

April 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.”

May 2012 GKK Area-wide Black Belt Promotion, Yamakura Seminars, and Annual Meeting

by Dwight A. Scales, Sr., GKK USA Director

GKK Headquarters will be conducting its area-wide black belt promotion, Yamakura Shihan seminars (open to all ranks), and annual organizational meeting in May 2012.

Area-wide Black Belt Promotion: The black belt promotion will be on May 18th at Imagine Clay Elementary School, 1030 Clay St., Toledo Ohio starting at 6:30pm. Applications for testing must be sent to Ken Maunz at 6524 Whiteford Rd., Ottawa Lake, MI 49267, or e-mailed to kenmaunz@bex.net, prior to the promotion.

Yamakura Shihan Seminars: The seminars will be the following day, May 19th at the same location.
Times for the seminars: White belt thru green belt - 10:30am to 11:50am
Green belt thru brown belt - 12 noon to 1:20pm
Black belt - 1:30pm to 3:30pm.
All participants must be wearing a GKK patch.

Seminar Costs: \$10 per session, \$30 Family Maximum

Annual Meeting: The annual organizational meeting will follow the seminars.
The location to be announced at the seminars.

Directions & Location: See Google Maps for directions to Imagine Clay Elementary School

We look forward to seeing you in May for a fantastic turnout.

Contact Information; Dwight A. Scales, Sr., GKK USA Director, tolcales@toast.net or GKKDirector@toast2.net

Training Event, Cumberland National Park, Kentucky

by Ken Maunz

We will be having a camping, vacation, and training event at Cumberland Gap National Park, KY. The target date is Wednesday June 13th to Sunday June 17th. Cost, guess about \$50. Hope to have 2 practices a day. Instructors will be myself and whoever else maybe talked into it. There is great hiking at the park, 15 miles of bike trails, mostly paved. There are also 125 miles of trails very close for ATV, 4 wheel, dirt bikes and the other stuff you can find to get dirty with. There is also a cave tour in the park. Also a lot of historical interest. The campground is a nice one with electric and non-electric sites about \$14 to \$18 per night. Several motels close.

Things could change a little depending on group interest. At this time it is a guideline. We currently have enough members interested to go ahead with plans, but we have room for any more who would like to attend.

Contact me at kenmaunz@bex.net

Editor's Note: Mr. Zak Zaklad attended a seminar on Food, Stress, and the Brain and is sharing his seminar notes with us.

Notes from Seminar: Food, Stress, and the Brain

Michelle Albers, PhD, 2/17/12

General comments on obesity in our society

- The trend to obesity is VERY rapid. People are getting fatter, dieting more, and prejudice against overweight people is strong
- Food industry creates and intensifies desire for foods heavy in salt, fat, sugar; creates “obesogenic food environment”. Food addiction is REAL.
- **“The present epidemic of obesity is not really due to laziness or overeating, it is the result of a society that has stepped out of kilter with our biology.” (King, 2011).**
- **“... the increasing weight of people worldwide is a result of a normal response by normal people to an abnormal environment.” (Lancet, 2011)**
- **“The sedentary character of modern life is a disruption of our nature. It poses one of the biggest threats to our continued survival.” (Ratey, 2008)**
- World Health Organization recent large scale study found that depression is the most disabling disease in the world. Depression is connected to obesity.

Basic model of health weight management

Balance these four:

- Intake (food)
- Movement. You don't have to exercise, you have to MOVE the body regularly and often.
- Sleep. How much sleep do you need? Here's a quick and dirty rule — how long do you sleep 3-4 days into a vacation?
- Stress. Chronic stress leads to high levels of cortisol, which sends the message, “Store Fat”.

Random highlights:

- BMI is flawed as measure of overweight. Does not take into account body fat % or body type
- Useful, nonbiased websites for research articles: Medline, Google Scholar
- Visceral fat (vs. subcutaneous fat) is more dangerous, leads to apnea
- Depression & anxiety connected to wt gain
- Salt, fat, sugar are electric foods.
- Book – David Kessler, “The end of Overeating”
- Diet foods – they have no calories, but there may be negative effects; jury is still out.
- Trans fats – the WORST. Go for zero.
- Extra challenge to keep weight off for women in menopause.
- There IS a genetic effect of managing weight. But, what you DO affects how the genetics play out.
- Physiological principle: weight gain leads to insulin and leptin resistance which leads to more weight gain. A vicious cycle. Diabetes type II
- Weight gain side effects of psychotropic drugs (e.g., antidepressants, antipsychotics such as seroquel)

Advice for health providers

- Don't make any recommendations that you don't follow yourself.
- Beware of foods with added sugars.
- People eat less if they start with smaller portions. Use smaller flatware.

Did You Know?

by Rich Stamper

Did you know onegaishimasu means "please give to me"?

In Japanese, it is considered excessive to state a subject when it is obvious. Kohii onegaishimasu (coffee please) would be correct in a restaurant since the waitress hasn't any idea what you want to drink. With one's sensei, the request for teaching is implied and therefore omitted.

The Sum of All Fears

"Alright. I'll jump first....*No*....Then you jump first....*No, I said*.....What's the matter with you?....*I can't swim*.
Are you crazy? The fall will probably kill you".....Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

I am terrified of heights. I've tried to overcome the fear. I painted our former two story house, including the peaks which were a good twenty-five feet high. This three week ordeal didn't blunt the fear at all. I am pretty sure one can still see death grip imprints where I held onto the eaves. When each day was done, I felt as if I had run a marathon from the stress of working all day in a near panic state. But, this would not compare to what was coming.



I was laid off from my Pipeline job in 1994. I took a low paying, temporary position with Illinois Bell Telephone in the hopes it would become permanent. There was a catch; Installation School was followed by Pole Climbing School.

Illinois Bell's training facility had nine telephone poles where we students learned how to climb. We wore a pair of devices, called gaffs, which we secured to our boots. At the arch of each device was a small spike which one would poke into the pole. The idea was simple; lift your foot, poke the gaff into the pole, shift your weight to the newly poked spot and stand. Your entire weight is being held by a spike which is no deeper into the pole than a quarter of an inch. One continues the process alternating legs to climb up the pole.

There were a few wrinkles to this. First, if the spike is shoved in too deep, it becomes very difficult to pull out. It was stressed we only use enough force to set the spike. Second, there was nothing to hold on to. Illinois Bell did not recommend or allow us to wrap our utility belt around the pole. Balance was maintained by using the palms of our hands on the outer edges of the pole. If one "gaffed out", as it was referred to, one slid down the pole. The natural tendency was to hug the pole when that happened and the result is disastrous. Finger sized splinters protruded from climbing practice and it would be like sliding down a cactus. The trick was to maintain a slight leg angle so the gaffs pointed towards the pole's center.

A red ring was painted around the pole at the eighteen feet height. We were told qualification meant we had to climb above the ring, reach around the pole to grab our utility belt, unhook one end and lock it into the opposite side of the belt. We would now be able to lean back in complete comfort with our spikes holding the body weight allowing us free use of our hands. Oh, for good measure, we had to make two steps to the left, two to the right, two up and two down.

The poles were not braced at the top as they would be out in the field when wires were attached. The poles rocked back and forth especially as one climbed higher. If this were an amusement park ride it would be shut down for causing heart attacks. Those students who said they had no fear whatsoever of heights ended up hyperventilating and turning pale.

I had no choice. I needed the job. Long story short, I made it and was even told I had perfect climbing technique. That's not surprising. Since I was scared to the point of wetting my pants, I burned everything the instructors demonstrated into my memory. My life depended on it.

But, here is the odd thing. I trained from the age of nine until around sixteen to join the Underwater Demolition Teams, now known as SEAL's. One surprising fact about their course is many who manage to make it through Hell Week, fail in the pool qualifying portion where the trainee's air tank is shut off, the mask ripped from the face and the hoses tied in knots. This is done while being turned every which way by the instructors. One has to untie the knots, turn the air back on and clear the mask. I had practiced this drill for years and was absolutely fearless in the water. I always figured the surface was ten feet away. And although I inhaled a respectable amount of water over the years, panic never hit.

The fear of drowning is too much for most, even the toughest of men. But, I am not tough. The drowning fear simply wasn't there, even when my brother got a bit carried away as my training partner. And, when fear has no means to enter, it can't distract one from using his skills. The mind remains focused to the task at hand, oblivious to any danger.

Last year, I bought a lawn tractor and started driving the two blocks to my daughter's house to cut her grass. The granddaughter's plastic turtle sandbox was in the way and it was a really nasty mess - slimy, stinky and full of bugs. She had left the lid off and it filled with water. She wouldn't get within ten feet of it and my daughter wasn't about clean it out. So, on my hands and knees, I scooped out the wet mess with my hands and threw the sand into the nearby bushes.

I happened to look up and there was my granddaughter, eyes bugged out looking at me as if I were some sort of god. "What's wrong?", I asked. With the total awe only a six year old child can muster, she said "Poppy.....you are soooo brave." If she only knew.

Is it our martial arts training which helps us overcome our fears and become stronger? Or is it our daily trials and tribulations which help us become stronger martial artists? It's a moot point, the two are inseparable....it adds up the same.

The Character of Goju-Ryu **Kata Implications for Experienced Practitioners** by Rich Stamper

Chapter 10 - In The Beginning - The Big Lump of Stuff

Most of us sort of view Goju-Ryu as this big lump of stuff that contains basics, kata, applications, theories, philosophy and more. All this is sort of mixed together and homogeneous. This is a natural consequence of the way we were taught.

Goju-Ryu has many valuable lessons. We tend to learn one thing here and another there and add these various pieces to our general knowledge. That's how our instructors learned - a little piece at a time - and is how we teach. It all makes us very "general" and unable to distinguish the individual and distinctive aspects of the kata.

Because we view Goju as continuous throughout, a concept learned here is applied to an application there and all fits together and is good – at least in our minds. We have been cultured to believe there are no specific, individual fighting styles contained in the syllabus of Goju-Ryu – just the 'Big Lump of Stuff'.

When we were in grade school, we were taught math specifically and separate from geography and specifically separate from history and specifically separate from grammar and so on. We were easily able to distinguish the differences. We didn't try to use our math skills for grammar. What if instead we were taught one math fact then one history fact then one geography fact then one grammar fact and more facts randomly throughout or education? That would work I guess but it would all seem interrelated and blur the individual message of each subject. That teaching method would make it difficult to comprehend the natural progression of history from one event to the next. It would make it difficult to understand the progression of math from simple arithmetic to calculus. It would frustrate learning sentence structure and language skills. Geographic locations would be mysterious. Learning facts in a random manner defeats the integrity of the subjects and makes them seem discontinuous and yet somehow related. Well, that's the way Traditional Karate-Do presents the information with similar consequences.

We have been taught Traditional Karate-Do as the lesson and basics of Gekki Sai with everything else just sort of thrown in as though it were an afterthought. There were no efforts made to distinguish the individual messages of the various kata in almost all cases. We're just taught Gekki Sai basics extensively and then shown a bunch of kata that use different moves and left to learn to perform those moves as part of the kata but never to develop them as part of the basics. It's the "fact here and the fact there" scenario described previously with no unifying theme for each kata. Just a bunch of stuff.

So here we are, having spent the first three years of our karate education on learning the "basics", which are really the basics of Gekki Sai, and we are handed Saifa and Seinchin along the way. The movements in Saifa and Seinchin are very different in many cases from what we learned as "basics", but we aren't taught what those different movements mean or how to use them. So we try to use the only skill set we have available and attempt to understand those different movements from our Gekki Sai reference point. We try to make the Gekki Sai basics work for Saifa and Seinchin. That often doesn't work, or the movements are distorted, and we eventually relegate the lessons of those kata to some distant place and just continue to add to the lump of stuff with no real understanding or ability to use those foreign movements. Can't help it – the way we were taught. How Traditional Karate-Do works.

Pretty soon we accept "the big lump of stuff" as normal, rational, practical and effective. We don't know any better and "that's the way it's always been done". If it even occurs to us that there might be some other way or to question the purpose of the lessons taught in the Classical Kata, there are no answers or we're told something to the effect that it will all be revealed in time. So the opportunities to use our creative intelligence are stifled and we languish in the morass of "the big lump of stuff".

"A lie repeated often enough becomes the truth" Lenin.

Each of the kata was created independently of the others. Each has a specific message, theme, and construct. Each has its own story to tell.

Is it even possible for us to listen to each kata's story considering the way we've learned "the big bunch of stuff"? Maybe, but only those few who are willing to set the "stuff" aside and have an open mind - beginner's mind - will succeed.

Ah, the stories the kata can tell.....

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