



The Feminist Karate Union is a 501c3 non-profit

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FKU Punchline

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FALL 2009

Fun at PAWMA Camp *by Jennifer Sweigert*

I had been told for years that I should go to PAWMA camp. Last year, I finally went for the first time, and it instantly became an annual event for me. This past year was my second camp, and just as inspirational as the first. For those who might not know, the Pacific Association of Women Martial Artists sponsors a weekend camp each year for (obviously) women martial artists up and down the Pacific coast, including British Columbia. This year, camp was held at the Stampfer Center outside of Olympia, and was attended by women and girls from as far away as Israel. Classes were given in goju style karate, tai chi, meditation, aikido, and many other styles of martial arts.



In addition to enriching one's training with techniques and activities from other martial arts, the camaraderie of the camp just can't be beat. Once there, I realized how unusual it is to be in the presence of 100+ other women who understand the joys and benefits of training. This year, I followed a plan I came up with last year, which was to combine classes in styles similar to our own shito-ryu karate, with classes in styles that were different enough to feel outside my comfort zone. In familiar classes, such as goju style karate, it feels good to relax while learning something new but not too different. Classes like tai chi or street fighting, so different from what we do at FKU, are inherently more stressful, but stretch the brain and have an enlivening effect.



The tables now have turned. I am now one of those encouraging people to attend PAWMA camp, and have even joined the PAWMA Board. Next year's camp will take place July 30-August 2, 2010 at Menlo College in Atherton, California. More details will be available at the dojo in the new year. If you want to have a fantastic weekend of training and connect with both new friends and the ones you train with every week, PAWMA camp is for you!



Coming Soon -- Kickathon 2010! See Page 8 for more info.

PROMOTIONS

KARATE-DO

13th Kyu-ho: A'Miyah Barquet; Henry Cladouhos; Aidan Lee; Jacob Linden; Tatiana Linden; Azure Savage; Ryan Tjoa

10th Kyu-ho: Juliet Ahrens-Siegel; Cora Donadio; Jeana Kimball; Adela Parra

10th Kyu: Renee Agatsuma; Annie Hosch

8th Kyu: Sarah Baker; Kelly O'Hara

7th Kyu: Mack Beveridge

6th Kyu: Audrey Musselman-Brown

5th Kyu: Nick Hall

4th Kyu: Galen Chuang

3rd Kyu: Amelia Hooning

2nd Kyu: Maggie Hargus; Jennifer Sweigert; Nancy Yamaguchi

KOBUDO

4th Kyu: Maggie Hargus; Amelia Hooning; Eileen Michel, Nancy Yamaguchi

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If I forgot you, just let me know and I will put it in the next newsletter. Thanks!

-- Eileen



Kanji Review

Text and Calligraphy by Nancy Yamaguchi

KIHON KATA ICHI, (Foundation Form Number One), and ICHI NI SAN SHI GO, (Numbers One through Five)

The first kata we learn in our style is *Kihon Kata Ichi*, meaning "foundation form number 1." This is written as follows.

The word KIHON appears as the top two kanji, KI being an eleven-stroke kanji meaning foundation, basis, root or standard. The bottom three strokes in KI are the radical for "earth." This makes intuitive sense, since the basis for any foundation would be solid earthworks. The second kanji is the five-stroke HON, generally meaning book, but also meaning source or origin. This compound is similar to the kanji for "tree," except with a short line across

the bottom, which gives the connotation of a tree's root or base. Incidentally, HON is also appended to items and used as a counter for round or cylindrical objects. This character is recognizable as the second part of NIHON, or Japan, with NI meaning "sun." The name NIHON therefore indicates the land of the rising sun.

The third kanji is KATA, meaning form, model, or type. The upper left four strokes are a frame for construction. The two strokes to the right of the frame are the *katana*, or sword, in a standing position. The standing sword gives the meaning of "to act" or "to make." The bottom three strokes are the earth radical once again, reinforcing the idea of works upon the earth.

The last stroke is simply ICHI, the number one. This is a graphic representation of an abstract idea. NI, or two, is two strokes, while SAN is three strokes. ICHI, NI, SAN, SHI (or YON) and GO are drawn here in order from top to bottom. Kihon Kata Go would be written simply by substituting GO, or five, for ICHI.

Writing Japanese calligraphy is similar in some ways to performing a kata: Each stroke in a word must be drawn in order, and the stroke directions from left to right or up to down are critical. In a kata, each move must be performed, and all moves must be performed in the proper order and in the proper direction. In *Kihon Kata Ichi*, for example, the first move is to the left, with a downblock then a punch. It cannot be to the right, and it cannot be a punch and then a backtrack to the downblock. Our kata are intended to help us hone our skills, combining stances and movements with a variety of blocks, kicks, and punches, starting with basic techniques and progressing to the more advanced. Good basics are the foundation of a good kata. With training and study, the karateka then learns to breathe life into kata, for as Sensei Mabuni taught, *kata* are the heart and soul of the art.

Training in Hawaii -- 2009

by Eileen Michel

Training in Hawaii has its ups and downs, but all and all is an amazing experience. Since training hard in karate and lazing around on sunny beaches are two of my favorite things, I had very much been looking forward to my trip to Hawaii this year. I had been to the All Hawaii Tournament and subsequent training once before, so I had some idea what to expect, and as before the first big hurdle to overcome was getting through the tournament. The All Hawaii was even more of a big event than usual this year, as it was the 50th anniversary, and this was shown by the number of people competing, not to mention watching. OK, to be honest – in some ways the experience was not always pleasant. It was noisy, hot, very crowded, sometimes confusing and chaotic, *long*, and at times rather boring. However, for me these negatives were far outweighed by the fact that it was also challenging, invigorating, and in the end electrically exciting, as I watched what I realized were some of the best karate-ka in the world performing right there in front of me, live and in person, so much better than on Youtube! I had seen videos of some of these same martial artists, but seeing them in person made me feel that they were transmitting some of their energy and skill to me directly. Of course I do realize that we have to work hard to develop our skills, and can't just pick them up by osmosis, but there is something about watching an exciting performer live, in a highly charged situation, that makes it seem like I can internalize some of what they are doing, and make it my own.



In any case, towards the end of the tournament, just when my energy was flagging, things started to get really interesting, with an amazingly high level of skill demonstrated in the advanced divisions. For example – one of the young black belt women did a kata that involved doing what appeared to be a crane stance as seen in our Rohai kata, holding it very still for what seemed like forever, then from that stance doing a side kick to head level, fast and with great snap and focus, then going *back* to the crane stance without putting the kicking foot down, and again holding it with perfect balance. Then she did a couple of other moves, and then repeated the same thing with the other leg, without wobbling a bit. Wow! I felt like asking her for an autograph based on that move alone, and she didn't even come in first!

The tournament culminated with the men's sparring championships. Actually I was a little disappointed that I missed the advanced women's sparring, but by that point just about everything that was going on seemed exciting. There are so many men's sparring divisions that they really have to work to prove themselves! The first place winners of each division have to spar each other, it seems like over and over again. This is one of the things that was confusing to me, all I know is that they just kept sparring and sparring, then finally it was
(continued on p. 7)

Yes! I want to help FKU support women and children in martial arts.

The Feminist Karate Union is a non-profit organization and your donations help us fulfill our mission of providing affordable, quality martial arts training to women and children.

Enclosed is my gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____

Comments: _____

On Ranking and Promotions *by Sensei Aleeta*

Over time I have gotten a lot of questions about the ranking and promotion system used in this school. As students achieve higher ranks, the criteria for promotion become more subjective and students become more assertive. With more advanced students, questions have become more frequent and harder to answer, (and in a few instances—you know who you are—pretty pointed) so I thought it would be good to address some of these concerns in the newsletter.

A ranking system is important because it allows one to measure one's progress in learning the art, and generally gives encouragement and satisfaction, especially to beginning students. Unfortunately, the system and process can also be confusing, may seem unfair, and often provokes anxiety and frustration. This is particularly so at the higher levels where criteria for promotion are much more subjective than at lower ranks.

Promotions are based on a large number of criteria, which typically are not written down as such, in keeping with the ancient traditions of the martial arts. However, most of the criteria before brown belt and black belt are easily found in the lists of kata and kobudo necessary for promotion at each rank and in the 7 principles of IKF.

While some of the criteria for promotion are objective, others are subjective, as mentioned above, and still others are relative. Subjective qualities that must be evaluated are: 1) the physical, which includes speed, power, strength, reflexes, timing and focus, 2) the intellectual, which includes concentration; (knowledge, memory and understanding of kata are of course objective and much easier to evaluate), 3) spirit and attitude, which include confidence, focus, awareness and discipline, and 4) miscellaneous, which includes growth, effort, the willingness and ability to change, and contributions to the school.

Relative ability absolutely must be a consideration in our evaluation process. This factor, I believe is one of the biggest causes of confusion about promotions. A good example is age: 8 year olds are not held to the same emotional, physical and intellectual standards as 30 year olds, but they can be promoted through the ranks nonetheless. Over 50, or even 40, students are not held to the same physical standards as teens. Occasionally teen students do not have the physical ability that some older adult students do. This is always taken into account. While everyone is expected to attempt to improve in all areas, abilities in one area can make up for lack of ability in other areas. Showing the desire to improve and making an honest attempt is critical.

Please let me make an analogy. Let's say that a karate student's potential is like that of a water glass. The glasses do not all hold the same amount, but each one can be 90% full, and 90% makes the equivalent of black belt. Let's further say that water is physical skill, juice is intellectual skill, sugar is spirit, and crushed ice is miscellaneous. Varying combinations of all of these can add up to 90%--according to the availability of the ingredients. Of course, not all people have the same potential, and promotion is earned by much more than simply physical skills. In fact, if all a student brings to the table for consideration of promotion is physical skills, that student will not last long in our system.

No, not all karate students are equal, not all black belts are exactly equal, even at the same rank. That is impossible. Not all karate students have the same intrinsic ability. Not all human beings have the same intrinsic ability, but we all deserve respect and the chance to better ourselves. Most students can develop a combination of the aforementioned skills that will help them to rise through the ranks as long as they are willing to keep working.

(Continued on next page)

Sensei Aleeta on Rank (cont. from previous page)

Is the system easy to see and understand, particularly as one is coming up through the ranks? Is there a book somewhere in which this is all written down? Is there an easy and completely objective way to make certain that everyone is always promoted 100% correctly and fairly? Would all IKF Instructors agree with each other's promotions 100% of the time? Am I 100% perfect? Sorry, the answer to all of these questions is no. But I *will* say that I love this school, and I love all of my students. I always try my hardest and best and I always work to improve in everything I do. So thanks to those of you who question me and take me to task when you don't agree with me. It keeps me on my toes and makes me continue to examine myself for areas in which I can improve. Please, everyone—if you have a concern about, a frustration, or a problem in your training, please let me know. Helping students is my only job here.

In the spirit of the martial arts,

Sensei Aleeta

Tuition Reminder and a New Way to Pay

Tuition will be due for January on January 1st. You all have the choice of either paying by the month or by the quarter. If you pay quarterly, you get a 10% discount on your tuition, so 3 months will cost you just \$229.50 instead of \$255. The offer to pay quarterly IS ONLY AVAILABLE AT THE BEGINNING OF JAN, APRIL, JULY, AND OCTOBER (at the beginning of each quarter, or every 3 months). So, decide now about this quarter. I will continue to send out tuition reminders on a monthly basis, and reminders that quarterly payments may be made just prior to the beginning of each new quarter.

If you have any questions or concerns about that, please get in touch with me and we'll try to sort it out together.

Also, up until now we have only accepted either cash or checks (and money orders) for tuition payments at the dojo. However, you may now also pay online via PayPal, which means you can pay with a charge card. To use your Visa or Mastercard, go to <http://www.FeministKarateUnion.org/TuitionPymt.htm> . PayPal charges us a fee for the convenience of using it and we pass along that fee to you so that we get our whole tuition payment, thus you will note that the tuition amounts listed for the PayPal payments are more than regular tuition. The difference is the amount of the PayPal fee.

Some Food for Thought, AKA Cliché Corner

- I fear not the (man) who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the (man) who has practiced one kick 10,000 times. -- Bruce Lee
- A black belt covers about 2 inches of your (butt) -- the rest is up to you. -- unknown wise person
- In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities. In the expert's mind there are few. -- Shunryu Suzuki, Zen master/monk/student

ATTENTION KARATE STUDENTS - THE BOARD NEEDS YOU!

a message from Donna Hargus

The Feminist Karate Union is an organization that relies upon its members for its well-being. As a non-profit organization, it is very like a co-op in that every member has something necessary and useful to offer to the whole. For a long time, there has been a core group of members putting in a great deal of time and effort to manage the myriad needs of our school. They have done stellar work and have kept the FKU afloat and growing. However, it is now time for an influx of new effort. More is needed to see our school strongly into the new decade ahead.

The Feminist Karate Union is a non-profit organization. As such, it is headed up by a volunteer Board of Directors. These Directors help to provide the vision and wherewithal to steer the course of our organization. Our bylaws state that our Board of Directors will consist of a minimum of 5 Directors up to a maximum of 9 Directors and that 3 Directors shall be training adult students. We are currently in great need of new Directors. The Board's former Treasurer and President have both stepped down from well over 4 years of service each. These positions must be filled by law. Therefore, the Board is especially in need of Directors willing to serve in the capacities of Treasurer and President of the Board.

I am writing to ask that each of you consider serving as a Director on the FKU Board. No special training or experience is needed. Your perspective as a member of the dojo is more than sufficient to make each of you a fine addition to the Board. You are the very best experts regarding what the dojo needs, what would make the organization and the training better. You are in the best position to look ahead to what you'd like to see in the next year, the next 5 years, and in the next generation of the FKU.

As the Board grows in numbers and strength, its work can grow as well. With additional Directors there is the option of forming committees to better address the needs and hopes of the Board and the membership. Committees provide opportunities for more members to participate in the vision and realization of the school's future.

Your dojo needs YOU. Your service to FKU is what makes the organization work. Please contribute to the membership by taking your turn in service. Board meetings are always open to any and all who care to attend, so come to the next one to see a meeting in action (Weds., Jan. 13th). Meetings are currently held the 2nd Weds. of every month at 6 PM at the dojo. The Annual Membership Meeting will be held next month; January 23rd, immediately following the Kickathon. Elections to the Board of Directors are held at the Annual Meetings. Please put your hat in the ring for service to your dojo.

I would be very happy to speak to any of you who may be interested in serving the dojo. Please get in touch with me. You should also feel free to contact any of the current Directors for any information you may want about the Board.

Many thanks to all -

Donna Hargus, Office Manager, Feminist Karate Union

on behalf of the FKU Board of Directors: Aleeta Van Petten, Tracey Drum, Charlie Smith, Laura Mueser, Kirsten Rook

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down to two guys, and one of them won and he was given the well earned title of Overall Champion. (You can Google 'Diego Vanderschrick' if you would like to know more about him, though it would be helpful to know French or German, since many of his competitions have been in Europe.) In any case, he must certainly be the world's takedown and sweeping champion, because none of his opponents ever stayed on his feet for very long! This made for some fast and furious action, with many slams to the floor, but fortunately his opponents were also very good, so no one got hurt. I also particularly enjoyed that there were several matches where the much shorter fighter beat his taller opponent, and a few where the much older guy beat the younger. Yay short people! Yay old people!

After all of this excitement, it was nice to have a day to relax on the beach on Sunday before launching into a week of intensive training. Not counting driving time, we usually spend about four hours a night actually training. I quickly learned to go a bit more moderately than I normally would in the earliest class of the evening, or I would never make it through! Each evening starts off gently enough, with the 4:30 class consisting of many beginners, some of them very tiny, though there are usually also plenty of brown and black belts to help out and get a workout themselves. By 9:00 at night things are at their most intense, with many national and international champions in our midst, which is humbling, to say the least. One of the highlights for me was on Tuesday night, when they had a demonstration of three different pairs of fighters, all or most who have won international championships at one time or another. One of them was Diego, the "tournament champ". (When we were leaving I said a few words to him, and told him I was sorry I hadn't had a chance to spar with him, but "maybe next time". He was gracious and did not laugh.) Two of the six were Elisa Au and Eimi Kurita, and watching these two top female fighters sparring with one another -- and holding their own when paired with the men -- was another high point. I thought back to the days when my first teacher, Py Bateman, had to fight for the right to even spar in class, not to mention in tournaments! I felt as if I had gone through some kind of time warp, seeing into the future when two women could be sparring at that level, but also knowing that that future had arrived, and I felt very happy and fortunate to be seeing it.

At one point I will admit I got a little frustrated and downhearted, feeling that my karate was really pathetic in comparison to some of the others, but that didn't last long. After a good night's sleep and another morning of swimming and sunning, I felt energized and uplifted again. I was training with some of the best people in the world, in one of the most beautiful places in the world. How fortunate!

If you would like to expand your horizons as far as what it is possible to achieve in karate, I highly recommend a week of training in Hawaii! Scholarships are available.

Newsletter Submissions are also Needed

As previously stated by Donna, this school is us! This newsletter is your newsletter! I would like to invite all students, regardless of rank or age, to think about your experiences of karate, and to consider sharing some of your thoughts in this newsletter. Maybe you don't like to write, or don't think you're good at it, or maybe you're just a little kid and haven't even learned how yet. Don't let that stop you! If you don't feel up to writing anything yourself, let me know what you want to say and I will help you put it down in words. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- How it felt or feels to be a new student at FKU. What it was like on your first day. What you hope to learn.
- Experiences at FKU events, such as tournaments, Summer Camp, or PAWMA Camp.
- Things that you like about karate. Ways karate has helped you in the rest of your life.
- Problems, frustrations, or challenges you have had with karate, such as injuries or feeling stuck, and what you did or are doing to deal with them. How your training goals have changed over time.
- Karate related jokes, cartoons, or drawings.

I think you get the idea! Please feel free to talk to me or any of the teachers if you think you might have something to say. You can be sure that whatever is on your mind, someone will be able to relate to it! Eileen Michel -- Newsletter Editor

Events Calendar

Jan 13 6-7 PM	Board Meeting
Jan 22 7-9 PM	Advanced Training
Jan 23 10 AM to Noon	Kickathon Fundraiser
Jan 26-27 7-9 PM	Adult Class Evaluations & Promotion Test
Feb 10 6-7 PM	Board Meeting
Feb 12 7-9 PM	Advanced Training
Mar 10 6-7 PM	Board Meeting
Mar 12 7-9 PM	Advanced Training
July 30-Aug 2	PAWMA Camp Menlo Park, CA
Sometime in April	Spring Demo

Attention Karate Students (again) Get Your Pledges in Now, for the 2010 Kickathon!

It's not too late to help raise money for your school, by getting your friends, neighbors, relatives, and casual acquaintances to pledge towards your magnificent effort of performing 1005 KICKS! How could they say 'no', especially when you tell them what a great school we have, and that their contribution will enable us to continue to provide high quality and affordable karate to women and children. FKU is a non-profit organization. Proceeds from the Kickathon will be used for scholarships, partial subsidization of travel required for advanced training, and dojo improvements. Prizes will be awarded to the top three fundraising students! <http://www.FeministKarateUnion.org/KickathonDonations.htm>

Board of Directors

PRESIDENT AND
TREASURER POSITIONS
ARE OPEN

Members:

Aleeta Van Petten
Tracey Drum
Laura Mueser
Kirsten Rooks
Charlie Smith

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Donna Hargus
Newsletter:
Eileen Michel



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*Come discover your
strongest self*