

Aikido of Phoenix Newsletter

FROM TERESA MASTISON SENSEI

Happy New Year to you all! I hope as you begin this new year you are able to reflect on all for which you are grateful. In this time of turmoil around the world be mindful of what you have, both materialistic but also that which is intangible - family, friends, love, freedom, health.

We all have areas in which we want to improve our lives. I hope you take the time to improve the areas that are most important to you and your family. Apply an important randori skill when approaching self-improvement...you can only deal with one opponent at a time. Focus on what you're doing and then move on to the next thing. Take babysteps towards your goals and focus on the task at hand. The longest journey begins with the first step. Good luck in whatever you are trying to achieve.

As I began this new year I went back to my roots as far as my Aikido training is concerned. That took me back to my first Sensei, Bill Sosa Sensei. He wrote a book entitled The Essence of Aikido and I encourage everyone to read it. It is a great book for anyone who has just started as well as a good review for seasoned students. It's a fairly easy read and has a good collection of basic technique illustrated and described. I'd like to highlight some of what I thought were it's most important points:

O'Sensei undertood that the real battle of life is to overcome the qualittes of pettiness, ambition and selfishness that keep our full potential from unfolding.

Although everyone has ki, in most cases it is untapped, undeveloped and uncontrolled.

The mind rules and leads the body.

The attacker turns his mind to the attack before his body. Aikido training is to develope sensitivity to this energy.

A person is more efficient if their ki is centralized rather than scattered. Through practice one strives to coordinate mind and body.

Ki is something that must be experienced and felt through rigorous training.

Here's to a wonderful new year and peace in all you do!

FROM JOHN SCANLIN SENSEI

"Always keep your mind as bright and clear as the vast sky, the highest peak, and the deepest ocean, empty of all limiting thoughts." -O'Sensei

Happy New Year, everyone! It's time again to evaluate and dedicate ourselves to become the best Aikdoka/person we can be. The good thing about how we celebrate New Year's is that we get to start all over again each year! This idea also applies to our Aikido training. Try to come to each class as if it is your first, to look at each class "through the eyes of a child". And as we continue to study the many intricacies of Aikdo, it is important to remember that focus and repetition are extremely important when learning/becoming proficient in our techniques. Even if you have done the technique many times in the past, or are doing it many times in the current class, please give it your best energy and effort each time ("empty all limiting thoughts"). As we know, no matter what our rank is, we are not "experts" in Aikido. Constant dedication is required (as O'Sensei said as he neared his death-"I'm finally starting to get the hang of this Nikyo").

I would like to thank everyone who was able to make the two "O'Sensei theater" nights. I had a blast, they were great fun. Thanks so much to Sempai and Cynthia Horn as well as my wife Jane for their efforts. Social events are an important part of our Aikido learning (and a good time!). If anyone has suggestions for other get-togethers please let Sempai or Sensei know. Let's do it!

FROM LUCY MAILLOUX SENSEI

Happy New Years from Snedigar!

The first of the year is always an exciting time as many of us make our resolutions. What a perfect opportunity to recommitment yourself to **all** that is important to you. Whether it is dedicating more time to your family, bettering your physical fitness, a hobby, starting or going back to school, broadening your Aikido knowledge, or all of the above, take a moment to write down what you want to accomplish this year and be realistic.



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Make sure to take the time to develop a plan to help organize your efforts and share them with someone as that adds a level of accountability.

When developing your plan, if you find that you may need help in accomplishing your goals, ask! Many goals and challenges although they may be tough to achieve, they are still much more easily accomplished with help from others. However it also requires that you demand and give 110% of yourself. Don't be afraid to set new and challenging goals for yourself. Expect success from yourself and let no one tell you that you cannot achieve it.

As I said in last month's newsletter, I am challenging myself and encouraging the class to prepare for a fresh start in 2010. Focus on taking care of yourself by eating right, drinking plenty of water and getting 45 - 60 minutes of cardio at least three days a week. I was fortunate enough to have a great holiday season and ate some wonderful food that was not so kind to the body. As I still have the memory of pumpkin pie, stuffing and chocolate everything, now is the time for me to recommit myself and really focus on the principle of Masakatsu Agatsu. **Masakatsu Agatsu** is true victory over oneself. This can be difficult as it requires maintaining control over yourself and not allowing inner pride, ego or obstacles cloud your judgment. This principle also demonstrates the ability to truly blend with a situation versus blindly trying to control it. O' Sensei said, "Clear your path of obstacles and cleanse your senses. Envelop adversaries with love, entrust yourself to the natural flow of things, unify Ki, body and mind and efface the boundary between self and others, this opens unlimited possibilities." Sounds easy, but this can be a daily challenge and a principle that should not simply to be applied while on the mat but must also be applied in our daily life adventures.

We need to remember to train for success while learning to anticipate and being able to recover from obstacles as they will happen from time to time. Failure comes when you do not sincerely dedicate yourself to your commitments and accept that you will not succeed.

Wishing you a happy and successful 2010.

KIDS' CORNER

Here's a fun and interesting way to practice Aikido outside the dojo. Paying attention to what's around you can help keep you safe, but it can also help you find your car. The next time you go to the store with your parents take notice of where they park the car. You can do this with or without your parents' knowledge (if you do this without them knowing and they need help finding the car you'll come across as if you possess superpowers:). Look for landmarks to help you remember where the car is. Remember not to choose other cars as a landmark because they may move and not be there when you return. Good landmarks would be trees, lightpoles, signs on poles, where you parked compared to the store's entrance or anything else that doesn't move. Then, when you come out of the store be the first one to find the car...or be there ready to come to the rescue if your mom or dad need help finding the car.

One more thing about parking lots. As you are walking in a parking lot watch the taillights of parked cars. If you see white lights that means the car is in reverse and may be moving backwards. Keep an eye on the driver and be prepared to stop as they may not see you.

This will sound silly, but have fun in the parking lots! Be aware of your surroundings and pay attention. Let

RANK PROMOTIONS

Hachikyu (green belt) - Chris Rivette, Mariam Ayesh, Abdullah Ayesh

Shichikyu (orange belt) - Alison Eierdam, Phillip Eierdam

MESA DOJO NEWS

The Mesa dojo will not have classes on Monday, Feb. 15 as the center will be closed in observance of Presidents' Day.

***SELF-DEFENSE CLASS TO BE HELD AT
SOUTH CHANDLER DOJO***

Lucy Mailloux Sensei will be conducting a self-defense class on Saturday, February 27 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the South Chandler dojo. There will be no regular Aikido class that day due to this special class. The class will cover basic self-defense techniques including grabs, chokes and knife defenses. You do not have to be an Aikido of Phoenix student to participate so tell your friends and family or bring them along. Cost will be \$25 per participant. See Lucy Mailloux Sensei for registration and payment. You can contact her through our website at www.AikidoOfPhoenix.com.

***SUGGESTED READINGS RELATED TO
AIKIDO***

Following is a list of books related to Aikido that you might find interesting. You are welcome to check out a book through the Chandler dojo or pick a title and check it out of a public library. You might even get lucky and find some of them at a used bookstore like Bookman's. Reading about Aikido from different perspectives can provide valuable insights. Different people/authors talk about the same things in different ways and one of them might use just the right words that will help you understand. Enjoy your reading. If you come across a good book that you think others would enjoy, please share it with Sensei so we can add it to our listing.

Abundant Peace - John Stevens
Aikido and the Dynamic Sphere - Adele Westbrook/Oscar Ratti
Aikido Basics - Lynn Seiser
Aikido for Self Discovery - Stan Wrobel
Aikido in Three Easy Lessons - Richard Moon
Aikido: The Heavenly Road - Kenji Shimizu
Art of Peace - Morihei Ueshiba (O'Sensei), John Stevens
Enlightenment Through Aikido - Kanshu Sunadomari
The Essence of Aikido - Bill Sosa

This is a great list with which to start your "off the mat" studies. Good luck and have fun!

***FOLLOW AIKIDO OF PHOENIX ON
FACEBOOK***

Become a fan of Aikido of Phoenix. Go to the Aikido of Phoenix facebook page and become a fan. Get all the latest and up-to-date information on classes and events.

Follow us here!



UPCOMING SEMINAR

Arizona Aikido's Annual Winter Seminar
with
Kevin Choate Sensei, 6th Dan
Chicago Aikikai

The Seminar will be held at Longview Elementary in
Phoenix
(SE corner of 12th St. & Indian School Rd)
February 19 - 21, 2010.

Schedule:

Fri. - 7:30 - 9:00
Sat. - 10:00 - 12:00
Sat. - 2:30 - 4:30
Sun. - 10:00 - 12:00

Fees:

Full Seminar \$90
Sat. only \$60
ingle class \$30

Register online at:
www.azaikido.com

For more information, call or email Don Crawford at:
480 - 456 - 0995 or AZAikido@cox.net

AoP T-SHIRTS COMING SOON!

We are in the planning stage of creating a new t-shirt for Aikido of Phoenix. It's been a few years since we've had a t-shirt for the dojo available. Once the details have been worked out we will begin taking orders. We will be going with a cotton/polyester blend t-shirt with a design on the back and our Aikido of Phoenix logo on the front. In the past the cost was \$15. We hope to keep it around that same price. We will have kids' and adult sizes. Watch for ordering information at your respective dojo.

AIKIDO OF PHOENIX CHRISTMAS PARTY AND AWARDS CEREMONY REVIEW

On Wednesday, Dec. 16 Aikido of Phoenix held its annual Christmas party and awards ceremony. It was a wonderful time with lots of good things to eat and plenty of socializing. It's nice to have a little time to just sit and visit. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend and for bringing such delicious food to share. December is such a busy time of year and we were pleased to see so many of you there.

The evening began with everyone having fun watching volunteers try to find various people in a modified version of Scavenger Hunt. During the last round we all learned what doshu means (*a direct descendant of the founder*). You learn something new everyday!.

The awards ceremony consisted of recognizing all the children for their hard work and dedication throughout the year by presenting them with special certificates. The adults had awards that were nominated and voted on by the students of their respective dojo. The categories were Most Improved Student and Student of the Year. The recipients for 2009 were:

Mesa dojo: Most Improved - Brandon Magda
Student of the Year - Jason Lee

Chandler dojo: Most Improved - Jonathan Scanlin
Student of the Year - Clement

Singarajah

South Chandler dojo: Most Improved - Karen Aguilar
Student of the Year - Amanda Redington

The evening also included a special visit from Santa, activities for the kids and visiting with each other.

We've been holding this end-of-the-year gathering for many years now and it's always a sincere pleasure to have as many students as possible gather together with their friends and families. It was a perfect ending to another wonderful year. Thank you.

AIKIDO OF PHOENIX WEBSITE HAS A NEW LOOK - CHECK IT OUT!

As of this month, the Aikido of Phoenix website has a new look. Chandler student and sempai, Daniel Horn, has worked incredibly hard on updating the site to better serve our students and promote our dojo. New to the site is a shopping cart that will allow online purchasing of uniforms, equipment, DVDs, and instructor fees. There will also be photo albums loaded with pictures from classes at each of our three locations as well as pictures and videos from special events and happenings.

Our website is www.AikidoOfPhoenix.com - check it out!