

GMA News April 2023

Upcoming events:

April 1 st	Kristian Woodmansee seminar, Indy
April 2 nd	Korea night demo. Meet here at 12:00 pm to practice. Performance at IU Memorial Union @ approximately 3:00. We will be leaving for B-ton around 12:30
April 8 th	Stick fighting 9:00-11:30
April 10 th	National sibling day—siblings can join us for classes Mon the 10th and Tues the 11 th .
April 14 th	TKD testing—no regular class.
April 22 nd	Dodge pad Korea fundraiser 10:00-12:00
April 29 th	World Tai Chi day celebration 10:00-11:00
April 29 th	TKD tournament in Danville ** we are not sure if we will have the leadership available to go.
May 6 th	Break a thon and school picnic.
May 20 th	TKD black belt testing
May 27 th	Bedford TKD tournament

Summer day camp dates are set.

Some people have been asking about this year's dates of our popular day-camps. More details will follow, but we wanted to announce the dates so people can start planning for our intensive training camps. We are also excited to announce a special camp on Rope Dart with a guest instructor. Pre-registration discounts apply. Here is what we have:

Dragons camp June 6-8 TKD camps June 12-16 and July 17-21. BJJ camp July 26-27.

** Special camp: Rope Dart/Meteor Hammer w instructor Ben Kennedy June 23-25 HKD TBD

Break-a-thon and annual school picnic May 6th

With lumber prices still what they are, we will be adjusting some things about our breakathon and picnic, but other things are back to normal. Our annual event is planned for May 6th. We will start with our pitch in picnic around noon, do breaking practice and then finish with some games and fun like pies to the face of instructors. The break a thon benefits our scholarship program!

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Mr. Noah Wilson	4/1	Adriel Colindres-Ramey	4/1	Kat Hicks	4/1
Adam Spiering	4/9	Everett Key	4/11	Nolan Tupper	4/12
Finlea Stewart	4/13	Forrest Heidenreich	4/16	Camden Christian	4/18
Aurianna Bastin	4/21	Patrick Hersman	4/24	Cathy Petraits	4/27
Jack Higgins	4/30				

Training Anniversaries

Cathy Petraits (TKD 11 yrs.)	Evelyn Kaufman (TKD 7 yrs.)	Wesley Yoshida (TKD 11 yrs.)
Jenna Berry (TKD 6 yrs.)	Mason Wendling (BJJ 5 yrs.)	Danton Wendling (BJJ 5 yrs.)
Luke Voorhees (TKD 2 yrs.)	Noel Voorhees (TKD 2 yrs.)	Jake Staker (BJJ 2 yrs.)
Colt Goforth (BJJ 2 yrs.)	Chaz Smith (BJJ 2 yrs.)	Athena Henley (LD 1 yr.)

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

April 7, 1954. Jackie Chan's Birthday

April 15, 1922 (-Oct 20, 1982). Donn F Draeger (martial arts historian) birthday

April 26, 1963, Jet Li Birthday

April 1922 Gichin Funakoshi demonstrates karate in Japan—setting the course for Karate and TKD worldwide.

April 11, 1955, the name Tae Kwon Do is approved by President Syngman Rhee to describe Korean martial arts.

April 21, 1993, Walker Texas Ranger starring Chuck Norris debuts.

Knock Off Belts Don't Feel the Same

Recently we had to fail a significant number of 4-6 yr olds at our lil dragons promotion. It is certainly not something I enjoyed doing, and many people would be aghast that we failed them at all. There are many martial arts schools who subscribe to the philosophy that you shouldn't hurt your students' self-esteem and that we need to help their confidence by promoting them. I agree we should do everything within reason to help get them ready to pass their test...but they still have to deliver on the day of the test. A more cynical critique of some schools is that everyone promotes so long as their membership is current because disappointment is bad for business.

We obviously subscribe to a different theory—that even young children can tell the difference between authentically earning a belt and the cheaper, knock off, just giving it you option. Studies have demonstrated that if you wear knock off designer clothing, you don't feel as good as when wearing the the real thing. It might look the same. Perhaps most people looking at you can't tell the difference and think it is legit. But you know it to be a fraud. I have frequently shared my horror while shopping in Korea, when I came across a black belt for sale that had already been “broken in” to the point of being frayed and faded. I often wonder who exactly would buy this belt. This isn't just a pair of jeans that you buy faded and with holes in them because you like the look. This is misrepresenting years of work and effort. If carrying around a fake Gucci purse makes you feel less happy when compared to the real thing, I can only imagine when someone with their factory made tattered belt stands across the room from someone whose belt looks that way from the old fashioned way. While you gotta have some delusional tendencies to buy that belt in the first place, when staring across at legitimacy, face to face with the contrast, deep down you have to know, you have to feel like a counterfeit. The belts might look the same, but I bet they feel different. And so it is with our belts too.

As Simon Sinek puts in *Leaders Eat Last*, status (belt rank or otherwise) has to be earned, and we know this at a very basic, biological level. You are supposed to gain fame by first achieving alpha status, not by becoming tik-tok famous and then using that as justification that you are alpha. (Just like some people want the belt before they do the work.) Wealth and leadership is supposed to come from accomplishment. We feel that things are off when a person uses wealth as justification for leadership, without the accomplishment to go with it. And so it would be if we had students walking around with the currency of rank, but without really earning or accomplishing it. Why should lower ranks respect or follow them? Will their achievement be celebrated or snickered at? What have they done to legitimize their position?

Thankfully, most of our dragon parents appreciate the life lesson that we were teaching that day, that not everything is going to be handed to you and not everything comes easy. We have had many a former student who choose not to embrace that lesson. Parents may very well give lip service to overcoming adversity and rising to a challenge, but when the rubber meets the road, mama bear doesn't want them to experience it firsthand.

In her book *Grit*, Angela Duckworth elaborates on research that says in order to teach resilience, you can't just give motivational talks about not giving up. A person has to experience mastery or overcoming while in the middle of adversity. That you pushed through something. The deeper parts of your brain have to make the connection. And children who experience dealing with and overcoming adversity as a youth handle adversity much differently and better later in life.

Duckworth shares the term “fragile perfect.” Those kids who might have actually accomplished a lot but never experienced adversity and thus don't know how to handle actual setback or rejection when things don't go their way. What if we handed everyone their belts so as not to hurt their self-esteem? I am sure they would still put it in their college application that they got their black belt, but I doubt they would note it was because they kept their tuition current or because no one ever fails at their school. They might wear the symbol of perseverance and dedication, but their knock off belt is as fragile as glass. I would guess they would break into a million pieces if their skills, both mental and physical, were ever pressure tested.

Sometimes we have to discipline a student by taking away their belt. Their parent might comment that it was much more impactful than the other privileges that were taken away at home. I am not surprised, because that belt is one of the few things that they earned themselves instead of being provided for them.

Again, even the younger kids understand the difference. They feel the difference at a gut level. And it is one more data point that tells me that we are imparting truly important life lessons, and that we have built a healthy school where respect and status has been built on actual achievement instead of shortcuts and counterfeit belts.