Remember the Bumper Sticker?

by Richaed Stamper

Remember the bumper sticker "If you can read this, thank a teacher"? I do. But I wonder how much we take for granted.

How about running water in our homes? Did you ever have to tote it in from the well? In the winter? I did. Boy, do I appreciate running water. How about delivering a letter? Would you take a letter across the country for me if I gave you thirty-nine cents? Even across town? I really appreciate the US Postal System. Or what about disposing of your garbage? Ever have to dig a pit and bury it every week? I love those big, smelly trucks. Well, I guess it's easy to take some things for granted - and then to complain when the garbage man is a day late, the water is off for a while, or the price of postage goes up a few cents.

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It's like that with the GKK sometimes too. Do you appreciate receiving the Newsletter? Do you have any idea how much effort goes into preparing, copying, stuffing envelopes, mailing and so on that goes into that effort? How about trying to supply a line of merchandise for us? Ever try to coordinate suppliers, embroidering, inventory, shipping and adjusting stuff? Pack it up and take to area schools and tournaments? How about publishing books for our organization? Do you have any concept of the work involved in arranging, editing, sizing pictures, ISBN, obtaining copyright, printing, storing, shipping, returns, dealing with distributors and so on? How about our videos? Ever organize a tournament or develop a competition team? Any idea of the work involved in creating and maintaining a web site? What about keeping track of our records, updating promotion results, sending out cards and patches? Know how many other jobs there are? Do we ever take that stuff for granted?

Unless you've had the pleasure of GKK administration and the opportunity to have someone complain about every decision you make no matter how well founded, you'll never understand nor appreciate that thankless responsibility. Have you started your own school? Boy, is there a lot of work involved and tremendous accountability. Have you taught seminars? Learned special skills just to share them with others? Chased down membership applications? Tried to coordinate many schools in a region or a country? Do we appreciate the effort?

I remember how hard it was to find martial arts instruction in the ancient days of my youth. I was grateful to find a good school, but had no real appreciation for the effort it took to establish that school or to have an organization to support it. "Ignorance is bliss" works great sometimes. Well, I now have great appreciation for such things and am ever so thankful to those who did all this for me back then and do them for all of us now.

Think I'll set out the trash, run bath water, and splurge and mail two letters. And I am really grateful.