



Gentry Martial Arts

News March 2025

Upcoming events:

March 8th Stickfighting 9:00-11:30
March 8th BB prep 11:30-1:00
March 8th HKD upper rank testing 1:00 -?
March 22nd Demo Team 9:00-10:30
March 22nd BB prep 10:30-12:30
March 29th Grappling Industries BJJ tour
April 2nd & 3rd Kristian Woodmansee returns for BJJ classes
April 11th TKD testing 5:30 no class
April 12th USHF seminar at GMA
April 26th World Tai chi celebration 10:00-11:00
April 26th Black belt testing and BB stripe testing

Don't forget Kids BJJ comp class on Sundays from 3-4 until March 23rd.

Congrats to our newest lil dragon graduate: Eleanor Berninger and Lynne Stewart

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

We are late starting our focus points, so we will continue with those, and after that, we will be going over some of our favorite sayings from Grandmaster Choi.

Training Anniversaries:

Mike Dodge (BJJ 18 yrs.)	Nathin Plummer (TKD 7 yrs.)	Alysha Patel (TKD 7 yrs.)
Mikenna Kirk (TKD 4 yrs.)	Jason Eversole (KBJJ 2 yr.)	A J Starodub (LD, TKD 3 yrs.)
Kris Mallng (BJJ 2 yr.)	Charlie Malcom (TKD 1 yr.)	Ryder Morris (TKD 1 yr.)
Lucas Stapleton (LD 1 yr.)	Cooper Bain (LD 1 yr.)	Sarah House (LD 1 yr.)
Isabella Shrake (TKD 1 yr.)		

Don't forget GMA website, Facebook, Instagram,

Follow us on Instagram @Gentry_MA for lighter notes. And you can also subscribe to our YouTube Channel

Birthdays:

Jenna Berry 3/3	Lori Overby 3/4	Haylie Pries 3/4
Evelyn Kauffman 3/6	Bryan Bolin 3/7	Cole Frye 3/8
McKinley Morgan 3/14	Aleah Spires 3/14	Lyle Britton 3/16
Alaynah Gregory 3/18	Maya Mras 3/21	R J Arney 3/23
Matson Green 3/28	Matthew York 3/28	Lise Roberson 3/29
Rinlee Mullikin 3/31		

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 31st, 1999, The Matrix debuts in theaters—changing the way movie fights are done, and changing perceptions of what we do!

Tournament Results

Altogether we had a very strong showing in forms at our last tournament, with nearly half of our students winning 1st in their division. Sparring was not as successful, but we will get back to it for the next one. Congrats to the following,

Kylie Yoshida	1 st forms	1 st weapons	Jonas Stewart	1 st forms
Isach White	1 st forms	3 rd sparring	William Yoshida	1 st forms
Jaxson White	2 nd forms	3 rd sparring	Mylah White	2 nd forms, 3 rd sparring
Clara Gibson	2 nd sparring		Kason Barnhorst	3 rd forms, 2 nd sparring

Martial Arts—The Serenity Prayer in Action

Serenity Prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

. I am not advocating that martial arts replace the serenity prayer, but I will say the martial arts are a great supplement to it and a chance to put the sentiment into practice.

Last month I mused about how martial arts gives us a continual reminder of our imperfections, but in a way that should also give us a healthy perspective and balance between striving for excellence while still accepting our shortcomings. I used the term comrade because in trying to convey my point, I was reminded of an account of Taichi Chuan legend, Cheng Man Ch’ing, where he described a special kind of relationship, that he called ‘comrades in the same discipline.’ This relationship in some ways is higher than being a friend, because it requires being truthful, perhaps even brutally honest with one another.

Martial Arts practice can indeed expose some bitter truths about ourselves. But in discussing many examples of our ‘failures’ in training last month, not all of them are exclusively internal or skill based. Often there are external factors or other personal limitations that also come into play—some that we can control, some that we can’t. So, I would like to elaborate further on how the martial arts are the comrade that teaches us some hard truths, and in doing so, makes us more accepting of factors that we have little control over, while at the same time, helps us try to adapt and overcome them.

Accepting Mother Nature. A fighting style isn’t much of a system if it only works on people that you could conceivably beat up anyway—typically your own size or smaller. So obviously the whole point of martial arts is to give us technique, efficiency, strategy and other ways to get the most bang for our buck, so we can defeat someone with more

potential but lacking in those efficiencies. That being said, any decent instructor will never say that size and strength don't matter. There is a reason almost all combat sports have weight classes. We should respect mother nature. Sometimes it is the technique itself in relation to the other person; there are certain people I look at and realize I am never going to get their body folded into a particular position. Other times, it is the limitation of the person doing the technique. A five-foot-tall person is going to have a hard time reaching certain targets or fitting into position for certain techniques. Some body types are more conducive breaking boards, or jump kicks, or moves based on agility, while people are more naturally flexible than others, etc.

These personal limitations are not newsflashes to the practitioner. Master Yoshida didn't need martial arts to tell her she is only a couple of inches above a hobbit.* But our comrade, martial arts, doesn't allow us to use them as excuses. We are forced to address our limitations and make up for the deficiencies by problem solving or finding a work around.

Accepting Father Time. I firmly believe that martial arts are an underappreciated vehicle for longevity. Many a martial arts old timer, despite their battle scars and mileage, are still far beyond their counterparts in functional living. But as the saying goes, father time is undefeated. We can lose flexibility, speed, strength, and explosiveness. Obviously, everyone must deal with this in life, though not everyone does it gracefully. But I would assert that martial artists do it more gracefully than most, because our comrade forces us to find a way to pivot and adapt. Our sparring style must change. If we refuse to let go of our old self, relying on strategies and tactics that are no longer feasible, it will mean "death" in the match. As a fellow martial art...elder.... Bill Kennedy phrases in it a more comical way, "I still do head kicks. I just gotta throw them down on the ground before I kick them in the head now." We might not always like these trends, but we have to accept the challenge of finding new ways to survive and thrive if we are going to remain on the mats.

Accepting when Murphy shows up. Most know of Murphy's rule that anything that can go wrong will. And Murphy loves a fight. We can slip on a wet spot on the floor. Maybe we simply try to create space from a person, to disengage or try to de-escalate, only when we push them they fall backwards, hit their head on the corner of a billiards table, and now we are looking at manslaughter charges. Yes, there are strategies and tactics to minimize the chances of some of these things happening. As we discussed last week, we try to stack these odds upon one another in order to "die less often," and it is not hard to see how those who are the most practiced are the least unlucky, but sometimes you just have to shake your head. Which leads us to the next one...

Accepting we are not invincible. As I tell my college self defense class or our Be Safe FAST courses, none of this is about being invincible. Anyone of us can walk out from training and get shot by a 12 year old with a gun. Rickson Gracie relates that he is much more concerned with an unpredictable juvenile with a gun than any of the world's greatest fighters that he faced (see Murphy above.)

I always smile when a student asks the question—couldn't they hit you when you do that? Sometimes they don't understand that it really isn't a concern if you do the technique right, and in fairness, it is important to understand the inherent weaknesses or potential counters to a technique. But sometimes, the answer is simply 'I reckon so, cause it is a fight.' Beginners want the magic bullet and fail to realize that—contrary to what Master Miyagi said about the crane kick—there is no perfect technique that can't be countered. If there was, everyone would just do that one technique!

In a related anecdote, on more than one occasion when I was buying ammo in a popular store, I have had people who recognized me (not even people I know, but just recognize me as the karate guy in town) ask why I needed to buy ammo? My 'cute' response that gets a chuckle is that sometimes I feel like being lazy. That is easier than trying to explain to someone who might have been just trying to be funny, that the more you train, the more you fully appreciate that not every situation can be solved with empty hand combatives, and a more comprehensive personal protection plan includes the option of firearms (with responsible training.) In fact, I dare say the more you train, the more you realize just how vulnerable you are, from murphy showing up, or just how easy it is for a lucky blow to land, or how you can't really imagine all the ways that violence could possibly happen.

In short, try as we might—and we should absolutely try—there are still some things we cannot fully control, and we just have to accept those facts of life. Yes, growing old or accepting random circumstances are aspects of life that everyone has to deal with, but I would assert that martial arts are unique in how they force us to deliberately confront and find work arounds. We don't let our personal limitations be an excuse for why we can't execute or perform. We take the fight with Father Time into the later rounds rather than throwing in the towel. We strategize to control as many variables as we can to give us an advantage. The serenity prayer has some ying-yang elements to it. In paradoxical fashion, we strive to minimize certain factors while at the same time come to face the realities that we cannot change or account for. In the long run, martial arts is a great way to practice finding courage, understanding, and possibly even a little more serenity.

*She is actually a good 10 inches above a tall hobbit....I decided to google it.