



GMA News Feb 18

Congrats to our newest LD graduates: Alex Skirvin, Evie Kaufman, and Kole Stephens

Upcoming events:

Feb 2 nd	HKD make up testing date
Feb 3 rd	Demo Team 9:00-11:00
Feb 3 rd	Game night—Go explanation at 6:00, all others at 7:00-9:00
Feb 10 th	BB prep 9:00-11:00
Feb 17 th	Tai Chi field trip
Feb 17 th	Professor sledd BJJ seminar, IU 12:00
Feb 24 th	Kids STOP BULLIES FAST 9:00-11:30
Feb 24 th	Adult FAST Basics 12:30-4:00
March 3 rd	Demo Team 9:00-10:30
March 3 rd	Black belt prep 10:30-12:00
March 3 rd	Stickfighting 1:00-3:30
March 10 th	FAST Stress Shooting Extravaganza 9:00-3:30 ish

Other important dates:

April 7/8	Dr. Yang chinna, tai chi, chi gong seminar
April 14 th	Bedford TKD tournament

Valentine Passes Coming Soon

Don't forget to look out for our annual Valentine Day Guest Passes to share with your friends. If they bring one in, they get the bonus and you still get the referral credit on your tuition.

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Nico Inman (2-7)	Maddox Sparks (2-7)
Finnegan Vandewalle (2-10)	Haley Adams (2-11)
Keegan Spires (2-14)	Jackson Harper (2-14)
Liam Gadberry (2-15)	Anna Fritch (2-18)
Katheryn Clephane (2-19)	Madison Wood (2-23)
Minda Ruba (2-27)	Mason Thrasher (2-28)

Quotes of the Week

This month we will be revisiting our focus points.

Don't forget GMA website, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Want to be the first to know when the school closes for weather? Need to double check the special events calendar or pics? Check the GMA website and our Facebook group, and sign up for email announcements online. Like the GMA Martinsville Facebook page for other public announcements and promotions. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter @Gentry_MA for lighter notes.

Training Anniversaries

Cathy Petraits (TKD 8 yrs)	Clay Thacker (BJJ 7 yrs)
Karissa Cozee (TKD 6 yrs)	Isaac Workman (TKD 1 yr)
Lilly Workman (TKD 1 yr)	



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

Feb 1882 Jigoro Kano opens the Kodokan and becomes the founder of Judo.

Feb 2, 1965 Brandon Lee’s (son of Bruce Lee) birthday

Feb 12 1968 Jean Jacques Machado (BJJ pioneer) birthday

Feb 22 1972 Kung Fu debuts on TV and starts a craze.

Feb 26 1988 Bloodsport with Jean-Claude Van Damme is released, inspiring Mr. Sieg and countless others.

Self-Defense Courses--There is a Fine Line Between Building Confidence and a False Sense of It

There is a vlog that is making the rounds of a young lady discussing self-defense courses and the false sense of security they provide, and I feel compelled offer some commentary. It is kind of rambling, but makes salient points, and kudos to her for speaking up. (Warning: some language as well.)

<https://jiujitsutimes.com/vlogger-calls-false-empowerment-womens-self-defense-seminars-partially-blames-feminism/>

Her point about a false sense of security from a half-day self-defense seminar is largely accurate. I refuse to do your typical “show us some basic moves in two hours” self-defense class. It is a waste of their time and mine. I would much rather to talk about strategies of personal protection and start getting them mentally prepared to resist. Hopefully, they will continue to think about those things, which translates into practice, which they are likely never going to do with any “move” I show.

Sometimes they accept my recommendation, but then last minute, still insist I show a move or two. I usually show a defense against a hand choke from the front—pretty simple to learn—and I give them 5 minutes to practice. Most people are standing around talking after two, because after all, they “got it.” Likely, while “choking” each other, they practiced by simply resting their hands on each other’s collarbone. I ask if everyone is good and then ask for a volunteer to demonstrate with me. I proceed to lunge at them, screaming vulgarities, and shake them. The student freezes. I ask what happened to the move and then usually have to take a moment to console them as they cry. Am I a real butthead for partly traumatizing them? I have been called that. But if me being one helps them be safer then I don’t really care.

While this rant isn’t designed to be a sales pitch, this is why FAST classes are different, very different. That is why we do them, even though they are a half day seminar like the ones that we just maligned. But they focus more on the mental and emotional empowerment that is needed to find your voice and your power to effectively resist. And through adrenal stress that is lacking in most all other classes (at least the ones criticized here), our students get a more real experience and testing under some stress. They learn to deal with that wind of hate that causes most people to freeze. We are quick to point out that this doesn’t guarantee success; the class is not about invincibility. But it gives people a better fighting chance, in a shorter amount of time, than any other program we are familiar with.

One other relevant point is that there is a difference between martial arts and self-defense. The vlogger either fails to grasp the difference or at least failed to distinguish in the conversation. She frequently interchanged and equated doing jiu-jitsu with self-defense. While obviously inter-related, they are not the same for many reasons such as sport influence, legalities, etc. But we will limit our scope to the same thread—that martial arts training in a school typically doesn’t include the same amount of intensity—in physical training or emotionally—that an asymmetric assault would. As the vlogger pointed out, even well trained martial artists are not prepared (trained) for some of these situations. BJJ is a great *component* of self-defense, but as Rory Miller



puts it: BJJ will tell you that someone on your back is the worst position in the world. If this makes your top ten, you need to get out more.

And this gets to the heart of an important point implied, but not articulated in the vlog. A pet peeve of mine is someone doing a crash course, martial arts sampler of their art and calling it a comprehensive self-defense course. These same people would lose their minds if someone ever took a weekend seminar and came back with a black belt in their style, and yet they give their self-defense students delusions of grandeur that they can do the same moves in a weekend that took the instructor decades to master. Granted, usually the class is rudimentary stuff for white belts, but still. Furthermore, the majority of such instructors haven't really ever fought outside of sparring others within their own style, and their perception of what bad guys do is really colored through those glasses. (Let me stop right here and offer the disclaimer that I am keenly aware I did not grow up with a hard life on these fronts and have only waded in relatively shallow waters myself. But I do my best to learn and train with people whom I know have swam through much deeper water. At the very least, I hope being at least somewhat self-aware will help limit giving our students lenses that are dangerously rose colored.)

She makes the valid point defending against a motivated male attacker is very different thing than a fellow female student, generally averse to violence, trying to pretend to be an attacker who embraces violence. (See my example above.) In short, you have to respect mother nature and physics. But at the same time, confidence matters. Mindset matters. And developing that mindset is a process and needs to be nurtured. As I tell my female students during ground fighting, "If you think you can't do this move to a bigger, stronger male, then you are right. You can't. And I can't help you. But I have done this move to people 300 lbs and had kids and women at 100 lbs do it to me. It won't be easy or foolproof, but it is possible. This is not a technique problem, this is a you problem." So there needs to be a balance here. I totally agree that many classes are very "Yeah rah! You can do it!" when in reality you are giving them very false hope and confidence. But I also would be a horrible person if I taught self-defense, but actually had the fatalistic view that women don't have a chance. But the vlogger is right; it is going to be a lot harder than most people want to accept. The sooner we can mindset for that, the better.

If that is raining on some feminist's parade—to paraphrase the vlogger--so be it. That isn't sexism, that is just plain anatomy and physics. I agree with her that there is too much sugar coating that goes on, sometimes in the name of "equality." But lying to women that they will not be at a decided disadvantage is a funny way to help them. I could go down several tangents, but for now, let me just say that there is a big difference between blame and onus. When the bad guy is standing in front of you, the blame is on him, but the onus is on you to defend yourself. I would want to be armed with skill rather than rhetoric. And for that matter, none of these semantics or definitions is going to matter or help you in an assault.

Having a false sense of security and delusions of grandeur should be a constant concern for everyone in martial arts and self-defense. The same applies to the person who carries a handgun, but only does target practice in his backyard once in a while. It applies to both men and women. It is mitigated by quality training, along with a healthy skepticism and questioning and understanding of why you are doing things—things that include sport, fitness, other reasons besides practicality in life and death situations. But there is still nothing that is foolproof. If nothing else, I hope the vlogger gave us all a chance to reflect and re-evaluate some of these issues in our own lives.