



# GMA NEWS July 24

## Upcoming events/Class adjustments

July 4-5	Closed for 4 <sup>th</sup> of July
July 6 <sup>th</sup>	Demo Performance at the fair 6:00. Demo meet here at 4:00
July 8 <sup>th</sup>	Lil dragons testing
July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Stick fighting 10:00-12:30
July 16-18	Lil Dragon camp 9:00-1:00
July 19 <sup>th</sup>	TKD testing 5:30-7:00
July 19-20	Rope Dart Weapons camp with guest instructor Bensei
July 22-26	TKD camp 9:00-3:30
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	BB PREP 9:00-11:00 ish?
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	FAST Adult basics 1:00-4:30
July 29-30	HKD camp 9:00-3:30

## Look for us at our FAIR BOOTH, Sign up to help and Earn Points!

## GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Norah Lieffers	7/2	Dessy Rodebaugh	7/7	Mr. David Yoshida	7/8
Connor Ennis	7/9	Ryder DeMott	7/11	Jonah Lieffers	7/11
Grace Lieffers	7/11	Alex LaPointe	7/14	Joey Devine	7/21
Mr. Mike Dodge	7/24	Caleigh Allender	7/30	Jayden Chaboya	7/30
Cooper Bain	7/30				

## Training Anniversaries

Congrats to those who are celebrating a year, or multiple years, of training. We appreciate their hard work, dedication, and friendship.

Phil Salamander (TCC 9 yrs.)	Charles Branaman (TCC 4 yrs.)	Liam Canada (LD, TKD 3 yrs.)
Markus Pasborg (LD 1 yr.)	Monroe Long (Kids BJJ 1 yr.)	Austin Schneider (TKD 1 yr.)

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

July 1935. Mikonosuke Kawaishi introduced the concept of various colored belts to his judo school in France.

Subsequently adopted by all martial arts around the world.

July 20, 1973, Bruce Lee’s death

July 21, 1899(-Oct 27, 1986) Birthday of arguably the founder of Hapkido, Yong Sul Choi

July 24, 1936, Birthday of Dan Inosanto (kali, jkd)

July 27, 1923 (-April 25, 1994) Birthday of Karate legend, founder of Kyokushinkai karate, May Oyama (Korean)

## Quotes of the Week

As the year is halfway over, it is time to assess our yearly goals and talk about sacrificing to “win”.

## Getting Back to the Basics in Korea

There is a common theme in martial arts stories—both fact and fiction. The champion or promising advanced student, thinking themselves formidable, is humbled by a chance encounter or new teacher, whose technique is so good it is baffling to the upstart prodigy. Typically, our protagonist begrudgingly seeks instruction, only to find he doesn’t even know the basics like he thought he did---that his grip on the sword is limiting him, that his basic punch or kick is lacking something, or some other start over moment. For the Karate kid, it was going from learning from the YMCA and out of a book, to sanding the floor and waxing cars, but it is rarely the imagery of this process that dramatic. Most of the time it is quite unceremonious. Perhaps, the reason such a scenario plays a part of so many stories and movies is because it is such a frequent but cautionary tale in real life, and in fact, we recently had a similar encounter in Korea.



As most of the school and our friends beyond are aware, several of our black belts just returned from another amazing trip to Korea. It was a demanding itinerary because of the double nature of the trip—both touring and training. We trained at 6 locations, including some true meccas for a Korean martial artist, and with 3 different ninth dans. With the exception of Master Yoshida and myself, most of our group had never been around that much experience and accomplishment in TKD or HKD and given what we bring to the table and bring to GMA, which is saying something. Naturally, I was similarly excited to be a student again, train, and gain more insights. The trip did not disappoint. Did we learn secret applications or high-level sparring tricks? No. Did we practice fancy, complicated techniques that only the best black belts in Korea typically do? Nope. Did we learn cutting edge training methodologies? I don't really think so.

So, what did we do? Well, in one class we did A LOT of punches. Hundreds of them. Yeup, same horse stance punch that we teach the first day of class. Our 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> dan black belts, along with our masters, did the same punch they had been working on for several years—including some of the same drills that I had learned from same masters previously. And I must say, we did them with vigor and enthusiasm. And then we moved on some white belt blocks. In another class, we spent time on drills for front kick and roundhouse kick. Yet another was footwork drills for sparring—it was basically similar to the same footwork class this grandmaster showed us during our first trip back in 2012. We have ever since done some of those drills, bearing the gym's name, but I learned a lot more this time around.

Some people might have found the lesson plans disappointing, but we found them educational. These high-level masters or world class instructors were able to provide details of minutia and show ways to break down, compartmentalize, or isolate different components that might get lost in the whole. Tricks that we are able to bring back to all of our students. As my master instructor, Grandmaster Choi, was fond of saying, “to be master, you must master the basics.” Note, he didn't say it was a prerequisite for being a black belt, but a master. To the outsider or new students, which might be a surprise.

Being a black belt was, at least initially, held in higher regard in America than it was in the parent culture of the Japan or Korea. Here there was a mystique to it, and the image or notion of having action hero fighting skills in real life wasn't exactly downplayed by many a black belt in the 70's or 80's. Some people still hold that image. Others, however, particularly after the commercialization of the martial arts in America and the rise of ever younger black belts, who clearly were handed belts for other reasons than technical proficiency and knowledge, have a more jaded view of black belts. McDojo and other online sources offer lots of examples to validate their cynicism, but I have a theory that a large portion of their hostility comes from originally being in the first camp and having a high regard, only later to become disillusioned and feeling duped.

Ironically, the second view might have been the proper and more accurate view all along. Not because of the McDojo examples, but because a black belt is viewed differently over there. GM Choi always reminded us that a black belt isn't the end but the beginning. You have simply shown that you are a sincere student and have the basics down—NOT MASTERED. This stuff is hard, and to be an expert requires more dedication than a single dan rank. It is absurd to think that a child or young adult could play basketball for 3 years and then be ready for the NBA, but yet somehow that unrealistic expectation remains for a black belt in our society.

And as our trip made apparent, even when you think you have a pretty good handle on it, there is usually someone who can demonstrate even more depth and skill. And when that happens, you are at the crossroads of our cautionary tale: do you puff up and say that you already know what you are doing (after all, you are a black belt), or can you be humble enough to be receptive and go deeper still? I would like to think that our black belts have a pretty good perspective about what their rank truly represents, and I would like to think that is why our training in the basics in Korea was met with enthusiasm instead of disappointment, and why the trip was a huge success.