

# Aikido Connection

Monthly Dojo Newsletter

## Aikido of Northern Indiana – Onshinkan Dojo

July 2009

**Aikido Connection** is currently published monthly by Aikido of Northern Indiana – Onshinkan Dojo for its members and the internet community.

Dojo-Cho/Head Instructor:  
*Elisabeth Menning, yondan*

Assistant Instructors:  
*Shannon Crawford-Taylor, nidan*  
*Lonnie Amico, MD, shodan*  
*Karl Nelson, shodan*  
*Jeff Loewe, shodan*

Class Assistants:  
*Andy Volk, ikkyu*  
*John McCormack, sankyu*  
*Sharon Halfman, sankyu*

Office Manager:  
*Sharon Halfman*

Aikido of Northern Indiana – Onshinkan Dojo is a member dojo of Sosei Aikido Kyokai, a Chicago-based organization which is comprised primarily of dojo run by former direct Toyoda Shihan students. Sosei Aikido Kyokai itself is a member organization of Tendokan Aikido International; through that group we receive dan rank recognition from Hombu Dojo

### Congratulations to Our New & Improved Yudansha !



Saturday, June 13, 2009, Jeff Loewe nicely demonstrated the requirements for shodan (first degree black belt), and Shannon Crawford-Taylor wowed the audience with her nidan performance (second degree black belt), which has long been deserved. Congratulations to you both.

Thanks to those who came up to Soseikan Dojo in Worth, IL, to take ukemi: Sharon Halfman, Brian Bilyak, Len Langmeyer, Marjorie Kerby, Jonathan Kerby-White, and to those who came up to observe and provide moral support: Andy Volk and Dave Lamberson. Our students made



up a good part of the crowd. And finally, thank you to all of you who helped Jeff and Shannon train and prepare these last few months – we couldn't have done it without each other, which highlights the importance of dojo community (and don't forget those supportive family members !)



*TOP: Shannon flows through her randori; MIDDLE: Jeff piles his uke's up during his randori; BOTTOM: Jeff pin's during his 5 Arts demonstration (See page 7 for more pictures)*

## My Time At Onshinkan Dojo

by *Jonathan Kerby-White*

My time at Onshinkan Dojo has been great. All the stories I have heard, the people I've met, and everything I've learned has been awesome. But, Aikido can be applied in your daily life (*shugyo*.) Applying Aikido in my life has helped me a lot, like not getting mad at someone just because they felt like making fun of someone. Or, doing one thing and part of another, I mean multi-tasking is good, but it's better to finish one thing than to partially do another.

Aikido isn't all work. It can also be lots of fun! For instance, "breakfalls", which I really like, are some of the most fun falls you can do. (I can almost guarantee if you are a new-comer you won't like them 😊!) Also, learning so much from everybody at the dojo is fun. Lots of people at the dojo (Sensei Menning, Sensei Lonnie, Sensei Karl, Sensei Shannon, Sensei Andy, Sensei Jeff, Sharon, Brian, Jim, Dave, Len, Michelle, John, Kaisa, Rose, Celine, Brianna, and last but not least my mom) help me out with so much.

The stories I hear are great. Stories are one of my favorite things about this dojo. Sensei Lonnie and Sensei Jeff both tell me stories but, Sensei Lonnie doesn't tell them to me any more. My favorite story from Sensei Jeff is ... When he fell in

a pond! Jeff was at a pond and he saw someone that fell through the ice (it was winter.) He ran to go get them, but he fell in too. So, the moral of the story is to be aware of all your surroundings. Then my favorite Sensei Lonnie story is when he quit his basketball team. (Well, he didn't end up quitting after all.) First, he tried out for his basketball team he wasn't doing very good and he just quit. After he quit Sister Pietra was running down the hall. Sister Pietra watched over him at school. She heard that he quit and she was angry but couldn't help but wonder why. He said he wasn't doing well at all but, she said to never quit. So, he asked if he could try again on the basketball team and the coach said yes! That is one of my favorite one of Sensei Lonnie's stories.

Here at Onshinkan Dojo, I have some responsibilities that I have to get done. Some of those responsibilities are watering plants, cleaning weapons, changing the open sign to close and vice versa, turning dojo lights out, etcetera. Those are most of my responsibilities here at the dojo. I have learned many things from doing these dojo jobs like how to tell if a plant needs water.

This dojo is great – it is like a home away from home. I wear my gi so much it is starting to feel weird to wear normal clothes.

Now, you see from my point of view of Onshinkan Dojo!

## '09 Rank Promotions

(only the most recent rank for an individual is shown)

### ADULTS

7<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Dave Lamberson

6<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Jim Garbacz

5<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Jonathan Kerby-White  
M. Marjorie Kerby  
Dominique Williams

4<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Brian Bilyak

3<sup>rd</sup> Kyu: Sharon Halfman  
John McCormack

Shodan: Jeff Loewe

Nidan: Shannon Crawford-Taylor

### YOUTH

7.5 Kyu: Matt Spencer

5.5 Kyu: Sean Kelly

5<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Celine McCormack

3.5 Kyu: Kaisa Crawford-Taylor

Congratulations and good work!

## Dojo Birthdays

### June

21<sup>st</sup> – Jeff Loewe

21<sup>st</sup> – Rose Van Nelson (4!)

26<sup>th</sup> – Brian Bilyak

### July

5<sup>th</sup> – John Sears

10<sup>th</sup> – James Heneghan

18<sup>th</sup> – Kaisa Crawford-Taylor

28<sup>th</sup> – Rachael Kubiak

### **DID YOU KNOW ...?**

Menning Sensei began her Aikido training at Seishinkan Dojo in Dickinson, Texas with Ginny Whitelaw and Walter Marker Senseis when she worked for NASA-JSC

**Welcome to Our New  
(or returning) Students**

*(listed in no particular order)*

- Ethan Frendling
- Craig Frendling
- Rebecca Lungo
- Alola Epps
- Paul Horgash
- Dave Snyder
- Michelle Minard
- Jeff Schantz
- James Heneghan
- Rachael Kubacki

**Recommended Reading  
for the Aikido Mind**

*By David Lamberson*

**The Aikido Student Handbook**

A guide to the philosophy, spirit, etiquette and training methods of Aikido (by Greg O’Conner)

*A good read for the new and not so new student.*

**The Art Of Peace**

By Morihei Ueshiba

*The philosophy of O’Sensei, a must read.*

**Living The Martial Way:**

A Manual for the Way a Modern Warrior Should Think (by Forrest E. Morgan)

*Not much about Aikido, but lots about Budo and Bushido.*

**Abundant Peace**

(by John Stevens)

*The life story of O’Sensei and the history and development of Aikido.*

**Aikido: Exercises for Teaching and Training**

(by C. M. Shifflett)

*A must-have study and training guide! (Sensei’s note – this book is written by an instructor from the*

**Upcoming Events**

- **July 4 Weekend** – No classes at our dojo; instead, two **Toyoda Memorial Training** events will be held: one at Tokushinkan Dojo (Oak Park, IL) from 10am-12pm and one at Soseikan Dojo (Worth, IL) from 12:30-2:30 pm that Saturday
- **July 17/18 (Fr/Sa)** – **Eishin-Ryu Iaijutsu Seminar** in Indiana postponed to March 26/27 next year
- **August 12 (W)** – **Youth Kyu-Rank Promotion Test**, 5:30 pm (next test Nov. 11)
- **August 13 (Th)** – **Adult Kyu-Rank Promotion Test**, 6:30 pm (next test Nov. 12)
- **October 16-18 (F, Sa, Su)** – **Aikido Seminar** at our dojo, instructed by **Hiroshi Tajiri Sensei** (Seibukan Dojo, Raleigh, NC), an early uchideshi of Toyoda Shihan
- **December 5 (Sa)** – **Instructor Seminar (3<sup>rd</sup> kyu & up) and Yudansha Testing (open to all)**, at Tokushinkan Dojo (Oak Park, IL)

*Ki Society, which is in our lineage as well, so it includes a lot of helpful information on our Aiki Taïso. It also ties in nicely with Aikido and the Dynamic Sphere, (by Ratti & Westbrook), a book long considered to be the “Aikido Bible”*

Are there dojo-related books that you’ve enjoyed reading? Share them with us in an upcoming newsletter! List, review, share quotes, etc...

**Notes on Etiquette**

“Sempai? Sensei? What? Who’s teaching? What do I say?”

- All blackbelts on the mat should be referred to as “sensei” – this is a respectful address meaning teacher, and acknowledging their achieved rank – regardless of whether they are teaching the class or not, or whether Sensei is on the mat or not
- If the designated class instructor is bowing in for his/her class,

the senior student should call in “sensei ni rei”

- If the designated class instructor has asked another student (of any rank) to start class for him/her, the call-in should be “sempai ni rei” – even if the student is of lower rank than others in class (for that time while they’re leading class, they’re considered the “sempai” of all others on the mat)
- If the designated class instructor has assigned a substitute to teach class on a given day, that person should let the senior student know, so they can call in “sensei ni rei” instead of the other
- When visiting another dojo within the Kyokai organization, the senior student of that “home” dojo will do the call-in, regardless if there are higher-ranked people on the mat. This may not be true in other organizations
- When referring to instructors in the third person, we use their titles in this way: Costanzo Sensei, or Toyoda Shihan, or Amico Sensei. These are more

formal constructs – a less formal construct, such as often used in kids’ classes, would be Sensei Karl, Sensei Jeff, etc... Because “Sensei” is used as a title here, it is capitalized.

- When directly addressing instructors, we use the term sensei, even if the instructor is a shihan. (Doshu would be “Doshu”, however). For example, when I spoke to Toyoda Shihan on the mat, in his office, or on the phone, it was always “Sensei”.
- A higher-ranked blackbelt may refer to a lower-ranked blackbelt by his/her first name and not use the term ‘Sensei’. In a dojo setting, a lower-ranked blackbelt should always use “Sensei” when speaking to or about a higher-ranked blackbelt. (This does not need to apply outside an official dojo setting – i.e. if Jonathan and Jeff are out eating ice cream together, and there’s no other students around, it’s considered a personal setting, and Jonathan could just say, “hey, Jeff”. If, however, they are with a group at a seminar out eating ice cream, that is an official dojo (not personal) setting, and the proper forms of address should be used – Jonathan should say “Sensei” when talking to Jeff, or refer to him as Sensei Jeff or Loewe Sensei when talking to others.
- When in doubt, err on the more formal side! The higher-ranked person can always say, heck no, just call me Lonnie (or whomever).

*Do you have etiquette questions? If so, maybe you’re not alone! Submit your question, and we’ll be happy to answer it here for others to benefit from as well.*

## Reflections on the Art of Peace

*Opponents confront us continually, but actually there is no opponent there. Enter deeply into an attack and neutralize it as you draw that misdirected force into your own sphere.*

- The Art of Peace, #87, by Morihei Ueshiba

### My Interpretation

by Jeff Loewe

Conflict, struggle, troubles, and attacks are always present in a variety of forms... but they are negative, cumbersome, confrontational and personal *only* if we allow them to be. We control our destiny. We get to choose how we handle conflict, struggle, trouble, and attacks. By not fearing or avoiding, and by meeting these challenges head on, we are in control and can dictate the outcome. We encounter these situations both on and off of the mat...

An Aikido training example includes that technique which you struggle to comprehend or demonstrate. While you might tend to allow that inability to frustrate you, the fact that you struggle with the technique only provides an opportunity for growth and should not be disconcerting. Keep a positive attitude and choose to meet the opportunity head on rather than give in and you will have conquered the obstacle.

A real-world example is dealing with the coworker(s) with negative attitudes. You could choose to avoid them or choose to allow their negative attitudes to continue to upset you (and others), but if you choose to

interact with them while having the intention of helping them become more positive in their demeanor, you will have neutralized the negative energy (i.e. the attack or opposition) and have affected all those involved in a positive manner.

*Sensei’s note:*

*What have you learned in struggling with a particular technique?*

*How have you redirected or deflected a friend’s or co-worker’s attitude or your reaction to it?*

*Share these experiences with the rest of us – it might help someone else find a way to resolve a situation, or to find a different way to look at something...*

## Tai Chi Class Report

by Deanna Riveron

Our T'ai Chi class meets every Tuesday evening from 8-9pm. This class has been ongoing for about 3 years now. Marc Troop is the teacher, but he prefers to be called a fellow student. Actually, we are all "students of students" of Master Waysun Liao, who trained with monks in Taiwan since his childhood, before coming to America and starting his own T'ai Chi studio.

Our class consists of 2 students, Steve V. and me. During the years, there have been people who've taken a class or two, or who've stayed for several months. I guess you could say the 3 of us have been the "core group". Since we are a small group, we've been able to input what we'd like to work on each week.

There must be a sincere dedication to T'ai Chi as the art form that it is. It takes many years of practice to improve on the form, once it is learned. We

do the Yang-style long form, but there are other forms as well. There are many physical and emotional benefits of taking T'ai Chi, which include: flexibility, relaxation, better coordination and self-confidence, stress-relief... to name a few. However, the main reason for the art form is to be able to connect to Universe, our higher power, through learning how to become aware of



our own energy flow, or chi, and ultimately, to use our chi flow to promote wellness and longevity in ourself and others. To connect with our "true" spiritual self, not the self we think we are which stores all our worries and problems.

Most people who take T'ai Chi usually go on to use their energy to heal others through teaching, acupuncture, chiropractic work, etc... – the list goes on. There is an even higher form of T'ai Chi that uses energy and takes many years of dedicated training – this is known as "transferring" your energy. That is way beyond where we are at this point.

Besides practicing the form, we are able to do "2-person" practice, which is the beginner's way to feel someone else's energy flow and to try to connect with it. We also do forms of meditation, go to seminars given by Master Liao and some of his more seasoned students, and discuss books we read that are from past Masters.

This – especially our seminar attendance – allows us to review what we've learned and incorporate it into our class. What can be learned from practicing T'ai Chi is never ending.

## **Iaido Study Group Report**

The Onshinkan Dojo Muso Jikiden Eishin-Ryu Iaijutsu Study Group has been in existence since January 2006. When we started, Menning Sensei was the study group leader; Greg Noble of Kushinkan Dojo in West Virginia was our *shibu* (ranked instructor who oversees the study group instruction). The group is now led by John McCormack and Sharon Halfman under the direction of Menning Sensei.

In class, we wear gi and hakama, and practice with bokken, iaito (unsharpened blade), and shinken (sharpened blade). Practice consists of basic movements, cuts, and kata; partner kata; rolled-mat cutting; and demonstration practice.

We are pleased now to welcome Len Pellman Sensei as our new shibu. Pellman Sensei has been studying traditional Japanese and Okinawan martial arts for over 45 years, including two stays in Japan as an uchideshi. He has been a senior disciple of Shimabukuro Hanshi for nearly 20 years, and is co-author of *Flashing Steel: Mastering Eishin-Ryu Swordsmanship* and *Katsujinken: Living Karate*, as well as performing in Hanshi's instructional videos for iaijutsu, jōdō, and karate-dō. Pellman Sensei's instructional focus is on authenticity and practical utility of techniques, as well as application of martial arts principles to success in all areas of life.

Pellman Sensei has already made two trips to our dojo to teach an afternoon workshop in Iaido – these are open to all dojo members and visitors regardless of rank, affiliation, or experience. We hope to have another workshop at our dojo in July.

## **Seminar Report: In The Footsteps of Shihan**

June 19-21 at Soseikan Dojo in Worth, IL, Ed Germanov Sensei taught an Aikido seminar sponsored by Sosei Aikido Kyokai (our parent organization). Germanov Sensei was a longtime student of Toyoda Shihan, and is President and Chief Instructor of the Bulgarian Aikido Association and Tendokan International (the umbrella organization that the Sosei Aikido Kyokai organization belongs to).

Several Onshinkan Dojo members travelled up over the weekend for the instruction. Here are some of their stories:

### **“You Must Cook the Uke”**

*by M. Marjorie Kerby*

If you are curious what this means, you obviously were unable to attend Saturday's session of Sensei Ed Germanov's seminar held in mid-June at Sensei Robert Garza's dojo in Worth, Illinois. If I were a mean person, I would now leave you wondering, "What did he mean by that?" At best you would now be left to ask an attendee what you missed. Make sure they are a friend that you trust. You will soon know why. I suggest you do this anyway, because when was the last time you thought someone understood how to swim merely by reading a book on it? I'm not saying it is impossible, just that it is highly improbable.

“Cooking your uke means to move your body well, which leads uke well, until his body is aching to fall. If your uke is not aching to fall, you need to cook him longer, because he is not ready to eat.” In other words,



you need to lead more, or longer, or differently.

**Another Great Seminar...**

*by Sharon Halfman*

As with any seminar we all finish with tired bodies and most of us have tired minds as well. We are taught so many things at a seminar that if you walk away retaining even just one technique it is well worth the event. I myself have some difficulty retaining terminology especially, so to tell you the techniques name would be a feat in itself. But with each fall or technique I was a part of I will remember portions of them. And down the road I will be saying to myself, I remember doing this before!

We get the chance to train with individuals that we normally would not and gain new or renewed friendships with every seminar we attend. This is what I call networking!

Some of the techniques that Germanov Sensei taught were more direct and more in the way of grappling (I believe is the term), although this is not what I was expecting, I did learn a few more ways to defend myself. Most of his techniques had the dancing feel to them, the big circular movements that Sensei Menning is always expecting from us.

I have to say I enjoyed this seminar as much as I have all the others I have attended. I learn everyday, but during a seminar it is magnified. Thank you for the opportunity to attend.

**DID YOU KNOW ...?**

Onshinkan Dojo began in September 1999; on Labor Day weekend 2002 we began constructing the matted floor in our new (now current) location.

Regular Column

**Bushido in the Modern World**

*by David Lamberson*

Most people today see bushido as a romantic and antiquated ideology, quaint but long forgotten. How can a warriors code of behavior developed centuries ago in a tiny feudal country fit into our fast paced, sophisticated and technologically driven world? I believe there is much we citizens of this modern world can learn from the samurai warrior of old. Let us look to the heart of bushido and to the heart of modern man. There is more than a place for bushido here today – there is truly a great need. One only need watch the evening news or pick up a newspaper to see that something is amiss in our world. Let us look at the tenets of bushido and decide its value in our own culture today.

Being a retired military man I thought I had a good understanding of Bushido and the way of the warrior. Further research has led me to believe my thoughts on this matter are incomplete and still evolving. My research is from many sources but largely based on a book I read and continue to read over and over again. This book is titled *Code Of The Samurai: A Contemporary Dual-Language Edition Of The Bushido Shoshinshu*, written by Daidoji Yuzan. The author was a samurai retainer, a respected expert in the military arts, and a writer of some prominence during his lifetime (1639-1730). He lived during the Tokugawa Shogunate, which was later to be known as the Edo period. He witnessed the heroic actions of the Forty-Seven Ronin Of Edo whose leader Oishi Yoshio was a fellow pupil under his

teacher Yamaga Soko, another famous writer on the topic of Bushido. So let's look at the larger issues covered in this book (written by a samurai) to be the guide for the young samurai of his day.

Each time this column is published we shall look at the different virtues or tenets that make up a code of behavior on which for centuries an entire nation based its way of life. Bushido, while not to the degree it once did, still influences the mindset of the Japanese people today. One only has to look at their philosophy regarding education, business, and daily family life, and its presence is apparent. It is still the spirit of Japan.

Until we next meet on these pages, think on these seven virtues or tenets of Bushido and what they mean to you.

- Valor, or Courage (Yuki)
- Benevolence (Jin)
- Rectitude, or Right Behavior (Gi)
- Respect, or Etiquette (Rei)
- Honesty, or Truth (Makoto)
- Loyalty (Chugi)
- Honor, or Glory (Meiyo)

In future columns I will attempt to define these concepts to fit our world today and still uphold the original intent of Bushido. Until then, *sayonara*.

- Dave

**Websites to Check Out**

- [www.aikiweb.com](http://www.aikiweb.com) is a given! It has a link to a useful dojo search feature to help you find a dojo if you're traveling: [www.aikiweb.com/search](http://www.aikiweb.com/search)



- [www.aikidoconnection.com](http://www.aikidoconnection.com) is our own website for the general aikido community. Take a look – some pages still need information, which maybe YOU can help provide.
- [www.aikidokyokai.com](http://www.aikidokyokai.com) the website of our parent organization, Sosei Aikido Kyokai.
- [www.round-earth.com](http://www.round-earth.com) is a site for the publishers of Aikido Exercises for Teaching & Training. It is very interesting!
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/and\\_search\\_for\\_the\\_following:\\_Aikido,\\_Morihei\\_Ueshiba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/and_search_for_the_following:_Aikido,_Morihei_Ueshiba), “

Detailed historical information on Menning Sensei’s late teacher, F. Toyoda Shihan:

- <http://www.chushin.com/toyoda.htm>
- <http://omlc.ogi.edu/aikido/talk/toyoda/interview.html>
- [http://www.nipponkan.org/senseis\\_articles/toyoda\\_memorial.html](http://www.nipponkan.org/senseis_articles/toyoda_memorial.html)

What dojo-related websites do you like to visit? Share some with us! Send email to [office@onshinkandojo.com](mailto:office@onshinkandojo.com)



**JUNE 13 YUDANSHA TEST:**

*TOP: Shannon Crawford-Taylor throws Sharon Halfman during her successful test for nidan*

*MIDDLE: Shannon launches Jeff Loewe into a nice front roll; Jeff earlier tested successfully for shodan*

*BOTTOM: Jonathan Kerby-White and Brian Bilyak gang up on Shannon during her two-person hanmi hantachi demonstration*

**Our Dojo Community**

Turn in your business card for free publication! Especially if you have a service to offer to our dojo community – it's a free advertisement. Network, learn more about your fellow students, find previously-undiscovered common interests... OR share news about scholarships, births, graduations, awards, moves, promotions, etc...



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**2009 Saturday Sunset Concert Series**

St. John, Indiana Chamber of Commerce

Community Healthcare System  
**COMMUNITY Hospital**  
OUTPATIENT CENTRE

**Saturday, June 13: ROCK**  
'TOURIST' & 'MOMENTS OF CLARITY'  
Sponsored by QUIZNOS SUBS

**Saturday, June 27: Classical**  
JOHN MCLAUGHLIN & FRIENDS  
FEATURING JESSICA BOUMA - VIOLINIST  
Sponsored by PASCALE'S PIZZA

**Saturday, July 11: Bluegrass**  
THE OXCART RAMBLERS  
Sponsored by TAYLOR STREET ITALIAN

**Saturday, July 18: Dulcimer**  
STRING FEVER  
Sponsored by JIMMY JOHNS

**Saturday, July 25: Praise Band**  
AN EVENING OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC WITH INSPIRED  
Sponsored by STRACK AND VAN TIL

All concerts are held Saturday evenings beginning of 7pm in Lake Hills Park Amphitheatre, located at 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lake Hills Drive. Bring your family & friends, chair, blanket, picnic basket and enjoy a summer of concerts along the lake. Admission is free!

Paul Horgash plays



**Event:** String Fever Concert      **Date:** 7/18/2009      **Cost:** Free

String Fever (hammered dulcimer players Paul Horgash & Mark Janiga and acoustic guitarist John Roth) will perform a free outdoor instrumental concert at Lake Hills Amphitheater in Saint John, IN from 7-8:30 pm.

**Event Address:** W. 85th Avenue & Lakehills Drive, Saint John, IN, 46373

**Website:** <http://www.stringfever.biz>      **Point of Contact:** Mark Janiga

**Email:** [stringfever@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stringfever@sbcglobal.net)      **Phone:** (219) 365-4800 (St. John Town)