



Gentry News Jan 2010

****2010—Year of the Tiger****

Upcoming events:

Jan 9 th	Leadership Team 9:30-11:00
Jan 9 th	Demo Team 11:00-12:30
Jan 16 th	TKD black belt class 9:30-11:00
Jan 22 nd	HKD testing 7:00 pm
Jan 23 rd	Lil Dragon Testing: beg/int 9:30-11:00, advanced 11:00-12:00
Jan 23 rd	Stickfighting 1-3:30
Jan 29 th	TTCA TKD Testing 5:30 pm
Jan 30 th	TKD BB prep class 9:30-11:30
Jan 30 th	First ever Gentry-Jam—bring your instruments 7:00
Feb 6 th	Tentative date for the TKD trip to GM Choi's
Feb 6 th	BJJ blue belt pretest: 10:00
Feb 13 th	Tentative FAST adult basics 1:00-4:00

Other dates:

Feb 27	Professor Caique seminar
March 6 th	USHF Spring seminar
March 27 th	TTCA Tournament (BB testing on the 26 th)

A REMINDER that Tai Chi classes have been moved to Mon/Wed evenings for the month of Jan. *

And the winners are....congrats to our award recipients!

We want to once again thank everyone for a great time at the annual Christmas party and awards banquet. This year we recognized the following students with our annual awards:

- Most Improved Student—Marshall Leitz
- Competitor of the Year (TKD)—Haley Sieg, Malana Harmon, and Noah Lambert-Adams
- Competitor of the Year (BJJ)—Doug Bailey
- Black belt of the Year—Mr. Jake Waltz
- Student of the Year—Rebekah Wiley and Morgan Williams

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Josh Hampton	1-5	Madison Francis	1-14	Levi Simpson	1-24
Annabelle Cleary	1-8	Brayden Fraker	1-14	Ethan Retz	1-25
Blake Rains	1-9	Chad Handlon	1-16	Carl Lowes	1-26
Mr. Ryan Jerome	1-11	Miss Raven Shotts	1-17	Branden Mason	1-28
Anthony Tejera	1-13	Titus Vee	1-18	Mr.Jake Waltz	1-31
Angela Fields	1-13	Mr Noah Lambert Adams	1-23		

Training Anniversaries

Marc Shotts (TKD, HKD 8 yrs)	Zachary Rupert (TKD 5 yrs)	Greg Hamilton (BJJ 2 yrs)
Caleb Shotts (TKD 8 yrs)	Ethan Rupert (TKD 5 yrs)	Luke Goodin (TKD 2 yrs)
Raven Shotts (TKD 8 yrs)	Jia Jones (TKD 4 yrs)	

Announcing our first ever Gentry Jam

As several of our students are musically talented (or at least think they are), we have decided to host a night where all of them can come together and “jam”. Bring your instruments and best solo routine. Other students are welcome to come hear the concert. It will be held on Jan 30 at 7:00 pm.

Quotes of the Week

Since Jan is the time for new years resolution, we take the chance to discuss goal setting. We will be getting everyone to share their goals through a homework assignment.



Healthy Competition Doesn't Mean Level the Playing Field for Those Who Don't Like Hills

Recently, a couple of events have drawn my attention to how we at GMA may view healthy competition differently than other environments. I talked to a frustrated mom who made arrangements for her daughter and her partner for a school project to meet afterschool and work on it. When it came time to leave for the day, the teacher wouldn't let them take it home, citing fears that it would be damaged on the bus. A trip was made back to the school to pick it up afterwards, so the dangers of public transportation could be avoided. The teacher still refused to allow the project to go home, this time at least coming a little more clean as to why: it isn't fair that some people have extra time to work on it and others don't. MY translation: despite your daughter showing initiative and enthusiasm and a willingness to go above and beyond, it would separate her too much from the other students who don't have the same work ethic. Similarly, my daughter Haley is fortunately an avid reader, and she had backlogged several AR tests at school. I made arrangements for Haley to stay after school and catch up. When she sat down to do the tests, we learned that they have set the system to prevent people from gaining AR points after school hours, so some people can't have an unfair advantage. Seems fair on the surface, but again the more subtler message you send is there might not be a reward for extra hard work. In both cases, I would say the students were showing black belt effort and going the extra mile but were prevented from doing so. I understand the rationale, perhaps they don't want to hurt the feelings of the other children, but our students were trying to find a way to succeed and couldn't. That isn't the black belt way of looking at things; at GMA, we strive to constantly give our students the chance to succeed (or conversely, fail).

We currently have several brown and black belts who stay after class regularly to keep working on breaks, etc. I literally have to kick them out of the building some evenings. Our BJJ crew will stay and spar well after class is over, sometimes leaving the building after other people have already gone to sleep for the night. Other students make arrangements outside of class to work on things. Some come to early classes to review lower rank material. It is no surprise that many of these students are nominated at our awards banquet, leadership team, black belt club, etc. I have heard through the grapevine that I play favorites with these students. I will admit that they are—because they work the hardest and are undaunted in their martial arts journey.

Indeed, part of success is figuring out what you need to do extra to achieve your goals. I might have a student who is struggling to remember his rank material or lower rank forms. Clearly the normal practice isn't enough for them. The question is how are they going to compensate to ensure success? Schedule a private session? Come to lower rank classes to do more review. If they don't take the opportunity to try to succeed, then I give them the opportunity to fail. One of my favorite sayings from GM Choi is that the martial arts are fair—either you put in the time and it shows, or you don't put in the time and that also shows. Now, I am not going to say that “the time” is the same for everybody.

Every once in a while I will get an email at the end of the semester after I post grades in my college classes. It will go something like this...I came to class and I tried hard. You should take effort into account. While I can sympathize to some degree, I tell my classes this parallel. There was a kid in high school who had a photographic memory...he didn't have to read the book, he would just flip the pages walking down the hall and go in and ace the test. I didn't think that was very “fair” but he still got an A. In any other class, some people are more talented than others or have better backgrounds, and some people have to work harder to get the same grade. And so it is in my class. And so it is in life.

In the real world, there are rarely rules on how much effort and work you can apply to something. While there are never any guarantees, if you stay late, burn the midnight oil, and do what it takes to succeed, then you are rewarded. The person who cries “foul” will say that they bent the system. Well, that would be the case if Mr. sourgrapes tried to get the same opportunity but wasn't allowed. More often than not, however, the issue is not about extra opportunity for the other person, but failure to look for opportunity for themselves. Often, what they should be upset about is that they didn't think about a way to achieve it themselves, never had the guts to try, or simply weren't willing to sacrifice.

Instead of protecting those who aren't willing to do what it takes from those who are, why don't we let them learn the lesson that some people do have a black belt attitude and are willing to go the extra mile, and if you want the same results, you have to be willing to do the same or more. Kinda sounds like *focus point 2: the concept of healthy competition* to me! That is a much better lesson than learning to play the nepotism or favoritism card. Want me to play favorites with you too? Simple—find a way, any way, to work as hard as they do,...and maybe bring me a sugar or caffeine fix every once in a while ☺ ---BLS