

Aikido Connection Monthly

May 2006

2006 UPCOMING EVENTS

(All events held at Onshinkan Dojo unless listed otherwise)

TAI CHI WORKSHOP

June 3, Saturday, 1-4 pm, \$20
Instruction by
Paul Channic and Marc Troop
Tell your friends and families!

IAIDO SEMINAR

(Japanese Swordsmanship)
June 23-25
Instruction by Greg Noble Sensei
(West Virginia Aikido)
On Saturday, there will also be a
Chanoyu (Tea Ceremony)
demonstration

LIVE-IN SUMMER KENSHUSEI PROGRAM

July and August
Held at Onshinkan Dojo
Please see Sensei for details.

MERIDIAN TOUCH™ YOGA WORKSHOP

July 15, Saturday, 1-4 pm, \$20
Instruction by Meridian Touch
creator Darryl Aiken-Afam

AWA Shochugeiko (Summer Training Seminar)

July 31-August 6
Instruction by AWA Chief
Instructor Andrew Sato Sensei
Held at Kiku Matsu Dojo,
Chicago, IL

AIKIDO & SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP

August 26 or 27, time tbd
Instruction by Dianne Costanzo Sensei (spiritual direction adviser, published author and dojo-cho)



Notes From Sensei

We can always use a reminder to help take care of our dojo. Just as Aikido is an art of the mind, body, and spirit, our training and participation here should reflect all those aspects. Don't wait to be asked to do something or help out in some way. Even if you're a new student, you can truly make it your dojo by looking for things that need to be done. If you're a senior student, take the initiative and start cleaning—before and after class ! There are any number of projects that need to be done on a regular basis ...



Dojo Affiliation Change

Effective May 11, 2006, Aikido of Northern Indiana is no longer affiliated with Aikido World Alliance. We have instead chosen to become an independent dojo. Until F. Toyoda Shihan's death in 2001, and for the next three years, we were affiliated with Aikido Association of America (AAA). Upon A. Sato Sensei's split with AAA in 2004, we became one of the three founding dojo (of many dojo) of his new organization, Aikido World Alliance (AWA), and were pleased to host the first AWA Kangeiko (Winter Training Seminar) in February 2005. Now, just over a year later, we have made the difficult decision to become independent, while still maintaining good relations with Sato Sensei. Please feel free to continue to visit Kiku Matsu Dojo (the AWA headquarters in Chicago), and to attend any AWA seminars.

Certificates will still be issued for kyu and dan tests; testing will still be done on the current test requirements. Time-in-grade requirements for testing may change, but the ki test and technique requirements will remain the same, as they have since Toyoda Shihan established them.

For our dojo students, this transition to independent dojo status should be seamless. Please feel free to talk with Elisabeth Menning Sensei if you do have any questions. Thanks!

Reinforcements & Reminders

by Andy Volk

A friend recently asked me what aikido has taught me. As a fairly new student to aikido I have found that while I have learned so many new moves, exercises, and katas, aikido has reinforced or reminded me of many basic rules for living, such as;

1. You are more likely to achieve a goal if you first believe you will.
2. The energy you put into a thing directly affects what you receive in return from that thing. Something approached with a passion or "fierce joy" will most likely return a passion in life.
3. You can learn something helpful from most everyone around you regardless of age, race, sex, or occupation. Knowledge Good!
4. Learning something new is not always easy. Some days you feel like Einstein other times Homer Simpson, even on a "Homer" days you are still learning something if you just relax and enjoy the journey.



Zen, Bodywork, and Yoga Seminar

Many thanks to Ginny Whitelaw, Everett Ogawa, and Ximena Prudencio for sharing their time and knowledge with us during the February 24-26 weekend.

The results of that time spent relaxing, breathing, tuning in and "sitting" have been amazing. I recommend it to anyone in need of change in their lives, as well as to those who are happy as they are.

Thank you to Menning Sensei for your continued caring and hospitality at Onshinkan Dojo. Best of luck with your new bodywork journey.

- Debbie Owen

This weekend began with a session of zazen (seated meditation) and then a free public lecture Friday night by Dr. Ginny Whitelaw, a Rinzaï Zen priest and 5th degree blackbelt in Aikido (and Menning Sensei's first Aikido/Zen teacher!) Saturday we started with zazen, then did some yoga with Ximena Prudencio and then zazen again. The difference between the two zazen sessions was amazing! The yoga really helped relax and stretch us, and to settle our brains. The second sit was so much easier and more pleasant. In the afternoon we learned some basic, safe, and easy-to-do bodywork from Everett Ogawa (founder of Integral Bodywork™), which was to help us realign our bodies, improve body awareness, and begin to release pains and tensions (some of which we didn't even know we were carrying!). Again, the sit afterwards was much easier and our breathing much deeper and larger. The group dinner that night at the Oriental Buffet was fun (as usual!). Sunday again, we did zazen, some exercises to help release and improve our breathing, a session of yoga, and another session of zazen. The event finished with a thought-provoking Q&A period.

Why I Like Weapons Class

by Frank Rodriguez

At that very moment when two samurai meet and draw their swords to face one another it seems as if time stops because to them the world gets locked out and they are the only ones there left to face each other. That is how it should be, complete focus on your enemy because one mistake can cost you, your life. I like fighting in weapons class with the bokken because I treat it like a real sword and that's its life or death. There are other reasons I like fighting with it as well.

I also like fighting with the bokken because it reminds me of the samurai. The samurai were fierce warriors that fought with honor and were loyal. Not to mention how all the great samurai swordsmen later on discovered that there is a better way to solve problems instead of fighting and taking lives. For example Miyamoto Musashi, a legendary swordsman who later on would almost never fight with a weapon but use his opponents strength against them just like we do in Aikido.



Which leads me to another reason I like training with weapons, it is because it can be related to lots of the same techniques in Aikido. That's how Aikido was made by its founder Morihei Ushiba. He wanted to make an art that related to weapons like the Jo staff and samurai katana. His style was also to use his opponents own strength against them.

That is why I like weapons class, what is your reason?

Who was Miyamoto Musashi



Prior to adulthood known as Miyamoto Benosuke, was a famous Japanese swordsman, who is claimed to have been one of the most skilled swordsmen in the history of Japan. Musashi, as he is often simply known, became legendary by triumphing in numerous duels, even from a very young age. He invented and developed the Hyoho Niten Ichi-ryu style of swordsmanship and he wrote *The Book of Five Rings*, an enigmatic book of strategy, tactics, and philosophy that is much studied by business people and others even today.

Musashi most famous duel was against Sasaki Kojiro in the year 1612. Sasaki was well known for the fighting style that he developed. It was called Tsubame-gaeshi or swallow counter. It was based on the motion of a swallow tail when the bird is in flight. The duel was to be held at 8:00 AM on an island a few miles off of Ogura. Musashi left the place he was staying for the night in an effort to play mind games with his opponent, trying to make him think that Musashi was scared. Musashi then arrived late to the duel in an effort to make Kojiro impatient and cocky. When Musashi finally arrived he made a wooden sword from a spare oar and then fought Kojiro. Musashi was able to kill Kojiro with one swift blow to his skull. After seeing the condition that Kojiro was in, Musashi dropped his sword and walked back to his boat. It is said that he only used wooden swords, and never a real sword, in duels ever again.

(Information collected from multiple sources)

“Honey, your Samurai Warrior has returned home!”

by Tom Martello

I was asked to reflect about the recent Iaido seminar with Sensei Noble and I must go back to November 2005 when my interest in the martial art began. I first became interested in the ownership of a quality Katana and I searched the Internet in my quest to learn as much as possible about Japanese sword making in order to make a wise purchase. During my search for a Katana I developed an awareness of several martial art disciplines relating to the Samurai Warrior's sword. After considerable research I acquired my wakizashi and now could feel first hand that this instrument had a historical value that was deserving of respect and a power requiring responsible ownership.



In my quest to determine how to responsibly own this instrument, I became intrigued by Tameshigiri and discovered the link to Iaido. Keep in mind that I had zero experience in martial arts and kind of figured that this Iaido thing may be very rare or practiced only in Japan. I figured that I would surf the net and kind of become backyard educated in the subject matter and my ownership of my new prize possession would be relegated to merely a cool conversation piece.

Much to my surprise I discovered an Iaido Study Group and Iaido Seminar at Aikido of Northern Indiana just few miles down the road. Onshinkan Dojo's proximity warranted further investigation and I contacted Sensei Menning. I told her that I had a sudden interest in Iaido but had no martial arts exposure and had little interest in becoming long term involved with the study. She respected my personal interest and invited me to participate in the Thursday evening sessions. I was encouraged to give it a try and if I did not find what I was looking for no strings were attached.

Try it I did! After the first couple of sessions I felt good about myself, found that this would be a great venue for some exercise and I could learn something about the art form. Now my wife had a bit of a problem with this at first as she expected my mid-life crisis to extend to a new automobile or an extra-marital affair. Those were things she was prepared to deal with but catching me in the living room practicing the first kata with her large wooden spoon set off alarm bells. Keep in mind that in an Italian household the wooden spoon is considered a weapon but its utilization as a proxy bokken was being viewed as a bit of potential lunacy. She new I was really over the edge when I soon had a pair of bokken and a black pleated dress-type outfit to wear on Thursday nights. I re-assured her that this was normal behavior and if worse came to worse, I could go to the next Halloween party as John Belushi "Samurai Warrior"

Well the Iaido Seminar came to be; I attended it with great interest and really enjoyed the progression that soon allowed me to interact in the more advanced katas. Sensei Noble exhibited great patience and was supportive of any personal goals in my practice of the art. I felt it a rewarding experience and it allowed me to interface with some nice people in the process. Thinking back to January, I had set a limit to terminate my Iaido experience after this seminar. Limits are to be challenged and I guess I am looking forward to the next Iaido Seminar scheduled for June.

“Honey, I am going to the dojo!”

Aikido Kids

ATTENTION: ALL KIDS / YOUTH

(Ages 1-17)

This is a new addition to the Aikido newsletter. All Aikido kids/youth please help to keep this section in the newsletter and start submitting your thoughts on Aikido or on special achievements or awards you may have received. If there are any artists out there, please submit some drawings for the newsletter. All submissions will be in your own words and the only editing will be the spelling.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!

What you would do if you came early to help in Aikido

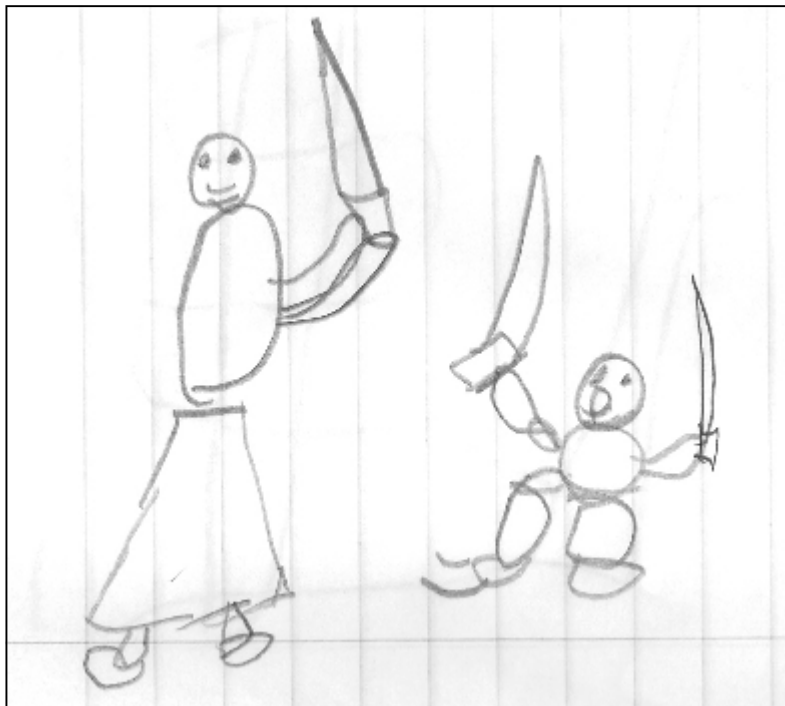
1. You would sort stuff out and write it.
2. You would probably help teach the tots class, but it would be fun sometimes.
3. Like on number 1, after you would write it down on paper, you would write it on the computer.
4. You would sort belts, books, Aikido bags altogether and you would find the cost.

What I learned:

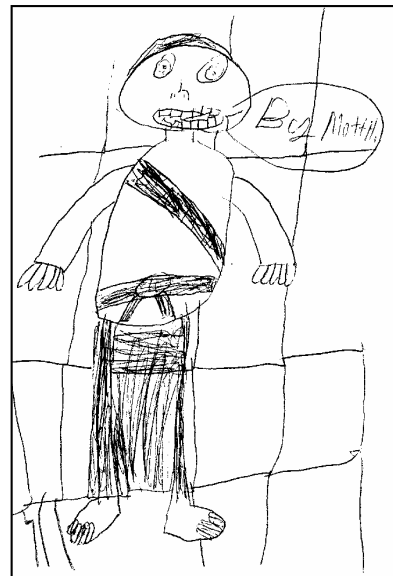
1. It is very hard to take care of that place.
2. You learn a lot more than you think.

So here's your info!

By: *Matt Honeycutt*



By: Nick Honeycutt



By: Matt Honeycutt

Seminar Report: Sato Sensei at On

April 21-24, Andy Sato Sensei, Chief Instructor of Aikido, taught an Aikido seminar. You might have noticed the instructor's hakama (that cool-looking black split skirt the instructor passed her shodan test. Congratulations, Shannon! from kihon waza (basic technique), to henka waza (creative). Weapons work included partnered jo kata, jo awase. This year was a beautiful wooden plaque from our resident calligrapher, a small weapons rack, a plaque with the Toyoda fan, and a Sato Sensei, each of which were presented by the dojo. The seminar was enjoyable. Thank you, Sato Sensei!

COOL NEW DOJO SUPPLIES

Resident embroidery wizards John and Sue McCool have been all out embroidering our logo onto dojo patches, vests, and all kinds of gi bags. Check out the local display in the dojo featuring the dojo leaf logo and "Aikido of Northern Indiana" embroidered on it. In addition, the dojo is offering a variety of calligraphy material; books on Aikido, Zen, and Iaido; Iaido supplies, clothing, and weapons. See Sensei or our resident instructors if you would like any supplies. A price list is on the supply cabinet for your convenience.



ings, slogans, artwork, shirt design. The to hear some the favorite or written

Happy Dojo Birthdays to

March

Peyton Hicks (6 yrs)
Amber Schiessle (7 yrs)
Phil Smutko

April

Chris Painton
Celine McCormack (9 yrs!)
Mike Namovice

May

Jackie Volk (10 yrs)
Kat Conroy (6 yrs)
Len Langmeyer
Andy Sobun (13 yrs)

June

Nick Honeycutt (8 yrs)
Jeff Loewe
Kevin Lasley
Shawn LaBon (8 yrs)

July

Wyatt Smith
Collin Schiessle (6 yrs)
Paul Lopez Jr. (6 yrs)
Danny Avitia
Kaisa Crawford-Taylor (8 yrs)
Garrett Smith (10 yrs)

Ikebana Workshop Report

Saturday, April 29, a few people (not nearly enough!) attended a two-hour workshop taught by Ikka Nakashima on the Art of Japanese Flower Arrangement. Nakashima Sensei graciously come to our dojo from Chicago—where she has people from around the country visit her for training. She has been teaching Ikebana and Chanoyu (Tea Ceremony) in America for 50 years,

and is one of the most highly-ranked instructors in the country. (See exciting article on the next page). We were lucky to have both a reporter and a photographer from the Post-Tribune attend the class. As always, Sensei Sensei shared her deep wisdom and sense of humor with us as she taught us the aesthetics of using space, not form, in our arrangements. The arrangements graced the shomen side of the dojo for two weeks afterwards. Thank you, Sensei!

Chanoyu Workshop Report

The Saturday, May 6 Chanoyu (Tea Ceremony) workshop was postponed due to lack of timely sign-up. Of course, just after the class was cancelled, six people signed up or called in! It will be rescheduled for sometime this summer. Stay tuned!

Here is an excerpt from an article about Chanoyu, from

Chanoyu is something more than a refined form of taking refreshment. Its purpose and essence are difficult to express in words. It will be helpful to remember that the ceremony was developed under the influence of Zen Buddhism, the aim of which is, in simple terms, to purify one's soul by becoming one with nature. In addition, chanoyu is an embodiment of the Japanese people's intuitive striving for recognition of true beauty in plainness and simplicity. Such terms as calmness, rusticity, gracefulness, or the phrase, "aestheticism of austere simplicity and refined poverty," may help to define the true spirit of chanoyu. For instance, the strict canons of chanoyu etiquette, which may seem to be burdensome and meticulous at first glance, are in fact minutely calculated to achieve the highest possible economy of movement and indeed are pleasing for the initiated to witness, especially when performed by experienced masters.

Menning Sensei says that the feeling she gets from watching or participating in chanoyu is very similar to the feeling of doing iaido. Go figure—a sharp samurai sword, or a small bamboo tea whisk ... you might have to come see for yourself!

The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays

Big news—Nakashima Sensei is currently in Japan being awarded a very high honor by the emperor—The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays (shown above). The award, called Sokosho in Japanese, was established in 1875, and is Japan's oldest award. It features rays of sunlight radiating from the rising sun. The attachment is shaped into a chrysanthemum. The award is being given to Nakashima Sensei for her lifetime of contributions in both Culture and Science, which have done much to further friendly relations between Japan and America.



The text below is reprinted from the [e-Japan Journal](http://www.chicago.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JIC/Webletter/jj2006.05.html), the electronic webletter of the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago (CGOJ) and the Japan Information Center (JIC): <http://www.chicago.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JIC/Webletter/jj2006.05.html>

Dr. Seiko Nakashima to Receive Imperial Decoration

On April 29 (Tokyo), the Government of Japan announced that His Majesty the Emperor of Japan will bestow upon Dr. Seiko Nakashima the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays. This award is one of the most prestigious decorations in Japan.

Dr. Nakashima is being honored for her lifelong activity as a master of *ikebana* (flower arrangement) and *sado* (tea ceremony), through which she has promoted friendship and cultural exchange between the United States and Japan, while engaged in medicine at various hospitals and sanatoriums around Chicago. Her work as “cultural ambassador” has not been limited to Chicago and Indiana, but extends throughout the country as she has helped set up chapters of *ikebana* and *sado*.

Born on February 14, 1928, Dr. Nakashima moved to the United States in 1948. She graduated from the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois, Chicago in 1964 and was engaged in medicine as a microbiologist until 1987. She established the Ikenobo Chicago Chapter in August 1964, and was awarded the highest degree of “Sokatoku,” Senior Professor First Grade, by the Ikenobo School. In 1981, she established a chapter of the Urasenke School of Tea Ceremony and became the president. She continues to teach Japanese culture and aesthetics to this day.

The decoration and the certificate are scheduled to be presented to Dr. Nakashima by Mr. Taro Aso, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on May 12, 2006.

Congratulations, Nakashima Sensei !!!!!!!

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Contributions

of Aikido-related writings and artwork for these newsletters is appreciated—and necessary. This is your newsletter- please help make it useful and interesting...

p.s.

your sensei / editor would be very happy.. .