

KINOKAWA AIKIDO
PO BOX 205
EMMAUS PA 18049-0205

SPRING SEMINAR AT DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Saturday and Sunday, May 17th and 18th, the Drexel University Aikido Club will host the Kinokawa ryu Spring seminar with Hanshi Wirth. Please see the enclosed seminar flyer for registration information and details. More information can be found online, at the Kinokawa ryu events calendar:

<http://www.kinokawa.org/kinokawa/events.phtml>

KINOKAWA RYU BETHLEHEM DOJO OPENING IN MAY

After much searching, and a lot of hard work, the Kinokawa ryu Bethlehem dojo is ready to open its doors. The dojo is conveniently located on Linden St in north Bethlehem near Moravian College, Lehigh University and various other businesses.

In addition to the usual adult and children's Aikido programs, the dojo will host Yoga and our free, ongoing Women's Self Defense program. In cooperation with other organizations, Kinokawa is also working to provide stretching programs and other martial arts.

The class schedule, directions and additional information are on the Bethlehem dojo's web page at:

<http://www.kinokawa.org/dojo/bethlehem/>

A TEACHING STORY...

by Kyle Olinger

At Spring Camp 2003 I made the observation that the intensity of years past was sorely lacking among the junior students and later expressed this via email to Hanshi Wirth. He replied that my observations were not correct, that the training was as intense as ever, and that I was inappropriate in my being upset about my perceptions. This was the same camp that I tested for my third Dan, and I received congratulations from many junior students who commented that my technique seemed effortless, that I seemed tireless, and that I barely broke a sweat.

Flash forward to present day. I found myself pondering where all the black belts have gone, and why so many disappear when the rhetoric over the years of their



UPCOMING EVENTS

Sat/Sunday, May 17 and 18, 2008
Spring seminar

Saturday, July 26, 2008
Demonstrations at Sports-
Fest 2008

SUBMISSIONS

We welcome news and information! Please send submissions to:

newsletter@kinokawa.org

or...

kinokawa aikido
po box 205
emmaus pa 18049

ON THE WEB

Copies of this newsletter, including back issues, are available in PDF:

<http://www.kinokawa.org/newsletter>



practice has been that the true training begins at the black belt level. Of course life happens, people reach their goal of blackbelt, old injuries take their toll, and some simply move on; however, it was suggested to me by several senior students that the intensity just isn't there like it used to be within my own dojo.

I reflected on this for a moment, looking back at my own observations on intensity a few years back, and came to the realization that as new students we observe the seniors moving with grace and ease and want that for ourselves. We train hard to reach that level of understanding where we can move freely with seemingly effortless effort, and then we wonder at why we are no longer struggling. Aikido is not about physical struggle rather it is about letting go of, and getting past, the exertion that creates exhaustion. This in itself takes a lot of blood, sweat, and tears.

As I have stated many times in the Mt. Airy dojo the goal is to reach a level of awareness and skill that the focus can be put on the four principles of aikido according to Tohei Sensei. Keep one point, weight underside, relax completely and extend Ki. When you no longer have to think about how to move to execute a technique you can more readily focus on the four principles and move beyond the physical aspects of aikido.

To maintain high levels of endurance you need to workout outside the dojo i.e. running, yoga, heavy bag training etc AND continue to train in aikido. The exertion that was a constant in your practice is gone when you reach the higher levels because the juniors can't take the kind of throws that you are now capable of applying, and you are no longer struggling against yourself.

Congratulate yourself for attaining that level of skill. Take ownership of the power you have in your possession and move beyond the physical side of aikido. Whether you are working with junior students, or your peers, push yourself and focus on the four principles. I believe you will be amazed at where your aikido will take you. I know that I could not get enough of the sensation that I was experiencing, and it's up to you to push yourself to the next level. Physical exhaustion comes from struggle. When we struggle we are not in harmony with ourselves or others.

"True Aiki is to become one within your self; Body, Mind and Spirit. Only then can you become one with the Universe." O'Sensei

PRACTICE VS. REALISM; THOUGHTS ON MINDFULNESS

by Craig Constantine

While discussing randori practice with Hanshi Wirth, he expressed this thought which cuts to the heart of the matter of how students should train:

"... when it comes to randori, I prefer that our students move in no-mind. Much of our technique is intended to bring the student to a point where there is no time to think or be self-reflective. [Often,] no mention is made of the fact that a realistic defense requires a realistic offense. A spark is required, the chronic absence of which creates in nage a dependant dullness which will prove to be decisive when the chips are down. We can, however, use some kind of randori drill to get students more comfortable with the activity and to help them to acquire and sustain a broad situational awareness."

– Hanshi Michael Wirth