

February 2019 Newsletter

Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai

www.goju.com



Annual Dues

By Ed Myers

Hello GKK members, Dojo Leaders and National Directors, 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.”

GKK Videos

We have training videos available!

There is a location on our website, www.goju.com, that lists the training videos we have. They are for whomever wishes to observe them. No charge of course.

To date, we have five videos. They include:

- *Gekki-Sai Bunkai: Carol Gittins
- *Gekki Sai Advanced Class: Applications, Concepts, Philosophy, Hierarchy. Rich Stamper. 2001
- *Saifa Bunkai: Carol Gittins
- *Close-in Fighting Concepts: Techniques, Timing, Distancing. Greg Dodge. 2003
- *Seipai Bunkai: Carol Gittins

These can be found on the web site under Main Menu on the left, at the bottom of the listing as GKK Videos. Members who have a video to be included please submit a link to HQ. All are welcome. We know more collectively than we do individually, and sharing our knowledge is a primary goal of the GKK. Join in and share.

Thanks to Helen Muth and Eric Naujock for setting up the video links.

44th USA Karate Federation's National Championship

By Patrick Hickey

Dear Athletes, Coaches, Instructors, Officials and Fans;

It is the honor and privilege to extend a cordial invitation to you and your club to participate in the 44th edition of the USA Karate Federation's National Championship on May 25th, 2019.

This year, the Japan Karate Academy of Toledo, Ohio will be the host of this great event. With competitors joining us from all across the nation, as well as some internationally, we expect the competition to be fierce, fun and rewarding. Consistent with USAKF's time honored reputation, esteemed dignitaries, coaches, and referees will be on hand to ensure a fair, well run and exciting tournament showcasing some of today's top athletes of martial arts.

On-line registration will soon be open. We look forward to the support of our fellow USAKF Members, Karate practitioners worldwide and martial artists of all styles. Competition is open to both youth and adult with division from novice to elite.

For information on the tournament, rules, regulations and registration, please contact Shihan Akram Geelani or Shihan Grant Campbell.

We truly hope you and your team can join us at this event and wish you lots of success.

Event Information

Date: Saturday, May 25th, 2019 – event starts at 10:00 am, please arrive 30 minutes early. On site registration and check-in will begin at 8 am. More information to be made available.

The Best Teacher

By Rich Stamper

"The best teacher tells the student where to look but doesn't tell the student what to see."

Seems to me, most karate instructors tell their students where to look, what to see, and how to interpret it. Maybe part of the structure so necessary in Traditional Karate.

So, what does the quote above mean? What does it mean to you? I won't tell you what to see.

The way karate is typically taught is to provide an example of a technique or a kata – where to look; then how to perform in excruciating detail – what to see; then how it is used – how to interpret and apply it. Usually not much room for free association.

"It's the teacher's job to teach and the student's job to learn" I'm told by an eminent karate instructor. Okay, maybe no conflict there, but exemplifies typical karate philosophy. What do we teach? Do we teach students to think? Would it have been better if the quote was: "It's the teacher's job to teach and the student's job to interpret?" Master Bruce says: "Absorb what is useful".

Probably the most dominant theme in Traditional Karate is maintaining the purity of the kata. To not change "one jot or one tittle". So, we are duty bound to teach as we were taught and as our instructors were taught and so on. That is as it should be.

Yet, I have been told that at the upper ranks there is room for personalization. Seems like conflicting information there. Hard to personalize without changing anything. Don't change just for change's sake.

One of things I have read and heard is that some people drop out of karate practice because it is too ridged, too structured, too repetitive; and too boring for the reasons just mentioned. Others tell me the structure and repetition are what they like. Different strokes. Still, is there room for improvising by those who need it? Maybe a matter of degree?

What we teach is the goal of duplicating some prearranged form exactly. We do this while being told we will never succeed in the perfect performance. Builds character, I guess.

So back to the initial quote. Is it incorrect? Not apply to karate? What?

I speculate that it depends on what it is that one hopes to gain from karate study and practice. Supposedly dan rank holders are practitioners - a person actively engaged in an art, discipline, or profession. Guess that is what we are. But what do we hope to gain? And the real question: is there any room for advancement in knowledge and skill other than just an improved rendition of some prescribed standard?

Oh! Kumite! That's where one has freedom and opportunity for self-expression. Well, except for the rules. Tournament sparring is very structured. Okay, then, dojo sparring. Nope, also structured so as to avoid injury if nothing else. Kumite has to be well regulated or it becomes a fight, and we don't do that. Nothing wrong with regulation, but the boundaries are well established for both what techniques are allowed and the form of those techniques. Still, more room for personalization with kumite. Most instructors don't spend a majority of class time teaching sparring though. Especially kumite strategy. I personally believe that is a good thing.

"The best teacher tells the student where to look but doesn't tell the student what to see." A philosophy I aspire to. My goal has always been to create students that are better at it than I am.

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