



Sept 16 NEWS

Congrats to our recent recipients of GMA's highest honor-the title of Gentry-man to three graduated seniors who basically grew up at GMA: Morgan Williams, Noah Lambert-Adams, and Christian Marion.

Upcoming events: ** No, We do NOT have class on Labor Day ******

Sept 5th Paragon Homecoming/Labor Day parade. 10:30 in Paragon
Sept 10th Lil Dragons Testing (beg 9:00-10:00, 10-11:00)
Sept 10th GMA Fun Day 11:00 - 2:00
Sept 17th Demo Team 9:00 - 10:30
Sept 17th Leadership Team 10:30 - 11:30
Sept 17th Black belt prep 12:00-1:30
Sept 24th FAST classes in Columbus
Oct 1st Black belt prep 9:00 - 10:30
Oct 1st Demo Team 10:30 - 12:30
Oct 1st Stickfighting 1:00-3:30
Oct 7-9th Fall foliage demo and parade
Oct 15th USHF seminar, IU
Oct 22nd J.R. West HKD seminar, Fort Wayne
Oct 29th TKD black belt testing
Oct 29th TKD black belt strip testing
Nov 6th Master Chen Tai Chi workshop, Wisconsin

Parents Committee and Fun Day

We need lots of parent volunteers to make the GMA Fun Day a success. We have several stations of activities and concessions planned, but the number of things we can provide is based upon the amount of staffing we have. Look for sign up sheets at the viewpoint.

Paragon Parade

We appreciate everyone's support by marching in the Paragon Homecoming Parade on Labor Day. Meet at Paragon elementary at 10:30, parade starts at 11:00, and we should be finished approx 11:30-11:45. Students need to be picked up back at the elementary. Attire for the parade is dobok pants, belt, and a GMA T-shirt.

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Kylie Yoshida	9-1	Luke Wilson	9-2	Reece Satter	9-4
Launa Perryman	9-8	Daniel Wiggins	9-8	Clay Thacker	9-8
Corey Christman	9-11	Colten Clephane	9-30	Donovan Sieg	9-30

Training Anniversaries — Special congrats for everyone who is celebrating a year or multiple years of training.

Rob Snyder (TKD, HKD 11 yrs)	Joshua Britt (BJJ 10 yrs)	Christian Marion (TKD 8 yrs)
Megan Gens (TKD 8 yrs)	Nathan Hall (TKD 2yrs)	Cathy Petraits (HKD 2 yrs)
Reagan Foster (LD 1 yr)		



Quotes of the week/ Mat Chat

As anyone who has been with us for over a year may recall, September is the month we do our Random Acts of Kindness Campaign. As will be explained in class, this is a response to the President's call following the terrorist attacks of 9-11, and it is our way of showing a little patriotism, remembering the tragedy, and helping others at the same time.

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

Sept 14, 1902 (Oct 7 1994).	Carlos Gracie Sr. birthday—founder of BJJ
Sept 15, 1938	Fumio Demura –Karate Master, author—greatly influenced Mr. Sieg
Sept 1954	CDK member GM Tae Hi Nam breaks 13 roofing tiles in front of President Rhee, compelling President Rhee to order all ROK army troops to be trained
Sept 14 1961	Pivotal meeting in the government ordered unification of the kwans under the later named Korea TKD Association.
Sept 9 th 1966, Sept 1 1973	Bruce Lee debuts on TV as Kato in the Green Hornet, and Enter the Dragon opens, resp.
Sept 17 th 1988	TKD unveiled as a demo sport in the Olympic games in Seoul—huge demo in opening ceremonies.
Sept 2000	Unified rules that govern modern MMA are adopted.
Movie debuts:	---The Protector (Tony Jaa), Fearless (Jet Li) Rush Hour (Jackie Chan) Kickboxer and Knockoff (JCVD)

On Stealing Belts, Stealing Valor, and Stealing Identity...

During a recent exchange at the country fair, I had a gentleman come and up and tell me that he was already a black belt in Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, and thus didn't need us. Already skeptical, I asked whom he had trained under. He replied that it was a long time ago (which only reduces the number of possible black belt instructors greatly) and he didn't remember. Incredulous, I replied, "You trained with him for 10-12 years and don't remember his name?" I am not sure he ever became aware I was calling his bluff as he kept talking.

I have had some amazing and surreal conversations while marketing in public events. I suspect many a tall tale has been spun to impress me. But none make me scratch my head, and kind of tick me off, than those who overstate or outright lie about their martial arts experience. Given how hard some people work to legitimately earn their rank or competitive achievements, I view it nothing short of stolen valor—martial arts style.

Recently, a GMA student became aware he works with a former student. He shared this fact with me and shared his name, and how he was a former black belt here. I remember this individual training while a kid, but he quit before he ever made black belt. Maybe he regrets quitting so close, and maybe he thinks it was close enough, but he is NOT a black belt.

Once we contracted a service by a gentleman whose kids went to a different martial arts school. While his dad was setting up, I recall having a conversation with one of his sons, comparing notes between his school and ours. Sometime later we did one of our visits to the PE classes in a local elementary and saw him at lunch. He proceeded to ask if I remembered him and that he got a black belt at my school (hint* real black belts never have to ask me that). "Uh, no, you never actually ever attended a class at our school, you have only been to our parties. You went to another dojo, remember?" He insisted and stuck to his guns. To be fair, I remember spinning a tale about catching a great white shark on a fishing trip to Florida in kindergarten. I had Sally Carter enthralled. So I get how a kid might double down on the brag to save face in front of his friends. But why not just lie and say you got your black belt in the school I know you went to rather than mine? And as I argued with



him (as much as you do with a 4th grader about such matters) there was a part of me that started to think he actually believed it!

There are even more bizarre cases that go beyond stolen valor and become cases of stolen identity. Recently a colleague at IU met a friend who told him, “You probably know my new boyfriend. He is an IU martial arts instructor.” The name was unfamiliar. “He teaches advanced hapkido.” Odd, my friend thought, because I am currently teaching advanced hapkido. His friend continued to recite this boyfriend’s bio, which sounded oddly like another one of our instructors. As strange as that sounds, there is a good chance the same thing happened to me years ago. I got a random letter from someone that suggested a relationship with another “me.” But the other me clearly taught martial arts at IU in the same positions.

A martial arts instructor whom I highly respect and has been good to me is Jeff Westfall of Rising Phoenix Martial Arts in Evansville.* He shares a story where he actually ran into another guy at a party who introduced himself as Jeff Westfall, owner of Rising Phoenix. The imposter was familiar with the school, Jeff’s biography and credentials, etc. Jeff had to pull out his driver’s license to settle the dispute.

I am used to people overstating or being delusional about their skill, rank, or accomplishments in the martial arts. But most of the time, it is at least grounded in some fact. Cases like these are even more peculiar to me. In some of these conversations, as I nod politely, I can’t help but wonder if they think I am stupid enough to believe this nonsense, or are they crazy enough to believe it themselves. I guess it is a glimpse into what it is like to work with the mental patient who thinks they are Jesus Christ.

Keep in mind, most of the stories I listed above are relatively recent. Similarly, you hear more and more about incidents of stealing military valor. I wonder what makes people feel more emboldened, or at the very least, insensitive enough to do it. And I am not suggesting that what we do in the dochang is comparable in valor to what the men and women who serve our country do. Stealing that valor is certainly more egregious and audacious. But both cases are equaling puzzling to me, and if nothing else, having it done to me certainly makes me more sensitive to the issue as a whole.

One of the special tactics groups I have had the honor of working with gave me a decal of their insignia. I sincerely appreciated the gesture, but admit I am quite conflicted. Personally, I want to support them by displaying it; plus, it is just plain cool. But at the same time, I don’t feel I have earned it, and don’t want to be accused of stealing valor by any of the group.

Our students have earned their rank. It is certainly disappointing when people who haven’t earned theirs are placed on equal footing. But unfortunately that happens, and increasingly more often. As I said, if nothing else, I hope our students are at least sensitive and self-aware enough to avoid overstating their status and “stealing valor” on a smaller scale. Humility should also be a trait of a good black belt. Not surprisingly, many of the imposters we meet seem to have missed that point as well. –BLS

*Jeff chooses to do his musing by podcast, called The Martial Brain. I don’t do podcasts often, but I must say that Jeff influenced my thinking on certain matters even in short amounts of interaction. If you can take more ranting than just from me, you should check them out.