



# GMA News April 2015

## Congrats to...

Our newest TKD black belts, Mr. Blake Prather, Ms. Katherine Satter, and Mr. Keegan Spires (2<sup>nd</sup>)  
Our newest Lil Dragon graduate, Liam Gadberry

## Upcoming events:

April 11<sup>th</sup> Demo Team 9:00-10:30  
April 11<sup>th</sup> BB open mat breaking practice 10:30-11:30  
April 17<sup>th</sup> TKD BB stripe testing 5:00  
April 18<sup>th</sup> USHF seminar, Terre Haute (ISU) 9:00-5:30  
April 25<sup>th</sup> FAST Stress Shooting 9:00-1:00  
April 25<sup>th</sup> Stickfighting 1:30-4:00  
May 1<sup>st</sup> TTCA Testing 5:30  
May 2<sup>nd</sup> BJJ 10 yr anniversary events. Freet intro/self-defense seminar adult 9:00-11:00 kid 11:00-12:00  
May 9<sup>th</sup> Black belt class am class at the park  
May 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Break a thon and school picnic, Pritchard Park  
May 9<sup>th</sup> BJJ open mat and Metamoris viewing  
June 6<sup>th</sup> TTCA CAMP AND HOOSIER OPEN

## 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. Here is what we have:

**BJJ (Kids) competition camp: June 2-4. HKD day-camp: June 8-10/12. Lil dragon camp July 7-9 TKD day-camp: June 15-19; July 20-24**

## *Break-a-thon and annual school picnic May 9th*

It is time for our annual school picnic and break-a-thon to benefit our scholarship program—which provides scholarships for students to become or stay involved in martial arts. Some of our own students benefit from this fund, so we need your continued support, plus it is great chance for our students to get a lot of breaking practice! The break-a-thon will begin at 12:00 (arrive at 11:30) with a cookout and fun and games to follow. This year we will be having it back at Pritchard Park. Parents committee would welcome help with logistics.

## BJJ Ten Year

May will mark the 10 year anniversary for our Brazilian Jiu-jitsu program. A lot of things have happened in the past decade. We have represented in tournaments, break new ground in promotions, and hosted several world champions. We are marking the occasions with some big events: On May 2<sup>nd</sup> we are having a free, open to the public introductory/self-defense seminar for adults from 9:00-11:00. This is a chance for our students, parents, or people you know to try it out. We have a kids version scheduled from 11:00-12:00.

On May 9<sup>th</sup> we will be having an open mat roll night, followed by watching the next Metamoris pro BJJ event.

## GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Mr. Noah Wilson	4-1	Korbyn Baker	4-9	Sabrina Chouinard	4-10
Kody Gist	4-17	Mr. Todd Miller	4-18	Haley Sieg	4-23
Megan Gens	4-23	Cathy Petraits	4-27		

## Quotes of the Week

This month we will be reviewing the importance of humility



## Training Anniversaries

Sabrina Chouinard (TKD 9 yrs)  
Cathy Petraits (TKD 3 yrs)  
Katheryn Clephane (TKD 2 yrs)

Finnegan Vandewalle (TKD 7 yrs)     Adam Satter (LD, TKD 4 yrs)  
Wesley Yoshida (LD 3 yrs)

## This Month in Martial Arts History (selected from “Dates with Destiny” in *Martial Arts Success* by John Corcoran.

April 7 1954. Jackie Chan’s Birthday

April 15 1922 (-Oct 20 1982). Donn F Draeger (martial arts historian) birthday

April 26, 1963 Jet Li Birthday

April 1922 Gichin Funakoshi demonstrates karate in Japan—setting the course for Karate and TKD worldwide

April 11, 1955 the name Tae Kwon Do is approved by President Syngman Rhee to describe Korean martial arts

April 21 1993 Walker Texas Ranger starring Chuck Norris debuts

## Maybe We Aren’t As Big of Deal as Some People. Maybe We Don’t Want to Be.

“As the rice stalk matures and grows wiser, it bows toward the ground” Common martial arts proverb, cited by Dr. Yang Jwing Ming among others.

To follow up on last month’s column, in which I at least somewhat in jest, mentioned just how big of a deal I am, I thought it best for this month to pontificate on the other side of the coin—humility. And sadly, there are several points to be made.

Advancing through the ranks of the martial arts can certainly bring a sense of accomplishment; it has helped improve the confidence of many of our students. Eventually titles may even come into play. And in an activity whose culture that is based on hierarchy and respect for authority, sometimes those accomplishments can come with advantages or even deference by others. And yeah, sadly, some people let this go to their head—we sometimes call them not Grandmasters, but rather Grandpoobas. They come to expect or even demand the deference, not for sake of decorum, but because they think they really are a big deal. Like a rock-star wannabe, I have seen some that travel with an entourage of students behind them that have also drank the cool aide, or at least have been coerced into looking like they did. One of my instructors for a time studied under another martial artist of note. Each time this famous instructor came into town, he made it clear that he was supposed to be greeted at the airport with fresh batteries for his Walkman (yeah, this was a while ago) and a six pack of beer. More recently, another ego driven instructor that people in this area may be more familiar with, who was quick to point out who he once trained with (or at least posed for a picture with), showed up to a “meeting” with one of his (possibly only) student in tow. The student had no reason to be there. Actually, it was pretty awkward.

Everyone knows the one obnoxious doctor who is quick to remind everyone at the party that he is one, for example by introducing himself as Dr. Smith instead of just John. Martial arts titles are even more abused, especially when you consider that the title of sensei (Japanese) or sabumnim (Korean) is honorific. That means according to the rules of the parent language, you would only use it for someone else, and would never, ever, use it on yourself. Sadly, I can’t tell you how many times I have been given business cards or seen embroidered shirts introducing “sensei Bob.” Even better is when the same card is for a TKD instructor (Korean, not Japanese, so wrong use of the wrong language), which also misspells Chung Do Kwan (Kwon and Kwan are two different words). In contrast, I refuse to sign my emails to anyone, let alone random people I have barely met, as “Master Sieg.”

Sadly, this process begins well before the grandpooba stage. In my estimation, the most dangerous belts in the martial arts are green belts and 1<sup>st</sup> degree black belts. They are the most dangerous because they are also typically the most prideful. We will talk about black belts more specifically next month. Relating to green belts,



they are starting to learn some stuff, just enough to be a real danger, as much to themselves as someone else. Their excitement for legitimate growth in knowledge and skill distorts into unwarranted pride because they also don't realize how much they don't know and how far they have to really go. Thus, they are prone to let their mouths get them into trouble or overestimate their abilities. They have had success at some level in sparring (usually against other green belts or upper ranks who really weren't trying), maybe even learned a fancy self-defense move or disarm, and think they can handle anything. The pros know that everyone has a boxers' chance, and it only takes one lucky shot or slice with a knife to make all those sparring matches irrelevant.

Martial arts should keep you honest. Either your technique is good or not. Weaknesses are exposed while rolling, sparring, or pushing. There is no hiding on the mats, although some people are quick to shrink the corners of the mats sometimes. We all have weaknesses and are subject to injury or age, for example. And chances are there is someone out there better than you, or that can beat you on any given day, or at least get lucky.

As much as we would like to hold our heroes (in the martial arts and otherwise) to superhuman expectations, we are all fallible humans. Reflecting back on my thoughts as a child, I now laugh in embarrassment at the expectations of action movie skills that I was certain I would possess once I achieved the status of "master." However, what is more sad is that some grandpoobas are either deluded enough to think they have gotten to that level, or at the very least have attempted to keep the illusion alive and well in the minds of their students. They usually hide their own skills and never demonstrate their ability, spar, etc. for fear of being discovered as a fake.

In contrast, the truly great ones I have been around have also been the most humble. They have no ego because they really don't have much else to prove to anyone. They are secure in their own accomplishments and knowledge, and don't need titles or other things to convince others. They have also accepted that invincibility is an illusion. I have watched one of the best grapplers on the planets roll around with one of our youth practitioners and allow himself to get tapped. TCC master William CC Chen often says, "If I can do it, anybody can do it," although the 50 years of practice is implied. Unlike the obnoxious doctor or sensei Bob, they don't introduce themselves as a big deal to everybody at the party. GM Chen doesn't always want to talk martial arts at dinner. He often prefers to talk about family.

I like how GK Chesterton puts it in *The Everlasting Man*: *Normally speaking, the greater the man is, the less likely he is to make the very greatest claim. Outside the unique case we are considering [the divinity of Jesus] the only kind of man who ever does make that kind of claim is a very small man; a secretive or self-centered monomaniac. Nobody can imagine Aristotle claiming to be the father of gods and men, come down from the sky; though we might imagine some insane Roman Emperor like Caligula claiming it.*

And those icons, the ones that truly are a big deal around here or anywhere else, are also still learning. They have realized the martial arts path is a never ending journey of self-betterment. Unlike the green belt, these people understand how much more there is to learn and to understand. And for the rest of us, that should be truly humbling.

Kyle Idleman points out that as humans, "we're built to bow. We must find something or someone to serve." I believe that is true. I believe we are happiest when we are subservient to a purpose or a cause. The martial arts has given me a lot. I choose to give back to the martial arts by passing those life changing benefits on to another generation. GMA instructors strive to serve our students well. And in doing so, I believe I am using my God given talents as a good and faithful servant, in a purposeful way. Along the way, I have shared some truly gratifying moments of success or meaning with our students. That is truly humbling.

Some people serve the martial arts and their students. Grandpoobas try to be served by their students and the martial arts themselves. And contrary to what I wrote last month, I don't want to be as big of deal as Grandpoobas apparently are. --- BLS (just BLS)