

December 2012 Newsletter

Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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A Story About Our Patch

by Bob Engel

As the wonderful philosopher J. Krishnamurti said, "Art is putting everything in its right place."

It has been a personal honor and an extremely beneficial experience to be a member of the Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai.

In my twenties, I was fortunate to travel to Japan on a number of business trips. These trips opened my mind and started to change many of my conditioned life views. I had taken a couple of years of judo and before that I was a high school wrestler. During that time, I was drawn to what was a relatively new to America mystical fighting method called karate. I didn't know much about karate; was mostly intrigued by the movies and shows that were popularizing it.

After reading an article on Jack Coleman and the Mid-West Goju-Kai, I was impressed and became a student. At the time, it seemed I was going through many of the problems some of us experienced in life. I had many moments where I had to challenge my fears. When I met Jack Coleman and was accepted by him, the other students and teachers, I knew I was in the right place at the right time. The relationships brought more balance into my life as I was learning about Goju-Ryu karate.

Finding out I was an artist, at some point, Mr. Coleman talked with me about doing a patch. Coincidentally, as an artist, I had done some patches for the New Jersey Rod and Gun Club as a younger guy. At the same time, the organization was undergoing change. Mr. Richard Stamper was entering my life as my new sensei, so this new sensei started teaching at the dojo and gradually switched places with Mr. Coleman. The torch was being passed. As a green belt, I was apprehensive on some level. As it turned out, he was the right new teacher for me. Then Mr. Coleman left for California and Mr. Stamper acted as the art director on the patch. He filled me in on Master Yamakura's philosophy, thoughts and other information along with his thinking related to the patch.

As part of the process of developing the new patch, Mr. Stamper gave me the buckle shown here as a visual guide to our heritage. It seemed to me it was a very powerful and perfect representation for its purpose. Armed with this information, I set out to design the patch. The patch was inspired by the character, philosophy and heritage of its masters, leaders, teachers and students. Visually I was inspired by the colorful battle flags. They had to quickly and accurately be read in the chaos of battle. It seemed simplicity and boldness should be the foundation of the design. It seemed important to show the hard and soft aspects of Goju-Ryu. I decided to use the fist as a key element. Red is the hottest color and excites the eye and can conjure up many different meanings, flesh and blood, etc.. As an example of things are not always what they seem, curiously, I am left-handed so I drew my right fist then flopped the art to create a left fist entering the patch. For me, the black and white portion represent the unseen, unknown and soft aspects. Using the characters instead of English writing on the fist, I believe, were Mr. Yamakura's idea. It definitely tied the design together showing our heritage. I feel like everything was put in the right place in this design.



Mr. Stamper sent our design to Master Yamakura. As I remember, there were a number of designs being submitted from other dojos. I was, of course, quite happy to find out we had been chosen. The patch design received a certificate of registration from the United States Patent and Trademark Office on March 23, 2004. Mr. Coleman also responded positively to the patch design in a letter where he described many meanings the patch brought out in his thinking. For me, the circle was complete.

Did You Know

by Rich Stamper

Did you know our training is: "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be". Is it the same as ages past? Yes. Does it ever change? Yes. The GKK promotes Traditional Goju-Ryu as it was originally conceived. It stays the same throughout, but should change for you as your knowledge and depth of understanding increase. If you are just practicing and not learning at a rapid pace, then perhaps you should consider taking advantage of the training opportunities the GKK offers. Yes san-dans, yon-dans, and go-dans this means you too.



Sri Lanka Training Camp

by W.M. Damith Bandara

A training camp was held by the Sri Lanka branch of the Goju-Ryu Karate- Do Kyokai Association. In this photograph are the black belts who participated. The names are as follows – Sachintha (Shodan), Ruwan (Shodan), Kasun (Shodan), our sensei Daya Withanage, Damith Bandara (Nidan), Ijas Ahamad (Shodan), Hansanee (Shodan), Kasun sandaruwan (Shodan)

This program was conducted by Sensei Daya Withanage, the chief instructor of the GKK Sri Lanka branch. This training camp which is held every three months is very important to new members and black belts.

The training which is given by our Sensei is very high standard. I was a Member of the Sri Lanka Karate Do pool and I can certify him as an excellent instructor for the Sri Lanka karate field. It is the secret to our many achievements. (National & International) I think the Goju-Ryu Karate Do Kyokai is a very valuable resource for us.



Herkimmer Martial Arts Tournament

by Frank Matt

On October 20th 2012 representatives from our Corinth Goju program competed in the Herkimmer New York Martial Arts Tournament.

Josh Welch received Bronze medals in Kata and Kumite-Advanced Division
 Anthony Lugo received Bronze in Kata, Silver in Kumite, - Black Belt Division.
 Cory Graska, competing in his first tournament, received Gold in Kata, Bronze in Kumite -Advanced Division.
 Joel Graska, also his first tournament received Silver in Kata, Bronze in Kumite - Advanced Division.
 Carla Denn received Silver in Kata, Silver in Kumite - Novice Division

Congrats to all.

Thanks, Mr. Myers

by John Roath

On Nov. 24/12, Mr. Ed Myers stopped by for an informal visit at the Windsor YMCA. During his visit he was kind enough to share some of his knowledge and insights with the students in attendance. In the limited time we had, he provided some great tips on Kihon practice as well as kata. Then after the regular class had concluded he continued on with some of the senior students providing additional insights with the advanced kata. We had a great chance to practice most of the Goju kata and obtain some of his perspectives, which for me is always a treat.

I'd just like to send a personal thank you to Myers Sensei who came here by himself on a holiday weekend. To me it was just great experience, a pleasure to be a part of as well as a learning opportunity.

GKK Around the World Germany

Chief Instructor: Andreas Salchow



June 2011 - 3 day training-camp in Regen Many hours of exercise, but also a lot of games and fun. In Regen we trained partner exercise , kumite and kata sequences. But we also had a fun time together

July 16, 2011; More than 110 participants from six associations took place in the Isarhalle in Würth as part of the Karagames 2011. The participants fought in four different disciplines: Parcours, Kata, Kerativkarate and Kumite. The first was the Parcours. In this discipline we divided the karateka in two different groups of age, so they had a chance to show how fast and skillful they are. We got very good results.

In the category kata, the children themselves decided, depending on their grade, for a kata which they trained before with their parents with a big effort Also here we got in two different groups of age very good results and in the discipline KATA- creative, where the children organized themselves in groups a program of different technique, which they show together in synchronized teamwork and very nice finalizing in this version.

We end up with the category kumite with the ball. Here the karateka could prove their fighting qualifications. At the end of this long, exciting, and emotional day everyone was very happy about winning a certificate and trophy . SC-Buch got "silver" in the category kumite, won from Anna Baumgartner

In the category Creative-Karate; "silver" for the team of Anna Schabram, Anna Baumgartner and Lara Schikory

In the category Kata; Vera Feuchtgruber made third place.

July 23, 2011 Buch am Erlbach: 47 children stayed overnight in the exercise hall. This exercise meeting gave us all a lot of games, fun, and exercise. First we showed the bigger kids a new kata followed by training in combination on the pushing..... After some hours of high concentration training we changed to games and fun for all . We organized a barbeque and played some games together. We went on a night-walk and after we watch together the movie Kung-Fu-Panda. Late on, the biggest highlight for the kids was to stay overnight in the exercise hall. Sunday morning we celebrated with a breakfast for all the tired kids. The program ended when the parents picked up their excited kid

Oct. 16, 2011 Extraordinary Show at the Latin Mastership. In the mastership in Mexico-City the sportsman Samuel Alberti from Shinte Karate show up a spectacular achievement. He dominated clear and brilliant and got in his class of weight the Mastership in Muay Thai.

Apart from this we visited together following training-meetings;

March 5, 2011 – Goju-Ryu Tag in Ingolstadt

April 9, 2011 – Goju-Ryu Lehrgang in Regensburg

May 14, 2011 –DKV Karate Tag in München TSV Neuried

May 3,2011 - June 5,2011 – Eppingen (BW) with Klaus Fingerle and Christian Schollenberger

2012 Goals

March 2012 - 2 day training-camp in Regen

April 25, 2012 – Goju-Ryu Day Landshut

May 19, 2012 – Goju-Ryu Coach-Meeting

June 2012 – 3 day training-camp in Regen

July 14, 2012 Kara-Games 2012, Worth

July 28, 2012- July 29, 2012– Regensburg with Fitz Nöppel

Sep.22, 2012 Buch am Erlbach: overnight in the exercise hall.

Oct.20, 2012 Extraordinary Show

Coconuts and Peaches

It was another typical Illinois January; a balmy zero degrees and the wind howling. The phone rang and my wife answered. "Would you or Bill come over and finish shoveling my driveway? I made it to the road, but the snowplows packed the snow so hard, I can't do anything with it." We threw our winter clothes on, drove to her house and parked near her driveway. Millie was my wife's friend from church and this was the first time I had been to her house. I jumped out of our car and in about ten minutes I had the snow shoveled. I was pretty pleased with myself. Then, I turned....

Millie's driveway ran along the side of her house, through the back yard and up to the garage door. Maybe seventy-five feet total. She had shoveled the entire length. This was no sloppy job. The waist high row of snow looked as if she had snapped a chalk line to make it perfectly straight.

That was twenty-five years ago. Millie was eighty-four years old at the time. I thought to myself, "If I can do that when I am her age, I will truly be proud of myself." She didn't believe in wearing pants. "Ladies wear dresses", she would say. She had shoveled the entire driveway, in wind chills well below zero with the wind swirling around her skirt. Probably looked like a geriatric version in support hose of Marilyn Monroe's most famous photo.

Millie was sweet as sugar and hard as nails. That was how she was raised and lived. She would never have considered a snowblower or having someone shovel her driveway. It was her home, her job. Just do it and don't think about it. Another chore God gave her. She was the type who would be grateful she had a good snow shovel to make the task easier. Her husband died many years earlier, but she spoke as if he were in the next room taking a nap. They never had children and she believed it was God's will. Her faith was unshakeable. Her will, unbreakable. She was a peach.

Most men I know are coconuts. That is, they are rough and hairy on the outside, but there isn't anything substantial inside. Smack a coconut and it falls apart. Peaches, on the other hand, are deceptive. They are fuzzy and soft on the outside, but underneath lies a pit. You may get away with a nibble on the peach, but bite too deep and you lose teeth.

Traditional karatedo removes the hair from the coconut and slowly builds a pit inside until it becomes the peach. We soften the phony hard exterior appearance as we build interior character. Eventually, if you are perceived as soft, it no longer matters. Ego shrinks and quiet confidence fills its place. No, you don't become Kwai Chang Cain with a total mastery of the self. More like indifference. The "yeah, whatever" mindset. Maybe this explains why an art, whose core is based on violence, ends up producing the non-violent.

I suspect it is due to the hard training. That isn't the only reason, but it is surely part. What doesn't kill you, only makes you stronger I guess. The more you push yourself, the more the pit grows. Done long enough, training becomes habit. Everyone has ambitions, but very few are able to develop the habits necessary to reach their goals. Those who persevere learn to accept the work involved and no longer give it much thought. The pit keeps growing over the years.

Yet, when many reach dan grade, the pit stops growing. Quite a few drop out of karate. They have lost sight or never had it to begin with. Maybe it is like the day after Christmas; the anticipation of the black belt doesn't live up to the moment. Some stop training when they or their sensei moves away. They can't seem to muster the self-reliance to continue training on their own.

Someone once wrote the most dangerous years in a marriage are the middle years. When you are first married, newness and youthful exuberance make you want each other. In the later years, you need and rely on each other. It is the middle years which test whether two people have what it takes to weather the storms. Over half fail.

Maybe this is why we lose karateka after first dan. It isn't easy to keep training unless you have found something more than a belt to keep you going. But, if you make it through the middle years, it slowly becomes a part of you. You find reasons to keep at it and hopefully get used to the effort. After awhile, you don't need a reason. "I've been loving you too long to stop now," as Otis Redding might say.

So, maybe it wasn't that Millie was a tough old lady. Maybe she was just used to a harder life than we are. Maybe she just didn't think too much about how hard a task was or whether there was a labor saving device she could buy. Perhaps she found joy in the fact that at such an age she could still struggle along, lost in the moment, oblivious to the weather. Maybe the hard work made her feel alive and useful. Perhaps she was grateful that at her age she could still stand on her own two feet and merrily do a task most young folks would dread.

Millie passed away the following year. She died happy because she was going to be re-united with her husband. There was no doubt in her mind. My wife lost a dear friend.....I lost someone I admired.....the world lost a peach.

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