



May 2026 GMA Newsletter

Congrats to our newest black belt: Joseph Runnebohm
CONGRATS to our graduating seniors: Maddox Bailey

Upcoming events:

- May 2nd-3rd GMA hosts Dr. Yang seminar
- May 9th Possible black belt morning class 9:00 am--TBD
- May 9th Break a thon and school picnic 11:00-3:00ish?
- May 11th-14th Happy Mother's Day--Mothers please join us for class this week.
- May 16th Leadership Team 9:00-10:30
- May 16th Demo Team 10:30-12:00
- May 16th Black belt prep 12:30-2:00
- May 16th Stickfighting 2:00-4:30
- May 16th Possible BJJ fight night--TBA
- May 23th Spring Clean 10:30-1:00 ish
- May 25th No class, Memorial Day
- May 28th Tentative TKD black belt/stripe testing retest/ceremony during BB and BBC class—no BBC
- May 30th FAST Defense Handgun Extra 9:00-4:30 ish

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 a great chance for our students to get a lot of breaking practice! This year we will be having it at Jimmy Nash Park, Shelter no 5. Please arrive around 11 for registration for the break and set up. We hope start the picnic at 11:30, and the break practice will begin shortly thereafter. For the picnic, fried chick and pulled pork will be provided, and students need to sign up for the pitch in. We will still be doing fun and games such as egg toss and throwing pies at the instructors (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. HKD/TKD camps are the equivalent of 30 classes and 3-5 points and cover a full belt rank material in one profoundly serious week. LD camp covers 8 stripes. Knowledge, drills, and games not normally covered in class is also taught. And there is still time for dodge pad. Discounts are available for multiple camps or multiple family members. Additionally, get a discounted rate if you pre-register by May 15th.

Dragons camp July 7-9 TKD camps June 8-12 and July 27-31. BJJ camp June 18-19. HKD June 22-23

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Colin Stevens	5/1	Ethan Jackson	5/2	Taylor Ham	5/5	Orion Stephenson	5/5
Darien Troxell	5/15	Carter Craven	5/20	Dalton Smith	5/21	Ethan Payne	5/23
Greydon Parker	5/24	Ryan Spires	5/25	Archer Wagner	5/26	Eliana Gluff	5/28



Training Anniversaries

Rob Snyder (TKD, BJJ 18 yrs.)	Lise Roberson (HKD, Tai Chi 16 yrs.)	Donovan Sieg (TKD, BJJ 15 yrs.)
Jamie Kirk (Tai Chi, TKD 2 yr.)	Aedric Hogan (TKD 2 yrs.)	Adiah Smith (LD 1 yr.)
Hadley Smith (TKD 1 yr.)	Natalia Strait (TKD 1 yr.)	Mason Kreamer (LD 1 yr.)
CJ Smith (KBJJ 1 yr.)	Janie Bradley (TKD 1 yr.)	Noelle Cooley (TKD 1 yr.)

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.

Congrats to our BJJ kids who competed at the FUJI tournament: GMA took 3rd in the kids team standings, bringing home 5 gold, 12 silver, and 4 bronze medals overall.

Colt Goforth	2 silver and one bronze	Colin Stevens	1 gold, 1 silver	Brycen Byrum	1 gold, 1 bronze
Ezekiel York	3 gold, 2 silver, 2 bronze	Gideon York	2 Silver	Charis Hoffman	1 silver
Cam Gregory	2 silver	Drew Goocey	1 Silver	Kaleb Park	1 silver 1 bronze

Also Congrats to Miss Kylie Yoshida for placing 1st in ITF forms at the Ohio State Championships



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The Image of Invincibility in Martial Arts? Part 2

Last month I used the death of the seemingly invincible Chuck Norris to opine on the tendency to view true martial arts masters as nearly superhuman. Some of the great masters may approach that in skill, but both the student and the instructor contribute other factors that lend to the overall mythos. From an instructor or leadership standpoint, such a mystique may be counterproductive, although from the practitioner standpoint, there is a practical reason for encouraging such an attitude.

I mentioned an incident when GM Choi once admonished me to never let my students see me in a weakened state. Such an attitude certainly reinforces the mystique of invincibility, but it also has a more down-to-earth value. While GM Choi never used the Japanese term of zanshin—being in a regular state of relaxed readiness or alertness—he often gave lessons to that effect, and I think the aforementioned incident was one of those times. But honestly, it wasn’t GM Choi who most poignantly drove home the point, but a soccer coach when I was a youth*

While at the IU soccer camp as a goalie, I was nursing a pretty bad thigh injury that was severely limiting my play. I did not hide this fact during warmups and as I went up to discuss it with my coach, who was talking to the coach of the



opposing team that we would scrimmage later. My coach and I turned away from the opposing coach to have our conversation. As soon as it was over, I nearly dropped to the ground in pain. My surprise quickly turned to rage as I turned back to the opposing coach who had just kneed me in my injured thigh. He was an international coach, so in his broken English, he admonished me “you hurt there? Never let them see you in pain.” My initial thought was this was a scrimmage that didn’t matter, so this guy needs to chill. But my attitude quickly softened when I realized that I was not “training as if it were real” as we would say, and this other coach had taught me in an instant the most important thing I got out of that camp.

As a martial artist, I was disappointed with myself that I needed that reminder, but I certainly took it to heart and still appreciate that coach who showed me that soccer (and life) isn’t all about orange slices. Never let the opposition know of a weakness or injury that they can exploit or possibly make worse. This is sometimes used to explain the long-standing tradition of physical, nonverbal tapping as submission in the martial arts. We don’t want to get into the habit of making audible noises that inform our opponent that their technique is working. It could even be unnerving to them if we appear less injured or unphased by their “best shot.” While I am not a fan of a lot of aspects of modern sport BJJ, I do like the fact that they keep this tradition alive with the concept of the nonverbal tap, where any utterance is considered a sign of submission. While I am fully aware that the rule is for safety, it nonetheless reinforces the martial attitude that making noise is admitting defeat. Thus, the aura in invincibility is further encouraged.

While having this mystique may offer an advantage in potential combat, that same persona may prove disadvantageous for the master/instructor in a teaching or leadership capacity. A teacher is supposed to encourage students to follow a similar path for similar growth and to inspire students to meet or exceed them in skill. Typically, that means you must be relatable in some way. It is hard for students, particularly beginners, to relate to the mythos of invincibility. It is hard to get students to attempt to follow you if you make the chasm between you too wide to cross. They won’t try to climb to your height if the pedestal you put yourself on is too high for them to reach. Tai Chi master Scott Rodell mentions that viewing the teacher as supernatural is tantamount to giving up. As the student is merely mortal, he justifies to himself why he can’t attain the same level of skill, and thus why it is ok to fail.

In contrast, one of the reasons I think Tai Chi master William CC Chen is so effective is because of the phrase he frequently utters: “If I can do it, anybody can do it.” The “after 50 plus years of practice” is implied and not fully appreciated by his listeners, but still, it goes a long way in encouraging people to bridge the skill gap. When we are in Korea and it is time for another training session, but our students are starting to get the 1000-yard stare after both working and playing hard, one of my favorite pep talks is to remind them that we are not there just to admire these grandmasters, we are there to become more like them.

This attitude of appearing invincible and not showing weakness is hardly unique to the martial arts, and it may have similar pros and cons in the broader world as well. Green Beret and author Scott Mann wonders when was the last time a CEO, politician, coach, etc. stood up and honestly addressed not only their organizational challenges, but their own personal struggles and problems? Airing such “dirty laundry” to the outside world would likely be seen as a sign of weakness and probably hurt them professionally, cause the stock to dip, etc., but it might just help make them more relatable, approachable and endearing to the people who work under them.

FBI lecturer and author Scott Schafer shares his tactic to be a more effective teacher that is very contradictory to adopting the superhuman, expert persona. He starts his lecture by purposely making a mistake, like a spelling error, and lets the students correct him. He maintains that this doesn’t affect his area of expertise but makes him more human, more likeable, and students are more willing to engage or participate in class because they have already broken the ice by correcting him.

As in most aspects of martial arts and life in general, I think the answer to the debate is in finding a balanced approach or understanding when it is proper to apply either the hard or softer tactic. There is a time and place to appear unphased and show strength (or hide weakness), and there is a time and place to be more relatable. As students, we should appreciate the master’s expertise but not put their skill or accomplishment out of reach for ourselves by making them superhuman or invincible. As both a teacher and student, this might be the most challenging feat of balance you must do in the martial arts.

*If you didn’t pronounce it like in My Cousin Vinny, I am not sure we can be friends.