



GMA Newsletter

March 07

Upcoming events:

March 9	TTCA Testing (no TKD class)
March 10	Demo team 9:00-11:00
March 10	KHF seminar with Master Whalen and Thomas 1:00-5:00 at DPU
March 11	KHF testing 12:00
March 16	Parents Euchre Tournament 9:00 pm
March 17	Demo Team practice and performance 10:00-12:00
March 17	TKD 1 st kup class 1:00-2:30
March 17	TKD black belt class 2:30-4:30
March 24	Demo team practice 9:00-11:00* (might be adjusted on account of TMNT)
March 24	Tai Chi seminar 1:00-4:00
March 30	TTCA black belt testing, Louisville 7:00 pm
March 31	TTCA TKD Tournament
April 7	TTCA black belt ceremony, Louisville 1:00 pm
April 14	USHF seminar at DPU 10:00-5:00

* because of all the special events and also Easter weekend, we will have to have lil dragon testing during the regularly scheduled class times during the beginning of April. Details will follow as time approaches.

TMNT movie night:

We are working on getting together a school trip, possibly a private showing, of the new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Movie on opening weekend, March 23-24. Nothing is set yet, so keep looking for details.

Class cancellation:

All classes will be cancelled on Friday, March 30th on account of the TTCA tournament and black belt testing. BJJ will have a make up session to be determined later.

Birthdays:

Elaine Hooker 3-2	Kaitlyn Weber 3-8	Shelby Moler 3-25
Trenna Dodge 3-3	Mya Freed 3-14	Marc Shotts 3-30
Trenton Clark 3-5	Kyle Holden 3-15	Shae Brouse 3-30
Jason Cox 3-5	Erica Honaker 3-20	
Logan Scott 3-6	Kristen Broyer 3-26	

Training anniversaries:

Mr. Devin Arthur (TKD 3 years)	Darian Crites (TKD 2 years)	Grant Wolfla (TKD 2 years)
Mark VanHuss (TKD 3 years)	Shelby Crites (TKD, LD 2 years)	Nathan Payne (TKD 1 year)
Alec Hooker (TKD, LD, 3 years)	Mike Dodge (HKD 2 years)	Alli Pounder (LD 1 year)
Ian Hooker (LD 3 years)	Sean Lamar (TKD 2 years)	Kaitlyn Weber (TKD 1 year)

Quotes of the week:

This months QOW will be dedicated to sportsmanship (martial arts style) and the proper mindset at the upcoming tournament and black belt test.

EUCHER tournament and fundraiser for parents/adults:

GMA and GMA parents committee will be having a Euchre tournament fundraiser on Saturday March 16th. This is a great chance to get to know some of the other parents you will be seeing at tournaments, in the chair beside you, etc. This is for our parents and adult students only, NO KIDS will be present. Volunteers from leadership team will act as servers during the event. The event is Friday March 16th, beginning at 9:00 pm. Money raised will go towards the purchase of a defibrillator for the facility (which we are also exploring other sources of funding such as grants, etc.). Small prizes will also be awarded to the winners. Suggested donation is 10.00 per couple or 5.00 per person playing. We will also need help with card tables (though we should be ok on chairs!). Some snacks will be provided but people may also consider bringing their own preference of 2-liter or snack.



It is graduation time again, and sometimes you never know:

Some of our academic students are probably thinking, whoa, I haven't even taken midterms yet! I don't mean academic graduation; rather, I am referring to the semi annual rounds of black belt testing in both TKD and HKD. We once again have a great crop of students going for this milestone...a kind of graduation of sorts from the colored belts. Now, I realize that black belt is not an end but a beginning. I also realize that some people don't necessarily have everything down even at black belt. It isn't perfect analogy, but it is probably the most visible, most tangible representation of the process. If anything, the graduation to 1st dan is like elementary school graduation, not college, but still, I wanted to take a minute to explain why we put such an emphasis on the black belt.

Some martial arts business gurus say that you must paint across the front of your school that "this is a black belt school." Honestly, I think that is a bit much and not exactly clear. But we do expect a comparable commitment to making black belt—both from the student to get there and from our staff to help them get there. Again, the black belt is not a sign of expertise or mastery, but it is supposed to be one of competency. If our duty is to teach martial arts, getting our students to black belt is the sign that we have done that at least somewhat effectively. It is a milestone or marker.

I have gotten a lot of response from the recent newsletter rambling about "the idea of being a martial artist versus actually being one." I know of another TTCA instructor who shared it with his students. One of his mothers took offense. "Well, I am not here to live the martial arts. This is just a fun activity for them to do until they get bored." He asked, "What am I supposed to say to that."

I responded, "Well, after I gained my composure, I would have said something like 'And I thank you for helping to financially support the school to allow the serious students a place to train.'" Now that seems a little blunt or harsh, and maybe it is, but let me explain.

Generally, I am glad for everyone who comes in the door, and I hope that they are appreciative of the experience and genuinely take some lessons that will be of value down the way for them (obviously some learn those lessons better than others, and some have more work to do.) It would be delusional to think that everyone who walked through the door is a lifer in the martial arts like our instructors. But at the same time, it would be suicidal to write everyone off as not having the potential to be a lifer.

If black belt is a graduation, is it not our duty to prep the students for graduation? Isn't it the elementary school teacher's responsibility to set the foundation skills for the rest of their academic career, if not life long learning? What would be the quality of instruction if an elementary school teacher doesn't encourage the students to graduate and assumes that every student is going to be a high school dropout rather than a college graduate? Similarly, martial arts instructors cannot cater to the casual student, the dropout, at the expense of those who will eventually graduate. What would be our effectiveness if we simply said, "It doesn't matter, he is just going to quit anyway." How would the standards slip? As you see, we have no other option but assume that everyone who walks through the door will become indeed become a black belt, and we will continue to assume it until told otherwise.

While my hypothetical response to the mother of the casual student might seem harsh, let me explain that it really isn't with any malice or condemnation. In actuality, I know where she is coming from, because I know my parents thought the exact same thing when I started! In actuality, so did I! I can remember the car ride home from watching my first class (you had to watch before you could take an intro). I commented to my friend and father that "I think I'll get my green belt." I wasn't sure about those crazy brown and black belts, but the green belts, they had cooler forms, looked like they sort of knew what they were doing. I bet that was enough to be able to take care of myself, and that wasn't too much of a commitment. I was sure I could at least get green belt. Well, somewhere along the way, I changed my mind.

Sitting at my masters ceremony, I thought about all the times my parents drove me to class, and tournaments, and testings, and well, you all know. Then I looked at all the parents of my own students—many to see their own kids graduate into the black belt ranks. I wonder if they thought the same was as that one mother when they first walked in. It just goes to show, you never can tell. The parents might very well have thought that this was an activity to pass the time. Perhaps the kid has different ideas. Perhaps both will see the true value of martial arts training along the way, and realize it is more than just something to keep them busy, and both will change their mind. I know there have been several times when I have been pleasantly surprised by the turn around and improvement of a student, when they finally start to "get it."

A few of my classmates in high school were in real danger of not graduating. Granted, some didn't. Some might have said they didn't want to graduate, but later changed their minds. To reiterate, what would have happened to those who got it together and did graduate if their teachers had written them off freshman year? Sometimes you never can tell. What I can tell you is that those who did graduate are glad they did. In the same manner, our students who "graduate" to black belt will tell you the journey was worth it. --
BLS