as transmission through repetition should have, but we have previously discussed how the telephone game is certainly a problem in the transmission of martial arts knowledge. *** It is sufficient for now to reiterate that despite some people's romantic notions, thinking that what you are learning today has been dutifully handed down, unadulterated for centuries, without any revisions, omissions, and mistranslations, is just plain pretending.

Even the most sincere and faithful attempts at preservation is subject to my first point—the physical idiosyncrasies of the instructor. Any of the TKD instructors from our previous organization could identify which students belonged to whom because they saw the nuanced differences of the instructor in the student. Just last year at a demo for Korea night at IU, our performance was preceded by another group who had a member displaying the patch of our previous organization. One of our black belts wondered which school. I have never seen this person before but guessed the correct school by watching him in a 5-minute demo. We are not immune to such unconscious mimicry. Did you know that your index finger doesn't have to—and probably shouldn't—curl on a knife hand block. But I and Mrs. Yoshida do it, and now so do most of our students, even though we never instructed or corrected anyone to do it that way.

So, some of the modifications are idiosyncratic, but some of our modifications are more deliberate on my part, perhaps because of differences in opinion. These two factors manifest together to form a personal expression of the art. That is one reason why we refer to it as martial ARTS. Our BJJ and TKD students have attended the same classes and have had basically the same experience on the mats, yet many of our students have developed very distinct personal games that you can observe in sparring. They have tweaked the techniques to fit their body and their temperament, and if they teach, will likely communicate how they do it. GMA instructors have experienced the same thing, and so have our instructors. If you watch all of GM Chen's tai chi classmates/colleagues, the personal points of emphasis and execution are profound within the same generation, yet every one of them had very much “mastered” the art. Indeed, that is part of the mastery process.

In *Old School*, Author Ellis Amdur sums it up perfectly with this analogy:

“Imagine, for example, a studio that attempts to merely replicate the art of Picasso. True artists, be they aesthetic or martial, would find themselves confined, if not trapped, were they forced to merely repeat what some creative soul discovered long ago. Those with passion will not settle for rote; they feel to their bone marrow that they, too, must emblazon their mark on the world.

The creative drive, however, can also be problematic. In the European and American art world, the simple fact that something is new....is often judged as sufficient to define it as high art. Craft is abandoned, aesthetics are lost, and much art today has little value as graffiti scribbled upon the walls of great buildings.”

Analogies of the telephone game or graffiti are relevant but do not address the positive changes that result in true, novel masterpieces. When master craftsmen create things of both beauty and function. The quotes from famous masters at the beginning of this article acknowledge that process. Indeed, Bruce Lee described his martial arts journey as the art of expressing the human body, and elsewhere considered fighting as one of the highest forms of personal expression. We must be vigilant in trying to recognize the difference between true art and empty shell imposters. I must admit that I when it comes to painting, I sometimes can't tell the



difference between a masterpiece and a toddler's fingerpaint. Fortunately, the martial arts should remain grounded objectively in function and effectiveness. But personal expression is a characteristic of an art form, and we must appreciate the artistic process within the combat arts.

* I hope you just had an image of Master Ken giving a groin shot and then deadpanning "buy my book." If you don't know what I am talking about, I have failed as an instructor.

**I have ranted about many things over the years, but one subject I have skirted around is how martial arts is an art, not just a science. Mostly because I found the task overwhelming for this format, and it would require a book onto itself. But I felt the need to address this particular area, and perhaps the floodgates will open, yielding other mini chapters.

*** "Haaaiiuu. Buy my book." They say repetition is also a key to advertising.