



GMA Newsletter

December

St. Louis Tournament results

Congrats to our team that competed in the St. Louis tournament. Overall, we brought home 11 sparring and 8 forms trophies. We had a member in the finals of every division we entered, even the ones that aren't actually held during the final matches that evening. We are pretty sure no other school can boast that achievement. More specific results are as follows

Mr. Sieg	1 st forms	2 nd sparring	Obed Soto	2 nd forms	2 nd sparring
Mr. Yoshida		2 nd sparring	Brittany Nenedjian	4 th forms	1 st sparring
Mrs. Yoshida	2 nd forms	4 th sparring	Makyla Nenedjian	4 th forms	1 st sparring
Miss Dill	4 th forms	1 st sparring	Quinton Nenedjian		3 rd sparring
Mr. Pierce	4 th forms	2 nd sparring	Max McLeod		4 th sparring
Miki White	3 rd forms	1 st sparring			

Annual Christmas Party Preparations

As we approach another Christmas, it is time for our annual Christmas party. As we continue to grow, we fear the school will not be large enough to accommodate everyone, so this year we have reserved the Central Elementary Cafeteria in Martinsville so that things can run more smoothly this year (Mr. Sieg will also try to be more brief). We are currently in negotiations with Santa Claus, and we hope we can arrange for our very hard working demo team to perform. We also have some very deserving people to recognize. We hope everyone can come be a part of the gentry family on Dec 19th. Classes will be held at the Martinsville school that evening—both TKD and Hapkido will meet from 5:30-6:30. The dinner/party will start at 7:00 at the elementary school. While class is going on, we will need the help of some parents to help set up, decorate, etc during the day and that evening for the party. We also need help taking down afterwards. If willing, please sign up as a volunteer and listen for announcements in class concerning that.

So that we have a balance on the pitch-in meal, as usual we will divide the classes in terms of what to bring. Signs ups will be posted so we can figure out how many people in your family will be attending and so that others can see what everyone else is bringing to avoid too much duplication:



Hapkido students:	Drinks, cups, ice, utensils, napkins, condiments, etc.
Lil' dragons:	Salads, breads, other appetizer like dishes
TKD yellow belts:	Desserts
TKD white/green belts:	Side dishes
TKD advanced:	Entrees (ham, chicken, lasagna, whatever)
Black belt	Their choice—(black belt rules)

Upcoming events

Dec 5 th	TTCA testing. 5:30 at GMA-Martinsville
Dec 6 th	Holiday sale at GMA-M Spencer: 9-11 am.
Dec 6 th	FAST defense at DPU from 1-5
Dec 3 rd , 8 th	DPU Hapkido testing
Dec 12 th	Temp black testing at GMA-Martinsville
Dec 12 th	Demo team practice 6:30-7:00
Dec 19 th	Annual Christmas Party





Happy Birthday to the following

We are going to start announcing our school birthdays in the newsletter, so everyone can help us remember to embarrass them with song.

Martinsville: Aaron Gray 12/1
Logan Griffin 12/10
Gage Kidwell 12/11
Drew Wilson 12/12
Collyn Dodge 12/12
Dexter Grubb 12/18
Mandy Yoshida 12/26
Jody Powell 12/27
Griffin Selch 12/30

Spencer: Lynn Miller 12/6
Autumn Reed 12/26
Chad Moffatt 12/30



Quotes of the week:

This month's character development centers on the concept of personal excellence. You might want to review these quotes and our discussions about them at home.

"Success will not lower its standards to us. We must raise our standards to success." Rev. Randall R. McBride Jr.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle

"Good, better, best; never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best." Anonymous

Holiday Schedule

Please note the following class cancellations around the holidays: Class will be held the first part of the Christmas week, Mon and Tues Dec 22 and 23rd. No class Dec 24th, 25th, or 26th. Classes resume for the first part of the following week, Dec 29th and 30th. No class on Dec 31st or Jan 1st. Classes resume full time Jan 2nd. We will likely have joint black belt club classes on Tuesday the 23rd and 30th, since TKD black belt club falls on both holidays.

A reminder about the tuition increase

Please remember that January marks a 5 dollar increase in all programs except family discounts. Also don't forget that you have until Dec 31st to commit to a longer term agreement at the current rate.

XMA: X is not on the mark

I have already answered, and undoubtedly will continue to answer, question after question concerning the Discovery Channel new show on the martial arts. To be perfectly honest, I watched until I couldn't stand it any longer and then turned it off, but it was like a bad train wreck where one has to stare, so I kept turning it back on. But I thought I would share a limited number of my thoughts with everyone.

They started the hype with the intro—that XMA is the future of martial arts. I believe, sadly, that this might be true for many people without traditional teachers, influenced by the media portrayal and Jackie Chan movies. That the masters of old would be proud, as the show maintained, is another question. Even though we think of martial arts as being frozen in time from centuries past, they have continued to evolve and change—some for better and some for worse. Martial arts were certainly progressive at one time, applying the best science available to them. I believe that is still possible. Olympic TKD athletes apply cutting edge training methodologies to reach peak performance. My personal trainer perspective encourages me to bring some of those training principles, such as ripcord or band training, into our classes here. But we try to find a balance between the modern, supplemental exercises and the traditional training approach that our master instructors have taught us.



I must also concede that the featured martial athletes are top notch. Their work ethic and training regimen ranks them among the elite, professional athletes. They are great performing artists. Because of their attributes, they might even be very good traditional martial artists in addition to the fancy stuff, but they didn't show that part. I recall one part where the guy starts to sanchin kata, only to break into a back flip in the middle of it. To be sure, some of the trick kicks are fun to try and do show what the body is capable of with martial arts inspired training, and they look good for demos, but there is a reason it is fun and games. Can I do everything they can do...not a chance... but then again, I have never tried and never been motivated to.

What we are left with is a very specialized method of martial arts inspired movement, that is certainly demanding and eye pleasing. But did you notice that despite supposedly being from the most varied styles of martial arts, the competitors all looked the same? The quality of the movement, the style of movement, the types of strikes, even the exaggerated grimaces on their faces. (as an aside, it seems like you cant win a tournament anymore without a scowl on your face. This even happened in St. Louis, where one of our black belts was told that her form was good, but she needed to show more effort. Her movements were crisp, snapped the uniform, etc. My inner response was, "but she can have power without making a funny look on her face.") All of the movements on XMA are a far cry from the reserved, stylistic power and technique of GM Choi, Mr. Burns, Master Chen, Dr. Yang, Bill West, etc. I think the quality of movement would be quite different as well. One XMA feature talked about how his style is based in Iaido, only to proceed to throw his sword in the air and do things no iaido practitioner would EVER do.

Real martial arts are seldom flashy. It is in the details: a centimeter difference in space or angle, an ounce of pressure more or less, a split second of timing, and a lifetime of practice to know the difference. It can sometimes be repetitious and mundane. But it has substance and can be applied, not just choreographed. Consider the guy who broke a coconut in half with a palm or knife hand strike. They made mention that it takes 1600 pounds of pressure. First, I have never tried to break a coconut. I despise the taste, have never been stranded on an island, and have never been attacked by one. (I practice good avoidance and don't walk under them). The line from the show...if they can break this...the human skull doesn't stand a chance. Well, if a person will let me set their head on a concrete slab and remain motionless while I come down on them, then yeah, I can do some damage. A person moving who can roll with the punch, etc., is another story. The question is can you transfer what you are doing. Anyone who has taken our FAST classes knows how difficult that is to do with the simple stuff, let alone the flashy stuff.

Lastly, what is the point of martial arts practice? At gentry martial arts, we maintain it is a way to self-betterment. Now, it is conceivable that XMA can teach some valuable life lessons and life skills, but that wasn't the side that was presented. Instead, we have a guy on the show bragging that he gets excited about seeing blood. Some role model.

There are some neat things about XMA, but I wouldn't call it real or traditional martial arts. It is unfortunate that the show leads the public to believe this is the way of the future of all martial arts. Since XMA is the latest money making venture of Century and some of the stars of the show, I am sure they would like the public to believe that. I hope that it is not the only future for the martial arts. --BLS