



# May 2021 GMA Newsletter

## **BIG CONGRATS to:**

**Our new black belts: Mr. Andrew Skopecek and Miss Hope Gunn**

**Coach Clay Thacker on his promotion to brown belt in BJJ**

**Our newest lil dragon graduates: Ethan Cornelius, Isaiah Hanscom, Violet McCarthy**

**Our graduating senior Miss Launa Perryman**

## **Upcoming events:**

May 7 <sup>th</sup>	TKD testing 5:30 (no regular TKD class)
May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Black belt open mat breaking practice 9:00-10:00
	Annual Break a thon and school picnic, Jimmy Nash Park (details below)
May 10 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup>	Happy Mother's Day--Mothers please join us for class this week.
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Stick fighting 9:00-11:30
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	BB stripe testing 12:00-2:00
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	BB retesting and ceremony 2:00-3:00 ish
May 29 <sup>th</sup>	Spring clean day at the school 10:00-1:00 ish?
May 29 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup>	Indianapolis Open tournament
May 31 <sup>st</sup>	No class Happy Memorial Day
June 8-9	German Longsword camp 9:00-3:30
June 14-18	TKD Day camp

## **Break-a-thon and annual school picnic**

It is time for our annual school picnic and break-a-thon to benefit our scholarship program—which provides scholarships for students to become or stay involved in martial arts. Some of our own students benefit from this fund, so we need your continued support, plus it is great chance for our students to get a lot of breaking practice! The break-a-thon will begin at 11:00 with a picnic and fun and games to follow. This year we will be having it at Jimmy Nash Park, Shelter no 5. We will not be using real boards this year. Donations to the scholarship fund are not required but appreciated. For the picnic, parents committee will provide the main dish (fried chicken). Because of covid, we will not be doing a pitch in, but every family will bring the rest of the picnic for themselves (side, drinks, etc.). We will still be doing the fun and games such as egg toss and throwing pies at instructor (1.00 per pie for scholarship fund) Please sign up inside so we can still anticipate numbers. Students DO NOT need to wear doboks to the break-a-thon (egg toss appropriate clothing strongly encouraged).

## ***Mother's Day invitation***

As usual, our students are welcome to invite their mom, grandmas, etc. to class the week following Mother's Day. We will plan classes to have you and your child interact and share the martial arts experience. While you are at it, feel free to try out any other class including our lunchtime hapkido and morning tai chi classes.

## ***Sign up now for Day Camps/Summer camps***

We are now taking sign ups for our GMA day camps. These are weeklong intensive training sessions. from 9:00-3:30 each day. They are the equivalent of 30 classes and 3-5 points and cover a full belt rank. material in one profoundly serious week. History and philosophy, how to write the black belt papers, and other. knowledge not normally covered in class is also taught. And there is still time for some fun and games like martial arts. dodgepad. Discounts are available for multiple camps or multiple family members. Additionally, get the discounted rate if you pre-register by May 15th.

**Specialty camp—German Longsword June 8-9**

**TKD day-camp(s): June 14-18; July 12-16.**

**Lil dragon camp June 29-July 1.**

**HKD camp July 6-7**

**BJJ camp July 22-23**



### ***GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:***

Adrian Britt	5/4	Elijah Johnson	5/7	Silas Elmore	5/13
Ryan Dyer	5/16	Anakin Lakin	5/20	Alexander Price	5/24
Ryan Spires	5/25	Ethan Higgins	5/26	Kirby Brester	5/26
Dave Hubbard	5/29				

### ***Training Anniversaries***

Nate Wilson (TKD 13 yrs.)	Lise Roberson (HKD 12 yrs.)	Donovan Sieg (TKD 10 yrs.)
Brayden Gordon (BJJ 2 yrs.)		

### ***Quotes of the Week***

This May, as Heroes in Training, we will be looking at the stories and learning from some real-life heroes (medal of honor recipients) in honor of Memorial Day.

### ***This Month in Martial Arts History*** (selected from “Dates with Destiny” in *Martial Arts Success*)

1984—Ninja Turtles debuts (in comic form)

May 1st, 1971—Billy Jack, featuring HKD master Bong Soo Han, premieres (it is released in ‘73 and helps fuel the Martial arts boom)

May 20, 1975 –KTA in Korea consolidates the “kwans” as part of the unification effort of TKD. The CDK is assigned kwan #9.

May 25-27, 1973 First world TKD championships held at the Kukkiwon. The WTF is founded the next day.

May 27, 1949. Shotokan founder Gichin Funakoshi founds the Japanese Karate Assoc, helps to spread Karate worldwide.



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### ***Does sparring by any other name feel the same?***

*My Opponent is My Teacher; My Ego is My Enemy-- Renzo Gracie*

We certainly have many names to describe martial arts activity and its participants. Beyond the stylist names such as karateka, judoka, taekwondoin, or jiu jiteros, we are also referred to as fighters, players, combatants, competitors, pugilists or grapplers, and more colorful terms. Similarly, we engage in activities interchangeably called sparring, fighting, competition, or combat. But are these terms synonymous or interchangeable? I would argue that is more than semantics and is detrimental when people throw these terms out willy-nilly.

As I have stated before and elsewhere, I generally refrain from referring to our students as being fighters or having a fight coming up. We have some very tough competitors, but even a competitive match in a combat sport isn’t a true fight in my book. Even within combat sports, there can be a huge discrepancy....it is hard for me to compare an 8-year-old green belt in a local TKD tournament to a professional in a UFC title “fight”, but the same term is used for both. Naturally, one seems closer to the real thing than the other, but I would say neither is the same as someone who is



approached by a predator. I am certainly not the first to point out the difference between an asymmetrical surprise attack by a predator who has stacked the deck against you, versus a mutually agreed upon contest with specified rules that are designed to limit the potential for permanent damage and true long-term injury. Soundbites such as “bringing a knife to a gun fight” or if “it is a fair fight then your tactics suck” might be cliché but still highlight the disparity of force in a true fight. And no one has to deal with the psychological aftermath that comes with defending yourself after competing in a tournament. (I also realize we could further split hairs between social versus asocial violence, but you get my drift, and if you don’t understand this distinction, please learn.)

Other similar words that are used interchangeably can really mean different things to different people. Sparring can be lighthearted for some, but Sifu Mornie Maul of the SSBD system says that in silat, an invitation to spar is understood to be a polite way of challenging to a fight (but is it really a fight or just an agreed upon dual? Ugg...I am confusing myself now.) Beyond that type of context, the recreational BJJ practitioner and a professional grappler in a training camp would both describe their activity as rolling, but “wanna roll?” is a much more loaded question for one than the other.

A competition certainly seems to describe the sport component of martial arts a little better, but even then, connotations may differ. For starters, competition can (although doesn’t necessarily) invoke attitudes contrary to the ideal of mutual friendship and respect that martial arts are supposed to instill. It doesn’t help that in martial arts, we can be discussing techniques against an “enemy”, an “attacker” or “bad guy”, or an opponent. Even if care is taken to use them in the proper context of what you are teaching (self-defense versus sport, etc.) when thrown out in the same class, it is hard for students not to conflate them. Like the Renzo quote says, Ego is the true enemy. But when competitive success is driven by ego, it is easy to project it to the person across from you.

Perhaps those who use the term players and play are the ones most accurately describing what most of do on a regular basis. This doesn’t necessarily mean we play fight (although the case could be made), but play implies lighthearted and having fun. Playing is where creativity happens. In silat, if you are not trying to be confrontational, you ask to play. It should be no surprise that Tai Chi Ch’uan, with its philosophy of focusing on the process and willingness to invest in loss, has a long-standing tradition of referring to themselves as players.

Tai chi has another tradition that goes to the heart of the matter. After most competitive matches, rolls, sparring, etc., there is a bow, or a fist bump, or bro hug, all with plenty of atta boys and acknowledgements. While not exclusive to tai chi, I feel it is more tradition in tai chi to say “thank you” to your partner. Thank you for providing the opportunity to learn and improve. As Lowenthal puts it, resolving your issues is the point. Saying thank you for that opportunity certainly helps us keep perspective more than engaging in “fights” would.

To be sure, there are many fine, honorable martial artists, who are both good people and good practitioners, who don’t follow these same vocabulary rules. But it is worth noting that words often do mean something different to different people. It is wise to make sure we appreciate the different connotations that words can be given, because sometimes they can have unintended consequences in changing our perspective and attitudes.