



DECEMBER 16 GMA NEWSLETTER

Upcoming events:

Dec 3 rd	Bloomington Open BJJ tournament
Dec 9 th	TKD testing and bb ceremony
Dec 10 th	Black belt stripe retest 9:00-10:30
Dec 10 th	Demo team 10:30-12:00
Dec 10 th	Leadership team outing 12:30
Dec 14 th	Christmas Party and Awards Banquet @ Fairgrounds 5:30
Dec 17 th	Demo Team performs at MHS halftime (demo team meet here 6:00; perform approx. 8:00)
Dec 23 th -26 th	NO CLASS—Merry Christmas! (see below)
Dec 27-28	Winter Daycamp: Martial Arts for Movies/Stage 9:00-3:00
Dec 29 th	Winter Weapons camp—Kendo 9:00—3:30
Jan 2 nd	Catch up camp 1:00-4:00
Jan 7 th	Spar Wars 5:00-9:00

Xmas Party, Dance and Awards Banquet

This years Christmas party/awards banquet and dance has been scheduled for Dec 14th at the Morgan County Fairgrounds. Arrival and set up will be from 5:30-6:00. The dinner and awards banquet will begin at 6:00. Music will be provided by Mallets and Skins. Following the awards, Santa will make an appearance and there will be a dance that will continue till 8:30 or 9:00 pm. This is a chance to join in some fellowship, recognize some key students and parents, and give Santa any last minute list revisions. Sign ups for the pitch in dinner will be posted soon. We also need a very close idea of people attending for seating arrangements. No classes will meet that Wed. We hope everyone will be able to share in our annual event. Parents committee would welcome help with set up at 10:00 at the fairground.

Winter Camps Coming Up Fast

Rather than having the kids sitting around stuffing themselves with candy, we take the vacation time to offer something special. Don't forget you can also make it a X-mas present. Camp price includes lunch and some of the weapons or gear needed for the seminar and you can put the gear under the tree!

Winter Weapons Camp 29th This year we will be having a guest instructor to help showcase the art of kendo (Japanese swordmanship)— great for reaction time, efficiency of movement, and just plain fun. Participants will get both a bamboo and a padded sparring weapon. (those having done the spar wars lightsaber event will be able to use that weapon)

Movie/Stage combat camp Dec 27-28th. Things that look good on the big screen aren't always what they appear. Come see how they do the stunts without getting the stars hurt. Mr. Yoshida, who has worked on martial arts films and done fight choreography, will show some secrets. Participants will make their own movie fight scene, and we will unveil our action stars at a red carpet event. The release date of this debut has not been set. Great for anybody in demo or anyone with interest in movies/theater, etc. Both the camp and red carpet event were a huge success last year. However, as before, spaces are limited. Only a few can become action stars on the latest Yoshitech production!

Catch up camp Jan 2nd. Fallen behind or gotten a little rusty on account of the holidays. Or maybe you just want some extra practice? It is a busy time and people get out of the routine. Here is your chance to get the new year started right with extra help focused on testing requirements. We keep it cheap to give everyone a chance to get extra work in.

Spar Wars NIGHT! We will also be having a SPAR WARS parents night out on Sat Jan 7th from 5:00-9:00. Obviously we are getting into the spirit of Rogue One, but it also provides us a chance to educate in the disguise of fun. As some of you might have learned from the ESPN documentary, Jedi and light sabers were largely based on Eastern martial arts themes and the art of Kendo. The night will include the pizza, basic kendo instruction (not the same as camp), sparring and games, and we plan to teach a choreographed light saber duel which we will film. The event will include an action flex light saber that is safe and durable for actual sparring (but unfortunately not cheap—this is an actual training weapon with a Star Wars theme). Participants are encouraged to dress up in a Star Wars theme as much as they want. There will need to be a minimum number of sign ups, which must be done in advance to get the light sabers. Previous Spars Wars night or Weapons camp with the light saber will obviously get a huge discount.



Congrats to our newest Lil Dragon Graduates: Jack Higgins and Gage Prose

Welcome Miss Katheryn Clephane and Mr. Kevin Biddle.

With some of the adjustments (see rant below), we are formally adding two new assistant instructors to our ranks. Miss Clephane will be helping at in TKD and LD classes, and Mr. Biddle will be helping run the HKD classes.

Training Anniversaries

Collyn Dodge (BJJ 8 yrs)	Minda Ruba (TKD 3 yrs)	Elizabeth Dodds (TCC 2 yr)
Elija Roberson (HKD 2 yrs)	Dominic Tejera (BJJ)	Caelyn Meier (HKD 1 yr)
Tim Meier (HKD 1 yr)	Collin Meier (HKD 1 yr)	Carter Waterman (TKD 1 yr)
Maddux Nikou		

Quotes of the Week: This month, with goal setting around the corner in Jan, we will be talking about the differences between the habits and behaviors of successful people and unsuccessful people.

And the NOMINEES are:

This year we are announcing those students who are nominated for our yearly awards:

Student of the year: *Jackson Gadbery, Launa Perryman, Emily Olson*

Black Belt of the year: *Cathy Petraits, Lise Roberson, Katheryn Clephane, Nate Wilson, Luke Wilson*

Most Improved Student: *Maddux Sparks, Mark Brook, Sophia Gillick, Holly Brown, Andrew Skopecek*

Competitor of the year (TKD): *Nathan Hall, Megan Gens, Debbie Rahman, Nate Wilson, Noah Wilson*

Competitor of the year (BJJ): *will be determined after the B-ton open Dec 3rd.*

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Piper Phelps 12-1	Elijah Roberson 12-2	Caelyn Meier
Richie Long 12/07	Alexis Irwin 12-7	Joshua Roberson 12/8
Collyn Dodge 12/12	Daniel Ramirez 12-8	Collin Meier 12-11
Kyler Chylaszek 12/12	Taylor Jones 12-12	Hunter Szekely 12/20
Nathan Hall 12/23	Mrs. Yoshida 12/26	Triton Brummett 12-27

Please Plan ahead for Xmas Items

If you have any last minute Christmas shopping to do (don't we all) or need that stocking stuffer or whatever, just a reminder to please plan ahead. Many of our suppliers go out of stock of seasonal items and we want to make sure we minimize the delays in getting any special orders to you! *The last day to order Xmas items to ensure shipping (assuming availability) is Dec. 13th. Keep in mind, some things are already backed ordered past the holidays.*

Give another person the chance to “be more” this Christmas

Don't forget that you can get a gift certificate for a uniform and month of classes –100.00 value, for only a 25.00 cost to you (BJJ uniforms more). If you know anyone who has ever “thought about” doing martial arts, or if there is someone you know who “this would be good for”, this is your chance to get them off the fence and really reaping the benefits of training.

Class Cancellations for Holidays, class adjustments, and general policies

- No class on Wed Dec 14th on account of the Christmas party...see you there.
- Holiday class cancellations: No class on Dec 23rd through Dec 26th on account of Christmas. Classes will resume Tues Dec 27th (evening classes).
- Also a reminder of our general policy regarding bad weather. We *try* to follow the lead of local schools—if they cancel school that day, cancel evening events or let out early, so do we. If on morning delay, we will meet as normal (tai chi in the morning will follow the 2 hr delay). This applies to universal problems such as snow and ice, not things like flooding or other issues that may be more regionalized. The only exception to this may occur when the school cancels in advance of a huge storm and the forecast is *clearly* incorrect, or when crews have all day to work on the roads. When in doubt, simply call, check the website and facebook/twitter, check your email for announcements, listen to WCBK, etc.



The Year in Review--The Circle of Life, Martial Arts Style—From a Different View

It is not uncommon for me to reference the cyclical nature of the growth of individuals in the martial arts. With enough time kids grow up to be upper ranks and leaders, even instructors in the school. When speaking of our awesome assistant instructors who mentor and inspire our students, I point out to our intermediate ranks that our instructors in turn were mentored and inspired by someone when they were coming up the ranks. And someday, some of our intermediate ranks will be that person for the next group behind them. I refer to it as that whole circle of life thing—when the lions eat the grass (I always skip a few steps there)—martial arts style. And it is true. But we tend to focus on it from the perspective of the student who reaches their potential and is able to give back. But there necessarily has to be the other side of coin...that means someone had to be replaced.

I certainly had those people I looked up to. One went off to college. Another committed suicide (I was the one who broke the news to our instructor). I share that to point out that even our heroes in the martial arts are fallible humans. Other instructor friends and associates have faded away. Some schools failed as a business. One instructor's bad back simply got too bad. Others got burnt out...or something. My point is that while I and many people think of the dochang as a place of sanctuary, where the concerns of the outside world are forgotten at least for a while, people have to live the rest of their lives in a much broader world. One that is full of other concerns, time constraints, and even tragedy.

This year we have seen a seemingly unusual number of our instructors and staff start a new chapter in their lives that doesn't include GMA. I say seemingly because to some of our newer students and parents, it seems like we have had a lot of turnover this year. And for a given year, we have. But I think looking at it from the lifetime of the school will give it perspective.

Miss Morgan Williams graduated high school and took on more work and college, stepping down from her assistant instructor position. As someone who watched her grow up here, it was both a proud and sad day. But while she was one of our longer tenured assistants, there have been 8 before her. And the sun still rises.

We are excited that the Biddle family is expecting a new addition. While we are happy for them, we are sad to see Cat go much sooner than anybody expected. And while her duration was shorter than normal, we have had four program directors before her. Life goes on...for everybody.

We couldn't have gotten our kids BJJ program off the ground without the help and commitment of Mr. Josh Britt. But we are blessed to have Mr. Thacker to step in, and Mr. Dodge remains a constant. To illustrate just how constant our entire BJJ program is, it is worth noting that our original BJJ instructor who started the program has moved on from here and opened and closed two different academies since. That isn't meant to be a dig at Prof Sledd for unforeseen circumstances beyond his control, but my point is that we are still here, grinding it out on the mats.

I founded GMA with a good friend and training partner. No, it wasn't Master Miller. No one but the Yoshida's has even met the other guy. But I have been blessed to have Master Miller here for the entire time we were actually building GMA into something, into what it is today. It has been a good run. And it is a transition that will be felt more than most. And yet, to quote a line from one of my favorite old hymns, *grander earth has quaked before*.

This is in no way meant to diminish the importance or contribution of many of these fine people. They are all missed greatly and we were better for having them. In an earlier time in our history, I agonized over how we were going to replace seemingly irreplaceable people. But it turns out that while they were missed, they were not irreplaceable. And that is the circle of life of the martial arts. They have been passed down for generations because no one is bigger than the arts themselves. I would hope the same applies to me as well. If something should happen to me, I would hope what we have built won't die away. While it may change, I hope the impact of our efforts will continue to be felt in the lives of the students we have touched and the community at large.

We owe a great deal to those people who have contributed to the growth and longevity of this school (one that has survived nearly 20 years and seen other schools in town come and go). And we owe it to them and ourselves to persevere in martial arts fashion. The lions will continue to eat the grass...or something like that. --BLS