

# Aikido Connection Monthly

Volume 3, Issue 1

May 2005

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AWA Aikido Seminar

May 13-15. Instruction by AWA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato. Held at Onshinkan Dojo

### Dojo Camping Trips

\* May 21-22 at Tippecanoe River S.P. (bring ghost stories).

Canoeing too!

\* June 18-19 (location tbd)

### Intro to Zen Training

#### Seminar

June 24-26. Ginny Whitelaw, zen priest and former Aikido sensei (sensei's first instructor)

### Women's Self-Defense 4-

#### Week Program

July 9, 16, 23, and 30 — 2-3 pm (\$40/4-weeks)

### 4-Week Ikebana and

#### Chanoyu Workshop

July 9, 16, 23, and 30 — 3-5pm Taught by Nakashima Sensei, a recognized master in the art only \$120 (includes materials)

### National Aikido Summer

#### Camp (Shochugeiko)

Aug 1-8. Instruction by Andrew Sato, Rokudan, Kiku Matsu Dojo, Chicago, IL

### Self-Defense Workshop

August 6, Southlake YMCA, 12:30-3:30pm (extra uke appreciated)

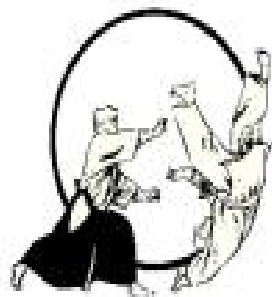
### Dojo Picnic

August 14 Sydney's house (2003 Sunnyside Ave, Dyer)

## The Aikido Moment

by Phil Smutko

Some time ago, while training at the dojo, Sensei Menning asked our class to form a circle on the mat and go through some formal introductions. This is often done when there are a lot of new students in the dojo and is a nice way to blend the different levels of experience together. During these sessions sensei often asks to tell your name, why what interested you in aikido, and just some general thoughts about the art. After listening to several of the ongoing aikido students' talk about the



benefits of training on the mat, I decided that I would try to mention the benefits off the mat. So after I told everyone my name and reasons for taking up the art, and how I literally stumbled into aikido, I combine two words that I personally will never forget. As I spoke of the benefits off the mat, I mentioned how there are times that you do or experience something in your daily life that reflects the training we do in

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Kiku Matsu Dojo's Opening Night

Sato Sensei's new dojo, Kiku Matsu is located at 4512 N. Lincoln Ave, Chicago, IL 60625 (773) 784-4450. There is around 1,500 sq ft of new tatami mat space and enough energy resonating through it that if ComEd has another power outage they could borrow some volts. The dojo has a city parking lot right across the street for easy access and 4 huge windows so everyone can see the Aikido being practiced inside. (And it's air conditioned)

It was great to see so many people come out to support the new dojo that it seemed like a seminar, right in the middle of the week. Did I forget to mention the wonderful 2 hours of training we all received.

Sato Sensei's Kiku Matsu Dojo will be hosting "Shochugeiko" (summer training) Aug 1-8. Hopefully everyone will get a chance this summer to check it out.



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the dojo. And it's not till after whatever it is was said or done, that you realize that you just had an "aikido moment."

Maybe not worded so dramatically, but aikido moments happen all the time. They can announce themselves like a freight train in the middle of the night or be as subtle as the wind across a still pond. Sometimes, it's not till long after the moment has passed that one realizes that such a moment even occurs. And it seems that the more training one does, the more frequent these moments become.

My first aikido moment off the mat was so subtle that I didn't even realize that it happened. In fact a fellow aikido student pointed it out to me. We were out in a bar one night having a good time when we decided to leave for the night. The establishment was packed wall to wall with people. Apparently as I moved through the crowd, I turned tenkan and pivoted about to avoid the moving people and get through the crowd. When I reached the door, I turned to look for my friend. When he emerged from the crowd, he had a tremendous grin on his face and was laughing. When I asked what was so funny, he told me how I blended through the crowd and what a sight it had been.

Writing this essay has not been easy, but no worth while task is ever is. I have not only spent hours reflecting about this topic, but days, weeks, and months since I was asked to start this journey. To this effect there is no end. Our lives are a series of moments and these moments help us learn about who we really are. For those who have found Aikido, it is just one of the many tools that help us on the way.

## Happy Dojo Birthdays to

### May

*Katherine Conroy  
Andy Sobun  
Pam Allen  
Len Langmeyer  
Ben Dangerfield  
Taylor Davis*

### June

*Nicholas Honeycutt  
Jeff Loewe  
Wayne Neeley  
Kevin Lasley  
Hunter Davis*

## Thoughts From the Editor on "The Golden Buddha"

*Around a hundred years ago a Zen priest was faced with the challenge of moving a 2 1/2 ton clay Buddha from one temple to another to make room for a new road the Japanese government was putting in. The crane used to lift the Buddha started to crack under the pressure, since it started to rain anyway the priest decided to cover it with a tarp so it would not be ruined. He came back later that night to check the connections on the crane, when he noticed a crack in the Buddha. After chiseling a piece off he discovered underneath the clay was a Buddha made of pure gold. Many years prior to this discovery another Zen priest had covered the Buddha with clay to hide it from invaders who subsequently killed all the monks and priests. They left the clay Buddha because it had no apparent value. The Golden Buddha can still be viewed at the small temple in Japan.*

*We are all born Golden Buddha but throughout life we cover ourselves in clay to hide our true selves from invaders. Through our Aikido training we can chip away all the clay and return to our true selves. We are all Golden Buddha — keep chipping away.*

## HELP!

Just a reminder about our upcoming seminar May 13-15 with Sato Sensei: Please take some time to help with cleaning the dojo and washing the mats in the few days before the seminar.

Thank you.

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*Contributions of Aikido-related writings and artwork for these newsletters is appreciated !!!! This is your newsletter- please help make it useful and interesting!*