

# Around the Dojo

## Our Family Grows

I will start by congratulating and thanking all of members of the Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha Federation and their respective families, as that is what I perceive the SKWHF to be, a family joined by my teacher through his efforts, mine and all of the members collectively.

Through these efforts we have accomplished much in the course of the year. So much so that it would be impossible to list all now, but suffice to say we are growing stronger and getting better everyday. So much so that I am overwhelmed to say that we have taken on a new addition to the family.; Australian Shorinjiryu is now the Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha Australia Association! My heart is so full of enthusiasm and accomplishment on behalf of my teacher and my personal goals that I must thank you all! So, OMEDETO!

This being said, we have much to do and I believe the spirit and tools to do it. I know Kaiso would be proud and as such, so am I. Please welcome them as they have welcomed me and our continued quest into the true and unadulterated Shorinjiryu of Kaiso Masayoshi Hisataka. The excitement, dedication and sincerity of the Australian faction is truly refreshing and should be a comfort to all members to find such great people who share in our sentiment and fortune.

So as you read through this second issue of *Around the Dojo*, be thankful for those who do and ask what you can do as well. Enjoy, be well and pat yourself on the back. Now we can work toward reaping the full benefit of this historic year!"? !

Omedeto, Watanabe Shunji *Hanshi*.

## Federation News

Daniel Hayes *Shihan*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who attended the recent annual Yudansha / Federation organizational meeting this April. It was at this meeting that Watanabe Hanshi chose to share our good fortune regarding the joining of the Australian branch (Shibu) and thereby declaring us International and 10 schools larger! His excitement was overwhelming to all those fortunate enough to attend and I am sure we all found it worth our efforts to do so.

WE have much to do and we have a plan, tools and able minded enthusiastic leaders to accomplish much. I must say this is the most exciting time for the Kenyukai of Watanbe Hanshi in years (perhaps over a

decade)! As the Vice President for the administrative branch, I would like to extend my congratulations to those newly elected officers and of course to our new Australian Shibu family. I would also like to extend this to the newly appointed Saiko Komon (Chief Advisor) *of the technical branch*; John Salasko *Shihan*, Page Christis *Shihan* and Daniel Hayes *Shihan*. This is truly a great honor and opportunity to affect the future and direction of SKWH and to serve Watanabe Hanshi who has served us, so much, for so long. Domo Arigato Gozaimasu and Omedeto!

All of the appointments are listed on page 10 along with a brief job description for each of the position.

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### Upcoming Events

- April 28, 2007 - Watanabe-Ha Tournament, Baltimore, MD
- May 27, 2007 - Canadian Tournament, Montreal, Quebec
- August 4, 2007 - Island Budokan Bogujutsu Tournament - LI, New York
- October 9, 2007 - International Shinzen Shiai—Brooklyn, NY

## Problem Solved

by Peter McMahon Sensei

Recently I have solved a problem that has been plaguing me for some time. At the CJK Dojo we conduct 2 classes per week and I have been trying find a way to incorporate at least one more practice session into my schedule however demands of my job have left me even less time for family commitments and training than I previously had.

"Time Management" is a phrase heard often these days and it occurred to me that if I applied some time management principles I might find away to fit in another training session during the week. After analyzing my weekly schedule I was surprised and pleased to find that a few hours after work around 6:00PM and early mornings on weekends were "unassigned" and I could squeeze in a work out at home during these times. Great! Now I needed a mat area. This proved to be a much simpler solution and a source of more enjoyment than I expected. The picture shown is my solution and as you can see my backyard dojo is under construction.

It consists of a 22ft concrete octagon with a duratile

(recycled rubber) cover. It has 8" wooden poles wrapped in manila rope installed at the points of the octagon for a



traditional look and 2 of these poles will support a makiwara and a heavy bag station. Lights, walkway and fountain are soon to be added and also I am pleased to report that I have added 2 more

training sessions to my schedule. Shodan Donna Nemes and Christine Daniels are once a week regulars. This project born out of frustration has become a great source of pleasure. My two sons helped with the construction and my wife Barbara approved it-- Not an easy sell by the way since it sits in "her" yard. In any case if you call the house and are told that I am unavailable just be patient and I will return your call after my workout.

## Reflections on Japan

by Page Christis Shihan

In August 2006, I had the rare opportunity to travel to Japan with a native Japanese citizen for ten days. I visited the islands of Hokkaido and Honshu. Upon arriving in Japan, the six of us were separated and spent two days with a Host family. Land is a rare commodity in Japan, most of the homes we saw were practically sitting on top of one another. My middle class host family lived in a townhouse like building. The garage was so small that passengers entered the family van once it had pulled out onto the sidewalk. The Japanese people seem to always keep the toilet in one room and the sink in another. In our travels, we found that half of the toilets were extremely technically advanced while a few toilets that were typical in American homes and the rest were very primitive, consisting of a place to stand over a trough. We were impressed with the Japanese bathtub/shower room combination. The typical Japanese citizen bathes themselves either before dinner or after, but, the bath water is shared by members of the family. Each person therefore cleans themselves with the shower first, so that the bath water is not dirtied.

In Sapporo we observed only Japanese brand cars, the majority of which were either extremely small or mid-size. The Japanese roadways were very narrow and they drive on the left. The city of Sapporo is known for its Beer, Saki, blown Glass, and wood carvings. In addition to visiting both a Saki factory and a glass blowing, I also visited an all day Sumo wrestling tournament where I was able to watch the

wrestlers practice before the tournament. When watching Sumo wrestling on tv I had always been bored with all of the rituals. But at this tournament, the wrestlers kept things moving, they displayed brute strength, agility, and balance. I was surprised to see them utilize Judo's leg sweeps, Aikido's take downs, and Karate's escapes. I also saw a ceremony held for a wrestler that was retiring, the cutting of his hair. Sumo wrestlers do not cut their hair while they are competing.

The next part of the trip consisted of a bullet train from Sapporo to Kyoto, one of Japan's oldest cities. In Kyoto, we visited Nijo Castle (Nijo-jo) which was built in 1603 by the first Tokugawa Shogun, Seyasu. In order to protect the Shogun from assassination, several security devices were installed in the castle. There were wooded floors surrounding the main building. Metal clamps and nails were installed under the floor boards. The floors creaked when tread upon as a warning for the Shogun's guards. The building was also laid out in a maze like fashion making it difficult for an assassin to find the Shogun. There was also a moat and several high walls surrounding the buildings.

We then visited the Golden Pavilion (Rokuon-Ji Temple). In 1397, Yoshimitsu the 3<sup>rd</sup> Shogun of Ashikaga converted this temple into his retirement palace. On both of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the building was covered with gold-leaf on Japanese lacquer. The building was situation next to a

*(Continued on page 9)*

*Autumn Lightning, The Education of an American Samurai* is written in autobiographical manner, by Dave Lowry and describes his initiation into Yagyu Shinkage Ryu, a classical style of Japanese swordsmanship and offers insight into the traditional Japanese "student-teacher" relationship. The book is a neat blend of personal journey and the history of a martial way.

As a young teenager, Lowry learned of a "Japanese swordsman" living in the same University town. In the tradition of old Japan when a student seeks out an instructor, Lowry stopped by the house every day, asking the woman who answered the door if there was an instructor who would take him as a student. Lowry's persistence paid off and he was "adopted" by Kotaro Sensei, a master of Yagyu Shinkage Ryu swordsmanship. Early on his sensei proclaimed that, "More is expected of bugeisha than ordinary people."

Lowry instruction was by no means limited to the physical techniques of the sword. As the subtitle implies, Kotaro Sensei transformed this wet-behind-the-ears teenager into an "American Samurai." Lessons learned within and outside the dojo taught Lowry that a "samurai" has to live ALL aspects of his or her life to a higher standard. While his schoolmates were busy experimenting with drugs and worrying about the Vietnam war, Lowry's spare time was spent learning honor, respect, courage, virtue and justice through this sacred relationship between Sensei and kohei.

Lowry takes an interesting and very effective approach to the assembly of the book, alternating chapters that chronologically detail his experience and historical anecdotes about the martial arts that reinforce the lessons he learned. Lowry is a true

"master of the sword AND pen," his masterful re-telling of his experience almost allows the reader to experience the same struggles and joys he experienced, yet he keeps this writing accessible.

This book is outstanding because of its authenticity, clarity, and the humility. It is the privileged description of a traditional Japanese martial arts education undertaken by a mid-

*"This is an ingenious and compelling presentation of the medieval Japanese samurai spirit and its survival in modern America."*

- George Leonard

Western American. He places his education and training in its historical context, and

makes sense of it (from a Western point of view). I truly enjoyed this book.

## Congratulations to the following for their recently announced promotions

### Nanadan

Page Christis  
Daniel Hayes  
John Salasko  
(Listed alphabetically)

### Shodan

Eugin Cherskansky  
Kirill Solovyev  
Robert Van Oostrom  
Don Yu

## Kid's Corner

by Kevin McLoughlin

**2006 Beach Workout**-This year for the beach workout, I felt it went very well. The weather itself was so nice. Everyone there I felt, pushed themselves to their own limit. I know I did! For me, part of the challenge is to get myself and others motivated to work harder than the year before. A goal I also like to achieve each year is to keep up with the higher belts a little better than the year before. I felt I did good with that I tried my best to. I also find I

always learn new things from the year before, that is always fun for me. Each year it feels good to know we have the sunrise workout to show our dedication to Sensei Dan, for all he has taught us each and every day. I love helping the younger belts try to stay focused and then to see the following year how much progress they have made within themselves. I felt it was a big success, the barbecue that followed was fun, we had plenty of good food and we got to

play football in the sand. I had fun doing that. I feel we were all there to push ourselves further than we imagined, to show our dedication to Sensei, and to Kaicho. I really look forward to next summer when we have another opportunity to show our potential and how much a year has made with all of our progress.



# Shorinjiryu Karatedo Australia Proud to Become Part of the Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha Family

Des Paroz Sensei

Shorinjiryu Karatedo Australia was formed in the late 1970's by Shihan Laurie Vanniekirk, a long time pioneer of karate in Australia who became a follower of Shorinjiryu after reading the book *Scientific Karatedo* by Hanshi Masayuki Hisataka. After reading the book, Shihan Laurie traveled to Japan where he trained with Shinan Kori Hisataka and Hanshi Masayuki Hisataka, before returning to Australia and founding Shorinjiryu Karatedo Australia. Currently Shorinjiryu Karatedo Australia is under the joint leadership of our Chief Instructors, Shihan Jim Griffin, 6th Dan and Shihan Max Estens, 5th Dan. We have 10 dojo running in



locations along the east coast of Australia, between Cairns in the tropical north to Sydney in the south, with our largest group centered around Brisbane.

In the mid-1990's Shorinjiryu Karatedo Australia became an independent school of Shorinjiryu. Having become disillusioned with the sporting focus that Shorinjiryu was taking in Japan, and with other aspects of the direction of the hombu, our Australian organization determined to refocus on the roots of Shorinjiryu and try to maintain and ultimately get closer to the teachings of Shinan Kori Hisataka. In time, Shorinjiryu Karatedo Australia became a member of the Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai, and our members have participated in three International Shorinjiryu Shinzen Shiai events. We are proud that we are part of the Shinzen Kyokai, as we believe it is an important glue that is bringing together many disparate Shorinjiryu groups, worldwide.

In October 2006, six of our number visited the US, and spent several days training with Kaicho Watanabe, Hanshi Myron Lubitsch, Shihan Dan Hayes, Shihan Page Christis, Shihan John Salasko, Shihan Vincent Capers, Jr and other senior Shorinjiryu Karateka at dojos in Baltimore, New York and Long Island. Key among this was our days spent in Baltimore with Kaicho Watanabe and his team of Shihan and Sensei. In this time we saw and learned Shorinjiryu

Karatedo from a direct student of the founder, who has kept the original teachings pure. This was a turning point for us, in that we could see what we had long suspected - that the teachings of Shinan Kori Hisataka have been changed significantly in the Kenkokan organization in the years since his retirement and passing.

After a heady two weeks in the States, where the other highlight was our visit to New York and participation in the 20th Annual Shorinjiryu Shinzen Shiai, we headed back to Australia, with lots of new (old) material to absorb and practice.

In March 2007, we had the great honor of hosting Kaicho Watanabe, Shihan Dan, Shihan Page and Sensei Richard Alicea to our shores. Here they gave 150% of themselves, participating in our National Training Camp (3 days), plus evening training sessions in Brisbane and even a one day trip to Sydney where they also trained at a local dojo. We were inspired by the energy and talent of these fine karateka.

During the visit, we were humbled and honored that Kaicho Watanabe invited our organization to become part of the Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe Ha Federation. We were delighted to accept this invitation, and in many ways we have come full circle. We are closer now to the teachings of the founder, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to become students of such a fine karateka and wonderful human being as is Kaicho Watanabe. To have such wonderful people as Shihan Dan, Shihan Page and Sensei Richard to also support us is incredible.

So, we are setting forth on a new journey. As Shihan Jim Griffin stated we are now "making progress by returning to the roots of Shorinjiryu". We look forward to working with all the members of the Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha family. If any of you are visiting Australia in the future, please feel free to visit and train with us. Your instructor will have contact details for us.

In closing, thanks to Kaicho Watanabe for your leadership and willingness to invite us into your organization. Also to Shihan Dan for your vision, and Shihan Page for your support and patient teaching. And of course, to Sensei Richard, well, thanks for your special ability to impart humor.

We should also pass a thanks to Hanshi Myron Lubitsch, whose friendship and support continues to be instrumental to us, and whose vision for the Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai is a major factor in bringing Shorinjiryu Karatedo Australia into the Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha family.

One man's sacrifice is another man's privilege. Have you ever given thought to this "truism?" Somehow it reminds me of John F Kennedy when he said, "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." It seems to me that we are currently at the proverbial crossroad, the one that either makes or breaks an organization or family.

This topic of moral and ethical responsibility seems to be a touchstone for anger and discomfort. Unfortunately those in question rarely see it as such. If something is in any way foreign or inconsistent with their pre-conceived notions or routine it is automatically a **sacrifice**. To show dedication to a person or organization by attending a function ultimately held for your benefit, or to publicly (or privately) recognize those who came before you is not deemed a sacrifice in Budo, but rather a moral obligation. This obligation is not to the person honored, but rather to yourself, your family, and your dojo mates so that all may share and grow in the shadow of what the entire group and its founders and nurturers have offered.

This appears to be a Western cultural trait. How often have you seen a guest at a party complain about the temperature, food, or music? They demand all sorts of concessions be made so that they may be inconvenienced as little as possible. I have seen this on all too many occasions. Not only do we accept this behavior, but by so doing, we teach it

by example.

I am reminded of a young man years ago testing for Shodan who was asked, "What do you do for Shorinjiryu and / or your dojo?" His reply upset and embarrassed all of the Yudansha present. "I help teach and practice, of course." He was not promoted. All of us know that this is a privilege, an opportunity to learn and practice ourselves and moreover, a privilege of obligation. If the dojo is gone because of a lack of Sensei or Senpai, then where do we go? So to teach or assist is a golden opportunity to train *yourself*. To teach, and to be afforded the opportunity to practice on your Sensei's students, is indeed an honor and a privilege, not a sacrifice. This same concept can be applied to not only your dojo, but also tournaments, clinics, events, family, and work. Instead of seeing dreaded obligations, we should be viewing them as opportunities. Unfortunately this concept is apparently very foreign to most. In order to teach it to others, we must first practice it ourselves.

Perhaps we need to re-consider our understanding of commitment and better think about how we define our sacrifices in the face of those of another. Particularly when we eat at their table. Look at your leader, father, mother, Sensei. Look up to them, applaud them, support them, and thank them most fervently for their willingness to embrace their **privilege**, for this is what you stand on daily.

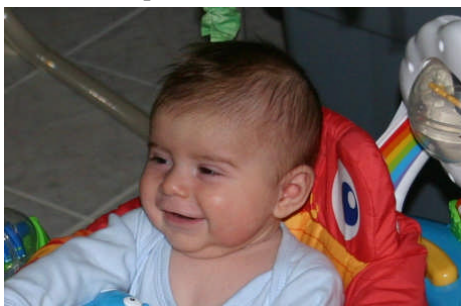
## News from Central Jersey

On February 17 2007, the Central Jersey Karate dojo hosted their annual Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha tournament. We had 94 karateka from 7 schools actively participate in tournament events, which included Kata, Kumite, Weapons Kata and Shiai. Proceeds from the tournament went to support the Hombu dojo in Baltimore.

## Newest Members of the SKWHF

### IT'S A BOY!

Luca Milana, son of Sensei Maurizio Milana and his wife Monica arrived on January 3rd of this year at a healthy 8lbs 14oz and 21 inches. Luca has been working on squats for the last couple of months for his round house kicks, and



using the (once secret) Shaolin knuckle hardening technique of coating one's knuckles with saliva for many hours a day.

### IT'S A GIRL!

Tamara Irene Dammons, daughter of Sensei Larry Dammons and his wife Yuliya arrived on January 21st of this year at a lovely 7lbs 8oz and 20 inches.



It seems to me that we spend much of our lives trying desperately to be taken seriously. As a child, we encountered that ill thrown phrase, “he’s just a kid...” like a knife in the heart. As a teenager we heard, “wait ‘til you’re older and you have real problems.” As a college student, “when you graduate and get a real life.” When your job is not the conventional, “When are you going to get a real job?” Does any of this sound familiar?

Thirty four years ago I began my practice of Shorinjiryui Karate-Do. I have a “successful” school, I have helped many, sacrificed much to attain what proficiency and knowledge I have, competed with and against some of the best practitioners alive today, trained some of the others, helped change the course of Shorinjiryu and therefore Martial history, yet people ask me when I am going to get serious with my life. Sound familiar?

I was recently confronted with, “Man, you sure take judging seriously!” at an affair following a recent tournament where I had been give the honor to judge. I was perplexed by the assertion that there may be another way to proceed with judging. It occurred to me that perhaps this person shares the view of many and that perhaps I should share my understanding with this opportunity.

In my dojo, the karate-ka practice very hard. They take themselves and their practice very seriously. They attend events to learn of themselves and to help teach others by example. This is their venue to be taken seriously. This is *ichi go ichi e*, a moment or opportunity that does not ever repeat itself. A one-time, one-moment event which can change the very essence of everything they believe in. They are trusting me to help them, respect them, and believe in what they are trying to accomplish. It is more than difficult to put it on the line, as most of you know. As a judge, I am also insulted that competitors would avail themselves of this opportunity light heartedly. Karate is something that I have practiced for most of my conscious life, and I presume we have a kindred understanding. So I expect to learn from you. When you bow in, I see your intention and judge accordingly. I try to teach with my actions, not words (*te ho no shimasu*.)

I propose that you consider competitions have a long history and are a development of training that has much validity in the legacy of the martial arts.

Finally, I suggest that you all take yourselves very seriously if you expect others to take you seriously. Karate is not just a hobby or sport, and you are not just a participant. You are Karate!



One of the highlights of our journey to Australia was afforded us by Des Paroz *Renshi*. He is close friends with possibly the most prolific and respected occidental Martial researcher, author and practitioner of our time, **Patrick McCarthy *Hanshi***. It was most fortunate for us to be offered the opportunity to have lunch (which turned into the entire day) with him and pick his brains. We toured his home, dojos and office. Never had we met a more cordial, humble and gracious host. He was so open with and polite to Watanabe *Hanshi* and all of us, he even gave many copies of his publications and even autographed them! I know none of us will ever forget this day and we would most emphatically like to thank both Des Paroz *Renshi* and Patrick McCarthy *Hanshi* for your time, patience and hospitality. You can find out more about Mr. McCarthy as an entire chapter is dedicated to him in ***Karate Masters***, Jose Farguas (Unique Publications) and by visiting his web site at [www.koryu-uchinadi.com](http://www.koryu-uchinadi.com). **Domo arigato gozaimashita!**

## An Impressive Beginning

by Martin Becker *Sensei*

Sachie Jolley, a 61 year old grand mother of two, began taking lessons at Japan Karate Center in December 2005. Her grandson Christopher, was already taking lessons from Watanabe-Kaicho. While watching Christopher at practice, she realized that karate would be a wonderful way to spend time with her grandson, sharing a common experience, plus a great way of getting exercise. At the 12th Invitational Island Budokan Bogujutsu Tournament in New York, Sachie won 1st place for kata in her division. She was an inspiration to all who saw her for her grace and focus. She demonstrated that karate is for all who choose to take up the challenge. Sachie enjoys Karate for many reasons. The

valuable exercise, the good friends she has made through Karate, learning proper self defense and of course being taught by patient, considerate Black Belts. The years of experience and effort shared by the upper ranks of Karate with beginners is what makes Karate so unique. The discipline and dedication of the Black Belts is an inspiration.

For the many hours the Black Belts at the Japan Karate Center spent teaching her proper technique and movement, Sachie is very appreciative. Her doing so well in her first Tournament is a direct result of the quality instruction provided by so many.

I started learning martial arts for spiritual development, not for the purpose of self-defense or the physical part of it. There were certain questions that I was looking for answers to. Not that I have yet answered them but that was one of the main reasons for me to begin the life-long journey that is called – Karate. I have read a few books about different types of martial arts and one that has had a tremendous influence on me is *Zen Way to The Martial Arts* written by Taisen Deshimaru Roshi. I personally recommend to all my friends who have not yet read this book to do so. The

Deshimaru Roshi truly reveals the secrets of Japanese Medieval Warriors also known as a Samurai. The main idea of this book, as I understand it, is that Martial Arts teach us how to live, while Zen teaches us how to die. Zen has influenced Budo tremendously and vice-versa. I do not think, at least for myself, that it is possible to learn one without the other. To learn Karate, without learning Zen. What a great waste of time. Overall, this book is very easy to read; nothing scientific or mysterious just simply come back, as Deshimaru Roshi stated, to our true nature. Good luck.

## Kid's Book Review: Angry White Pyjamas

By Michael LaBalbo

Angry White Pyjamas, by Robert Twigger, is set in Tokyo in the early 1990s. Rob Twigger is an Oxford poet who moved to Japan to further his writing career. He teams up with fellow foreigners Frank and Chris and they share a dilapidated apartment. Realizing that he has no discipline in his life, Rob convinces his roommates they need a change. He suggests martial arts, and after much discussion, the trio decides on Aikido because of the Zen elements of the art. The three friends eventually enroll in the one year long riot police course of the Yoshinkai Dojo.

The book follows the three friends as they improve both mentally and physically. As the characters progress, they learn how to test themselves. Sitting in seiza for an hour was traumatizing to most of the students. The pinnacle of the book is the final exam. Rob initially panics when he is told to do a technique that he does not recognize. He makes a mental picture of the Japanese words cobbled together and he completes the technique. Rob is sure he screwed up but he is amazed to find that he passed. I really liked this book and I think you will too.

### Did You Know?

In addition to his martial arts training, Sensei Anthony D'Avino is also an award winning artist. He was recently awarded two BOLI (Best of Long Island) awards for his New York Philharmonic poster. These awards are presented by the Long Island Advertising Club and were for Best Poster and Best Illustration. Congratulations!

## Interval Training

by Anthony D'Avino *Sensei*

As a former wrestler in college and high school, I learned early on that you never set foot on the mat unless you are in top condition.. Too many martial artists are concerned with " technique" and overlook their general "physical conditioning." Bruce Lee experimented with interval training, back in the sixties. Interval training consisted of training, by moving from one activity, to the next, with very little rest between sets. The following schedule was developed, by Bruce, for one of his students who was entering one of the first full contact tournaments. The student went on to win the competition by knocking out his Thai Kickboxer, opponent, but was disqualified, for kicking the guy, while he was on the floor, even though the rules did not prohibit it. This routine would be pretty hard to just " jump into" but it serves as a good model to work up to.

### **Bruce Lee's Interval Training Program**

1. Road work.....Jog one minute / sprint 30 seconds / walk. one minute. As many sets as you can.
2. Shadow kickboxing...3 minutes with one minute rest
3. Skip rope...5 minutes with 1 1/2 minutes rest
4. Heavy Bag...3 minutes with 1 minute rest / individual punches plus combinations
5. Heavy Bag...3 minutes with 1 minute rest. / individual kicks plus combinations
6. Light Bag...3 minutes with no rest / individual punches plus conditioning
7. Shadow kickboxing...2 minutes / loosen up

Depending on how many running sets you do, this will take from 32 - 47 minutes.

I started practicing karate at the age of 38, when my 5-year old son asked to take karate lessons. I wanted to get more exercise and thought karate would be an interesting way to do that. We joined Central Jersey Karate together, along with my two daughters. Eight years later I am the only karateka left in my family.

My early years of practicing were tough, to say the least. I was never a very graceful person, and seeing other students move fluently through the techniques left me feeling clumsy and awkward. I felt like my middle-aged body was deeply ingrained in moving only certain ways, and that the demands my karate practice was making on it were too difficult to achieve. There were many times during that early period that I drove to karate class with trepidation. Would I be able to follow the series of techniques that Sensei John or Sempai Pete were instructing the class to perform? Would I remember the steps of the kumite I learned at the prior class? Would I be able to perform front kicks repeatedly up and down the length of the dojo without my lungs bursting? Would I even make it through the warm-ups? Each class I hoped that Sensei John wouldn't turn to me and tell me to quit, that I was wasting my time.

As I practiced karate, never did it occur to me that I would one day reach ik-kyu level. My goal was to improve my techniques, learn more challenging katas and kumites, become more physically fit, and relieve some stress in my life. I am humbled by the thought that even as I improve, there is still so much more to learn and some things that I will never be able to accomplish in my training. In many ways I feel as if I am still a beginner. But I do get a great sense of accomplishment when I realize that four rounds of shiai doesn't wipe me out, or when a Sensei from another dojo comments that I have improved.

Even now, as I to continue to progress, I feel that my practice is still not easy. As I grow older, injuries take longer to heal. At times, the bruises I get are so noticeable that I get concerned comments from others about my welfare. Karate also pulls me away from other important things in my life. Many times I have felt guilty about missing a school function for one of my kids to attend a karate class (or missing a karate class because I had to attend a school

function or birthday celebration!). Business paperwork seems to fall to the wayside as I type up something for karate class. The day after each karate class is spent dragging myself around, because I get to bed late on class nights, and I wake up at 4:45 AM to get ready for work the next day. My weekly visit to check on my mom (she needs a lot of help since my dad died because she can't get around very well) cuts into my time to practice on the weekends. Trying to sandwich in some practice time after work gets to be next to impossible when there is dinner to make, shopping to do, kids to chauffeur, housework and laundry to do, paperwork to complete, and homework to supervise. This tug of war between karate and other aspects of my life even infiltrates my mind, as important dates and appointments slip my mind as I mentally practice my kumite, or wonder what I can do to improve my side kicks.

I often wondered why practicing karate could make me, a normally calm and self-assured wife, mother and working professional, so insecure. I often struggled with the guilt that practicing karate causes me to neglect my family, my house and my business. But I never wondered why I didn't just quit practicing. Somehow I knew, even with all the injuries, the self-doubts, and stomach-churning events, that karate was good for me. It was good for my body—keeping it, flexible, strong and aerobically fit. It was good for my mind—it opened me up to new ways of thinking. And if it's true that using your mind helps prevent dementia, I'm well on my way to avoiding that condition. The feeling that I get after a hard karate workout is immeasurable; any stress that I had during the day has melted away, leaving me with a profound sense of calm. And the warm sense of camaraderie I feel, both in my own dojo and throughout the Shorinji-ryu community means a lot to me.

Practicing karate is probably the hardest, most challenging thing I have ever had to do in my life. They say that the harder it is to accomplish something, the more satisfying it is when you achieve it. But even more rewarding than achieving it is the journey itself. To be able to challenge yourself on a daily basis is incentive enough to continue to practice, even when you feel as if you're not progressing as fast as you like.

## Of Tournaments and Giving Back

On November 18, 2006 the Island Budokan Dojo held their 12th Invitation Bogujutsu tournament. More than 100 competed in kata, shiai, kumite, and weapons. Demonstrations in Yagyū and Iaitō were given by Kazuo Kato *Sensei* and clinics in chanbarra and origami were arranged. Parents organized a bake sale and the children arranged a food drive. After a wonderful day of competition the Best

Spirit awards were presented to Yairon Silfa (Child) and Stephanie Coleman (Adult). The Island Budokan dojo was most pleased to be able to provide an SUV load of food to the Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and more than \$2000 which was split between the Hombu Dojo and the LI Ronald McDonald House. The dojo also held a toy drive in December to benefit the John Theissen Children's Foundation.



## Reflections on Japan (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

pond. The mirror reflection of the Golden Pavilion made the view breathtaking. The next stop on the tour was to the Kyoto Toei Movie Land (Uzumasa Eigamura). It is a Japanese theme park where visitors can observe the filming of period dramas. Numerous movies and over 200 television period dramas are filmed at the park every year. Visitors were able to walk through Edo era towns and see actors dressed as geisha and samurai warriors.

We then took a train south to Hiroshima. We visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The city of Hiroshima was the location the U.S. military dropped the 1<sup>st</sup> atomic bomb on August 6, 1945. We were very surprised that the Japanese Government admitted that their military had caused the start of WWII with the United States by bombing Pearl Harbor. We were also surprised that they admitted that their military generals at the time were the aggressors and had invaded other countries like China. The focus of the memorial was the necessity to eliminate all nuclear weapons to avoid further suffering of mankind. We then took a ferry to the Island of Miyajima. Miyajima is “One of Japan’s Third Most Beautiful Spots”. In the harbor was the O-Tori (Grand Gate). The grand gate can be found all over Japan and is meant to keep out evil spirits. Miyajima had many temples and its period piece town was geared for tourists. What we

found most unique is the island is inhabited by hundreds of tame deer. While in Miyajima, we stayed in a traditional Japanese Inn. We slept on futon bedding laid out on tatami mats. We were told that the rectangular tatami mats were made in standard sizes. The size of a room could be determined by counting the number of tatami mats that were present.

Our trip ended with a train ride to Tokyo which is an extremely large cosmopolitan city. It was rather disappointing to arrive in a major city after visiting so many charming towns. In Tokyo, I toured the grounds of the Emperor’s palace and the Ginza District, known for its trendy fashion stores.

The Japanese people eat a wide variety of cooked, steamed, pickled and raw food that Americans are not accustomed to. They eat Salmon, Eel, Octopus, Fish eggs, and crabs among other things. I tried to avoid eating as much Japanese food as possible but was largely unsuccessful. I was forced to eat many foods to avoid an “International Incident”. Whenever possible, I shared my food with my teacher who ate very well, she gained weight while I lost weight! In conclusion, my trip to Japan was most enjoyable. We saw many sights and experienced living in another culture. What made the trip most successful was traveling with a Japanese citizen that was able to guide us along the way.

### College Here they come!

**Edward Christian**—Cornell University

**Alexandra Daniels**—Undecided

**Christina Daniels**—Middlesex Community College/Raritan Bay Medical Center Nursing Program

**Jesus Rincon**—SUNY Albany

**Jack Zangara**—Siena College

## Request for Material

For those of you who do not know me, my name is Richard Alicea and I am a Sandan under Daniel Hayes *Shihan* at the Island Budokan Martial Arts Academy on Long Island, New York. I am also the Archivist for the Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha Federation.

At the present time I am gathering photos, films, videos, and memorabilia of past and present seminars, clinics, tournaments etc so as to create a chronology of Shorinjiryu and its participants as directed to me by Watanabe *Hanshi*.

If you have (or if you know of anyone who has) any such material I request that you send them to me to be included in this project. The materials cannot be returned so please either send a copy or make a copy for yourself. Wherever pos-

sible, please provide identifying information such as event name, location, date, participants, any special awards or commendations, etc. Please forward all material to either of the following:

Richard J. Alicea

107-60 111<sup>th</sup> Street

Richmond Hill, NY 11419

- OR -

Island Budokan Martial Arts Academy

P.O. Box 184

Centereach, NY 11720

Domo Arigato.

## A Faint Description of the Nature of Things by James Lynch

How do you define good and evil in a world where existence implies perfection?

Lives spent in search, only to find the search was perfect.

Time can be infinite or instantaneous.

Perception is the key.

Perspective is the answer.

Question is the answer.

Mind cannot escape the effects of unity.

Mind defines reality, and has no function at all.

All ideas are the same, rationality manipulates.

Zanshin in chaos.

## SHORINJIRYU KENYUKAI WATANABE-HA FEDERATION

President—Shunji Watanabe  
Vice President—Daniel Hayes  
Treasurer—Page Christis / John Salasko  
Secretary—Richard Alicea  
Newsletter Editor—Stephanie Coleman

*Spiritual development of individuality in mind  
and body.*



## Shorinjiryu Kenyukai Watanabe-Ha Federation Officers

### **President**—Shunji Watanabe

Cornerstone of the Organization. Sets the tone and direction of the Federation. This position not only leads but also reflects the organization in its entirety.

### **Vice President**—Daniel Hayes

Responsible for implementing the tasks set forth by the President and acting in his stead when necessary.

### **Treasurer**—Page Christis / John Salasko

Responsible for the fiscal health of the Federation. Forecasting, fund raising account maintenance, etc.

### **Secretary**—Richard Alicea

Responsible for acting as the networking agent for all Federation positions. Has a direct link to all regional and international information in order to provide pertinent information for decision making parties.

### **Archivist**—Richard Alicea

Responsible for creating and maintaining a catalog and collection of all articles produced and representative of SKWHF.

### **Quartermaster**—

Responsible for the storage, maintenance and dissemination of all material owned and utilized within the SKWHF.

### **Communications Director**—Stephanie Coleman

Responsible for disseminating all SKWHF information in a timely and consistent manner.

### **Events Coordinator**—Stephanie Coleman

Responsible for maintaining an accurate schedule of all global SKWHF events. Assist in their planning and implementation.

### **Public Relations Director**—Daniel Hayes

Responsible for the public image of SKWHF.

### **Tournament Director**—John Salasko / Peter Guarascio

Responsible for consistency and quality for all SKWHF events including codifying rules, safety, and training of officials.

### **Newsletter Editor**—Stephanie Coleman

Responsible for producing and ensuring quality of a bi-annual publication.

### **Ombudsman**—Edward Hitchcock

Legal advisor to the SKWHF nationally and to the dojo affiliates on an advisory basis.