

Aikido at the Center

News

July 2009 Issue

*“All difficult things have their origin in that which is easy,
and great things in that which is small.” ~Lao Tzu*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
July 4th		Classes/Open Mat canceled
July 5th	9:00 am	Advanced Class
July 11th	8:00 am	Open Mat resumes
July 19th	9:00 am	Advanced Class

**REMINDER: DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR DUES!
THANKS!**

**NO OPEN MAT OR AIKIDOKIDS! CLASSES ON SATURDAY,
JULY 4TH. ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAY!**

AIKIDOKIDS!

Native American Family Wellness Day

Joe and Claire would like to thank Sensei, Aleta, Ian, Polimana and Keion who came out to help us work with the children. We had kids from ages 5 to 17 having fun, learning Aikido, and throwing all of us. It sometimes takes a lot of talking and showing the older kids about Aikido before they will trust us to come on the mats, but once they try it out they keep coming back and bringing their friends. We had fathers who were watching and talking to us and then came back with their sons to join us on the mats and hopefully at the dojo. Alanna, who had come to one class, also joined us for a couple of hours. Some of the time we had only 2 or 3 kids to work with and other times about 10 to 15 kids of all ages.

Pascua Yaqui Summer Camp

We have had our first week of summer camp. We have about 15 kids ages 6-12 in the first hour and 15 older kids 10-17 in the second hour. This year we have some returning students in both classes. We expect more students Monday as summer school is now over. This year for the first time, we are holding classes in the gym, so we have air conditioning instead of the swamp cooler. Cezanne and Julide were able to be there for both days. Keion was also there to help us on Tuesday. Everybody enjoyed themselves including the helpers. If you would like the joy of helping some really great kids learn Aikido, see Claire or Joe.

DAN TESTING FOLLOW UP

A big thank you to everyone who came to the dan testing! It was great to have so many aikidoka there to take ukemi and to support our testers. Congratulations to Matthew, Ted, and Aldo! Also, congratulations to Patty who earned the rank of sandan in May at the Lake Tahoe Gasshuku.

OUR AIKIDO COMMUNITY-UPDATE

One of our former students is now the dojo cho of his own dojo! Dr. John Porter is the chief instructor of Vicksburg Aikikai in Vicksburg, Mississippi. If you are ever in the area you should go train with Dr. John--he is a great teacher! He will

also be testing for sandan in July. We wish him much luck on his test and with his new dojo.

BODYWORK BY SHANE

I have been and am offering massage and shiatsu treatments to some of my favorite people, the members of Aikido at the Center. I love my work as a body therapist and am good at it. Take advantage. I'm open to any body therapy questions so come talk to me or call (520)-235-1163. See you on the mat!

FOOD BANK DRIVE

Robinson Sensei and Karma will be collecting canned food for our community food bank on the first week of every month. The food bank is getting low due to the increase in people who need help with food. Even bringing in one can will help. Sensei and Karma will then deliver our food to the food bank drop off spot. Thanks to all of your support!

ASK THE YUDANSHA

Have a burning question that you've been wanting to ask but haven't had the chance? Here's your chance to ask the yudansha (black belts) what you've been wondering. It can be about anything aikido-related. Just email Kim and she'll send the question on to the yudansha. The answers will be published in the next newsletter. What's on *your* mind?

Deadline: July 20th for your questions. Please send them to Kim at superpup5@msn.com

Question: "What is 'advanced' ukemi? Can you give an example? How is it different from regular ukemi?"

Patty: In Japanese, the word ukemi derives from a verb that means "to receive". As we advance in ukemi, we improve our ability to safely receive the force of a throw or pin and absorb the power of the technique. We become more able to investigate the very subtle energy shifts during a dynamic situation.

A very important component of ukemi is learning how to keep the connection with the changing movements of nage. By being sensitive to the connection, uke begins to FEEL the movement with his/her entire body and develops a receptive awareness that allows the full sharing of the technique. Uke and nage become one movement instead of

separate entities.

As ukemi skills develop, not only is there a more flexible connection but uke develops a unified body and mind which allows for a safer and more effective response. I read recently that the ukemi skills in Aikido are more refined and subtle than in any other martial art, and I believe it is due to this factor.

We learn the techniques by practicing closely with each other and when really sensitive to our partners, we exchange very subtle energies. We learn by sensations and perceptions that are not ordinarily used in everyday life and in advanced ukemi, this can occur even during embu practice.

With advanced ukemi, strength and power is maintained throughout the attack but without resistance. To constantly resist nage is counter productive because one loses the ability to relax and blend. When uke resists he loses sensitivity and the ability to notice changes in angle and leverage that occur as the technique develops.

In summary, advanced ukemi means to become more sensitive to the dynamics of force and motion during technique while maintaining a strong, unified attack. It takes a lot of hard work and training but I think with Sensei's guidance, we are all headed in the right direction.

Joe: Advanced ukemi could be learning how to breakfall and prepare yourself to take high falls from koshi nages. Another example is learning how to follow the technique and take the ukemi safely without getting hurt or injuring yourself. Another example is learning to adjust your ukemi for the small and narrow spaces or learning to fall on a crowded mat without causing injury to yourself or others.

Aleta: Advanced ukemi is having the ability to respond to nage second by second, with fluidity and grace. This involves how to protect yourself without depending on nage to position uke in the right place at the right time. Like a moving meditation uke becomes one with nage, moving with speed and accuracy. Lightness and flexibility are important. Responding without anticipating.

Kim: Right now, for me, advanced ukemi is about trusting my body and attacking without fear.

On a more technical level advanced ukemi is:

*a strong attack

*the ability to roll or breakfall from every technique

*the ability to react quickly (without anticipating) to what nage is doing

*the ability to protect yourself from injury

Advanced ukemi, like all of aikido, is something you have to work hard at and train for. It's not something that just happens all of a sudden when you reach a certain rank. It takes time and commitment and practice, practice, practice.

I've only had glimpses of advanced ukemi in my own practice. These were times when I threw myself into the attack without knowing what was going to happen and with my mind calm, I was thrown hard, and I hit the mat in a perfect position without ever knowing how I got there. My body completely took over. It was a wonderful feeling.

There is a communion, a blending of ki, that takes place between nage and uke and when this is fully developed then your ukemi is advanced. I look forward to when it happens to me!

THURSDAY WEAPONS CLASS

Every Thursday night from 5:30-6:30 pm we will have a combined beginning and advanced weapons class. Ted will teach any beginner's and Sensei will teach any advanced students.

Keep in mind that all kyu tests involve a demonstration of weapons proficiency. We have some time before the Monday and Wednesday classes, but that is not really enough time to develop your weapons skills. Try to make it to the weapons class as often as possible.

SATURDAY OPEN MAT

Saturday mornings from 8:00-9:00 am we'll have open mat for everyone. One of the yudansha will be at the dojo at 8:00 am to be in charge of the open mat. You must be at the dojo at 8 if you want to train. If no one is there then the person in charge may leave.

Open mat is a time available for you to practice whatever you need to practice. You can work on open hand techniques, ukemi, or weapons. It's a great time to practice for your next test. Open mat works best if you have something in mind to work on and if you have someone to work with. You can always ask another student or an advanced student to come in and work with you.

ADVANCED CLASSES

Advanced class takes place on the first and third Sunday of each month at 9:00 am and is now open to anyone. Keep in mind that we will still practice advanced techniques and ukemi. If you feel comfortable you are welcome to attend this class. Try it and see if it's something you'd like to add to your training schedule!

MESSAGE FROM SENSEI

Greetings!

Well, everyone, we did it once again! We now have two brand new shodans and another sandan! I hope if you weren't able to see the tests in person that you will be able to see them on a CD soon! They were all very good and worth studying and sharing. To our new promotees - this is one step on a long life of Aikido and a great excuse to have a party before settling down to our daily practice. Thank you! To everyone else, take pride in the students who tested. Their tests were a result of all of you supporting their preparation. Congratulations to all of us!!

Blessings -Sensei

P.S. The Food Bank says thank you and keep up the good work!!"