



**United States Karate League
Defense Arts Center
Tri-Annual Dojo News Letter
January - April 2006**

Greetings and Happy New Year to all instructors, students, families and friends of our dojo! It's hard to believe the holidays are past and I hope you all had a wonderfully enjoyable season.

Here's to a year of happiness, health and prosperity for all!

-Christie

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**A Message from Shihan Ty Aponte
President of the USKL**

“Do You Sweat?”

In the sweltering summer of 1985 I was asked by my good friend Shihan Tom Serrano, 5th dan - IKA, to bring a few of my senior USKL black belts to join a special workout taught by his Soke (Master 9th dan) Tak Kubota (founder Gosoku Ryu karate). During the 3 hour workout, which involved basics, kata, self defense and sparring Soke Kubota in his broken English asked the class of about 20 senior Black Belts “Do you sweat?” At first we didn’t quite understand but my gi was wet and my eyes were burning from perspiration. Not happy with our response he barked out and clarified, “When you train, do you sweat?” A quick and affirmative Osu! echoed throughout the dojo but it only seemed to temporarily satisfy him. However, like any Sensei who wants to get the best and most out of his students he drove home the fact that we were not sweating (or trying) hard enough.

Later the question, “do you sweat” kept ringing in my ears, although it seemed simple, but the meaning ran deep. Upon reflection I could see the types of students categorized by how and why they sweat. The first are those who simply go through the motions of training, with no real commitment. They remain exterior to the action and if they sweat, it is by accident rather than design. Often they are sporadic in attendance, but when they do attend they may act as if they were the pillars of the dojo. The second group is those whose sweat is pure. Their attendance is regular; their effort is complete, and at the end of class their gi is soaked. This student rarely complains and may train outside of class to be better prepared for the next session.

In a different experience during my training, I was inspired to study along with a few of my black belts with Kyoshi (Master 7th dan) Anthony Marquez, in Okinawan Goju Ryu karate, and the unique art of Kobudo (Traditional Okinawan weaponry). Kyoshi Marquez lived the dream of most passionate martial artists; he spent 12 years in the US military stationed in Okinawa (the home and origin of most hard style kara-te and weapon arts) training with the masters. In short, to step up the threshold of one’s personal resolve and to test one’s self-discipline Kyoshi would have us train 2-3 hours, during the summer, with the doors closed and the heater on in 90+ deg heat. In this environment I found myself not only competing against my fellow black belts in sparring or for the acknowledgment of a well-performed kata but also for a fresh pocket of air. Needless to say our gis were literally soaked in sweat. To further test our commitment, he held a 1-½ hour, twice-weekly advanced class beginning at 4:00AM for three months straight. Though the outside temperature was cooler the amount of sweat was still the same. Kyoshi Marquez also had an ulterior motive, which was to prepare us for a dan (black belt) exam, which lasted approx. 6 hours, as well as preparation for special training in Okinawa. In 1995 I had the rare opportunity to be part on an entourage from Kyoshi’s organization to train at his sensei’s Hombu dojo (Head quarters), participate in a tournament, and dojo hop; attending training sessions taught by some of Okinawa’s living legends of karate and kobudo. As he predicted the weather in Okinawa was EXTREMELY hot and humid, and we found ourselves sweating in the evenings even at rest. Training in Kyoshi Marquez’s dojo sweatbox indeed prepared us for the hot and rigorous training in Okinawa. This experience tested and strengthened my inner spirit; I gained a sense of accomplishment that one has after a good workout, which I realized, can only be accomplished through Sweat. Training however must be self-motivated. The sensei is there to guide and push us, but we must ultimately find the passion and be the drivers of our own destiny. Thanks to Kyoshi Marquez, Okinawa and all the lessons and test of will, learned along the way, this experience became a highlight in my martial arts training. With Kyoshi, I eventually went on to receive my Nidan (2nd deg.) in Goju Ryu and a Sandan (3rd) in Okinawan Kobudo. The black belts from our dojo that joined me to train and receive dan ranks under Kyoshi Marquez were Sensei’s Gary Demerjian, Lynn Aponte, and Jon Krause.

It has been a number of years since I visited Soke Kubota’s dojo, or trained in one of Kyoshi Marquez’s sweat karate/kobudo classes, but occasionally that question still rings in my ears - “When you train, do you sweat?”

Note: While sweating is important, if you don't replace the fluids you lose through sweat, it can lead to dehydration and heat illness. That's why fluid replacement before, if possible-during and after training is so crucial.

Sensei Ty Aponte 2/06

A sincere thank you from the Apontes

As most of you know my wife, Lynn, was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2005 and is currently undergoing chemotherapy. The process of healing has been a physical and emotional challenge for her. Although this challenge is formidable, we are confident she will beat this. In 1982 (at age 18) Lynn began her martial arts training with USKL. While coming up through the ranks she demonstrated a passion for learning and trained for excellence, as she received her 1st deg. black belt in 1985. Lynn proved herself in the dojo by being one of USKL's toughest female fighters (her opponents were mostly men), and in tournaments she would compete (fight and perform kata) with the best of them. In 1993, ready for another challenge, she began training along with me under Kyoshi Marquez and went on to receive her black belt in Okinawan Kobudo (weaponry)*. Lynn received her 3rd deg. black belt with USKL in 1995. Currently, she is taking time off from teaching while she is recovering.

I have personally not known such gracious kindness as demonstrated towards Lynn from all of our students, friends and family through their good deeds, warm thoughts and prayers – thank you to all.

On behalf of Lynn, and with loving gratitude, thank you.

Ty Aponte

*see article in this News letter “Do You Sweat?”

Lastly, I would like to compliment Christie Kramer for doing a fine job on editing the Dojo Newsletters. Anyone who would like to contribute to the newsletter, please submit your material to her for review by the end of April. Thank you.

Sensei Ty Aponte

A Message from Sensei James Augur, Nidan & Dojo Proprietor:

To all our students, instructors, parents and friends: Greetings. It's a new year and one of our new year's resolutions should be to keep training hard and to have fun. This year we may have students testing for the coveted rank of first-degree black belt. I thought I might say a few words about this rank...

In the west, the black belt rank has been misunderstood. I have read that a first-degree black belt is a karate "expert". Not so! A first-degree black belt simply means that a student has learned the basics of karate, and is now ready for serious study. Earning a black belt is a very difficult accomplishment and certainly an event to be celebrated. However, students should be aware that the black belt is only a step to higher training and the pursuit of excellence. Nor is it true that a black belt has to register hands with the police as a deadly weapon. This is a myth that developed from servicemen training in Asia, where a martial artist was held to a very high standard of conduct. The police in Japan did keep records, but martial artists were expected to never get in trouble in the first place! They were expected to set an example for others, and use their self-discipline to avoid conflicts.

Let's resolve to live up to this ideal in our training and daily conduct.

A Message from Sensei Mike Whiteside, Shihan:

THE MEANINGS OF THE PAINTING (at the front of the training area)

By the Artist, Sensei Michael Whiteside

First, the painting is about Master Gichin Funakoshi who, in 1922, introduced karate to Japan. He was born in Okinawa in 1868, and died in 1957 at the age of 88. Besides teaching karate he also was known for his poems and calligraphy. His professional name as a poet was SHOTO, meaning whispering pines, or the sound of wind through the forest. When his karate students were asked what style of karate they did, they would answer "Shoto Kan Karate", referring to Gichin Funakoshi's professional name as a poet. The word Kan means "place of work". And, of course, Karate means empty hand (no weapons). Therefore, you can see my reason for the forest in my painting.

Also in the painting you see mount Fuji and the rising red sun. These symbols are of great meaning to Japan and represent power, strength and spirit. The red rising sun also means the day begins in Japan. The running water represents us. We are like water. We, like water, may at first seem weak, but in reality, we are very strong. Running water carves canyons out of the earth and wears down mountains. Water can even break rocks when frozen. But our goal in karate is to be humble and calm. Like water at sea level which, at its lowest level (humble), is calm by its nature. Water is continually seeking to be humble and calm, in other words, to be at sea level. We, too, can be like water by faithfully training in karate.

The Japanese writing says "karate-do", which means the path or the way to develop spiritual qualities, courage, courtesy, integrity, humility, and self-control. Another point of interest: notice there are no shadows from the figure. This was done to stress the spiritual aspect over the materialism. It is our goal in karate to reach Karate-do, and to be at peace with others and ourselves. The end result is to be able to win a fight without fighting and only fight in defense of Karate-do.

In closing, I hope you will enjoy the painting, and remember the ultimate goal of karate is not to win or lose, but to improve one's character. OSU! (For a copy of this painting, please see Sensei Whiteside or the office staff)

A Message from Sensei Leo Shortle, Sandan:

Most students think that when an instructor teaches them karate techniques or criticizes them in any way, shape or form, that it is all about them. In reality, the instructor gets as much (or more) out of a class than the student.

I have been teaching for a good many years and, along with the other Sensei's, agree that the one thing a student can bring to class is spirit and/or enthusiasm. Enthusiasm comes from the Greek word "*enthous*", which means inspired or more literally, the God within (*theos* "god"). My fellow instructors and I all agree that we can teach all the techniques in karate but if the student doesn't have that "feeling" or "spirit", then all the training will not help. On the other hand, we as instructors get great pleasure when we see willing students who can't wait to get into the karate program. These are the students we love because they are the ones who inspire the other students to do their best. Often times the instructor knows that the student can give more but will not because of the fear within themselves. We, as instructors, feel it is our job to get the most out of students, to bring out more than they think they can give (after all, this is what our instructors did to us).

Some students wonder why they weren't promoted when other students are advanced, who may even be less technically accurate. The answer is simple: the ones promoted gave more of themselves each and every class, not just on exam day. That is something that simply cannot be taught. I would much rather teach students who are less physically capable yet willing to learn and simply can't wait to train, than someone simply going thru the motions because either someone else wanted them to do it or they really don't want to be there.

Train hard each and every class - that is the way one can become a Black Belt. In effect, "One will only be promoted to that which one is already doing." If one wants to become a Black Belt, then one must act and train like a Black Belt.

A Message from Sensei Bob Johnson, Nidan:

"Not failure, but low aim, is a crime." -James Russell Lowell

Having failed means at least you tried. Each time you fail, you learn something - something that can make the next attempt more successful. When Sensei shows you a new move, don't immediately think you can't do it. Give it your all and try it. Maybe you don't get it right the first time or the second or the tenth, but you will get it. Don't be afraid to fail, be afraid of not trying.

Holidays

Please make a note of and mark you calendars for the following dates the dojo will be closed in 2006 to observe holidays:

Monday, February 20 - Presidents Day

Monday, May 29 - Memorial Day

Monday & Tuesday
July 3 & 4 - Independence Day

Monday, September 4- Labor Day

Friday, November 10-Veteran's Day

Thursday & Friday
November 23 & 24- Thanksgiving

Friday, December 22 thru Monday January 1, 2007 - Christmas/New Years
Classes resume on Tuesday, January 2, 2007

TESTING DATES

The schedule for testing (for those who are ready) is tentatively set for the following weeks:

March 27th
June 26th
Black Belt: August 12th
September 25th
December 11th

“Other dates” to make note of:

September 2006 - Dojo & class portraits (date to be announced)

Saturday, October 28th - Halloween Party

Saturday, December 16th- Christmas/Winter Holiday Party

COMPUTERIZATION OF OUR DOJO

Most of you have noticed that the office has a “new look”. With the acquisition of our new computer and desk, we have now officially entered the era of technology! This will enable us to more easily track attendance, and pertinent information.

Please ensure that your personal information **and** dues are current, so that we may make a smooth transition from the “ink & quill days”. Also, parents, please remind younger children that it is a “work only computer”. And even though most of them are as savvy as college students with computers, we have no games for them to play on it. Thank you.

DUES/FEES

Please note that effective March 1, 2006, there will be a slight change in fees due monthly, as follows:

Train 1x per week	=	\$45.
Train 2x per week	=	\$80.
Train 3 to 5 x per week/ unlimited training	=	\$90.

DOJO PRIDE

Our dojo is not only a place where we come to train, but a place to be thought of with honor as well, and should be treated as such - with respect. This applies not only to the treatment of others and dojo property, but also to ourselves.

What better way to start a training session than with fresh, clean GI! Your body will thank you for it, not to mention your training partners.

Everyone is always welcome to observe training, but audience-area attendees must please remember to keep their voices down. And, **especially during meditation time, please remember to be silent** so the students may prepare for their training, as meditation is a very important part of it.

Lastly, an observation and request from the cleaning staff... Please, let's keep our dojo clean by cleaning up after yourselves and/or children. With at least six trash receptacles strategically placed around the dojo, there is no reason why trash cannot make it into one of them. Yet, there is usually an array of wrappers, an occasional piece of bread, etcetera, to be found underneath the benches (that was not left over from the last party).

Thank you for not only being part of a dojo that is an exceptional place to train in martial arts, but is just as pleasant to be at as well.

HOLIDAY PARTY and other events - Christie

A hearty thanks to all of you who participated in the Halloween and Winter Holiday parties. Neither would be successful without your input, attendance and delicious foods! It just goes to show you: We can train hard **and** play hard, too!

Don't forget to check out the photo boards (located on the door of the office & next to the drinking fountain) for any recent activities, parties, testing and other photo "Kodak-captured" moments.

Also, remember to check the office bulletin boards for any additional photos, tournament/seminar dates, and other event flyers that may not have been available at the time of the newsletter distribution.

"KIDS ON KARATE"

As mentioned in previous issues of our newsletter, this section is devoted solely to "our youth" and their "karate thoughts", opinions, memories, etc. Thanks to them for their ideas, input and participation...

When asked **what thoughts they had about karate,**

both Conner Gutierrez (9th kyu-yellow) and
Brendyn Kramer (6th kyu-green) replied:

"It's fun!"

Adam Chang (9th kyu - yellow) nodded approvingly and smiled.

With regard to **favorite karate activity,** Jose Luis Nunez (8th kyu- orange) replied:

"I like kata best."

...and, the **most memorable karate experiences from**

Alex Matuhonis (6th kyu-green) was **"...when I received a 1st place tournament trophy for kata!"**

and,

Jeffrey de Hart (5th kyu-purple) said his most memorable Experience was **"...meeting Sensei Donnie!"**

WEAPONS CLASS

Training in weapons is on Saturday from 12:30 to 1:30 PM. All students are welcome, but must be at 8th-kyu/orange rank or above. The fees have increased from \$25 to \$30 per month (this is the first fee increase in over two years). If you are interested please see your sensei or a member of the office staff.

MISCELLANEOUS & REMINDERS

Spirit Night is the last Thursday of each month: 8:00 to 9:30 PM. All ranks are invited and must be able to perform Heian Shodan. Spirit night promotes spirit, fun, knowledge, camaraderie and a great workout! Taught by Sensei Mike Whiteside, 5th Degree Black Belt.

Please help support our dojo. If you feel that you or a loved one is benefitting from our training program, please be sure to tell a friend.

Don't forget our website:

www.uskl.org
for message board, announcements & contacts

Lastly and in closing, a quote from Sir Edmund Hillary - Humanitarian & first man to summit Mt. Everest:

"It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves."

OSU!