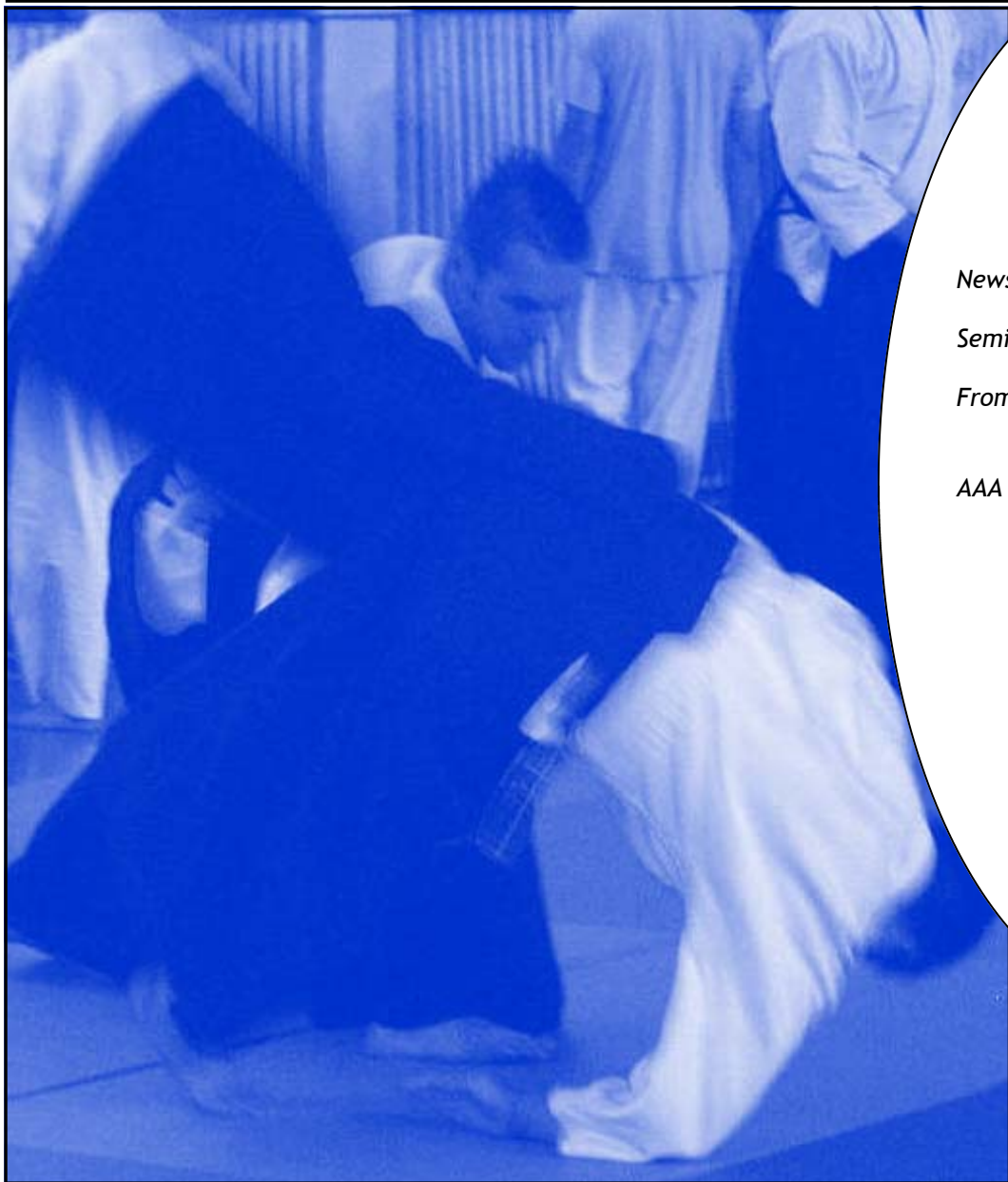


Aikido WORLD

Journal of the Aikido Association of America



October 2003



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News from Headquarters

Aikido World

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A Message from the Chief

It seems like just yesterday that I was talking about the start of summer...and now we are looking at the coming change of season here in Chicago! In between a lot has happened for the AAA & AAI this summer.

The first ever AAA East coast and AAI Poland Instructor seminars! Both well attended and requested again. Also another first was the Women's Aikido seminar taught and attended by women only. What is next?

Well for the first time ever the AAA is being asked to demonstrate at the Aiki Expo in Las Vegas this year. Attendance is estimated at over 500 Aikidoka! What a shot in the arm for the AAA/AAI as a recognized legitimate worldwide organization of Aikido.

As you may have also seen, there are many pictures showing up on the website rotating each time. It is our intent to display as many dojo and their members to the rest of the AAA & AAI as possible. If you have a group photo of a Teaching Committee seminar, camp, or other related event, please email us and we will try to get the picture on the web. Be on the lookout for a new and improved website by the end of the year!

With all these first time events it can be very exciting for us as an organization. But as Toyoda Sensei would probably say, "So what!? Just train." And that should always be in the forefront of our minds. Training is everything, and it makes us what we are and how we relate to each other on all kinds of levels.

The next Aikido class is just on the horizon. I hope to see you there.

Andy Sato
Chief Instructor ~ AAA/AAI



Northeast Memorial Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

Toyoda Sensei always lived bigger than life, and what he accomplished in such a short time is beyond measure.

He arrived in the United States not speaking English, with only a suitcase and a little money. From there he went on to found national and international Aikido organizations that together number more than 200 dojo worldwide, and lived to see the completion of a new international headquarters training facility in Palatine, Illinois.

As we entered the new millennium, Toyoda Sensei continued to build upon



Fumio Toyoda Shihan

and stress what have become the hallmarks of his instruction: powerful, effective technique, clear instructional methodology, the importance of instructor certification and training, and the spirit of Budo which must inspire and motivate all of our activities.

Toyoda Sensei was determined that we be at the center of the growth of Aikido, supporting and respecting the art's origins in Japan, while at the same time creating our own expression and strong art here where we stand.

Toyoda Sensei left his family and students with a remarkable legacy and with a remarkable dream to carry on. His teaching will have effects for generations to come.

AAA and AAI proudly move forward under the legacy of the man whose dream created them, and has driven them so successfully.

Seminars and Events

AAA Women's Aikido Seminar

By Chrissa Pedersen

After we did each other's hair and makeup, painted our nails and discussed the best ways to treat PMS ... we did a little bit of Aikido ... JUST KIDDING.

But I bet that's what some of you thought we might be doing at an all women's Aikido seminar. Actually, we did a lot of really great Aikido training. It was hard work—lots of sweating, sore muscles, a few bruises—the usual stuff that makes up an Aikido seminar.

So, why a women's only seminar? Don't we like our fellow male Aikidoka? Why do we need a separate seminar, especially in an age when women have been fighting to be equals with men, smashing that glass ceiling, and breaking into the "old boys" networks?

Well that's a good question. It's not to do each other's hair, or discuss PMS, or clothes (though there was girl-talk, what did you expect?). Several reasons come

to mind; within our organization and within many dojo women are a minority, there are gender differences in training and there are issues of sexual harassment and/or dominance that women may not feel comfortable voicing to a mixed gender crowd. We don't want to be separate from our male partners, but we do have different issues that can most effectively be addressed by training and talking to other women.



Group photo at AAA Women's Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

When we lined up in Ryoshinkan dojo I was excited to see all these women beside me ready to train. The seminar was attended by all levels of rank, by all ages, and by women from around the country and Puerto Rico.

When we bowed in, it finally hit me that WOW, we're going to be receiving instruction from four different female instructors this weekend! Elisabeth Menning Sensei was our first instructor. Though I had trained with several of the instructors at previous seminars, I had never had an opportunity to learn about their "take" on Aikido. One of the wonderful things about Aikido is that it is a personal art. What works for one body type may not work for another. So, though the principles remain inviolate, the execution varies. I was thrilled to know that I was

going to be exposed to yet another way to approach the practice of Aikido, and from four new perspectives!

I couldn't help but come up with nicknames for our female instructors. There was Dynamic Dianne Costanzo with her new twirling technique that we got to play with. Costanzo Sensei used humor and stories to help illustrate particular points she was trying to make.

Charismatic Christine Dyer admonished us to use our hips, our strongest asset as women. Her bubbly personality inspired us to keep going and keep trying new things without feeling self-conscious about our blunders.

Athena-like Cheri Dahlen Sensei introduced many of us to proper kicking technique, something we rarely get to practice but

are expected to execute nonetheless. Her strong presence and reassuring manner made us want to try anything.

Electrifying Elisabeth Menning Sensei filled the dojo with her presence and her centeredness. Her moving aikitaiso really made us work for our balance and timing. I could identify with Menning Sensei's story of transformation from tom-boy, to Aikidoist, to woman; and that is part of what this weekend was about, identifying with women who have dedicated so much time to their Aikido training and teaching. I could identify with them, and through them, see myself instructing at a seminar one day.

Everyone I spoke to expressed that there was a different feel to the energy of the seminar. Many found it difficult to define exactly what that difference was. Some said it was less competitive, some said more nurturing, some felt more

(Continued on page 12)



AAA Women's Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

Jastrowie Summer Camp

By Ola Cackowska

After long expectations, all Aikido students at last had an opportunity and great pleasure to meet together at the annual summer Aikido camp. This year we all met not in Dabrownno, which was the usual meeting place already well known to us, but in Jastrowie, a ravishing place surrounded by forests, lakes, and above all shrouded in silence, which induced us to practice Aikido strenuously.

Both experienced instructors and excellent technical facilities favored our Aikido practice. During the summer Aikido camp 2003, which lasted from August 6th to 14th, the Aikido classes were conducted by Andrew Sato Sensei (rokudan), the Chief Instructor of AAI from Chicago, who was invited by Tomasz Krzyzanowski (yondan), the AAI Director in Poland. Sato Sensei came together with Blaine Feyen Sensei (sandan) from Michigan and Derek Nakagawa Sensei (sandan) from California accompanied by his student, Nisha Panich.

All Polish Aikido students were greatly and pleasantly surprised at the visit of Shihan Toyoda's son, Stephen Toyoda, who turned out to be a very outgoing man. Ed Germanov Sensei (yondan) from Bulgaria together with his three other students did their utmost to come, although they were late. As it usually happens every year the summer camp was also attended by the guests from abroad, i.e. from Latvia and Slovenia.

All the Aikido practice was carefully supervised by Sato Sensei, who himself



*Bokken training outside during the Poland Summer Camp.
Below: Group photo at the Poland Summer Camp. Photos courtesy of Matija Grabnar.*

conducted the majority of the classes. A well-planned timetable of Aikido classes allowed us to practice freely as well as to take some respite and have some fun together. During the eight-day intensive training we were able to observe a cross-section of the art of Aikido. Every one started their day with meditation in the morning. During the day we would get through a series of basic techniques (kihon waza) as well as those more advanced ones (oyo waza) doing a lot of throws, falls and arm-bars.

Each day we also devoted some time to the training with traditional Aikido weapons. We were all surprised by an astonishing and interesting idea consisting in setting up a dojo on the football pitch in the open air. Both good mood and nice weather favored our open-air

Aikido classes. Aikido training kept us constantly awake, even at night since after evening meal there were always plenty of volunteers to practice on tatami the newly acquired techniques.

What next? A quick shower and a moment to relax. The locals were very friendly to us and took care to provide us with much entertainment. We were dancing, having fun, and bearing in mind the Aikido classes. We compared notes and exchanged our experiences.

The day that was anticipated so much by the majority of camp participants finally came. It was the day when the examinations for kyu and master dan ranks took place. After many days of hard Aikido practice on tatami, all the participants taking up the exams dealt with them brilliantly. The Summer Aikido School is an excellent and unique opportunity to participate in such an intensive Aikido practice where every one holding 7th kyu rank as well as yondan rank put his heart and soul and that is what we thank you for.

Ola Cackowska is 2nd kyu at Jindokan Dojo in Opole, Poland.





Photos from Poland Summer Camp, kyu tests and dan tests. Photos courtesy of Matija Grabnar.

Southern Region Camp

By Steven Patterson

Before I begin, I would like to take this time to thank Paul Domanski Sensei, and Kyushinkan Dojo for all their hard work and for being such gracious hosts. They hosted an excellent camp and did everything to make us feel welcome and at home. I do look forward to visiting and training with them again as soon as possible and I encourage everyone reading this to make their way to Atlanta.

Sandy and I made the nine-hour trek south. Coming down (and up for that matter) the Blue Ridge is one of the most beautiful drives you can make. Atlanta traffic was an interesting new experience; I think by Webster's definition we may have even achieved forward motion. I cannot imagine dealing with that every day.

After checking into the hotel, we headed over to the Atlanta Area School for the



Southern Region Camp. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

Deaf, which is a beautiful facility for those who have never been. After trying a few doors, we were eventually rewarded with the rhythmic percussion of break falls. Even after the long, rigor mortis inducing drive, nothing gets the blood moving more than seeing people on the mat training. We arrived a little late but were well stretched and ready to go by the end of the break. It was good to see so many familiar faces.

The class began as all do with tai sabaki toshu. It always amazes me, the meditative quality of these movements. The rhythm of movements, and I do mean rhythm, not rut. There is a difference, though sometimes we forget. Like all simple things, we so easily deceive ourselves by getting to the "exciting" stuff, when everything we need is right there at the beginning. The mind tries to lead the way but eventually falls into accord. Nothing is more frustrating than tripping over your mind... or do I mean ego. They have such similar faces. Our minds are turned and our bodies fall into the ritual of movement, we are opened and we are made ready to learn. It comes in small doses, slower than we like, slower than our patience wants but perfectly paced. I love looking back over my notes and seeing the progression of what we are learning.

First, we begin with the movement, then

(Continued on page 8)

Central Region Camp

By Michael Wurster

I didn't really think I should be going to a summer camp. After all, I had only been training for a few months before the camp. But after talking to my instructor, Elizabeth Menning Sensei, we decided it would be a good thing. And a good thing it was.

I must say I was pretty nervous going to the dojo in Palantine, Illinois, seeing as I would probably be the least experienced person there. Those fears were kind of put to rest upon arriving. Sato Sensei was just arriving also, and not even knowing who I was, he came up to me and thanked me for coming out, which I thought was pretty nice. Once inside, I was greeted by almost everyone I came into contact with, which I must say is very comforting. These were some of the nicest people I have ever met. Here I was, a total stranger to them, yet they treated me like an old friend.

Being on the mat was also a very positive experience. So many people made my training enjoyable that I'd like to



thank them all. I'll save that for some other time, but I would like to say thanks to Justin and Ben. They really made my experience a pleasing one. Even after training that hard for four days it was still a rewarding experience. And I'm

looking forward to my next camp.

One last thing, I couldn't believe how moved I was by the memorial for Toyoda Sensei. I never met the man, but during the ceremony, I felt like I knew him through his students, which was a feeling I couldn't really understand. I guess for the first time in my life I understood it when they say someone's spirit always lives on. I will always look at camp as a defining moment in my life and would like to thank everyone there for making it such. Also, if you haven't gone to a camp...GO.

Michael Wurster is 7th kyu at Onshinkan Dojo, Aikido of Northern Indiana in Merrillville, IN.



Group photo at Central Region Summer Camp.

Above: Practice at Central Region Summer Camp. Photos courtesy of Cassandra Geiger and Ben Zarit.



*Clockwise from top left: Central Region Camp, Central Region Camp, Southern Region Camp, Southern Region Camp, Central Region Camp, Central Region Camp.
Central Region photos courtesy of Cassandra Geiger and Ben Zarit. Southern Region photos courtesy of Laura DeGraff.*

From Our Members

Three Basic Rules To Get Beginners Started

By Heather Flanagan

Aikido has some basic principles that guide our practice. Things like “Extend ki. Keep weight underside. Relax completely. Keep your one point.” But for the brand spanking new beginners, who are trying to get their bodies to do new and unusual things, these rules are sometimes more than they can grasp that first month. For those new students, I have come up with three important rules to help them protect themselves and get their bodies where they need to go.

1. Get Out Of The Way! I don’t know how many new students have stood there watching a fist or a bokken heading towards their fragile bodies, practi-

cally vibrating in place as they try to decide which way is the “right” way to go. The answer is simple – the “right” way to go is out of the way! Figure out later if that is the way the technique dictated. First and foremost, protect your body. You’ll get the hang of the technique eventually.

2. Use Your Hips. How many times have we heard this? How many more times do we need to hear this to have it actually sink in? That is a question I ask myself regularly, since I *still* need to hear this on occasion. The movements of Aikido come from your center. You have to move your hips to move your body. Otherwise, you are just waving body parts around, and that isn’t terribly effective.

3. Take Your Feet With You. This rule always makes students laugh, but I

would not have made it one of the top three rules if I had not watched student after student getting their head and torso out of the way, but leave their feet on the line of the attack. Or, for the more daring, watching them lunge forward, completely off balance, and leaving their feet behind the rest of their body.

These rules are simple, and they often make students laugh. The more senior student may recognize these phrased differently in the more advanced training. The laughter is a wonderful thing. Aikido is for us to enjoy, and if these rules help make that first month easier on a new student, then I have done a good thing for them, and for the art.

Heather Flanagan is 2nd kyu at Seibukan Dojo in Raleigh, NC.

*Southern Region Camp...
(Continued from page 6)*

we move to the root technique. Next we build upon the kihon waza, moving through oyo waza, henka waza, guided through each when we are ready, not before. There is an amazing timing to teaching, knowing just when to push that way, prod this, slowing, quickening but doing so without the knowledge of the student. We sometimes think that it is only when Sensei is yelling at us that we are being taught, when truthfully we have just strayed and are being refocused. All the important lessons, the ones that matter most happen when we are not paying attention. They sneak in the cracks, becoming part of us.

It is always such an amazing experience

to take a seminar from Sato Sensei. And I do mean take. It is rare to find a teacher like Sato Sensei and you have to steal everything you can. It is not acceptable to just wait for it to be given to you. Sensei will teach what you need when you are ready but it is not given to you, it must be taken. You must have a hungry mind and eager spirit. You must also look to your own Sensei this way as well, when you return home from these travels.

Then come those people who have come from so far to train. It is an amazing amount of trust we place in one another that we take to the mat. This is also the best part of the camp, to see again all the old faces and to meet all the new ones.

There is so much energy and spirit when we all come together. It is the true spirit of shugyo you see everywhere.

When the tightness, pain, dehydration, and exhaustion sets in and things are

no longer comfortable, we have to deal with our true selves. It is amazing to see people push further than they ever thought they could. It is even more amazing when you look back and see that you are not the same person you were before. This is no more evident than in those who take their dan tests, those that leave are not the same ones that came. You can see it—they have gone through a transformation.

Camps push you through a myriad of experiences in a short time—from the first minute on the mat, through the tests, group dinner, late night discussions, the amazingly fast last session, and then stiff, yet satisfying, trip home. I believe the term is *musha shugyo* or “the travels to perfect one’s skills.” While your skills in Aikido will have improved immeasurably from the hours of training, it will be the least that you will have gained. As Sato Sensei instructed; “You must always *move forward* in your technique, always *move forward* in your Aikido and the same should be said about your life.”

Steven Patterson is shodan and an assistant instructor at Kushinkan Dojo in Charleston, WV.



Group photo at Southern Region Camp. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

Healthy Training

Heat and Aikido Practice

By Joel Augustin MD, M.S.

The summer has been relatively mild in the Chicago area, although we had a streak of 90 degrees and more for a couple of weeks. During these days, the number of students practicing Aikido decreased significantly.

One of the speculated reasons is the fear of the heat and its repercussion on the body. I think it is wise and smart to be cautious because athletes die from heat exhaustion/heat stroke.

The hottest hours are between 11am and 1pm., so it is wise to exercise in the cooler morning or evening hours to minimize the thermal stress. However, to progress, a serious practitioner should still be on the mat even when it is 90 degrees or more.

What happens if we practice when it is 90 degrees? The body works harder when we are adjusting to exercising in the heat. We should expect an increase in the heart rate and water loss from sweating. As a precaution, the training format should be less intensive. As the body acclimates to the heat, which may take a few weeks, we should be able to work out at the same intensity. Be cautious by not pushing too hard, since this may result in heat injuries.

To have a better understanding of the mechanism involved, I will go through the pathophysiology of heat related problems.

First, hyperthermia is defined as elevation of the core body temperature above the normal range of 36-37C (96.8-98.6F). Normally the body temperature is maintained within this narrow range by balancing heat load with heat dissipation.

Evaporation is the principal mechanism of heat loss in a hot environment but becomes ineffective above a humidity of 75%. With the elevation of the temperature there is an increase in oxygen con-

Tips for practice:

- ◆ Be smart, stay active
- ◆ Drink plenty of fluids for several hours before practice even if the dojo has air conditioning.
- ◆ Instead of 1 full hour, classes could last for 45 minutes.
- ◆ Allow students to drink 6 to 10 oz of water every 30 minutes. Avoid liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol or large quantities of sugar, because they cause loss of body fluids.
- ◆ A student with heat cramp should get to a cooler place and rest in a comfortable position. He or she should drink a half glass of water every 15 minutes.
- ◆ If the student develops heat exhaustion, he/she should be in a cooler place, remove heavy clothes, and apply cool towels or sheets. If the person is conscious, give cool water to drink every 15 minutes. Make sure the person drinks slowly.
- ◆ If a student has heat stroke **call 9-1-1**. In the meantime, move the person to a cool place. If possible immerse the person in a cool bath or wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it.

sumption and metabolic rate. Above 42C (108F), the liver, the blood vessels, and the brain are the most sensitive.

Stages of heat related illnesses

Heat cramps: Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.

Heat exhaustion: It occurs when people exercise heavily or exercise in a hot, humid environment. As a consequence, the body loses lots of fluids through heavy sweating. As a result, blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. The person will have cool, moist, pale, or flushed skin; nausea or vomiting; or dizziness. If not treated, the athlete may suffer heat stroke.

Heat stroke: Heat stroke is life-threatening. The athlete's temperature control system stops working and if the body is not cooled quickly, brain damage and death may result. At first the skin is hot, red. The person may develop changes in consciousness, rapid, weak

pulse, and rapid, shallow breathing.

Some common signs of heat-related injury include: light-headedness, extreme shortness of breath, nausea, and muscle cramps. If that happens, stop exercising, find a cool place to rest and drink lots of fluid.

These are a few tips to deal with practicing in a hot and humid place. You are encouraged to go to the Web for more information.

References:

- American Red Cross: Heat waves.
- Cleveland Clinic Heart Center: Exercise and the Heat.
- Discover fitness.com: Tips of the month, June 1999.
- Up-to-Date: Severe hyperthermia: Heat stroke; neuroleptic malignant syndrome; and malignant hyperthermia.

Dr. Joel Augustin MD, M.S., is nidan and an assistant instructor at Tenshinkan Dojo, Chicago IL. He practices medicine at the Department of Family Practice, Loyola/Stroger/Provident Hospital

AAA Nationwide

Central Region News

John Bieszk Sensei, AAA Midwest Regional Director

The 2003 National Summer Camp was another great event. Despite the heat and humidity, Sato Sensei kept everyone training hard with an excellent selection of techniques and stressing proper tai sabaki. Sato Sensei emphasized the importance of understanding the techniques and the ability to show them correctly to others when we returned to our own dojo.

On July 4th, we started with a remembrance of Toyoda Shihan. Father Steve Rehrauer Sensei recounted Toyoda Sensei's warm nature and ability to interact so well with so many different people of different backgrounds. Many instructors also retold parts of their relationship with Sensei and the effects he had on their lives. Stephen Toyoda inspired us all when he told us that he was happy that we were at camp together, in the building that Sensei and many of us had built together, to continue Sensei's dream of training together and bringing Aikido in America to its highest level. He reminded us that every day we train, we continue Sensei's memory and legacy.

In July, the Chicagoland Kids Summer Camp took place. Thirteen students trained despite the summer heat and had fun with Sato Sensei and members of the AAA Yudansha. Instructors had a chance to work with youthful enthusiasm and energy, as well as getting immediate feedback on their ability to keep a class interesting and stimulating. A good time was had by all.

Recent Events

- July 3-6 **AAA National Summer Camp and Toyoda Sensei Memorial Training**, hosted by Ryoshinkan Dojo in Palatine, IL. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- July 28-Aug. 2 **2003 AAA Chicago Area Kids Summer Camp**, hosted by Ryoshinkan Dojo in Palatine, IL.
- Aug. 22-24 **Ohio Seminar**, hosted by Tetsushinkan Dojo in Holland, OH. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai
- Sep. 5-7 **Memphis, TN Seminar**, hosted by Memphis Aiki Kai in Memphis, TN. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Sep. 5-7 **First AAA women only Aikido seminar**, hosted by Ryoshinkan Dojo in Palatine, IL. Instructed by Senior Female Instructors of AAA.
- Sep. 26-28 **Toyoda Center Seminar**, hosted by Yushinkan Dojo in Wyoming, MI. Instructed by Ed Germanov Sensei, Chief Instructor Bulgarian Aikido Association.

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 10-12 **Indiana Teaching Committee Seminar**, hosted by Onshinkan Dojo in Merrillville, IN. Instructed by Hiroshi Tajiri Shihandai.
- Oct. 24-26 **Aikido International Foundation Guest Instructor Seminar**, hosted by Ryoshinkan Dojo in Palatine, IL. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai and Frank Gallo Sensei.

Eastern Regional News

Glen Matsuda Shihandai, AAA Eastern Regional Director

Recent Events

- June 27-29 **Worcester Seminar**, hosted by Zenshinkan Dojo in Worcester, MA. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Sep. 25-28 **Eastern Region Camp**, held at the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, NY. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai and Hiroaki Kobayashi Sensei, Kobayashi Dojos.

AAA Nationwide

Western Region News

James Nakayama Shihandai, AAA Western Regional Director

On June 27-29, we held our annual Toyoda Sensei Memorial Seminar at Chushinkan Dojo, Western Headquarters of the AAA. The seminar was conducted by Teaching Committee members James Nakayama, Fred Phillips, Martin Katz, and Ken MacBeth. It was a huge success with a record setting 80+ people attending! In the following month, on July 18-20, Nakayama Sensei instructed in Helena, Montana at Mountain Spirit Aikido, hosted by dojo cho Roque Wardell. It was another huge success capped with Nakayama Sensei catching a huge brown trout in the Missouri River!

Recent Events

- June 27-29 **Toyoda Sensei Memorial Seminar**, hosted by Chushinkan Dojo, Buena Park, CA. Instructed by James Nakayama Shihandai, Fred Phillips Sensei, Martin Katz Sensei, and Ken Mac Beth Sensei.
- July 18-20 **Montana Seminar**, hosted by Mountain Spirit Aikido, Helena, MT. Instructed by James Nakayama Shihandai.
- Sep .12-14 **Teaching Committee Seminar**, hosted by Aiki Institute of Spokane in Spokane, WA. Instructed by Fred Phillips Sensei.
- Sep. 19-21 **Aiki-Expo**, Las Vegas, NV. Demonstration by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Sep. 27 **One day workshop** hosted by Ai-Ko Dojo in Fresno, CA. Instructed by James Nakayama Shihandai.

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 2-5 **Western States Camp**, hosted by Chushinkan Dojo in Buena Park, CA. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai and Ed Germanov Sensei, Chief Instructor Bulgarian Aikido Association.
- Nov. 7-9 **Jyushinkan Dojo 10th Anniversary Celebration**, hosted by Jyushinkan Dojo in Logan, UT. Instructed by James Nakayama Shihandai and Martin Katz Sensei.

Southern Region News

Ned Danieleley Sensei, AAA Southern Regional Director

Recent Events

- July 24-27 **Southern Region**, held at the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf in Atlanta, GA. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Sep. 26-28 **Southern Region Teaching Committee Seminar**, held at Campus Hills Recreation Center in Durham, NC. Instructed by Hiroshi Tajiri Shihandai and Bill Bunn Sensei.

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 10-12 **Texas Seminar**, hosted by Shinjinkan Dojo in Spring, TX. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Nov. 14-16 **Georgia Seminar**, sponsored by Kyushinkan Dojo, and held at the Holiday Inn in Roswell GA. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.
- Dec. 5-7 **Puerto Rico Seminar** hosted by Aikido Dojo del Levittown, Aikido Dojo del Norte and Goshinkan Dojo in Bayamon, PR. Instructed by AAA Chief Instructor Andrew Sato Shihandai.



AAA Women's Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

comfortable making mistakes and didn't feel as intimidated to really open themselves up to techniques. Several people commented that our kiais were higher pitched and that the phrase, "I'm sorry," was heard more often, but none of these defined it as a women's seminar. What defined it was our desire to come together and address gender issues in a safe forum.

Everything we did addressed these issues, but an open discussion circle that was held was, for me, a powerful deviation from other seminars. Within the circle we talked about how some men are afraid to attack strongly when faced with a female partner, many being

taught from an early age not to hit girls; and then conversely the excessive use of force on smaller persons by others. We talked about the discomfort or initial awkwardness that both men and women may feel when they first start training in such a literally "hands-on" martial art and how to deal with it. We talked about the fact that many women coming into a dojo may not know how to kick, punch or attack another person and should be shown how to do that safely.

There was a short discussion about sexual issues in a dojo. If a woman comes into a mostly male dojo she may feel intimidated if she is "hit-on" by fellow Aikidoka. That new student may quit because she has come to train, not to find a boyfriend. Women (and men) need to feel safe, both emotionally and physically, in the dojo, and that has to



AAA Women's Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

come from the top down, from the sensei and senior students. We discussed some possible avenues of intervention. Aikido is an intimate art and that intimacy should not be abused. In the end, we reaffirmed that Aikido is a great way to strengthen self-esteem and to provide an environment for men and women to interact on an equal playing field.

Despite the focused discussions, there were very few male/female generalizations, which was refreshing. I dislike gender-generalizing, either male or female. Men and women are different, we are often socialized differently, we have different body strengths, we may have been taught to communicate in different ways, but we are all individuals with unique personalities and histories that make us who we are. Generalizing belittles and demeans this uniqueness.

I would like to thank Mrs. Toyoda for supporting us in holding the event and for lending her presence to our gathering. I would also like to thank Sato Sensei for his go-ahead on the seminar. Special thanks to all the people who spent the time and energy to make it happen. Finally, I'd like to extend my thanks to the instructors and all the women who attended, for the energy with which they filled the dojo and shared with each other. Future women-only seminars can continue to strengthen the bonds we created here and further encourage more women to participate fully and safely in Aikido.

Chrissa Pedersen is shodan and an assistant instructor at Bonshinkan dojo, Aikido of Broomall in Broomall, PA.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS!!!!

We are searching for great Aikido-related photographs to use on the AAA web site and in AAA literature. We will give you credit. Please send us your favorite photos, identifying as best you can the date, event, instructors, technique, people in the picture, photographer's name, etc. We will accept either black/white or color, and either regular photos or digital images. Make sure you enclose your name and return address if you want originals returned to you.

We are especially looking for pictures of Toyoda Shihan and other AAA and AAI instructors, artistic photos, and photos showing clear Aikido technique or unique aspects of Aikido.

Please send them attention of Aikido World, 1016 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, IL 60657, or by email to AikidoAmer@aol.com.



Northeast Memorial Seminar

By Jennifer Caron

Ninety-four degrees in the shade. One hundred degrees in the Clark University gym. Friday evening of the Northeast Memorial Seminar proved to be one of the hottest days of the summer. Yet no amount of heat could beat down the smiles that people were donning as the seminar got underway.

Hugs, smiles, joy, and excitement abounded as Aikidoka from Northeast regional dojo, as well as from Chicago, Michigan, and North Carolina greeted each other with the welcome arms that only family members embrace with. All had come together to celebrate the lives of two unforgettable and cherished teachers, Fumio Toyoda Shihan and Edward Haupt Sensei.

With laughter and tears alike, two teachers that touched so deeply the lives of so many were celebrated by all.

The seminar, instructed by Sato Sensei and hosted by Zenshinkan Dojo in Worcester, Massachusetts, followed the schedule of a typical AAA weekend seminar. The Saturday morning session opened with a brief memorial service for Toyoda Shihan and Haupt Sensei. Each student made an offering of incense in remembrance of the two teachers. Afterwards, Sato Sensei explained the ideology behind the offering of incense, explaining that the relationship between the incense and the smoke it creates is the same as the relationship between our teachers that have passed on and all of us. The smoke left behind from the incense is similar to the spirit of our teachers that stays with us as we continue on after they have departed. Like the incense piece that burns away with time, so too do our teachers inevitably leave this world. More importantly, just as the smoke from the incense fills the room and is spread from person to person, so too should we take the lessons learned from our teachers,

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Ohio Seminar

By Jason Ziemke

Toledo, Ohio is not exactly the biggest city in the Midwest. However, in terms of growing Aikido presence, Toledo seems a lot bigger after our seminar last month. At Tetsushinkan dojo (school of the iron mind) we not only hosted a weekend seminar of hard training captivated by multiple dan tests, but also renewed desire for AAA Aikido to be prominent in the surrounding area. This desire has caused growth both inside and outside our dojo with none other than Sato Sensei as the leader. The seminar itself was filled with many techniques and emotions which made it a great experience for everyone who came to train. The overall experience of the training and the dan tests, with Sato Sensei's teaching methods at the helm, made for an awesome seminar.

So what made this seminar stand out for the Aikido students here more than other similar sessions we have hosted or been to in the past? Two reasons pop into my mind that made this seminar unique. The first reason is that this is the second visit from Sato Sensei in the past year. It was almost exactly a year ago that Sato Sensei came to teach at our dojo.

You may be thinking, *why is that so important, what difference does that make?* To understand the answers to these questions you must understand the connection we all have as Aikido students. In my opinion, all AAA students look to the source for direction and teaching as our students and instructors do. However, this source sometimes seems so far away being based in Chi-



Ohio Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

cago, Illinois and students are left feeling disconnected.

Seminars are a major part of keeping ties with affiliated dojo. When Sato Sensei came for the second time, it rejuvenated the sense of being connected to the source and that our Aikido was important to him in this vast world of Aikido.

Not only did this happen because the simple showing up of Sato Sensei, but because of how he presented himself during the seminar on and off the mat. Sato Sensei has an incredible ability to make people feel important, whether he is throwing you as uke or just talking to you off the mat. The techniques themselves seem unimportant compared to the feeling of true caring I was left with.

For example, throughout our seminar many techniques were presented and many questions were asked, yet the

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Group photo at Northeast Memorial Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

Moving Into the Dojo

By Chris Wall

My expectations before I moved into the dojo were fairly straightforward. It was obvious that this program could make someone an excellent Aikidoist after seeing the successes of past and present uchideshi. It was also clear that something ineffable had changed in each of these people. I wanted that confidence, that calm and that sense of togetherness.

My first few months were days of being shocked and overwhelmed strung to-

gether by the thread of training. I did not know how to throw right, clean right, or even eat right. Watching Sensei move like water on glass while I could only manage to trip over my own gi was (and is) humbling.

That initial frustration does not really go away, but it does change. Attaching to feelings of how things should be, both in the sense of personal development and in regards to the program itself, is a misappropriation of energy. Time can be better spent focusing on what is placed before you and handling it one thing at a time.

Letting go of these concerns (or trying to!) has made the past few months easier, and has allowed me to see what is going on in my environment.

With the beginnings of that awareness, what has become a source of awe and guidance for me are the personal qualities of Aikidoka. When you attend a lot of classes and seminars, you see fellow students frequently and come to know them well. You see their development and changes as they practice. Teachers adapt to maintain the necessary pressure

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Memorial Seminar...

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embody them, and pass them on so that they may continue to have life.

With the room full of energy and ki from the inspirational ceremony, training began. The seminar was focused on kihon waza. Beginning with tai sabaki movements and progressing into basic technique, Sato Sensei showed the clear teaching methodology and transmission of Aikido technique that Toyoda Shihan developed. Students of all levels, from children to adults and from beginning to dan ranking students, were able to practice with sincerity and intensity. As attendance at the seminar was at an all-



Northeast Memorial Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

time regional high, there was a significant amount of group practice. This only added fuel to the fire of camaraderie burning on the mat. Whether it was between old friends or new acquaintances, friendships were fostered and a common goal was shared.

A group dinner was held on Saturday evening at which people were invited to share stories and thoughts about Toyoda Shihan and Haupt Sensei. People remembered Toyoda Shihan's sense of humor, his power, his presence, and his last words. Haupt Sensei was remembered as a man of few words outside the dojo, and at the same time, a man of unmeasured value and uncountable life lessons in the dojo. With laughter and tears alike, two teachers that touched so deeply the lives of so many were celebrated by all.

The seminar concluded and people departed in the usual manner. However, the feeling was notably different. There was a sense of renewed commitment to the art, to the organization, to our teachers, and to each other; that the lessons that we have been so blessed to have experienced must be passed on! However, after everyone had gone their separate ways, there was another feeling that



Northeast Memorial Seminar. Photo courtesy of Bob Caron.

was prevalent. Strangely, there was a sense of absence...an absence that can only be felt when family has gone and their presence missed. However, this brought with it a sense of comfort too, as we then realized that we are part of a large community, joined together with a common mission: to pass on *the way* that we have experienced for ourselves and that improves the lives of others.

Jennifer Caron is shodan at Zenshinkan Dojo in Worcester, MA.

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Ohio Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

Ohio Seminar...
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names of our students were still of importance to the leader of AAA Aikido. *Connected*, this is what you feel when Sato Sensei comes into town and into your dojo, and connected is what I felt.

The second reason this seminar stood out is the dan tests which Sato Sensei conducted over the course of the weekend. The current students had not seen a formal test from Sato Sensei and it gave them an insight as to what is done in Chicago. Again, feeling connected was a huge part of the dan tests. The testing candidates also received their rank from a



Ohio Seminar. Photo courtesy of Jason Ziemke.

Moving Into the Dojo...
(Continued from page 14)

on students. Those students adapt and grow in turn – providing teachers motivation and inspiration to expand their understanding of Aikido.

This connection between students and the reaffirmation of what is good in others surpasses my original conception of “life in the dojo.” While the core of what compelled me to move in remains – hard, constant, and immersive training – this

higher ranking instructor than our instructors. This gave way to much respect from the upcoming kyu ranks and bettered the aura of our Aikido program. With these new instructors in the dojo and continuing rank of our previous instructors the surrounding area has solid instruction to offer new students and will increase the student base we currently have. In this way the seminar is continuing to better Toledo Aikido and Tetsushinkan dojo everyday and it is very exciting to be a part of.

Another aspect I cannot help but mention is the way in which Sato Sensei conducts tests in both formal and informal ways. To have the ability to witness his way of testing in our dojo has helped to better prepare our student body and especially myself for future testing.

There were three shodan tests and two nidan tests. This experience is very stressful for many testing candidates and is solely based upon their performance during the dreaded twenty-five minutes in front of “the man.” However, the minutes of these tests are not the most important part of the test from my perspective.

One of the best parts of being tested by Sato Sensei is that all weekend long you’re being tested. He is constantly watching you, even from across the room. Sato Sensei has an amazing awareness of everything that is going on

Attaching to feelings of how things should be, both in the sense of personal development and in regards to the program itself, is a misappropriation of energy.

sense has impact outside of the dojo. Everyone has bad days at work, and most would agree that environments tend toward being stressful and combative. Realizing that those around me at work are also trying to sincerely make their way gives me the peace of mind to find un-



Ohio Seminar. Photo courtesy of Laura DeGraff.

around him. During the seminar, I can remember one technique where I decided to elaborate and find shihonage, thinking no one was watching. The next moment, I looked up and there stood Sato Sensei, and without a word I knew that this technique was not the one he wanted me to practice. This awareness allowed him to test me with different techniques at all times during the seminar, not just during the actual test time.

Above all else that happened this weekend, I feel connected again. And like other students, I feel compelled to keep ties throughout the coming year by attending other seminars. It is a world some people will never truly understand because Aikido is an art form that I cannot describe in these few words.

Jason Ziemke is nidan and an instructor at Tetsushinkan Dojo in Holland OH.

derstanding and compassion for issues that arise.

So while I may still be striving for the same things, I have found a new set of goals to strive towards. Giving up on fear, pushing past self-set limits, attention to detail and awareness – those are all there too, but developing the start of sensitivity and compassion for those around me has been one of the best things to come from the training so far.

Chris Wall is 3rd kyu at Tenshinkan Dojo in Chicago, IL.

AI-KI-D'OH! #1 THE SEED IS SOWN. . .

By Jonathan Knipping



Until next time,

train hard...



but not *too* hard!



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