

April 2020 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

www.goju.com



Annual Dues

It is once again time to collect the annual dues and update the active member list. Dan ranks are \$25 and Kyu ranks are \$15.

Dojo Leaders are to send this to your National Director. For example, Frank Matt (Dojo Leader) of the Corinth Goju Dojo in New York will send their dues and active member list to the USA Director, Dwight Scales.

The National Directors are to send the active member list (in Excel or word) and dues to Ed Myers (CEO This is all due by April 1st."

Spring Seminar Cancellation

By Dwight Scales

Members of the GKK:

I believe you all can agree with me that these are "interesting" times. The COVID-19 virus has changed many things in our world. Schools and businesses have been asked to temporarily close, shelter in place and stay at home orders have been given and other disruptions have altered what we do and where we go.

Thankfully these changes are not permanent. There is no doubt life will return to some semblance of normality in the near future.

All of this being said, a decision had to be made concerning our Spring seminar.

After consulting with Yamakura Shihan, Sensei Stamper, Sensei Myers, Sensei Kane and others, I have decided to cancel our Spring seminar that was to be held in Ambler, Pennsylvania the weekend after Mother's Day - May 15th and 16th.

This was a difficult decision to make but a necessary one.

We are an organization that is a family. I'm sure no one would want any of their family members to get sick when something could have been done to lessen that possibility.

We are planning to hold next year's seminar as we had planned to do this year, at Sensei Kane's dojo in Amber. The exact dates will be determined at a later date. As per our by laws we will hold an organizational meeting. It will be sometime in the May time frame via a conference call. Please send any items that you would like discussed to Sensei Myers and Scales by May 15.

Please be safe and stay healthy.

Training While Maintaining Social Distancing

Carol Gittins, KinNamiKan Dojo, Seattle, WA

Members of the KinNamiKan Dojo in Seattle began training independently at the beginning of March. They did this to protect the health of their families, especially their parents who live with them. On March 13, the Seattle Parks and Rec department closed their facilities, including our training room. Since then, we have continued individual practice with focus on kata, basics and breathing. The senior members of the dojo also discussed how instruction should progress.

On March 28, our class met online to watch a video of Shihan Yamakura teaching kata at the Bellingham Academy of Self Defense in 1991. (Many thanks to Mr. Bill Giller for sharing the video.) As we watched, people asked questions and made note of technique details and the bunkai that Shihan demonstrated.

Setting up the class was fairly simple. I downloaded the videos to my YouTube account and got a sharable link. I then went to Sync-tube.de and started a chat room. I loaded the YouTube videos then sent dojo members a link to the chat room. After they signed on, I started playing the video, and they added comments to the chat box.

Boyd and I also had our headsets on and were on Google Hang-outs so we could talk to each other while watching the video. (Make sure you set the YouTube sound to go through your USB device rather than your speakers if you want to do this.)

Next week, dojo members will upload videos of other systems performing the kata and bunkai.

Ambler GKK Blackbelt Reflections

By Bill Kane

Recently, I asked the Ambler Blackbelts to reflect and help me understand what drives their involvement in our karate program. Many have been with me for over 20 years and have developed into some amazing instructors. I wanted more insight to what motivates them and keeps them involved in our program. The following are 2 questions that are key to their longevity and the impact they have had.

The most important thing I've learned from karate is:

Paul: To try new things to stretch my physical and mental capabilities.

Vic: Continual effort results in continuous learning. In many other disciplines (engineering, project management, process re-engineering, financial analysis...) the learning curve flattens after 10 or 20 years.

Howard: Conscious confidence – karate will improve confidence levels; maybe not Bruce Lee style confidence, but improved confidence nevertheless. I also still find it perplexing and yet interesting that many students find it difficult to line up in a straight line, or take direction like, “line up in three even rows”. But, acknowledging the difficulty for some to achieve this seemingly very simple maneuver sheds light on why students need to learn how to focus and how to apply sufficient effort to achieve even simple successes. A line makes it easier for students to focus, exert self-control and show respect to fellow students that are trying to learn.

Noah: the premise of centering my breathing and focus around an inner point - the Dantian or Hara - and using that to inform all of my techniques. That one principle I think applies not only to everything we do in karate, but to a lot in regular life as well. Whether I am throwing a punch in class or taking a written exam in school, the idea of having my focus, energy, and breath all stem from one center point is useful in many contexts, and often allows me to let go of any superfluties floating around in my mind and body.

Philip: Joy is your ally in persevering through the challenges of learning a martial art (or facing any challenge in life). It is easy to become despondent through the frustrations of learning the next technique or Kata. It is easy to fall into the trap of “I can't.” Instead, I've learned to smile and internally say “I can do X, and with a little more practice I will be able to do Y.” Karate has taught me to apply a growth mindset to all challenges.

Jenni: Over time, I have noticed that the most effective method of teaching is to not only show how to execute a certain technique, but to explain why the technique is important and in which situations it can be useful. With no such context, the knowledge of how to perform an attack or defense is useless. If the student knows why they are performing the technique, they will be able to use and understand it. This is something that more advanced students often work on in the form of kata applications,

George: Karate has taught me the mental and physical aspects of how to learn and how to apply karate in day to day life and how to apply that in any situation should it arise

Helen: As I have been doing karate for more than 2 decades I am always amazed at 2 things; the first is how much I continue to learn and the second is how much I don't know. It may be that I am a slow learner so karate has taught me to persevere and learn from everyone. The ability for study of karate to keep my interest through the years even though my physical abilities decline is an important lesson as well.

Steven: If you want to improve, practice the basics. If you put your full effort into that, everything else will improve dramatically. This applies to many areas of life, not just karate.

Bill: People seem to come to Karate for many different reasons; physical fitness, flexibility, mental focus, self-defense, their mother “made them come”, bucket list item, or all of the above. What keeps them coming is the people/instructors. Longevity seems to come through camaraderie, a feeling of self-accomplishment, and community.

Rachael: The most important thing I learned from karate is self-control. When I began karate, I wanted to fight back against my brother, and as I moved along the ranks, I wanted to fight everyone and anyone. But, closer and closer to my black belt, I would like to think that I learned to calm down and control myself. Learning karate is not about learning how to pick fights or how to beat people up. Instead, it is about learning how to defend yourself, but only when it is

truly necessary. Just because you know how to fight does not mean you should. I believe that this is the most important thing I learned from karate.

John: training in karate has shown me continual learning is essential for improvement and not to dismiss someone else's ideas or concepts. Everyone has something to teach you, even beginner students. This applies to both inside and outside the dojo. As we progress through the ranks, it quickly becomes clear that we must return to and relearn the more subtle details of kihon, body alignment, movement, and breathing. I have also learned how awareness, confidence, and knowing that you can defend yourself gives you the ability to spot or de-escalate physical conflicts. Finally, I have learned through karate training that our biggest opponent is our own mind. Our mind not only gets in the way of training (being lazy), it also inhibits the full potential of many techniques through delayed reaction, involuntary muscular tension (relaxation during conflicts), and the inability to predict an opponent's intention (both physical and visual cues).

The most important thing to teach a student:

Paul: To be patient with themselves in their learning process and to practice.

Vic: Respect. Respect for fellow students, respect for teachers, respect for themselves...

Howard: You will improve over time – keep practicing and little-by-little, you will notice improvement, sometimes more and sometimes less. Over time your karate will improve, as well as all aspects of physical movement that can carry over to other sports. Focus and effort are critical in learning Karate or anything for that matter. That's why I emphasize focus and effort in kihon drills and kata. When students achieve success it often translates into improved self-confidence. I don't believe self-confidence can be taught; it happens when students' see their efforts are successful. A little praise can also help. Starting class off with a good straight line improves the chances for longer-term learnings.

Noah: that the process of learning karate is never actually complete. Like a book, you can "read" a kata a million different ways and find different interpretations every time. As black belts, we are constantly aware of this fact: every class brings new energy and thought to our techniques and the intricacies of our own personal styles continue to be shaped as we continue our individual journeys with the art. Yet often white, green, and brown belts - especially younger kids - focus heavily on mastering certain concepts for the next stripe or belt, and don't see the same continuum of discovery. If, however, it is told to them that there is always more to learn, even on concepts and techniques they think they have mastered, their curiosity will always be sparked in the learning process rather than the ranking process, allowing them to personalize the direction in which they want to take their learning.

Philip: "Practice makes permanent." Every time you practice, your muscles obey the directions your brain provides. If you are attentive to instruction, and think about your stances, strikes, blocks, and movements in between, your technique improves. If you are not intentional about your actions, your technique will become sloppy.

Jenni: I find that it is beneficial to expose newer students to some applications as well. This is why one-steps are so important. They are a great exercise in applying basic techniques in various combinations. Other partner drills are very helpful, too, in strengthening a student's foundation in each technique.

George: I believe that students learn through repetition and then learn the mental depending on the age and level of the student as the repetition takes care of the physical itself and mental allows you to determine the situation and apply what you have learned appropriately

Helen: The most important thing to teach a student is how to learn and how to motivate themselves to do well. Their motivation may be intrinsic or extrinsic but all students must learn on their own throughout their study. I can show a student by touch or voice but their progress is really depend on their ability to learn from what we try to impart. I have realized that I cannot do martial arts for them so I must do better in helping them so their own studies.

Steven: This is related to what I said above. I try to teach students that practice only makes perfect what you are practicing. If you do sloppy techniques and don't really try, all you will learn is how to do the techniques poorly. You won't ever improve, and if you ever find yourself needing to use what you've learned in a real-life situation, you won't be able to. Practicing correctly and putting effort into it is the only way to improve.

Bill: Focus, self-awareness and discipline. I try to get them to concentrate on the task at hand, and make it a new habit, then move on to the next task. Be conscious of your body; but make your mind control your body, not your body control your mind. Finally, push yourself and gain satisfaction by realizing that first comes the goal, then the struggle and finally the victory. The greater the struggle; the greater the victory!

Rachael: I believe that, when it comes to teaching, there is no right way to go every time, like no person is ever the same. This means, that when I teach anyone, I try to teach in a way that they can learn. If I notice someone is struggling with the way I'm trying to teach, instead of just going over and over the same thing until it hopefully sticks, I try to go at it from a different angle. Everyone is unique and everyone learns different, so we should try to teach the individual and not the group. However, as a whole, I believe that we should teach them to defend themselves, while also teaching them about exactly when they should be using these skills and how to control themselves. Karate is not about attacking, it is about defense and we should guarantee that our students fully understand and follow this idea.

John: Directly, I try to teach new students, especially children and teens, to overcome the feeling of awkwardness or fear when training around other people. Fear can be many things.....failing, physical contact (partner drills), bullying, learning new things, physical disability, unknowns, confrontation. Etc. One of my greatest joys is seeing new students improve and develop confidence not only in their karate but in their everyday life, which extends outside the dojo. Even if a student quits training after a few years, the confidence they have gained will last a lifetime. Indirectly, I try to teach students that training can be fun and challenging at the same time. Repetition is required for improvement; however, if presented wrong, most students will quickly become bored, inattentive, and eventually stop training. Engaging the student(s) and disguising repetition will encourage them to return. Eventually, the student will realize that improvements in their karate can be made over time, thus building their confidence. Once the path to gaining confidence is established, I try to teach students how to focus and self-correct appropriate for their rank and age. Small incremental improvements are the key to long term results.

Portraits

By Rich Stamper



Mr. Bob Engel, inventor and artist, designed our insignia. Many of you know that, and there was a feature discussing it in our December 2012 Newsletter

Mr. Bob lived in Toledo for many years and was one of Mr. Coleman's dan rank students. At that time he worked for a local toy manufacturer, and later worked for Mattel in California as Principal Designer for Toys.

He eventually retired and moved to Texas and returned to his first passion - that of painting. Check out some of his work and personal story at: bobengelartist.com.



Bob converted a portion of his new home to a studio, and the first paintings from that new studio were two portraits based on selections from The Character of Goju-Ryu. These are of Mr. Ed Myers and Mr. Rich Stamper. What an honor!

He has maintained interest in martial arts and often comments on the parallels between The Arts and Artistry. A very interesting and intellectual conversationalist indeed.

All of us have lives outside of martial arts and sometimes it is appropriate to share some of that with others in the GKK.. We each have our own special talent and sharing of it is a gift of love. Mr. Bob has chosen to share some of his prodigious skill and ability with us.

Some Thoughts on Kata

By Ken Maunz

I have been thinking about this for awhile. Sometimes we think too much. Intelligence is over rated, and we shut off common sense or intuition. Like let's make a bigger nuclear bomb! Or let's use a particle accelerator to create a mini black hole. No worry it should wink out ! What if it doesn't ?? No worry it would take at least 4 years to eat the earth .

We also go the other way with our spirit and feelings. We abort 325,000 babies a year. Would funding adoption or providing mothers with a safe place be a better alternative? Or, finding out the reasons and helping save lives that cannot defend themselves? We have something like 50 genders! It's OK to peek in your pants and see what you are. But, be sure not to offend the spiritually weak. Oops, I just did!

The martial arts should teach us physicality and spiritually. It advances us in strength, movement, health and awareness. It should be doing the same for our spirit.

Goju is our system, hard and soft. I think internal and external is a closer interpretation in English. So in kata we look for both. In the kata we look at the fighting aspect along with the mind and spirit. We try to find the right and wrong of what we do in a fight. There are clearly wrong ways to block that end in pain. There are also better ways to do things and just right ways to do things.

Which leads me to my point "yay he finally has one"!; the depth of the kata beyond the technique. I pick my favorite kata Shisochin or Sanchin in the 4 directions. I do the kata hard. People may say it should have soft in it, but when I do it for me, it doesn't. After 52 years in karate I know how I want to perform the kata . You do them how you want when you find yourself in the form. I find the soft in other katas. So body, mind, and soul in 4 directions. How so grasshopper do you see that ? What can be after Sanchin, the core of Goju?

So, I think Shisochin is a higher form. Meaning it needs to be practiced many years and a 1000 times. It is one of 2 katas that have 8 directions of movement. Just a look at some of my lines of thought about Shisochin in my head and heart. So many thoughts and practice is in 4 points of understanding that are body, mind, and soul.

First direction- Student, put body, mind and soul into the training. So you learn right!

Second direction - Practitioner, when you have a working knowledge of the art and are making it work for you. With body, mind and soul.

Third direction- Teacher, body, mind and soul into your students when teaching them, is more important than you. You are almost there.

Fourth direction- Is time. If I don't have body, mind and soul in any of the other 3 the loop is never complete. The spirit of training was in you when you started or you would not reach the second direction or the third. In the fourth direction when I do Shisochin, I enter into the me that started long ago. Also, finding the me that continued to practice and then teach. In that moment of no time I see me begin the form, I see me in the form. I see me end the form. It started before I was born and doesn't end after I die. For a moment I come "Out of the Dance". Not often, but sometimes, I arrive in a real place with the greatest of effort, yet without any effort. But, I can't stay. So, here I am. For more details of the Dance or Time visit this site,dothekata 1000times

Last thought, there is right and wrong in the world. To go through this world with God !

What's Happening in New York

Joshua Welch one of my students is now teaching goju at the Saratoga YMCA in Saratoga Springs New York. Josh was one of my first students here in New York when we opened our first GKK school.I wish Josh all the best. Also I have moved my school to SUNY Adirondack college and they are very happy to have us. We started in March and already have four new students between the adult and kids classes.We will promote and offer woman's self defense classes and will be discussing a couple of other classes for the community.....Frank Matt

M. Yamakura	Chairman	3763 Old Creek Road, Troy, MI 48084	chairman@goju.com
Ed Myers	CEO	11568 Reed Road, Whitehouse, OH 43571	Ed.Myers@grammer.com
Dwight Scales	USA Director	1940 Bobolink Lane, Toledo, OH 43615	1940dscales@gmail.com
Eric Naujock	Webmaster	2146 Queensdale Ct., Maumee, OH 43537	webmaster@goju.com
Bill Kane	Program Development	7 Shalimar Lane, Maple Glen, PA 19002	wmkane@comcast.net
Deb Crawford	USA Business Manager	5705 Northlake Road, Springfield, IL 62711	sharpda71@msn.com
Angie Monday	Merchandise Administrator	6030 Davida, Toledo, OH 43612	angie.monday@yahoo.com
Bill Handren	Newsletter Editor	115 West North Street, Dwight, IL 60420	yokagawa2002@yahoo.com

All articles and photographs are the copyright property of the authors / photographers and do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the Goju-Ryu Karate- Do Kyokai. Consult your physician before beginning any exercise program and always train under the direct supervision of a qualified instructor. Neither the authors nor the Goju -Ryu Karate- Do Kyokai assume any liability for information contained in this Newsletter