

February 2012 Newsletter
Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

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Annual Dues 2012

by Ed Myers

“It is once again time to collect the annual dues and generate an active member list. Dan ranks are \$25 and Kyu ranks are \$15. Dojo leaders are to send this to your national director. The national directors are to send the active member list to Ed Myers (CEO) and the monies to Jean Stamper (Treasurer). This is all due by April 1, 2012.”

Did You Know?

by Rich Stamper

Did you know that our GKK Membership and Annual Renewal fees remain the same as in the 1970's? Yes, the same amount even though inflation renders it less valuable. Remember that our primary sources of income are membership and renewal fees and it is crucial to the continued operation of our organization for each of us to provide them. We have managed to balance expenditures to income and keep GKK membership less expensive than any other traditional Goju-Ryu organization. By far.

Thank You

by Shelia Leggett

I am humbled and honored to have shared karate and life lessons with so many members of the GKK. I want to acknowledge the support and love I continue to receive from my Springfield First Nazarene Dojo in Springfield, IL. I have not been able to actively practice since my cancer diagnosis, but my dojo has kept me involved and shown me unconditional support-Love you all-thanks Sensei Kim and Trish and all members.

The GKK, is beyond awesome, a couple of weeks ago our dojo went to training at the Nippon Dojo in Franklin, Kentucky. Upon his return, Sensei Barrington presented me with a lovely Christmas bowl and card from my fellow students in martial arts-all wishing me well.

I can't thank you all enough for your support and can't wait to participate with many of you once again!

USA-NKF National Championships and Team Trials

by Mark Cramer

This year, Bedford Goju-Ryu Karate-do Seiwa Kai and Bedford Community Education are sponsoring the Michigan Qualifying Tournament to the USA-NKF National Championships and Team Trials. The tournament will be held at Bedford High School on Saturday, March 24. Competition will begin at 10:00 A.M. The entry fee is \$45 for USANKF members and \$50 for non-members. This allows an athlete to compete in up to four events without any additional charge and includes a weekend membership to the USANKF for those who are not members. The spectator fee is \$6 for adults and \$3 for children. For more information, contact Mr. Cramer at: colette.cramer@att.net

**Everything I Need to Know about Karate I Learned in Master Yamakura's Dojo,
Extended Version**

by Carol Gittins

1. If you can't make the technique work, practice it some more. It takes many repetitions to set muscle memory, which is the ability to perform a physical action without thinking about doing it. In other words, you need to practice to make the action reflexive, which means it will be faster, which means it will be more effective.

2. Pay attention to the small details because they are important. You know it's important to have a tight fist before you do heavy bag punching—one hit with a loose fist convinced you of that. All minor details have purpose. In the first series of Saifa kata, the fist being chambered high and vertically before being pushed diagonally downward, ending horizontally, makes escaping a wrist grab easy. Leave out any of the components of the technique, and it's not so easy. If you are not

gliding as you move, you may have tipped the bowl of your pelvis, leaned back, or you could be standing too tall without enough bend in the joints to get compression, or you may be holding your knees, ankles or hips too rigid.

3. Study the history and cultural context to achieve understanding and competence. Uke doesn't mean block—it means receive, and that should tell you a lot about those arm actions you practice every class. Yushin is the active mind which is learning new things; mushin is the no-mind which just exists and does what is needed. That mushin is valued over yushin tells you that the quiet mind is valued more in karate-do. Numbers also play a part in cultural context. 108 is how many monks in the Shaolin temple developed their own styles, therefore the ultimate kata is 108, Suparunpei. 18 is the number of styles selected from the 108 to form the core of martial arts training at the temple, so Seipai, 18, is “what a master knows.”

4. How to bow, and what it means. Shihan Yamakura covers this on page 28 of his first book. When you bow, you should always think about why you are bowing the way you are. If the other person is a threat—keep your eyes on him. If the other person is your superior—show respect by lowering your eyes, but watch his feet for movement. If the other person is your master in the sense of being your ultimate teacher—bow deeply and show the nape of your neck. (Yes, this relates to cultural context.) You are indicating you have given your master control over you. But none of the physical acts of bowing have meaning unless you do them mindfully.

5. It is the student's responsibility to learn—the instructor just provides the material and opportunities. You have to “own” the techniques to make them work. It is not enough to have someone taking you through the motions practice after practice. You must actively engage your mind, yushin, unless you understand the techniques and can do them effectively. Flawlessly comes later.

6. There is breathing, and there is Breathing. Small-b breathing is moving air in and out of your lungs. Big-b Breathing is taking in ki with the air, circulating it throughout your body, applying it to the work you're doing, and expelling the waste and the harmful things.

7. If you can't make the technique work, you're doing it wrong. When you have achieved muscle memory, and the technique is still not effective, you're missing something. In doing a take-down or throw, did you let your opponent have enough slack that he could avoid the lock? Was the pull of your arms coordinated with your step back? Did the angle of your throw put his body into the “missing leg,” which works on the idea that only tripods are perfectly stable, so a human, being a bi-pod, can be thrown by directing his body downward to where the missing leg should be.

8. Have faith and imagination—visualize the result you wish to achieve. You can't achieve effectiveness just by physically practicing the techniques. You must also imagine them being applied. What does the age uke feel like when it contacts an opponent's arm? What do you do when that happens? In Shisochin kata, how does it feel when one hand grabs your attacker's wrist and pulls it down while your other hits his chin with the palm heel and you twist? About faith...nothing is hidden or lost in Goju-ryu Karate, but you may need to work to find it and master it. This I fervently believe.

9. Observe your students to learn your weaknesses and shortcomings. Whatever you're doing, they are doing to a greater degree. I am still battling the sticking-out pinky finger I picked up from watching my first instructor. His left finger had been injured so many times that he couldn't bend it. Most of his students mirrored him unconsciously, sticking their right pinkies out, giving rise to the term “Reuter's fist.”

10. Keep an open mind—just because you don't understand it doesn't mean it's not valid. You can travel by airplane without knowing how it stays in the air. You may start doing the exercises that use ki without believing that ki exists or being conscious of it. Shihan Yamakura equated ki development to digging a canal with a teaspoon—virtually no progress, followed by a trickle that soon becomes a substantial flow. “Great faith, great doubt, great effort. These are the three elements needed for enlightenment.”

11. If you can't make the technique work, analyze it again. While demonstrating the bunkai from Kururunfa, Shihan Yamakura laid me out on the floor using the crossed-hands pull-down though I had set my stance to thwart him. For the next five years, I tried to make that technique work, to own it, without success. Then one of my students said, “In kendo, we always bring our elbows together when making a downward strike.” I analyzed my technique, found I wasn't bringing my elbows together, made the change, and now I own the technique.

12. How you ask a question can shape the quality of the answer. If you ask, “Can I do it like this?” the answer is “Yes.” If you ask, “Is it right to do it like this?” the answer may be “No.” And if you ask, “How would you do it?” the answer may be very informative.

Then and Now

by Kim Barrington

Karate, when I started, was taught differently than how we are expected to teach today. I have been told time after time we can't teach the way we did. However, I don't understand how far we have let things go. I truly believe we need to step back and look at just how different today's training has become. Our students today want things at a faster pace but won't put in the years of work to accomplish those goals as when I first started training .

Others that have been in karate longer than I and some within the GKK, say when they were shown a block or a strike, they were told to practice alone for an hour and if they came back, they may have been shown something to add to it.

When I started my training in 1972 we sometimes worked for hours at a time .We were made to learn self-discipline and respect for not only for ourselves but for our instructors. We didn't dare talk in class or look around. We were told if we wanted to truly learn, we were to do what we were told without a single word and not question. Just do what was asked of us. We knew twenty or more were willing to take our place in the dojo, so we made sure we did what we were asked or as close to it as we were able. For myself it was a real struggle, but I tried to make sure I did the best I could do each time . You can believe this - if we were to step out of line our instructors had no qualms in putting us in our place. I recall the times our instructors made us stand in place holding our arms out just to make us stronger. And the stances we had to stand or sit in seemed like forever, just so that we would be able to do the stance the right way. I also remember we had over thirty students in one class back in the early 70's

We would stand or sit in the stance sensei put us in and hold our arms where he wanted them while he corrected every one of the students. And if we dropped our arms or moved from our stance, sensei would start all over again just so we would learn to do what he asked of us. That's what I thought. But later I found out it was much, much more than that. Sensei was teaching us self-discipline. We didn't understand at the time. We thought; "he's just being mean because he could." But no. Later in my training, I saw what he was doing. Sensei was building us up from the inside out to be better people, not just teaching us karate. Who would have known he was doing more than just teaching an art. He was molding us into better people.

If those of higher rank were told to take you aside and work with you or if they were asked to do something, you better have said 'Yes Sir or Yes Ma'am' and not give any back talk or question it. New members who didn't do what was asked were told not to come back. You learned respect for yourself and others.

We were pushed harder. I am told I must remember there weren't a lot of high ranking black belts and to make black belt then we had to work much harder. Shodan was about as high as you could receive without traveling a long way to be promoted. You didn't have 4th, 5th or 6th degree black belts close by. We were told the more rank we achieved, more was expected from us. With higher rank came more responsibility.

I don't remember any of the promotions being less than 4 hours. My first brown belt test was more like 6 hours long and black belt was even longer. The promotional board was 7 to 8 black belts. If one of them wanted to see someone do something, we all had to do and re-do it. I believe karate back then not only taught us basics, katas and sparring, it gave us much more. It brought self-respect, self-confidence and self-control. It had a big part in who I became and with God's help, a better human being.

I remember one time Sensei had a bunch of us lined up. He asked us one question: "why are you taking karate?" A lot of our answers were the same - we wanted to learn how to fight. I know that was what I was there for. And I thought that for the first year or so. But my instructors took that out of me. Once, Sensei came up to me after class and asked me: "so, do you still just want to learn how to fight?" He said, "think about it and come back to the next class and tell me your answer. But if your answer is still the same, I can't teach you."

We were taught to be dedicated to our art and come to every class if we wanted to be promoted. No excuses. One of my instructors would make sure I was at class. He would phone, then come and get me. This was after I was there a couple years. He had put so much time and work in me, he made sure I showed up. Don't get me wrong, I wanted to be at class. But if I felt sick, I didn't want to show up. Sensei knew once I got to class I would feel better and he was right.

Students today miss classes and won't put in the training it takes to become really good at their art. The same students who want to make black belt don't show up for one reason or another. They come when they feel like it. When they are not invited to test, they can't understand why. They say, "I run my katas as well as he or she does." That may be true, but the others are putting in the hard work and the time to show the instructors they truly want to learn. They give back to the art.

I know things are moving faster today and a lot of things have changed. However, are we to give in and just let the students of today workout when they feel like it? I don't think that's teaching if you want something, you need to put in the time, sweat, and tears to learn the discipline and skills of the art before you make black belt.

And now, students are training in Mixed Martial Arts. Before I upset anyone, I'm not putting down any art. I just see kids growing up believing the martial arts are all about fighting for fame and a title that someone will take away down the road. Karate has gotten a black eye from things like this in the past.

I just don't want to see that happen again. We need to take charge and bring back the true art and tradition of the karate a lot of us have come to know. We are losing what we worked for.

The Protein Sparing Modified-Fast, Cyclical Ketogenic, Low Glycemic Index Diet - Part One

"You better cut the pizza in four pieces because I'm not hungry enough to eat six"Yogi Berra

Lou Ferrigno of "The Incredible Hulk" TV show recounts the following story. He weighed 240 pounds and decided to bulk up then trim down. The goal was to add more muscle. He spent about a year "lifting enormous weights" and eating "several thousand calories" a day until he hit a bodyweight of 305 pounds. Then his ordeal began. He "dieted" down for what he described as "the most miserable 13 months of my life." The end result; a bodyweight of 241 pounds - a single pound more than where he started.

It is never about weight loss. Never. It is about fat loss. There is a monumental difference. To lose twenty pounds when ten of those pounds are muscle is self-defeating. And, with most diets, muscle is stripped away.

Muscle is metabolically active. Experts, and I hate that term, estimate each pound of muscle requires 35 - 50 calories a day for maintenance. Lose ten pounds of muscle and your calorie requirements drop by as much as 500. No wonder the term yo-yo dieting was born. You lose muscle, go off your diet and become fatter than ever. But, even the "calorie" concept has been questioned.

However, life isn't fair sometimes. I reach a point where I can afford to eat whatever I want and it all seems to make me fatter. I stepped on my digital readout bathroom scale and it flashed "one at a time please." Not amused, I got dressed and noticed my shirt label read XXX. That used to mean a movie rating. I figured it was time to get serious again and stop wielding cutlery like a Benihana chef. It's a wonder I haven't poked an eye out.

But, I have my doubts dieting will make me live longer. It will only seem longer. I won't recognize anyone after seventy-five anyway. Besides, discipline is so much easier on a full stomach.

I checked the US Government Food Pyramid for some ideas. Cheesecake wasn't on it so I was pretty sure a whole lot of thought did not go into its design. I had a problem with it when it recommended I use meat sparingly. If God did not want us eating animals, he would not have made them out of meat. Fruits and vegetables are recommended. I assume it meant when there is nothing else in the house to eat. How come Twinkies aren't included? They never go stale, so they have to be healthy. Or syrup on pancakes. Syrup flows, butter does not. Seems like a better choice for my arteries.

Some say a serving of anything should fit in the palm of one's hand. I need bigger hands. Others recommend drinking a gallon of water a day to lose fat. Sure, all the bathroom walks are bound to trim off the bodyfat.

I suppose I could buy stretch denim. Or maybe two size larger clothes so everyone will praise how much weight I have lost. That won't work at the beach and a man my age could hurt himself holding in his belly for more than fifteen minutes.

Restaurants have added little "healthy heart" icons to their menu entrees. If I owned a restaurant I'd have an icon of a paramedic with defibrillator paddles. The waitress would shout "clear!" when she set the plate on the table. The Denny's "Grand Slam" would be called a Bunt and be on the senior menu if I set the portion sizes.

Seriously, the point is I am a martial artist. I am held to a higher standard than the general population. It doesn't matter what age I am or how many debilitating spine injuries I have accumulated over the years. They are not a license to let myself deteriorate. I won't tell someone I have a black belt and have them think it was awarded at a hot dog eating contest.

I am not criticizing the genetically pre-disposed who can smell a cupcake and add a pound of body fat. My heart truly goes out to those who couldn't lose fat in a concentration camp. I'm referring to those like myself who add pounds through neglect. Yes, metabolism slows and it gets harder to keep one's weight down when we age. But, dieting doesn't hold the answer. A change in eating habits one can live with is the key.

I have been following a Cyclical Ketogenic Diet for many years now. Basically one low carbs for several days and then has a carb up day. It works pretty well, as long as I don't go wild on the carb up days which I tend to do. The carb up is necessary for weight training since the body cannot metabolize bodyfat fast enough for fuel when the intensity of an exercise passes a certain threshold. The carb up period restores glycogen in the muscles for later use. The low carb days are also high in protein, so minimum muscle is lost.

It works for me because I don't get hungry and have enough self-discipline to behave myself for three days at a time. To drop a few pounds of fat, I just choose less sugary foods when I am carb loading. The rest of the time I sort of cruise along at a steady bodyweight occasionally trimming a little when my weight creeps up. I do not recommend it for anyone. It is just something that works well for me.

Someone once told me, "don't learn from your mistakes, learn from the mistakes of others.".....Thanks Lou.

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