

ALL THE JUDO YOU CAN EAT!

Ronald Allan Charles

So many restaurants feature buffets these days that it's a wonder people are not overweight! But I know a place where you can fill yourself with something with absolutely NO CALORIES, where every offering is fresh and wholesome, and where you walk away better than you arrived.

The location for this feast is Matthews, North Carolina. Matthews is a lighthouse beckoning drifting martial artists, offering shelter, and meeting every visitor's need.

I refer to The Greatest Camp on Earth. And if you are still on the planet June 20 - 22 (way past when Earth was supposed to end), why not trek to Matthews? Three full days of martial arts beats watching TV while working on your black belt in tae bo.

Camp is where we discover that we haven't mastered it all. We make new friends, schmooze with old ones, and return rejuvenated with new tricks up our ample judogi sleeves.

Though most of the 300+ who attend are judoka, other martial artists practice their arts. Many are skilled in multiple arts, and The Greatest Camp caters to all. There are more arts than you can shake a stick at; some arts do exactly that.

Observe different ryu (styles) of jujitsu and striking and other arts, so you know what they are about, even if you don't practice them. And rather than go at each other's throats (which martial artists could do), practitioners respectfully share techniques in an atmosphere of mutual welfare and benefit.

If you hold green or higher belt rank you should take the Coach Education course, which teaches how (not what) to teach, ways to impart your knowledge to others. Covering planning classes and lessons, managing students, and controlling mat activities, it includes safety, liability, and running an effective club. If you help out at all in your club, you need this course.

Some love kata the way Southerners crave barbecue. Kata hounds feast at camp, with instructors to evaluate even obscure forms. Dr. Kano considered kata, along with randori and shiai, one of the three basic training methods of judo. Learn or brush up on kata and even become certified as an instructor or judge. Judges earn the same payment -- free food for officials -- at a tournament as referees. That's an incentive.

And speaking of refereeing, there's no better place to learn and become licensed. With classes followed by actual refereeing, participants improve skills under

watchful eyes of national referees. Sufficient competitors make this possible. At other clinics, attendees may learn rules without practical application. Hajime! Waza-ari! Ippon! Catch up on the latest, ever-changing rules.

We never want to break anything, but if we do, it behooves us to be able to fix it. Camp offers training and some certifications in First Aid, CPR, kappo, massage, and healing arts.

We cannot eat everything at a buffet; hence we discriminate. The same goes at camp. With ongoing activities (judo competitor classes; jujitsu; juniors; kata; martial arts other than judo and jujitsu; and a special sessions mat) on six mats and courses (coaching and refereeing) in two nearby classrooms, deciding which to attend is challenging. Best bet -- ask Sensei. It takes black belt level skill and intelligence just to decipher the schedule!

Except for lunch and supper breaks, activities run all day. You will be amazed at how much you can learn in nine hours on the mat!

From the best teachers come the best students. Camp attracts highly skilled practitioners, such as Nick Lowe from the United Kingdom and Igor Yakimov from Russia, and from every American judo organization. Olympian Ryan Reser and other instructors are tops in their fields.

Short kids don't get shortchanged! I was pretty surprised to see national and international champions teaching very young children. Instructors adapt material to reach youngsters through junior competition, junior jujitsu, and judo games sessions.

If you are ready to be tested for promotion (and your sensei concurs), rank examiners await you, even providing a partner if yours stayed home to watch tae bo on TV.

There's even the popular Flip 'em and Lick 'em session. Flip judo coins and lick judo stamps, that is. Most martial artists don't know that stamps, coins, and phone cards showing their art(s) even exist. View items from the world's largest collection (www.judostamps.org) while discussing this injury-free, safest aspect of martial arts.

This non-profit camp keeps costs low; compared to others, very low indeed. Bring friends to split room costs. Plan early and reserve one of the deeply discounted motel rooms. Bring an extra uniform so you don't drown in sweat. Camp provides delicious, plentiful lunches and dinners. The three camp motels provide large free breakfasts.

Before you were born, we didn't have such camps, so I had to hitchhike around the world, from Germany to Japan, to study in the Kodokan Judo Institute. Here, with

our American ways to educate people and our talented camp staff, you will learn a great deal without expensive travel to the Orient.

Learn the secret to getting beginners to win shiai, hooking them on judo for life, by attending the FUNTASTIC Kelly's Capers course. Joan Love will offer this if there is sufficient interest.

The Greatest Camp also features the Greatest Cams live! Mom and Dad can experience virtual camp with their teenager on the main mat and their small junior in Kiddy Judo at the same time from their smart phones. Last year one mom put the Greatest Camp Cam live on her company's big screen and worked Thursday and Friday while enjoying 7 thrilling hours of her child training with the best instructors on the planet. Coaches can observe their players; wives can swoon over their honeys or drool over studs. No sweat (for the viewer). How neat is that?

Everything is set. Mats await you. Instructors are honing lesson plans. The only thing missing from this scenario is YOU!

Experience camp. I want to connect with you. So do others.

Camp website: <http://greatestcamp.com>

Save \$30 on 3-day full camp fee (excluding lodging) by registering BEFORE May 15. Includes T-shirt. Lower prices if you attend fewer days.



Nick Lowe keeps them sweating.



Igor Yakimov excites kids about martial arts.



Greatest Camp on Earth, 2012.