

Aikido of Phoenix Newsletter

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER REINSTATED

We are once again going to put out a monthly newsletter to share our thoughts and insights that might help in your training, important information concerning our three dojos (Chandler, South Chandler, Mesa), upcoming events and other miscellaneous things that come up. We will have a hard copy at each location as well as send it out via email to all who have provided an email address. We hope you find this newsletter informative and helpful.

Parents of Aikido students, we ask that you encourage your child(ren) to read the newsletter if they are old enough or read it to them if they aren't able. This is yet another way to incorporate Aikido into their everyday life by giving them something to think about as well as talk about with you. Aikido is so much more than just training on the mat. It's a great opportunity for you to discuss Aikido ideas which can open the door to other important dialogues with your child. It also helps them and you be aware of what's going on with Aikido of Phoenix, upcoming events in which you may want to participate and a way to be informed of any schedule changes or other important announcements.

A CHAPTER CLOSSES FOR AIKIDO OF PHOENIX

On Wednesday, September 30, 2009 Fred Mastison Sensei retired from teaching Aikido full-time. After 21 years of teaching Aikido he has closed that chapter to begin a new one with his other business, Force Options. With Force Options he will utilize his many years of compounded learning and experience by sharing what he knows within the law enforcement and military arenas.

We had a very special celebration held in his honor at the Chandler dojo. During the celebration Teresa Mastison Sensei shared the Aikido of Phoenix "story", how Sensei got his start in Aikido and how it has become what it is today. Many students then shared personal stories and expressions of gratitude that were heartwarming and helped demonstrate the breadth of Sensei's influence. Sensei was presented with a special scrapbook filled with letters, notes, cards, and pictures from students past and present. It was a physical manifestation of what he means to many people.

Thank you to everyone for helping to make this a very memorable experience and for your contributions in demonstrating to Sensei just how special he is. I could not have done it without all of you. Thank you.

Teresa Mastison Sensei

PARTING THOUGHTS FROM FRED MASTISON SENSEI

It is with an odd mix of sadness and excitement that I write this last article for the newsletter. I have been off the mat for a bit now and miss it a great deal. I am also excited about what our future holds with our other business. My time teaching in Aikido has provided me with treasures beyond what anyone can imagine. They are not monetary but more ethereal. The wonderful people I have had the pleasure of meeting and teaching will always be with me.

As with all endeavors you pursue over two decades, there are ups and downs. This in and of itself is part of living and learning budo. The pleasant memories of the up times are the ones that will survive and define my time in the dojo. I hope that is a lesson that I have passed to you for your lives as well.

In regards to lessons, I feel compelled to take this opportunity to pass on some of the most important lessons of budo that I have endeavored to follow in my life.

1. Never accept that you have reached the top in anything. Always strive for improvement and do not accept anything less in your life. Each day strive to be better in some way. Be more than you were yesterday.
2. Remain humble but sure. This is difficult because they seem to be conflicting ideas, yet they are not. Be humble because you do not know everything. Be sure because what you do know, you should know because of truly understanding it.
3. Take the high road in all things. It is easy to get sucked into dramas and conflict. The best thing you can always do is maintain a positive outlook and refrain from taking part in pettiness. Be above it because you are.
4. Be aware in all things. This applies in the physical world as well as in the emotional and spiritual world. Know how you are interacting with things and people. Be in harmony in those interactions.
5. Never act recklessly. This applies to all things in life as well. Move gracefully in life and with those you interact with.
6. Keep your life in order. This is the greatest Samurai lesson to ever be taught. Yet again it applies to all aspects of life. It is logistical as making sure all of your life documents are in order such as life insurance etc. It also applies to your relationships. Say things that need to be said and say them



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often. The idea behind this may sound grim and yet it is part of our mortal existence. Someday we will all die. Be prepared each day as if it were your last. Not in a depressing way, but with the knowledge that all things are taken care of in the event something happens.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work with you all and those that came before you. I wish you all peace and joy in your lives.

In Oneness,

Sensei

FROM TERESA MASTISON SENSEI

Training in Aikido can be so much fun. You get to roll around the mat, learn to do some pretty cool moves that usually end up with someone falling down and, of course, there are the games at the end of class. All these things make coming to class an enjoyable time where you can make friends, have fun and feel good. These are excellent reasons for training in Aikido because they help you develop and mature, but let's not forget the self-defense aspect of training in Aikido.

The skills you are learning in Aikido can literally save your life or help you out of a dangerous situation. Anyone has the ability to develop life-saving habits and skills, but by starting younger you just give yourself more time to instill them and make them a part of who you are. Through the exercises, ukemi (tumbling), techniques, games, testing, ki breathing, energy extension and discussions everyone has the opportunity to learn about themselves, those around you and how we interact with each other. Kids have a greater advantage over others when they begin their training at a young age because they are uninhibited and ripe for learning. Some benefits of your training are evident right away. You learn how to get out of the way, keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings. These things don't take a lifetime to learn, but they help keep you safe. A lot of what Aikido has to offer in the way of self-improvement and confidence doesn't come as quickly. It can take month after month to see real progress in techniques. It's not until one has been exposed to Aikido for awhile that you begin to see the application of its philosophies to other areas of your life – school, work, sports, family etc. But one has to be paying attention and focused on what's being taught to take advantage of it. I hope you are.

I'm asking you each to rethink why you are training in Aikido and then do it with energy when you are on the mat; irimi nage – enter without fear. Whatever it is you do, do it like you mean it and you'll get more out of it. Even if you're training just to get some exercise, then go for it! Make the time you're on the mat count. What you do during practice is what you'll do for real – practice makes permanent. Take advantage of your training time. I hope you never have to use it for real, but if you do, will you be ready?

FROM JOHN SCANLIN SENSEI

Konichiwa Deshi! Thanks for making this month so memorable. We have studied quite a few techniques in our exploration of the "pillars" of Aikido. While it is important to have a lot of techniques in our catalog, it is also important to make sure we apply the basic principles of aikido each time we practice. Without applying these basic principles, the techniques become just fancy body movements instead of true aikido waza. The basic traditional principles are:

- Maintain one-point (move from your center)
- Keep weight underside (keep head above center)
- Relax completely
- Extend Ki

Use every principle, every technique, every time.

Or, to quote O'Sensei:

"A good stance and posture reflect a proper state of mind."

"In our techniques we enter completely into, blend totally with, and control firmly an attack. Strength resides where one's ki is concentrated and stable; confusion and maliciousness arise when ki stagnates."

"The key to good techniques is to keep your hands, feet, and hips straight and centered. If you are centered, you can move freely. The physical center is your belly; if your mind is set there as well, you are assured of victory in any endeavor."

Keep the spirit strong.

FROM LUCY MAILLOUX SENSEI

Greetings from Snedigar! We have just completed a month of practicing and breaking down the dynamics of randori. The class focused on ki extension, circular and continuous motion and control. The class did a fantastic job and definitely challenged themselves on the physical and mental demands of randori. The up coming months we will move into kick and ground defenses and as always, focus on good ukemi.

I encourage the class to continue to be humble and sincere in your training. In addition, remember the importance of training with an open mind and accept that there is a physical and a mental aspect to aikido and it is important that you train in both areas. Be proactive and take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions while on the mat.

I look forward to seeing you on the mat.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SNEDIGAR

October marked the expansion for our dojo and we are excited that we have added a second day of training. **Snedigar now offers classes on Monday evenings, 7pm – 8:30pm. and Saturday mornings, 10am – 11:30am.** The fees will change to reflect the addition of Monday evenings. They are as follows:

individual \$13 city fee / \$45 instructor fee
family \$17 city fee / \$60 instructor fee

Congratulations to Marty Martinez on achieving the rank of Shodan (1st degree black belt). Karen Aguilar will be testing for Rokkyu on Saturday, November 14th. Thor Mailloux will be testing for Nidan (2nd degree black belt) on Saturday, November 7th. Everyone is invited to attend to show support as well as watch and learn.

ENJOY THE GAME!

The Arizona Diamondbacks want to thank us for participating in their first Martial Arts Day at Chase Field this past September. They sent us free tickets to watch the Scottsdale Scorpions play in the Arizona Fall League Championship Game on Saturday, November 21. Game time is 12:35 pm at the Scottsdale Stadium located on Osborn Road. The deadline for ordering tickets was Oct. 28. If you got in on the deal, Teresa Sensei will pass out the tickets when they arrive along with details. Then each person or family is on their own to enjoy the game. There is no program or need to meet as a group. Have fun and enjoy the game!

SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR CHANDLER DOJO

Please mark your calendar for the following cancellations at the Chandler dojo: Wednesday, November 11 and Wednesday, November 25 there will be NO CLASSES at the Chandler dojo. Nov. 11 is Veteran's Day and the Community Center will be closed and Nov. 25 is the day before Thanksgiving and the center will close at 5:00 pm.

CHANDLER DOJO LIBRARY NOW AVAILABLE

John Scanlin Sensei has graciously opened his personal Aikido library for check out. There is a checkout binder at the Chandler dojo that has all the books currently available. If you are interested in checking out a book of Sensei's please inform him of which book you want and then write your name and date on the checkout sheet. Please take care of these books and return them in a timely manner.

MESA DOJO – NO CLASSES IN DECEMBER

The Mesa dojo will not hold classes during the month of December. Due to the Red Mountain Multigenerational Center's holiday schedule and the days/times we hold classes we'd only be able to have three classes the entire month, so it was decided to give everyone a break during the holidays and resume classes in January. Enjoy your time off and I'll see you on the mats in the New Year!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR – THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY IS DEC. 16

This year Aikido of Phoenix will hold its annual Christmas party and awards ceremony on Wednesday, December 16 at the Chandler dojo. All Aikido of Phoenix students and their families/friends are invited to attend this special event. It will begin at 6:00 pm and go to about 8:00 pm. It will include an hors d'oeuvre bar, a fun group activity for all to enjoy, awards ceremony for children and adults, a visit from Santa along with some activities for kids and time for visiting. It's always a good time. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Sign up sheets will be in each dojo, so let us know how many people will be in your party. This is a dressy casual event, so don't wear your gi! Everyone is asked to bring their favorite snack-type food and something to drink for about 8 people. All the necessities like utensils, plates, etc. will be provided unless that is what you'd like to bring. See Teresa Sensei if you are interested in helping out in that way. Thank you in advance for all your help in making this a great event.



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DOJO ETIQUETTE REVIEW

It's been awhile since we've reviewed basic dojo etiquette so for all the new students as well as seasoned students, let's review.

Because Aikido is a Japanese martial art we observe some of the aspects of the Japanese culture. Bowing is the most obvious action that demonstrates this. In the culture of Japan one bows to show respect and gratitude. Bowing can also be used for religious reasons, but not in our dojos. The reasons Aikido of Phoenix students bow are to show respect, express gratitude and to demonstrate readiness to learn and train. One should not bow into the dojo or onto the mat unless you are mentally and physically ready to train.

Bowing is an outward show of respect and appreciation. It is part of your Aikido training and represents your readiness to learn. Bowing is done when you enter or leave the dojo, when you get on or off the mat, before and after you train with a partner, after Sensei helps you while you are training, and several times during testing. Aikido of Phoenix is a traditional dojo and we want all our students to demonstrate the proper level of respect. When you begin, there will be many times you forget when to bow, but don't worry about it. There will always be someone friendly around to remind you. On that note, if you are a student and notice someone who is not following the etiquette protocol please see that as an opportunity to be a friend and inform/remind them of the etiquette procedures.

Other aspects of your training that fall under dojo etiquette include the following:

If you are late to class, stand at the edge of the mat and wait for Sensei to bow to you and then join in with whatever the class is doing.

If you have to leave early, let Sensei know ahead of time and then bow as you leave the mat.

If you have any physical limitations or injuries that will inhibit your training or warm-up exercises, let Sensei know before class begins. Also, be sure to let your training partners know so the techniques and falls may be modified. This needs to happen each and every time, unless it is an ongoing condition that you have already discussed with Sensei.

If you need to leave the mat for any reason during class get permission from Sensei first. The only exceptions to this are emergencies like bleeding, getting sick etc. In an emergency situation, take care of it and then inform Sensei of what happened.

After class, it is a show of respect and gratitude to fold the Sensei's hakama. In fact, any instructor for Aikido of Phoenix or visiting instructor should have their hakama folded. This is not to be confused with any student who

wears a hakama. The distinction lies in whether or not they are an instructor. Any student can learn how to do this. Experienced students should help others learn how to fold a hakama whenever an opportunity arises. If you want to learn, just ask for help. If you're folding, see if there's anyone around who wants to watch and learn.

The dojo, its atmosphere, and its physical state are every student's responsibility. Everyone should pay attention to what needs to be done to keep the dojo clean, orderly and a welcoming place to train. If you see something that needs to be done, just do it. If you see someone who is new, introduce yourself. If you see someone who needs help, help them. It's everyone's responsibility to help make our dojo a warm and friendly place in which to train. Thank you in advance for creating a positive dojo.

SEMINAR WITH GOTO SENSEI

Nov. 14th and 15th

Sat. the 14th 9:30 - 11:30, 2:00 - 4:00

Sun. the 15th 10:00 - 12:00

With over 30 years of martial arts experience, including extended residential training in Iwama, Japan under Saito Shihan, Goto Sensei embodies many of Iwama Aikido's attributes: its beauty, its stress on form and precision, its dedication to preserving and exploring the tradition passed on by Saito Shihan.

Practitioners of all levels of experience and all backgrounds are warmly invited to join with **Aikido of the Center** as we welcome back Goto Sensei for another of his wonderful seminars.

The seminar cost \$85.00 for the entire weekend and will be held at:

612 N. 7th Ave.

Tucson, AZ 85705

This is only about 5 minutes away from the Aikido at the Center dojo. It's on the east side of Stone Ave., almost at the corner of 5th St. and 7th Ave. Enter off Ferro St., which is a small street on the north side of 5th St. There will be a sign out on the street to help you find the place.