

Connections

The Newsletter of Abundant Peace Aikido and T'ai Chi School

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Upcoming Events

Special Training: Friday, May 11th, from 6:30 to 9:30 PM; our theme will be some of the learning gleaned from the Imamura Shihan Seminar which several of us recently attended at Aikido of Missoula. Imamura Shihan proved to be a very gentle yet powerful teacher, with an especial emphasis on natural movement and a unified body. These events always offer friendly and stimulating training. Join us for a fun evening of training and camaraderie with other fellow Aikidoists!

16th Anniversary Gathering: Monday, May 21st (Victoria Day). To celebrate the significant milestone that is our 16th Anniversary, we will enjoy a “day at the range” where, under the supervision of a professional instructor, we will learn to work with handguns. No experience is necessary, and all hearing and eye protection will be provided; spaces are limited, so sign up today!!

David Goldberg Seminar: June 2nd and 3rd, 2012. The second annual of these, this seminar is an excellent opportunity to engage in some deep and valuable training without having to incur the expense of travel. Details are available at the Dojo; as we are the sponsoring Dojo for this special event, we will need strong support from all. This seminar is not to be missed; first because we are the sponsors, and second because the training is outstanding!

Greetings from my office; I find myself once again apologizing for a late publication of our monthly newsletter. I was away in Toronto for about ten days, and upon my return have been digging through the accumulation created by my absence. Even from a distance I continue to marvel at the healthy and vibrant energy of the Dojo Community; this is a rare thing in this world, a place where so many different people can integrate into an atmosphere of mutual respect... and feel a sense of belonging, without being forced to conform to another's idea of what is acceptable. Treasure this, and nurture it.



Promotions

We congratulate as well the following aikido students on their advancement:

Kids:

Jr. 14th Kyu: Nigel P; Jr. 11th Kyu: William H, Brynn G.

Adults:

9th Kyu: Kyle J; 7th Kyu: Donna P; France M; Don F; Andrey P; Scott C. 6th Kyu: Leigh F; Chad F; Chad S.

We recognize as well the achievement of our T'ai Chi Beginner Class, on reaching the second “cross hands” of the Yang Set. Congratulations and well done!

Remember our Library, named for a member of the Canadian Forces, Corporal Francisco Gomez, who was killed in Afghanistan. The Library exists for all to enjoy.

Missoula-View From a White Belt

As many of you know, Sensei Brad heads to the South – Missoula, Montana – with many students to go learn in an Aikido Seminar. Usually the big group of Missoula Seminar goes is in September. Watching the “glow” from fellow students after last September’s seminar, I thought “wow, I want some of that too” so I decided sometime in February to partake in the April trip. I had a couple of months with my inner thoughts, creating more insecurities... I’m just a white belt, I have to wear a hakama (dark blue flowing pants for my Tai Chi readers), so many people with so much more knowledge than me, it’ll be expensive, driving 10+ hours... So I prepared myself the best way I thought I can – study hard, ask questions, buy another Gi (you don’t want to wear a wet gi for the afternoon session), google Missoula, get maintenance on the car, etc.

The drive there was actually not too bad. We were 4 – myself, Sensei Brad, Reg, and Chad (aka “one of The Chads”, “spiderman Chad”, “the tall Chad”)– excellent for travelling! With driving shifts of about 3hrs and co-pilot on “guard”, I got to know my traveling “buddies” quite well – did you know that Chad has his Realtor license? that Reg has an interesting fear? that Sensei Brad has... sorry, you’ll have to travel with him to get to know him better!

Missoula, what can I say about this town that you can’t google for yourself? Beautiful houses, landscaping, parks, old buildings... The town is surrounded by rolling green hills. It’s like Jasper, but bigger, without the busloads of tourists, with an excellent selection of varied restaurants, from your greasy burger joint to your vegetarian needs. There are a lot of Casino’s! I saw real Frat houses! There are microbrews galore! Many really cute stores selling a variety of eco-friendly articles! Beautiful Tea stores, book stores, coffee shops, clothing stores, artisans... I’m so glad I got some time to shop and judging by how full the back of my car was, so was everyone else!

We stayed at the Days Inn, reasonable price and we are well liked there. They even offered us a beer fridge but were disappointed when we said we wouldn’t need it, we were only 4 and didn’t bring “that” group (you know who you are). Super nice owners, really nice couple! The Inn was right across from the Dojo, very convenient for the change rooms are crowded. We would get dressed, minus the hakama, in our hotel room, scoot across the street, up one set of stairs, and bow in.

Coming back to my initial “insecurities/white belt thoughts”, the moment I walked up those stairs, I was welcomed like a family member (the good kind). Big sincere smiles, guided tour by one of the Ladies. Just like a great big Family reunion. I asked one of my new friends, how do we know where to position ourselves for the initial bow in, everyone wears hakamas so you can’t see the belts? She replied, “we are all equals”. I blended in like, like, a vegetarian baked fajita dish we had at the potluck supper Saturday night (need that recipe!). The seminar learning was not too physical and you learned a lot with and from your partners. By the way, the best spot for 1) viewing is in the middle front; 2) air circulation in the AM is front right side; 3) air circulation in the PM is front left side; 4) day 3 “leg pain day” is middle back! Ya, I tried the mall. The format was similar to our classes, listen/view then find a partner and practice. There were at least 60 people of all ages, sizes, knowledge, etc. I was impressed by the number of women practitioners, I figured 35% if not more. I did not feel big, or fat, or clumsy, sweaty yes (it was +27°F!).

Sensei Brad asked me on the way home if I can tell him the one thing that I got out of this seminar. Hmmm, one thing, just one! I told him to give me a few minutes to think. My thoughts – ya relax, don’t use muscle, fill in the space, only need 1 finger, shiho nage, and the list goes on. But, really, just one? I went back to the first flash thought I had when he asked me and then I told him – I felt like I belonged.

France M.

NEWS AND EVENTS

The Beginner T’ai Chi Class will celebrate reaching the second “cross hands” of the set with their second “Noodle Night” sometime in May. These events are always well attended, and are always open to any member of our community. These are a great opportunity to enjoy a great meal and build some connection

Training supplies such as uniforms and weapons are available for purchase through the School. These items are chosen by Sensei Brad for their quality, value, and suitability for our training level and environment. Prices are reasonable and quantities limited, so see Sensei today.

Keep an eye on our web site at www.abundantpeace.com to stay current and to check out new content! It is always kept fresh by our Web Master; in addition to the regular events pages and the like, there are always new videos and articles.

Great News!! Mitsugi Saotome Shihan is scheduled to return to Missoula, Montana, for his annual Seminar on the 28th through 30th September 2012. This is always a great event; one you don’t want to miss, so mark your calendars now!

Victoria Day Weekend is fast approaching; we need Senior Students in both Aikido and T’ai Chi to volunteer to cover classes through that weekend. *Note: there will be no classes on Sunday, May 20th!* Aikido students: if there is sufficient interest we will hold a Holiday Morning Keiko on the Easter Monday, with our customary breakfast to follow....if these are possible before range day, so let us know!

