

The Aikido Eye

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Aikido-Ai Vision Statement:

“Quality Students– Quality

Instruction”

Aikido-Ai will provide quality instruction to students seeking personal security, physical well being and enlightenment through the disciplines of Aikido, Tai Chi, Qi Gong and Zen Meditation

Aikido Teaching Committee:

Frank McGouirk Sensei
Joann Garner - Sandan
Michael Castro Sandan
Louis Celaya Nidan
Jason Oxman -Nidan
Melody Oxman -Nidan
John Wong - Shodan

Tai Chi Teaching committee:

Frank Mc Gouirk - Sensei
Nancy O'Brien - Shodan
Nancy Parker - Shodan
Diane Globerman - Shodan
Marilyn Omieczynski Shodan
Akiko Heurich- Shodan

Chi-Lel Qi Gong:

Nancy Parker - Second Level
Frank Mc Gouirk - First level

Zen:

Robert Moore- Zen Master -Tai Chi Sifu
Frank Mc Gouirk Abbot

The Only Way Out is In

by Ginny Cardenas



I was thrilled, hearing that Sensei had requested I write an article for the newsletter. Memories, of times in the past when a respected teacher had asked me to do something, immediately came to mind. Always, I felt honored... always, there was some fear, always I accepted...and always, I was glad I had. Something good came from it, some realization, some forward movement on my path. The choice is clear – I will write the article.

The thing about writing something, is that to be good, it's got to be real, be authentic, or it's useless...or even worse...destructive. What can I write then, that will be authentic and useful? I hear my teacher's voice, "Just go straight."

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As I See It



ZEN MEDITATION & THE MARTIAL ARTS

by Sensei Frank

Aikido-Ai is a unique dojo that incorporates the meditation tradition of Zen and the traditional martial arts of Aikido and Chinese internal martial arts of Kung Fu.

Our Zen school was created by Bob Moore and myself in 1984. Our Zen center is named: Aikido-Ai Dharma Kai of Whittier.

Bob Moore's Zen name is Ji Bong San Nim Zen Master and my Zen name is Ja Gong. Bob Moore is the guiding Teacher for our association and I am the Abbot & Dharma teacher for our center. We are currently sitting Zen on Wednesday evenings from 4:30 to 5:30 and alternate chanting, Dharma talk and walking meditation. I offer all of this as a prelude to inviting everyone to join with me and our "regulars": Meg, Suzette, Nancy, George, LinSu, Jim, Gary and Alex.

Meditation goes by various names: Wu Chi, Standing Meditation, Qi Gong, Al tong and oth-

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TRAVEL & TAI CHI: SAME OR DIFFERENT?

By Suzette Hodnett

A few months ago Sensei was at the Aikido Summer Retreat and I was leading his class of seniors at Presbyterian Hospital. It was their 4th class and all were overwhelmed with what felt like an avalanche of new ways of moving, breathing, observing and not-thinking. Parting wild horses mane was a move that put most up against the wall. "I'll never get it!" "It's impossible." Emotions we have all felt again and again throughout the journey of tai chi.

Finally, I asked one woman... "Do you like to travel?" "Yes", she said. "To foreign countries?" "Most of all!" she replied. "Then think of tai chi as an adventure to a foreign land. It has a different culture, language and rhythm. It can be challenging but also life-changing. And, if we stay long enough in a foreign country, little by little, the unfamiliar begins to feel like home." She nodded her head in affirmation.

Tai chi and travel. Same or different? I had been planning on traveling for a month at the end of last year. I longed for the pulse of a foreign land. But the reality of art show sales kept me at home. What to do with all this energy to embrace the strange and unfamiliar? There to answer me, as always, was the door to the dojo.

Being in a foreign land and being on the mat can feel like one obstacle after another. Yet both show me how it is always possible to move through the difficulty of the moment if I stay open, focused and true to my center. Going on in the midst of confusion and frustration, on the mat and in a foreign land, generates inner strength, calm and integrity.

What I discover about myself as I

travel is as important to me as the destination. What I discover about myself as I train is as important to me as learning the form. Travel and tai chi both ask me to "travel light" -- to leave behind every expectation, every judgment and, most especially, every consideration.

Without new experiences, something inside me begins to sleep. A foreign place awakens all my senses. The mat also asks that I see freshly and that my perceptions are attuned to discovery. There is a vast difference between "looking" and "seeing" which is fundamental and critical to both the traveler's and the martial artist's experience.

Both tai chi and travel are opportunities to come face to face with my own fear -- which is the greatest

"In travel and tai chi, it is the journey, not the arrival, that truly matters".

teacher of all. The fear of "not knowing" in a foreign country and of "not knowing" on the mat are really only about a loss of control. This "don't know mind" is actually the very state I want to cultivate at the dojo and abroad. An empty mind and a surrender to not knowing what comes next is at the heart of both travel and tai chi.

In travel and tai chi, it is the journey, not the arrival, that truly matters. A true traveler knows not where they are going. They have no fixed plans, no intent on arriving. A true martial artist does not need to have a destination, only to remain true to his/her center. Whether I am lost in a

foreign city at 3am or stuck on a move on the mat, the ability to embrace "right here, right now" is to truly live and learn.

Robert Frost said "Two roads diverged in the forest and I took the one less traveled, and it has made all the difference." To give, to explore, to dream and to discover are what keeps me alive. I won't go to my deathbed regretting a lifetime of travel or tai chi. This training may not be the path of friends and family, but it has made all the difference in my life.

Finally, not being able to travel became, like most else, about dealing with constant change. Like good tai chi, I let go and redirected the energy. When the wind blows, it is true that a lot of energy is saved by making windmills instead of walls.

And so, day after day, I go to the dojo and embrace the journey of tai chi. South America and all points east, west, north and south await me. But for now I will bow and step on to the mat, never knowing where it will take me.



WHO'S ROGER SHANNON AND WHY IS HE WRITING THIS ESSAY?

By Roger Shannon



Aikido of Albany is a dojo in Albany, Oregon affiliated with McGouirk Sensei and CAA. I was McGouirk Sensei's Fushiodin (assistant instructor) for over 10 years and have watched Aikido of Southern California prosper into the current Dojo that it is today.

Aikido of Albany opened its door on Feb 1, 2003 and is currently in its second year of operation. Running a successful Dojo is fraught with many obstacles, finding your place in the community, recruiting students, and above all making the Dojo a place where students want to come back repeatedly without a contract.

The only contract in the Aikido Dojo, is the intention contract between student and Sensei. The Sensei agrees to be in the Dojo to teach on the agreed times and the student agrees to support and train at the agreed times.

The Sensei comes to the Dojo to give of himself the lessons in Aikido given to him by his teacher. There is also the personal perspective of the Sensei that always leaks through into his own understanding of the art.

All of the Sensei's that I have known over the years offer similar lessons in;

commitment, honor, respect, obligation and love for their Art.

The hardest part of being a Sensei is getting the student to see the same thing in the art of Aikido that the Sensei sees. It is easy to show the potentially violent aspects of the art, but not so easy to get across the feelings of connection, energy flow, harmony, balance of mind and body that comes with every technique. Ultimately the martial art of Aikido is not about technique, not about toughness, or force, but about being a human being that only wants to resolve conflicts peacefully.

This is the greatest challenge in being a Sensei. Trying to convince people who come into the Dojo to change from a "fighting mind" to a mind capable of receiving attacks without worrying about winning or losing.

These are the things that I learned from my Sensei that I hope to pass along.

The final word I have for students of any martial art is that there is no end to the learning, there is always more to learn from the external and the internal. Internalize your art and take to heart, it will never let you down.

**Sensei Roger Shannon
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ers. All of these names describe something essential about calming the mind and body and the gentle easing of the consciousness.

It is precisely because the martial arts are so active, powerful and so movement oriented that meditation is so important. Meditation is the open hand to the closed fist. It is the soft aspect of even the hardest art. Train in martial arts long enough



and you will soon discover that martial training includes more than punching and kicking. The martial arts promises a change of the individual's *internal state*. Meditation is an important part of that change.

On the battlefield, in the Dojo, or on the street, all sometimes seem like a constant battle of conflicting situations and stresses. Things come to us so fast in this "information age" and from so many directions we each need a training hall where everything is completely quiet. Meditation is such a training hall for the advanced martial practitioner as well as the beginning student coming into the dojo from the hectic battlefield of the outside world.

Meditation is the very cornerstone of martial arts training, the medium through which we get in touch with our inner selves and achieve balance and harmony. Give it a try. On Wednesdays from 4:30 to 5:30pm we sit down, sing a song, read a story and take a little walk. Sometimes we drink tea.

I welcome you to join with us, and always remember:... **OUT OF THE MUD GROWS THE LOTUS!**

Attachment: Beyond Aikido & Tai Chi Training

By Louis Celaya

In Aikido (and I assume Tai Chi) training, we talk about letting go of attachments. For example, when students are performing a technique, sometime we "check" ourselves (am I doing this right, where is uke, is my form correct, etc) and this inhibits our ability to release and grow in our art.

Attachment also is something we experience as people, and also see in others. For example, some people make it a point to let others know a particular "status" they may hold in society. In their defense, maybe it is a reward for the years of hard work they performed to attain their positions (Doctor, Lawyer, etc), or maybe it is unfortunately simple arrogance or the need to be recognized.

I can recall a time when a young Aikido student (in young I mean an aikidoist with no kyu rank) inquired why he had to sit toward the right where some of the children were. After explaining that this was way it was structured in an aikido dojo, his response was, but I am an attorney. Knowing at that time that rank and position was of importance to this person, my polite response was, yes you are, but unfortunately in this dojo your status is recognized by the color of around your waist and the time you have spent training. The student then responded by saying, oh, so when I am black belt, I can sit anywhere toward the front. My responses was yes, however you will still sit to the right of your "siempi", that is anyone who is black belt before you. I remember his look was one of displeasure, and as suspected, the time with us was not long.

It sometime amazes me how some

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WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH OUR DOJO FAMILY?



Marty Wilson: I just returned from a week in Quebec City. My daughter's family invited me to spend part of their vacation with them. It was very charming and interesting, like being back in the 18th century.

John Wong: Since retiring as Soto Deshi, Debbie and I have discovered the joys of cruising! Early in 2004 we went on a cruise to Mexico. To end this year we are going to repeat it in November. I just think of cruise ships as floating restaurants.

Tina Roma: Went to Chicago and Wisconsin Land O'Lakes for the 4th. Didn't catch any fish but saw beautiful eagles and loons. I will be going on a bowling tournament the weekend of August 10th.

Genny Redona: I will be visiting the Philippines at the end of August for the 100th anniversary of my high school. My daughter visited the dojo in June. She enjoyed it tremendously.

Kim Romig: The Romig-Nelson family has had an eventful year. My youngest stepdaughter was married last September and my stepson just last June. Now, we're leaving to camp with my oldest stepdaughter, her family, my husband and my 9 year old son. I plan to do my best to enjoy (endure really) dirt, stinky fish and wild animals. Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Oops.... it's just the Lui He Ba Fa!!

Cynthia Krause: To Sensei, Tall Nancy, Short Nancy, Sister Marilyn, Akiko, Suzette, Meg, Cathy Marie, Jennifer, Marty, Linda, Jim, Dawn,

Elaine, John, Michael, Emily and our fellow dojo friends. Thank you for your spoken and unspoken wisdom, unending patience, generosity in time, compassionate smiles and so much more in making my Tai Chi and Anselm's Aikido experience fulfilling and rich. You are all awesome!

Mark and Bonnie Scott: We are excited about going on our vacation to Hawaii for 3 weeks starting September 5th. We have a wonderful new student, An-Ju, from TaiWan who is staying with us for 8 months. I have been singing "Ain't no Sunshine While She's Gone" as Bonnie has been busy nurturing her growing new business. H.O.W. House (a residential facility for recovering addicts which I direct) just received 2 new grants!

Candice Ryder: My husband, Bill and I, got our newest family addition, 8 month old Ashley, this past January. We have been foster parents since 2002. In addition to baby Ashley, we have three grown sons and 4 grandchildren.

Meg Rottman: I was accepted into Novel IV, a high level creative writing class at UCLA. I am working on my first novel.

Alice Mandelian: My husband and I consider strong family ties as essential to a happy life for our children. It has been our dream to rent a place at Big Bear and spend a few days with the entire family. This dream became a reality in August when 8 adults and 4 children had the best vacation they ever had! What made these days so special was not so much the place, but the people we were with. Our already close family became closer and it gave the children the best gift grandparents can offer -- fond and irreplaceable memories of family togetherness.

Sensei Frank: Senor Sensei is going to Buenos Aires again this year to study tango with the masters from October 3 - October 18th.

Coming Full Circle

by Nancy Parker

When I was asked if there was anything new in my life, someone suggested the recent closing of the Sequoia Athletic Club, which eliminated my part-time teaching job there in the Martial Arts Department - which I have held for over 9 years. I realized it actually involved more than that.

When two martial arts classes became inaccessible to me in 1989, I was a student in search of a class. As a member of the Racquetball World in Fullerton and in Buena Park (Sequoia), I found a class in Tai Chi at a time I could attend after work at noon. I had seen a demonstration (at the RBS First Annual Martial Arts Competition) of this art by a few people in shorts and sports shirts. I thought the slow movements were not for me. However, I walked into a class with many people in black doing what was probably the short or long form. I sensed something different in this room.

Sensei Frank walked up to me and we introduced ourselves after which he proceeded to teach me the first 4 eight treasures (which I promptly forgot before I got to my car). So much for my plans to practice them when I got home.

But there was something special in that room and when I came back to the next class, I had my own black uniform. I already had a black belt in Tang Soo Do (a Korean style

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Having A Ball

by Dr. Chris Johnson



All of you who have been working with the exercise ball already know how excellently intuitive and challenging it is. For those of you who don't know... find out! This thing will *work* you no matter what shape you're in. Our bodies function as a whole, and all movements originate from our center - - that is, one-point. The ball helps us learn to use our one point more efficiently, and this translates into strength, flexibility, and intuition.

Physically keeping one-point depends on what is medically termed proprioception. Your body talks to your mind beneath your consciousness; but you are, in a sense, aware of the conversation. For example, if you close your eyes and tilt your head to the left you can *feel* that position because the muscles and joints (along with your inner ear) are telling your brain what they're doing. The brain then integrates this into your *experience* of the head-tilt. Trouble comes when muscles and joints are dysfunctional, and therefore sending dysfunctional messages to the brain.

Efficiency of the neuromusculoskeletal system is the result of dedicated exercise ball work. The unstable-ever-changing-nature of the ball demands integrated control of the muscles and joints; and that's simply to keep yourself from falling over, not to mention actually exercising on it! But if you *can* perform some or all of the exercises you're fine tuning your mind-body connection--reinforcing patterns of movement that are biomechanically correct, which in turn promotes joint stability, durability, and proprioception. This is one of the most profound training tools we have--best of all, it's inexpensive and FUN!

New Promotions



Aikido

Jennifer Higa	4th KYU
Richard Villarruel	5th KYU
George Wheeler	5th KYU
Mitchell Delgadillo	5th KYU
Kevin McKee	6th KYU
Adriana Caldera	6th KYU
Talia Salido	6th KYU
Pauline Preciado	6th KYU
Monika Schmahl	6th KYU
Jasmine Warner	7th KYU
Lindsey Reeder	7th KYU

Tai-Chi

Jennifer Higa	2nd KYU
Michael Papero	4th KYU
Linda S. Hill	4th KYU
Jennifer Redona	5th KYU
Suzanne Brugman	5th KYU
Candice Ryder	6th KYU
Terry Thomas Brea	6th KYU
Candace Molinas Brea	6th KYU
Danielle Flores Brea	6th KYU
Brady Joshie Kaiser	6th KYU
Johnson Lula Kaiser	6th KYU

Aikido Summer Retreat 2004

by Jose Colon



This year's Aikido Summer Retreat took place during the week of June 20th at Menlo College in the city of Atherton. It was hosted by Hiroshi Ikeda Sensei, Robert Nadeau Sensei and Frank Doran Sensei along with Francis Takahashi Sensei from Temple City. Others, such as Julio Toribio Sensei and, our own, Frank McGouirk Sensei were surprise guest instructors.

The "retreat", as it is often referred, has been an annual mainstay for over thirty years. Given the caliber of instruction, it is not surprising that a great many high-level dans have been attending the seminar since its inception. Students of all levels participate in this week-long aikido marathon. A typical day starts with a morning session at 6:30 am and continues with breakfast, a 10:00 am session, lunch, a 2:00 pm session, dinner and an evening session. Seemingly, all one does is train, eat and sleep for six days. While this sounds grueling, it is very easy to get caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment. Most aikidoists are sensible and stick to a moderate schedule often electing to miss one or two sessions a day. Then you have those like

me who for whatever reason—mid-life crisis, machismo, or just sheer enjoyment—decide to take every class and participate with all the aches and pains that such training brings.

I decided to attend this year's retreat way in advance—when I was promoted to 1st kyu. At that time, I gained a sudden realization that I was one of the three or four highest ranking kyus in our dojo and that I really needed to partake in concentrated training to better myself—first and foremost because I knew that invariably I, along with Don Brown, Chris Johnson and Robin Emerson, would have to set an example for all other kyus to follow and second because I knew that my next promotional level would be shodan and that I would not be worthy of it unless I truly dedicated myself to the art.

Throughout this retreat, I was in constant awe. It seemed as if everyone except for me was a sandan or above but, in reality, there were many like me—awkwardly training and trying to keep up with one's uke who just happened to be Julio Toribio, Ikeda Sensei or a "lowly" 4th or 5th degree black belt. Instruction and training at this level is without parallel. One learns more than one can ever hope to master in a life time. Of course, one learns so much that by the end of the week most techniques, while not totally forgotten, are left hidden in the recesses of one's mind awaiting to be rediscovered perhaps several years later.

So what did I take away from this seminar? From fellow aikidoists from Utah, I learned a "new" form of break fall. From Doran Sensei, I learned about movement and intention. From Takahashi Sensei, I learned how to move more fluidly with the jo. From Nadeau Sensei, I learned to view aikido as a system and how to move the body as one. From Ikeda Sensei, I learned about connection and ki (along with a killer reverse kote geish [sic]) And from our own, McGouirk, Sensei, I learned to take pride in my own abilities when, as a guest instructor, he chose me as his uke in front of three

hundred or so other students.

The retreat instilled in me an infinite amount of inspiration and a resurgence in my love for the art. I learned that aikido training is not a means to an end since there is no end. I learned humility in knowing that everyone who was training was better than me but, at the same time, took pride knowing that no one was better. While this may seem to be a dichotomy, it is not—it just illustrates how aikido is not about the individual, it is about unity in spirit, it is about friendship, it is about the art form.

So next year—around June—if you find that I have been absent from the dojo, look no further than Menlo College where I will again be partaking in what will become a annual ritual for me. Everyone should consider doing the same.

The Edge of Compassion

by Dr. Chris Johnson

Regarding the roles of Uke and Nage a recent book, Budo-teki na Mono no Kangaekata: Shu, Ha, Ri (Budo Way of Thinking: Shu, Ha, Ri), by Nishoka Tsuneo, reveals the necessary spirit of the interaction. The author proposes that, "The heart of bujutsu is rei." In English, rei can be regarded as etiquette, decorum, propriety, politeness, or courtesy; writer Diane Skoss suggests we think of it "as the proper essence or quality of relationships between individuals." To be progressive, the heart of training must be rei.

However, it appears that for techniques to work one must win, and one or more lose. There is competition- - opposites. This is not the intention of classical budo.

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A little background is probably in order. Three years ago, after 12 years of being a Tai Chi student at Aikido Ai, I made a decision to move to the Lake Tahoe Area of Nevada. This decision was prompted by an unreasoning adoration of my infant granddaughter and her unborn sister. THEY were in Tahoe...and I HAD to be with them. I moved forward with confidence, fueled by "baby love" ...my only regret...leaving the dojo. How would I get along without my beloved classmates? Would I be able to find another teacher? One day in class, as the topic of my move came up, Sensei commented, rather casually, "So, now you must go teach." Teaching was something that I had never seriously considered before, so it came as quite a shock to me. My "monkey mind" had a field day, "Could I do that? Am I good enough? Can I just go up there and say I'm a Tai Chi teacher and expect people to believe me and show up?" Fortunately, since it was Sensei's idea, and not mine, I decided just to trust and go with it...just go straight. Thus, I became an Aikido Ai "Satellite".

I moved, started my first class six months later, then another and another. Many classes and many students have come and gone. But, two of my classes have remained intact, and seven students, who have been with me from the start, are now learning the Long Form. Three of them are ready to demonstrate the 2nd Set. This is an amazing accomplishment, in my eyes. Their dedication and trust in me, moves me to tears sometimes. I cried the first time I watched four of my students go through the Short Form together, without me. I am overcome with emotion, just now, thinking about it.

There is something about doing these slow, silent, ancient movements together that is such a joy, such a gift. Sometimes I forget...

take it for granted...like other things in life, that have become routine and don't seem to matter anymore. But, right now, I remember and I know that it matters. Whenever we come together in peace, to move and breathe as One, it matters. The world transforms. In that moment... it's a better place.

But, hold it! There is trouble in Paradise. Way up here, isolated from the "mothership", this little "satellite" is plagued with self-doubt. My mind plays tricks on me. I wonder if I'm doing it "right". With no one around to check with (*I'm the expert up here*) I'm uncertain. I crave reassurance, but there is none. My motivation to practice suffers. I procrastinate...I am uninspired. I feel isolated away from my teacher and my fellow students, and long for the comfort of the dojo...the solidness of it...a place that's always there, where I can go and be "recharged" when my "chi" batteries run low. This search for reassurance in places *outside* myself leads nowhere. All roads lead *inward*...and the message is clear. The only way out is in.

Tai Chi is an internal art...an inward journey of body, mind and spirit. This is good news. *Inner* guidance is simple. We make it hard. When you become very still, and very quiet, you can hear it...Let go...Trust...Love Yourself...Be Sincere...Do your Best Right now, my best is doing the Form in spite of the doubts that drift in and out of my mind. I go on. I stop. I do it again. "Just breathe...you *know* this form... relax...it will all become clear." And I continue...doing the Forms I have done hundreds...and hundreds of times.

Ginny Cardenas teaches a satellite Tai Chi classes in Lake Tahoe. She was a member of Aikido Ai for over 12 years.

You Always Have Something to Say, Don't You

Questions written by: Sensei Frank McGouirk

Answers written by: Michael Papero

Question: At age 20 you are the youngest black belt in the dojo. When did you start training and why?

Answer: I started my training in Aikido when I was 13 years old. At the time I decided to start training merely because I had an interest in the martial arts. What kid wouldn't after seeing movies like "The Matrix" and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"? I thought to myself, instead of just seeing those moves done on a television screen, why not learn to do them for real.



Aikido-Ai was the closest martial arts studio to my house so it seemed to be the logical and most convenient choice. So I started training in Aikido and I thought to myself "this stuff is pretty cool". So I continued to train. It was fun and I had no reason to stop. Eventually mere interest transformed into a real love for the art. It turned out that I was looking forward to training. It was my favorite part of the day. Now, I don't think I will ever stop training. I am having way too

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Mount Baldy

Virium Et Pulchritudo: Training with Sensei's Danielle Smith & Michael Smith

By Michael Papero

Each year that I have attended the Mt. Baldy retreat I have had the pleasure to see and experience the strength and beauty of Sensei's Michael and Danielle Smith demonstrating their skill and technique with the weapons of Aikido.



This year was no exception. During the last retreat the Smiths once again amazed us all with a demonstration of their incredible prowess with the bokken and the jo. Danielle Smith Sensei instructed us in the bokken this year. She taught us what is called the "Shihonage meditation". Essentially it is a series of four separate techniques, all based around the concept of shihonage. Learning the actual meditation was extremely fun and enjoyable. However, I would have been satisfied just to watch her perform the meditation. Her movements and techniques were clean and precise. It was absolutely flawless. Every movement spoke of a keen understanding of the technique and a mastery of the weapon that only comes from many long years of hard and serious training.

Michael Smith Sensei taught the jo the next day. And it quickly became apparent that the jo has to be his favorite weapon. He taught us a form of his own creation called "Eagle 3" which involved many spins and complicated hand changes. He started out by demonstrating the form at full speed, and it was like watching a scene from the Matrix. I thought that there was no way that I would be able to learn that form. It is a testament to his teaching ability that he was then able to break the form down and teach it to us. Before the day was done I was able to replicate the form on my own. It is truly a mark of a great teacher when he or she can help a student overcome what they thought were their limitations.

Clarity Within Chaos

by George Wheeler



Descending from Mt. Baldy with Suzette and Robin allowed us to reflect on the retreat. I had met some inspiring people and was also inspired by my Aikido Ai family members. Many things happened that weekend, but I would like to share one that was unique to me.

In Chaos Theory there is a paradigm by Dr. Edward Lorenz called The Butterfly Effect that says; if a butterfly flaps its wings, the effect could cause a hurricane on the other side of the world. A single event can last a few moments yet change us for the rest of our lives. We may not be aware of it at the cognitive level, but sometimes we are...

On Saturday afternoon, I was sitting with most of the group in the dining hall waiting for another delicious feast to arrive. The iPod was playing music and most were sitting around talking and having a good time. Chris and Suzette were working on *Da Liu*. Their graceful movements were like dance steps to the music. "*Sabor a mi*", which is our wedding song, began to play and immediately I wished that my wife was present. That thought passed as the next one hit me hard. My smile beamed, as I was unable to hold back a few tears. I was overwhelmed. I realized immediately that I was part of a family that extended beyond my own, and I thought, "There is no other place that I would rather be than right here, right now."

There are no words to describe my experience, but like Dr. Lorenz's Butterfly Effect, I experienced something that set off a hurricane within me.

Retreat 2004

Walk with the Animals:

Teja Bell Sensei's Animal Classes at Mt. Baldy

By Linda Hill



How appropriate it was to study the animals in the fresh outdoors at Mt. Baldy! With a gentleness that belied the martial art's power, Teja Bell guided participants in two enlightening workshops that introduced six of the twelve animal forms from Liu He Ba Fa.

Eager students filled and surrounded the rough-hewn stone fire circle to train. With smiles and laughter, Teja demonstrated the techniques in easy-to-follow steps and coached everyone so they could perform them. His warm, soft-spoken manner eased even the most tentative beginners into experiencing these advanced forms. Teja also showed some of the

martial arts applications and discussed the forms' spiritual energy and significance.

Each of the animals was a short series of movements that captured some of the spiritual and physical characteristics of its namesake. For example, the Dragon used coiling, undulating back and arm movements that imitated a dragon rearing and striking. The Tiger featured pouncing and shearing movements. The Bear's broad blocking and turning movements had all the participants imitating a bear lumbering through the woods.

Teja's presentation and pacing charmed his classes. Not only did they learn the new forms, but at the end everyone even felt game enough to follow Teja and link the animals together for a beautiful routine. Teja ended his workshops by sharing several centering and grounding exercises with his students, then expressing his heartfelt thanks to Sensei, the monks, and all the retreat participants.

Many students practiced the new forms right away and found they had more questions. Fortunately, Sensei Frank and Teja Bell had arranged to videotape the workshops. The video now available at the dojo helps students prepare for Teja Bell's visit to Aikido Ai in September, when he will review and introduce new animal forms.

At Mt. Baldy For The Day

by Kim Romig

I was a newcomer on The Mountain this year. I must confess – initially I was concerned that this might be a train-until-you-drop marathon. That's what I was used to in my previous martial arts days.

Although the seasoned members assured

me this was different, I was somewhat afraid they might really be joking and that this old body would fall apart into a million pieces. So, I thought I would be tricky and only go for one day (you know, to check it out). The lesson? Trust your seniors. They really do know what's what.

You know, there are some things in life that make you catch your breath and change your direction. For me, this was one of those times. The setting was serene with all the warmth of the dojo. There's something about drawing energy from beautiful surroundings and friends and then giving it back that is quietly powerful. Familiar faces and new ones made it both comforting and internally demanding. Pushing through mental blocks is not a new concept in martial arts, but training in a way that gently teaches the soul (read: without bruises, aches and pains) is a different option for me. And what better place to learn the animal forms than where they reside!

I'd like to express my appreciation to Sensei and all of you for the opportunity to learn new concepts, new forms and to have new beginnings. For those of you who have not yet been to the Mt. Baldy retreat, I hope to see you there when you're able to come. Remember, we're in this together and all a part of something bigger.



Mount Baldy Retreat 2004

Mt. Baldy Dharma Talk

by Kate Waterfall



Mt. Baldy on a clear warm afternoon in May. I follow the others into the Zendo for a Dharma talk. Looking around everyone seems to be at ease as they settle into comfort on cushions, Sensei McGouirk and Sensei Bell both appearing resplendently calm. I squirm; I struggle. What am I doing here? Dharma talk? What is Dharma? This not knowing knocks me off kilter just enough so I can let go, turn everything off, empty out and just breathe.

Both Sensei McGouirk and Sensei Bell spoke about finding their way to Tai Chi, Aikido and Zen and to that moment. Then, suddenly, it was over and people were beginning to stand and I am silently beseeching my body to move and for blood to flow back into my feet. As I followed everyone out into the afternoon sun my mind sprang back into action filling up with questions and self-doubt. What was the lesson? How could it be that I remembered little of what was said not five minutes before? Walking down the path it occurred to me that although I had been listening I did not hear. That

Saturday evening my last exhausted thought before falling into sleep was that I had had the privilege of learning from two Sensei's both having the virtues of realization and teaching with great compassion.

As the months have gone by, I've come to the conclusion that Dharma is not something tangible, rather, it is a complex concept, yet, like most things complex, simple; a path to spiritual knowledge. I've come away changed not only in terms of my own spiritual growth, but have also been reminded of lessons learned in childhood; kindness and courteousness. The journey is everything.

A Haiku:

When my house burns down

View of yellow evening moon

I share with the wind.

Training with Hayashi Sensei

By Chris Johnson



Have any of you noticed that training in our dojo challenges one not only physically, but also mentally, spiritually, and emotionally? Isn't that what makes it the very best thing you

have ever done? Tough times are not bad, not good; also, easy street is not bad, not good. The truth is just like this. Our teachers exhibit infinite profundity, and also playfulness. It is an honor to be nurtured by compassionate instruction. Aikido Aikido is integral with other great teachers from Northern California who propel us all to higher levels of satori.

One of the opportunities to train with our friends from the north is the annual Mr. Baldy retreat. Hayashi Sensei, senior instructor at Aikido West, will definitely take you to another level.

This year she worked with the tanto. Sometimes techniques we've practiced a lot suddenly make sense when you're holding a knife in your hand--or getting attacked by one! A real eye-opener against someone without training, but someone who knows what they're doing...yeow!

Sensei Hayashi helped us recognize gaps in the defenses of Uke and Nage when knives are involved. More to the point, when you're faced with attack by a deadly weapon you must be physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally ready. Our instructors are preparing us well. Respect to them all... thank you.

Hayashi Sensei has been a guest instructor and participant at the Mount Baldy Retreat for years. A student of Doran Sensei, her skills are well known. Aikido Aikido is always honored when she joins us!!

ChiLel QiGong Training with Nancy Parker

by Linda Hill



Nancy Parker's workshops were key for all participants! After all, the practice of collecting, focusing and extending "ki," "chi," or "qi" is fundamental to aikido and tai chi, so the exercises that Nancy shared would improve everyone's training at the retreat. The other instructors attended as well, which tells you in what high esteem they place qigong training.

Easy-going Nancy is passionate about qigong. She quietly promotes its benefits to everyone who will give it the time and practice it requires. She is deeply involved in a network of teachers who have seen students gain wonderful health benefits from its use. She'll tell you miraculous tales if you just ask!

She doesn't mention it, but Nancy is an advanced instructor and was one of the first students of Master Luke Chan, the man who brought Chi-Lel Qigong to the U.S. In fact, in 1998 both Nancy and Sensei Frank went to China to study at the famed Huaxia Zhineng Qigong Clinic & Training Center, where they were certified as Chi-Lel Qigong teachers. Sensei Frank added qigong classes to the schedule for all students to improve their health as well as their martial arts. Throughout the year Nancy attends advanced training seminars, then brings her expertise to the dojo and to the Memorial Weekend retreat.

The early mornings at Mt. Baldy were ideal for qi training. The sun filtered through the trees and the air was cool and fresh. Using the recordings and techniques she's found most helpful for groups, Nancy brought together the participants so they could "feel the love and compassion all around..." And that is an excellent description of the entire Mt. Baldy experience as well.

Tai Chi Examination - Kodak Moments



Linda Hill & Michael Paparo stand before the Tai Chi Examination Board during a Fourth Kyu test



Congratulations are in order! Take off the green and put on the blue!

(Continued from page 7)

much fun.

Question: You are teaching the teen Aikido class. How is this different from the children's class?

Answer: It is incredibly different. You must understand that in order to train in the teen class you must have Sensei's permission and my permission (of course Sensei can override my decision). As such, only the best and most dedicated and serious of the kids can graduate up to the teen class. I am proud to say that the kids in the teen class are as serious and disciplined as some adults. No longer do I have to labor keeping the kids in line and keeping them quiet. The students in the teen class are mature beyond their years and it is one of the greatest joys in my life to be able to help them grow and reach their full potential.

Question: What are your future plans after college?

Answer: I am slightly embarrassed to say that I really don't have any real plans for after college right now. I do want to eventually travel to Japan and study at Hombu dojo for a while. However, that is not really a long term plan. I guess you might say that my biggest plan right now is just trying to figure out what I want to do with my life. I am currently majoring in philosophy and that is going to take a little while longer. So I have some time.

Question: Why do you also study Tai Chi?

Answer: At first I decided to study Tai Chi simply because I was curious. I wanted to give this strange Chinese art that I saw a try. So I gave it a try and I saw that there was a lot of good stuff in the forms. Of course we don't practice the combative applications and I think that is a shame. I guess the reason why I continue to study Tai Chi is mostly for the machismo factor. I want to be one of the few people in the dojo to have black belt ranks in both arts that are taught there.

Question: What advice can you give

other young students in the dojo?

Answer: To be perfectly honest, I don't know what advice to give. I have thought about this question for three hours now. Ultimately the best advice I could give would be to keep training. There are no quick and easy answers. There is no ultimate technique. There is no one step solution. The only way you will get better is to train. The only way to be able to perform cool and powerful techniques is to do them countless times until you have figured out the little details that make them work. The only way those awful falls will stop hurting is to fall again and again until you figure out how to fall correctly. Just keep training. Never stop. You will figure it out eventually.

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of karate), but thought this would be something really different. The rest is history. I eventually started to come to the Aikido Ai dojo, where I have practiced ever since. The teacher who replaced Sensei Frank when he left Sequoia eventually left and I was asked to replace her. Though I did find a karate class eventually, I have continued to practice, teach and to love Tai Chi and the Chi Leqigong which was added to the program after Sensei and I went to China with a group led by Frank Chan.

So, in a sense, the closing of the club not only ended my job, but closed a chapter in my life that began many years ago and led to such a wonderful place as Aikido Ai. Most important of all is that as I have recently begun attending more classes, I have felt a wonderful warmth of welcome and love from my fellow practitioners, and know that it is this that probably permeated that first room that I walked into many years ago. It is this that makes Aikido Ai a very special place. It is our knowledgeable, highly skilled Sensei Frank and his kind heart, I believe, that make anywhere he shares his art a special place no matter where

he teaches.

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Tsuneo recommends that Uke "have the spirit of a nurturing parent." Nage, then, "is the child or disciple." Tsuneo suggests that the Uke role initially should be performed by higher-ranked students--one reason being that competition can arise when lower-ranking students attack with the intention of testing their skills against higher-ranks. This type of practice can lead every one of us to the edge of compassion.

O'Sensei's number one precaution for training is: "The original intent of bujutsu was to kill an enemy with one blow; since all techniques can be lethal, observe the instructor's directions and do not engage in contests of strength." Repetition of techniques in an adversarial relationship is not rei, and results in physical and spiritual damage. Rather, as Tsuneo proposes, "It is the repetition of the techniques in this parent/child or senior/junior relationship that allows for the growth of the spirit through the practice of technique."

Recently, I saw the edge of compassion. Uke attacked and was successful at stopping the technique through his strength. This was not our agreement. Resolving not to let the next technique fail, I changed the rules. Clash...slam...ouch. I won, and my training for the day - - a great day - - was over. It was a terrible feeling of disappointment from which sprouted an epiphany. The bodhisattva only saves all beings from suffering; there are myriad ways this can happen. Strong application of technique in response to resistance is not wrong. The mistake comes when one discerns the edge of compassion within the development of the interaction of Uke and Nage, and crosses that fine line into the beginning of violence. This extends to all things... rei.

Practice makes ???

by Joanne Plummer

The Tai Chi students at Brea Community Center were treated to three students testing for



their yellow sashes this past five week session.

The second week Terry Thomas wowed everyone with a strong and polished presentation of the short form. His wife, Marilyn, also a student at BCC had often commented how diligent Terry was in getting consistent practice time in between our weekly class sessions. Terry was ever ready with a question or clarification of a move or transition and very observant of the variation in a movement by one tai chi student to the



next.

Then on the last night of the session the mother/daughter team of Candace & Danielle put forth a very

steady demonstration in near perfect unison and at an unhurried pace. It was notable during class that whenever a new move was shown and then they were afforded time alone they tirelessly practiced until they felt able to add it in with the rest of the form.



All this as a testimonial to the power of practice. It is extra important at BCC since we only meet once a week and a lot can be forgotten in 167 hours.

One class member, Chris O'Sullivan, got some travel in this summer by braving Florida and two weeks on the road with two teenage daughters. Chris got some great memories and photos for his bravery! We had to fondly say adieu to Terry & Marilyn since they bought a home in No. California that is closer to family. Before escrow closed they had found a local tai chi group! First things first you know!

I myself tested the Thursday before our Mt. Baldy retreat for my green sash by demonstrating the first half of Liu Ha Be Fa, single hand push-hands and leading the 8 treasures. I ran thru all three of those at least twice a day for two weeks before my test. I was also blessed with the willing assistance of two green sashes that never said "No" to practice, a blue sash that answered tons of questions I had about transitions, and a patient brown sash who filled in the blanks that I wasn't able to get from class with several levels of students receiving training at BCC. Many helping one achieve a goal through hours of practice. Thank you all!!

Come Visit the
Aikido Ai
Website!
www.aikidoai.com



Our website has a new look and will now be updated frequently with information on new classes, upcoming seminars, and photos.

Check out the latest pictures on the slide show, visit links to sister sites, and keep up to date on all dojo happenings.

If you see Marie Brock in the dojo, give her a thank you for all the time and energy she put into giving our website a new look.

Don't forget! Visit aikidoai.com often...and invite your friends.

The Aikido Ai Beginners Class

AHHH! It is great to be a beginner... we should all have "Beginners Mind".

In fact Sho-Dan means *Beginner*.



Melody and Jason Oxman would like to report that the Aikido Ai beginners program is a success. All new Dojo members go through this 6-week beginners program. Melody and Jason try to reduce the anxiety a new student may have when they begin on their Martial Arts path.

This program is also used as an outreach to the City of Whittier Parks and Recreation department. It is advertised in the City of Whittier Parks and Recreation Program. The program is mailed to the residents of Whittier once every quarter (4 times per year). Aikido Ai offers the 6-week class two times in the winter quarter, two times in the spring, two times in the summer, and one time in the fall. The cost is \$40.00.

This class is at 7:00 pm on Monday and Wednesday and is usually separate from the regular class. After about 6 weeks the new students begin to understand some of the basics of Aikido, such as terminology, small forward rolls, small backward rolls, standing forward and backward rolls, tenkan and irrimi footwork, Aikitiso exercises (wrist stretches and body movement) and dojo etiquette. A few techniques are practiced and **a great time is had by all.**

At times the beginners class is combined with the regular class. The Dojo members have been wonderful about training with the members of the beginners class. The combined class goes at a slower and more careful pace but it is always a lot of fun. Traditional Aikido classes do not separate the beginners from the higher ranks. It is part of our training to work with people at all levels and ages.

Here is how the promotions work with the beginners class:

A student from the City of Whittier Parks and Recreation

department who completes two 6-week sessions is eligible to prepare for a yellow belt exam (7th kyu). If the instructors are confident in the student's technique they will participate in a Kyu exam. The 7th kyu exam requirements are as follows:

Display Kyu Exam etiquette.

Count to 5 in Japanese.

5 wrist stretches.

State 3 dojo etiquette.

Small forward roll.

Small backward roll.

Standing forward roll.

Tenkan principle.

Irimi principle.

Shomen uchi ikkyo irrimi – static.

A student who makes a full commitment and joins the dojo will skip the 7th kyu exam and prepare for 5th kyu. Students will be considered for examination after they have completed 50 training days and will follow regular Aikido Ai etiquette and kyu requirements.

The goal is to expand the membership of Aikido Ai. It is not just the Sensei or the other instructors who draw new students to the dojo; **it is every one of us.** The most common phrase we here is how much new students love the people and the atmosphere here at Aikido Ai. So lets keep up the good work. Train with enthusiasm, love and compassion, and take good care of each other and the dojo.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

TEJA BELL SEMINAR

September 10, 11, & 12, 2004
Aikido Ai, Whittier CA



SCHEDULE:

Friday	5pm to 6pm	Kids Aikido	\$10
Friday	6:30 to 8pm	Jo	\$20
Restaurant	8:30 to 9:30pm	TBA	
Saturday	8:30am to 10 am	Qi-Gong	\$15
Saturday	10am to Noon	Six Animals (L H B F)	\$25
Lunch	Noon to 2pm		
	2 - 4 pm	Animals 7, 8, & 9	\$25

SATURDAY FULL DAY SPECIAL PRICE \$ 55

Sunday	8:30 to 10:30	Zen Meditation	\$5
	10:30 to Noon	Traditional Aikido	\$20

Bell Sensei has trained in the Japanese and Chinese Martial Arts for over 30 years. He is an Internationally known classical guitar recording artist and an ordained Zen Priest in the Renzei Tradition.

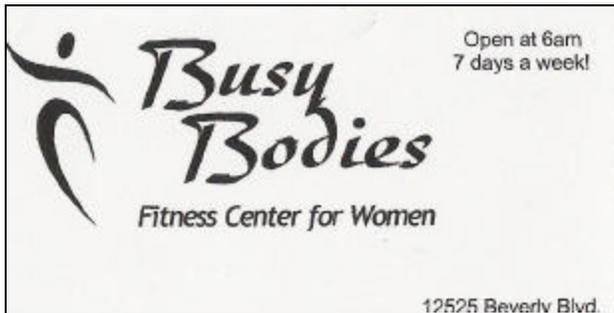
(Continued from page 4)

people can attach themselves to the smallest things, and how those things can completely consume them. Imagine trying to perform a Aikido technique completely occupied with what the end result will be. You would never experience that rare occurrence when uke and nage completely blend and perform that "dance like and flowing" execution. This does not happen if you are "attached" to something.

At the same time, we cannot grow as individuals if we are attached "our" way. Are you attached to always making sure you are right, no matter what the cost is? Are you attached to making sure that a relative or sibling apologizes first when you have argued, even if that means getting your apology at the heaviest of prices (sudden relative loss)? Are you attached to the fear of being wrong or proven wrong?

As martial artist, we must release ourselves from attachments, because they simply do not allow us to grow and truly share our ki. We spend years training and searching for ways to do this. As individuals we must also release ourselves from attachments if we are to ever harmonize as a society. I look at recent events in our society and wonder how many of these struggles can be avoided if attachments were let go.

As a practioner of Aikido, I feel honored that I have been shown a way to release my attachments. It is up to me to continue to perfect this and one day share what I have been shown. As a society, it is imperative that we release our attachments if we are ever to "harmonize" with one another in the way O'Sensei envisioned.



Something to Share?

Submit articles or questions to The Aikido Eye (MS Word/handwritten). Send to:

l.celaya@worldnet.att.net

Thanks!



COORDINATOR'S NOTES

Thanks again to everyone who shared! Each newsletter challenges my ability to coordinate and put the final product together in a fashion that is enjoyed by all.

Thanks to Suzette for being the catalyst and gathering the info submitted and emailing it. We are getting this down to a science.

Well that is it for now!