



# GMA NEWS April 08

## Upcoming events:

April 5 <sup>th</sup>	USHF seminar at ISU. 10:00-5:00. Master Thomas at GMA the night before.
April 12 <sup>th</sup>	Demo Team practice 9:00-10:30
April 12	TKD BB class (stripe test) 10:30-12:30
April 12 <sup>th</sup>	TKD BB prep class 1:30-3:00
April 12 <sup>th</sup>	HKD bb prep class-- TBA
April 18 <sup>th</sup>	TTCA Black belt testing—Louisville main school 6:00 pm. All classes cancelled.
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	TTCA tournament—Louisville (see below for details)
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	Extreme Grappling Open BJJ tournament—Indianapolis
April 25 <sup>th</sup>	TTCA testing (no TKD class)
April 26	Lil dragon testing: Beg 9:00-10:30, Int 10:30-11:30, Adv 11:30-12:30
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	USHF HKD Black belt testing
May 10 <sup>th</sup>	FAST adults basics class
May 30-June 1	TTCA summer camp

## Tournament news and notes:

- Reminder that classes are cancelled on Friday April 18<sup>th</sup>, as all instructors will be in Louisville.
- Remember to wear your Team Gentry and GMA Parent t-shirts to show your support. The parents committee is organizing a “show your pride” day at school the same day—wear your Gentry stuff to school that Friday to send off the competitors
- Make sure all gear is clean and white.
- GMA group photo will be taken at 9:30 at venue of the tournament. This is the photo to be used for the local paper, website, etc. There will likely be a line into the room at that point, so don't be stuck in line while we are doing the photo. Please be in full uniform at that time.
- Be sure to get to the finals a bit early to get a good seat to cheer on our demo team and any people we have in the finals. Demo team, you will be expected to be back around 5:00 for walkthroughs.
- A reminder that GMA parents committee is sponsoring a “game night” later that evening, after the finals. Bring your favorite board games or similar entertainment and hang out as a group.
- Good luck to all those testing for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees in TKD on the 18<sup>th</sup>!!!!

## GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Noah Wilson	4-1	Mr. Mike Ksenak	4-1	Kaili James	4-2
Aileen Pettigrew	4-2	Ethan Minton	4-5	Isabel Jones	4-8
Sabrina Chouinard	4-10	Vince Kreipke	4-11	Mr. Grant Ksenak	4-13
Larry Hayes	4-18	Mr. Todd Miller	4-18	Christopher Mosby	4-21
Haley Sieg	4-23	Breanna Fowler	4-25	Bailey Fowler	4-25
Mr. Caleb Shotts	4-27	Noah Dillon	4-28	Will King	4-30

## Training Anniversaries

Alex Hermann (TKD 4 yrs)	Trae Brouse (TKD 3 yrs)	Dan Wiggins (BJJ 2 yrs)
Sabrina Chouinard (TKD, LD 2 yr)	Liam Kidwell (HKD, 3 yrs)	Tori Dillon (TKD 1 yr)
Robbie Hammitt (TKD 1 yr)	Kathryn Goodin (LD 1yr)	John Mosby (TKD 1yr)



## Quotes of the Week

With the TTCA tournament coming up, we will be discussing our goals and attitudes for the tournament and how it can help us be more, be gentry.

## Summer day-camp dates are set

Some people have been asking about this year's date of our popular day-camps. More details will follow, but we wanted to announce the dates so people can start planning for our intensive training camps. Pre-registration discounts apply.

HKD day-camps: June 16-20, July 21-25 TKD day-camp: July 14-18, Aug 4-8. Lil dragons camp will be July 1-2

## BB testing—sometimes 77% is better than 100%

Twice a year our thoughts turn to black belt testings and getting our students ready for their biggest hurdle to date in their martial arts career. Last fall we had 13 students test for dan rank in TKD. We had 10 of them pass, with three having to finish up breaking requirements. Having a big group of people test creates a much greater chance of the day being filled with mixed emotions as some people pass and some people might fail. I relate to all the testing students that if you pass, you need to keep your exuberance to yourself so as to not rub salt in your classmates wounds, and if you fail, you must take the set back in stride and not rain on the new black belt's parade. Martial arts demand nothing short of self control in both situations, and I would expect that courtesy to their fellow students. As an aside, I still remember very vividly one of the best examples of this a long time ago with Miss Dill and (then) Miss Tracy Charlton. They were good friends and tested together. Miss Dill passed that test; Miss Charlton got her black belt a later retest. After the first test, we weren't sure how to handle it. Miss Dill, myself, and others from DPU were basically walking on eggshells so as not to upset Tracy further. It was Tracy who broke the ice in an honest yet humorous way that let us know we could—in typical martial arts attitude—don't dwell on the past and enjoy the present. The rest of the tournament was a blast.

Don't get me wrong, I would love to have all our students pass. I was really rooting for all of them too. But I realize with nerves and the number of people testing, probably says someone is going to have an off day. Doesn't mean they weren't ready, just had a bad day...as the Japanese proverb I am fond of goes...even monkeys fall out of trees. Still, last fall if you had said going into the test that I could have 10/13 or 77% of the students pass their test...I probably would have taken it. It could have gone worse. (Incidentally, our ratio of students passing the test has almost always been better or at least even with the other schools, since I started doing the stat). We actually had a USHF HKD seminar later that day, so we raced back from the test to attend the exec meeting. Everyone at the seminar knew why GMA was split in attendance that day and many came up, making nice but also genuinely interested...and several times the following conversation happened.

“How did your test go?”

“Pretty good, we had 10/13 pass. I wish it went better, not satisfied, but we will take it.”

“Good.” [pause] “Wait, 10/13? You mean three people didn't pass?”

“Correct, but only 3 didn't”

“You mean you fail people?”

“Uh..yeah.”

“Why?”

“Cause it is a test. People can fail tests.”

Followed by a general comment of disbelief.

Now, I think that recreated conversation is indicative of several things. First though, I have to say I always find it a little strange that they even ask the question of how it went if in their mind they knew how it went and everyone passed. But the general opinion is kind of industry specific—you don't want to fail people at the test...it is supposed to be a celebration of their accomplishments, a happy time. The test is more a showcase of accomplishment. Makes for good



business and happy students. But I think the obvious pitfall is illustrated by the conversation I had two weeks later. One of the same instructors who was baffled by the fact we actually fail people was talking to me and lamenting:

“I’ve got X students supposedly getting ready for the black belt test, only they aren’t working very hard. They don’t come to class very often. I remember when I was going through the ranks, when you were preparing for black belt testing, you were in class 3-4 times a week, staying after, doing extra, that sort of stuff. These guys don’t seem to have any urgency, and I don’t understand it.”

I just smiled. I certainly didn’t say it, but thought to myself, “I can tell you why they don’t have any urgency....because they already know they are going to pass. Why work hard for an outcome you know is a certainty regardless of how well you do?” One can certainly speculate on how the standards for the art are influenced by this policy.

We don’t have to worry about that....our students have to work to get their rank. Some people might cite our way of doing things as having other drawbacks, but I don’t necessarily agree. First, they say the fact that we fail people leads to disappointment for the student. To reiterate, by definition a test implies that some people run the risk of not passing. I believe the martial arts should be taught with high standards, but also do it in a way that lessons transcend the subject matter into life in general. Unfortunately, failure is a part of life. And what can students learn from having to get back up, dust themselves off, and persevere? Plenty! I am very proud of my students who passed their tests, but in some ways I have been even more proud of those who have handled the disappointed of failure. Often, they have been back in class the next week, ready to break again and practice for the next time. That more than anything else, proves they are ready for black belt, the test is just a formality. I see how they are on fire and want that belt!

Other people might also say that the milestone of black belt should be a positive experience and not a nerve-racking endeavor. To them I might tell the story of a girl at DPU who wanted to test for her yellow belt but was too scared...afraid she wouldn’t pass, she would mess up, etc. Similarly, I have had girls in self defense class offer the excuse for poor performance on their techniques during the midterm on “being nervous.” I usually comment that if, heaven forbid, they actually had to use their skills, they probably will be a little nervous and stressed under the situation. I went on to explain to the girl who was waffling about testing that martial arts teaches confidence—and finding it--through pushing through boundaries. Shouldn’t a black belt be able to have the confidence to deliver in the clutch? As one of my favorite quotes of the week puts it, “No pressure; no diamonds.”

Make no mistake that I am cheering on all of our students at this black belt testing. I want them all to pass...but I want them to earn it. I want them motivated to accomplish something, and I want them proud of their accomplishment. I want them to know that if they didn’t deserve it, they wouldn’t have passed. I want all of our students to succeed, but do it the right way. Compared to other black belt exams, I think our 77% is better than their 100%. --BLS