



GMA News June 10

Congrats to our new black belt and other awards:

We had some milestone promotions in the HKD program in the month of May. Congrats to our new black belts Kate Mittendorf, Kevin Pereira, and Mr. Greg Hamilton (2nd dan).

A special congrats and thank you to two students who received GMA's highest honor, the gentry or kunja certificate: Mr. Kevin Pereira, Miss Kate Mittendorf, and Miss Melissa Zimmerman.

Break-a-thon Results

Thank you to everyone who worked very hard to make our break a thon and annual picnic a success. Our final tally was approximately \$2,500 after breaking 250 boards. Also a special thanks to our sponsors lumber companies who donated part of the wood: Bender Lumber, Black Lumber in Greencastle, and 84 lumber.

SUMMER ATTENDANCE REWARD and Referral Program

As usual we have our summer attendance reward program starting in June. Look for details on how you can be a part of a celebration at the end of the summer for strong attendance during the hot summer months. We also have a special summer referral program. See the handout in class for details.

Upcoming Events

June 4-6 th	TTCA Summer Camp
June 5 th	Lil dragon testing: beg 9:00-10:30; int/adv 10:30-12:00
June 11 th	Hapkido testing 7:00
June 12 th	Hoosier Open BJJ Tournament
June 14-18 th	Hapkido day camp 9:00-3:30
June 16 th	Movie Outing: Special Private School showing of the KARATE KID. Some classes cancelled
June 19 th	Black belt prep class 9:00-10:30
June 19 th	Demo team 10:30-12:00
June 22 nd	No classes—GMA is hosting a special chamber after hours.
June 25-27	Tai Chi seminar with Master Chen, Bloomington

Fathers' day invitation

After inviting the mothers to join the kids in class for mother's day, we would be in trouble if we didn't offer the same to our fathers. Dads, Grand-dads, etc. are welcome to join their kids in class the week following Fathers day—June 21-25.

Join us for the retelling of Karate Kid

We have reserved a private showing of the new release of Karate Kid at Martinsville theaters for Wed, June 16th time (TBA). There are a limited number of seats available, but GMA will cover admission for every student plus one guest. Every additional person in the group is only 4.00—bring a friend who might be interested in martial arts. Since you are taking up a reserved seat that will be paid for, no shows will be charged 5.00. YOU MUST REGISTER AT THE DESK, and space is limited to 200 people. THERE WILL BE SOME CLASS CANCELLATIONS AROUND THE EVENT.

Happy Birthday to these students

Alex Hermann 6-09	Sydney Twardoski 6-15	Austin McCormick 6-18
Malachi Waples 6-18	Morgan Williams 6-19	Dominick Spires 6-19
Sarah Smith 6-21	Jia Jones 6-21	Ava Polster 6-23
Bobby Brouse 6-26	Cooper Baugh 6-28	Kenny Bowman 6-29

Training Anniversary

Congrats to those students who are celebrating a year or multiple years of training with us:

Timothy Thomas (LD, TKD 7 yrs)	Noah Wilson (LD, TKD 7 yrs)	Rebekah Wiley (TKD 4 yrs)
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Tyler Stocke (BJJ 3 yrs)
Zac Speer (TKD 2 yrs)
Seth Neal (LD 1 yr)
Kelsey Wagoner (BJJ 1 yr)

Vince Kreipke (BJJ 3 yrs)
Cheyenne Taylor (TKD 1 yr)
Cope Taylor (TKD 1 yr)

Cody Craig (BJJ 2 yr)
Eli Phillips (LD 1 yr)
Mike Taylor (BJJ 1 yr)

Quotes of the week In honor of the new Karate Kid, we will be using quotes for the original movie that are very valid martial arts lessons.

Please keep us posted

A reminder as summer approaches: if you have vacation plans, we would appreciate being kept informed, so we don't worry if we miss you in classes. Thanks.

The Blessing and Curses of the Original *Karate Kid*

As you might imagine, we are eagerly awaiting the opening of the retelling of The Karate Kid (they prefer the term retelling rather than remake, and from what I have seen, I agree). I hope nostalgia for the original doesn't ruin an otherwise great movie. As I will explain later, I will probably have more nostalgia than most. But when we showed the original ones as a series of movie nights in our studio, I mentioned the importance of that movie. With this upcoming event we have been waiting a long time for (ever since we heard rumors of casting, etc), I feel it deserves elaboration and a bit more background. In short, we probably wouldn't be here today if it were not for that movie, but for you to understand why we have to go back a bit further.

In 1946 Robert Trias is credited with opening the first of what we would recognize today as a commercial martial arts school. He was an American serviceman stationed in Okinawa who returned home and set up a shingle. His story highlights the real pattern. The first wave of American martial arts instructors were basically servicemen who were stationed in the Pacific, who were willing to venture off base and interact with the local people in a unique way. They came back and started teaching what they knew. A lot of the first Asian instructors in the US had ties to American servicemen who had returned. In a lot of ways, when you think about it, this was almost the way it HAD to happen. The first Americans to study martial arts in Asia had to transcend several cultural "obstacles." The Asian paradigm of teaching, which was based on modeling behavior and very little explanation, which stands at odds with Western teaching methods. Confucian ethics and culture dictated a highly regimented code of behavior and hierarchy. And with martial arts, I am sure there were more than a few attempts to weed out the foreigners to make sure they were serious. The testing period was likely a bit rougher than having to wax cars or paint fences.

Many a so called martial arts student of today would never have made it. In fact, I can hear it now: "That guy never answers my questions. He is always picking on me and just likes to show how good he is by beating on me. He doesn't take my opinions into account, yet he wants me to kowtow to him all the time, well, respect is a two way street. That isn't teaching, blah, blah, blah." But the American serviceman was well suited for the task of breaking that barrier: he was used to taking order without constantly asking "why, what is the purpose of doing that? Are you sure that is the best way? What if they do this instead?" He was sensitive to issues of rank and authority and socialized into showing respect. He was also used to being pushed and attempts to wash him out.

These servicemen brought what they learned, along with its culture and traditions that were consistent with their military lifestyle, and set up martial arts schools with this quasi-military culture. Their students were primarily other young adult males, often about the same age as they were when they started, embraced this time period sometimes referred to the blood n guts era, and through the Bruce Lee craze.

But in 1984, the playing field changed when Okinawan karate practitioner Robert Kamen wrote a movie that portrayed the benefits of martial arts, particularly through the wisdom of Mr. Miyagi (a compilation of characteristics of his teachers who was given the surname of the founder of Goju-ryu karate.) Parents suddenly realized that martial arts could help children and flooded martial arts schools looking for their own Mr. Miyagi. In doing so, they changed the demographics of martial arts forever, to where some would mistakenly label it as a child activity. Although I was a yellow belt before I saw the Karate Kid, I indeed started in 1984 and have to be included as a part of the Karate Kid generation. But the difference is that I was rare. You see, I actually hung around. While parents flocked to schools, they



most often found dungeon dojos full of the quasi-military instructors who had no idea what to do with children. As a whole, the martial arts industry wasn't prepared for the demographic shift and quite honestly, traumatized a lot of children in the process. There certainly wasn't anything like lil dragons, more kid friendly teaching styles or curriculums, or even peewee boards when I started. While Master Crecelius was an educator and better prepared than most, there was still only one peewee class per week for me. It took 23 weeks for me to test for my yellow belt, and that was nearly two months early (7 classes shy of 30) because I did well in my first tournament as a white belt. I believe I was the first kid to be allowed to take "adult" classes.

When the Ninja Turtle craze emerged in the 1990's, most of my generation had been scared off, but a new generation of non-traumatized children were ready to take their place. And this time, schools were better prepared. But it is safe to say that if it wasn't for the Karate Kid, we wouldn't be here today. It was the Karate Kid that altered perceptions of the martial arts. GMA might not have existed if the Karate Kid generation didn't happen for me, or my own perception of the martial arts instructor wasn't inspired. Many of our students wouldn't have ever been allowed to walk through our doors if their parents didn't have a better understanding of the martial arts through the movie. And frankly, it is questionable if martial arts would be a viable business without that demographic and paradigm shift. So we all owe a lot to that moment in history, but there a few things that have changed that maybe changed for the worse.

It is my estimation that some things have swung too far to the other extreme. While schools have become more kid friendly, some parents view studios as another daycare option or another activity to sandwich between other sport seasons, rather than a "DO" or way. Schools are certainly more commercially viable, but also feel those economic pressures and let students test who aren't ready, usually under the justification of not wanting to hurt their self esteem when really it is not wanting to hurt the bottom line. And sometimes parents think that because they pay for lessons, that gives them the opportunity or entitlement to dictate to the instructors on technical or program matters. Now to be sure, we try to have great customer service in all the other areas related to the school that are the more "commercial" aspects—such as proshop, billing, etc. , but to put it simply, a colored belt child or an armchair martial arts parent doesn't get to tell the black belt instructors how things work on the floor. It is a constant challenge for us at GMA to find that balance between being "professional" and keeping the integrity of the martial arts and martial arts culture that is the soul of the experience.

As a result of some of these pressures, it is hard to argue that the quality of black belt has slowly been eroding in most schools. I had one senior classmate who failed his black belt exam because his knife hand blocks, and only his knife hand blocks, did not have black belt power. Perhaps this was similar to what the first generation of American serviceman experienced: a test within the test, an attempt to wash him out. Maybe it was, but I can tell you he had amazing power in all his movements the next test. To be sure, the good ole days for many weren't so good, but in many other ways, there was something very valid to the way things worked before the Karate Kid came along. But one thing is for sure, we are where we are (for better and worse) because of that movie, and I am excited to see where the next version of the story takes us. ---BLS