



PUNCHLINE

Feminist Karate Union – 1971 - 2011
Still Going Strong After 40 Years!

January 2011

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Two for
Edmonds
Tourney
Results!



Tournament News *by Nikia Fenlin Antioquia*

The Feminist Karate Union made a strong showing at the 2010 Pacific Northwest Karate-Do tournament this year! We had a total of nine competitors in both the juvenile and adult divisions. Additionally, Sensei Aleeta and Sensei Kim acted in their capacity as judges.



Elana and Maggie

The tournament seemed well organized, with many attendees. For those who have not attended a tournament before, the divisions are divided fairly extensively by age, sex, and length of time training, which leads to many, many divisions. Some of these are extremely small. Case in point: the female, beginner 19-34 division had exactly 2 participants: Adela and myself. To add to the confusion, on the actual day of the tournament the administrators will recombine some divisions, seemingly at random and often at the last minute.

Generally, there tends to be more participants in the 18 and under divisions and the 18-34 advanced divisions – those who competed in those divisions could have 15 or more fellow competitors, as opposed to one or two competitors.

Overall, everyone involved seemed to have a good time. Renee reported that she used the downtime between her divisions effectively, and got a ton of grading done. She also enjoyed the competition aspect, and will compete in future tournaments.

This was her first tournament. Adela stated that this tournament was more fun than previous ones due to more FKU participants, and it was great having so many of us there together. Eileen and Jennifer mentioned there was an unusual number of participants in the 35+ advanced female division, and that the average sparring level was very skilled.



Adela, Nikia, Renee, Eileen, and Jeana

PROMOTIONS

KARATE-DO

1st Yellow Stripe: T'aira Bardwell-Alford; Christopher Betz; Daniel Chizhikov; Fiona Davis; Madison Dusseau; Jack Griffith; Formosa Huang; Ariel Igielski; Hailey L'Heureux; Jordyn Hubbard; Truth Jones; Taifa Lane; Andy Miller; Piper Nay; Brady Olsson; Radu Richardson; Jasper Toms

10th Kyu-ho: Rebel Luna-Robinson
Justin Zhang

8th Kyu: Renee Agatsuma; Regina Cairns; Nikia Fenlin; Jeana Kimball; Elana Mabrito; Adela Parra

7th Kyu: Nikia Fenlin

6th Kyu: Kelly O'Hara

1st Kyu: Maggie Hargus; Eileen Michel; Jennifer Sweigert

KOBUDO

10th Kyu: Renee Agatsuma; Nikia Fenlin; Kiernan Lee; Will Mueser;

Adela Parra

9th Kyu: Kiera Azar; Elana Mabrito; Kelly O'Hara

8th Kyu: Elana Mabrito

3rd Kyu: Jennifer Sweigert

2nd Kyu: Eileen Michel

1st Kyu: Maggie Hargus

Fall Tournament, continued...

Edmonds Tournament Results - Fall 2010

Adela Parra - gold in kata, silver in kumite, silver in kobudo

Amanda Rose Smith – gold in kobudo

Eileen Michel - bronze in team kata

Elana Mabrito – gold in kata

Jeana Kimball - gold in kobudo, bronze in team kata

Jennifer Sweigert - bronze in kobudo, bronze in team kata

Maggie Hargus - silver in kobudo

Nikia Fenlin Antioquia - gold in kumite, silver in kata, bronze in kobudo

Renee Agatsuma – silver in kobudo

Congratulations to everyone who participated! Upcoming tournaments on the schedule for 2011 are the Edmonds AAU tournament in April, and the Hayashi-Ha tournament in June. I hope we can beat our current participant record for the Pacific Northwest Karate-Do tournament!

Sacramento Tournament – June 2010



Amanda Rose, Maggie, and Khaye (IKF Kitsap)

Hawaii Tournament 2010

Amanda Rose and Elana also participated in the All Hawaii Tournament over last Thanksgiving weekend, and spent some time training in Hawaii. They were far too busy to take any pictures or write any newsletter articles, but by all reports they did very well!

New Years Eve Training 2010



LEFT TO RIGHT:
Joanne, Jennifer, Renee,
Kelly, Eileen, Kinny,
Amanda Rose, Elana,
and Kim

Two Hundred Classes Later *by Adela Parra*

I first stepped into our dojo over a year ago. When I first stepped in, I was still wearing my sweatpants and was deciding if I was going to just watch or if I was going to actually participate. Initially awkward and shy (which is totally not me) I decided to follow along with the class and immediately fell in love! By the end of the class I had decided that this was definitely what I wanted to do with my evenings.

It started off as a hobby, or something to do when I wasn't traveling for work, but it soon became part of my life. There were many days that although exhausted by work I would go home, grab my gi and head out the door, not even giving myself the opportunity to even question if I wanted to go to class, but determined that I had to.

I had a steep learning curve the first couple of months, turning the right way, blocking over the proper leg, memorizing my first katas, it was overwhelming, but I got over it relatively fast. I was getting more confident and just when I was about to congratulate myself on my early accomplishments I was reminded of all I have yet to learn. Soon I realized that my toes don't obey my brain's commands, my elbows don't bend far enough and that my shoulders and knees move in funny and unexpected ways...

Regardless of how tired I am, how sore my arches are or how bruised my ego (or forearm) is I keep going back. I think that the feeling of accomplishment after mastering something that took months, or the anticipation of learning something new make every class interesting and exciting, like learning something new every class.

I think I've learned a lot in this year, I don't mean just katas, and techniques, but knowledge that transcends the dojo. I've learned to be humble and not be too quick to pat myself on the back, I've learned to be patient, that everything takes hard work and a lot of practice, that in this world of instant gratification some things worth knowing takes time, that quitting won't get you anywhere, that work is not my life, that you can make the best of friends over shared interests, but most of all I learned that taking that first step or taking that first class could change your life.

When I think about how my life changed from that 1st class to what I estimate will be my 210th class this Thursday, I can't help but think how many lives this dojo has changed in its 40 years of existence. I am grateful for all that I have learned from the wonderful women who train here. I look forward to another awesome year and another couple hundred classes more!

Insights Gained Along the Way *by Kiera Azar*

I was first invited to P.A.W.M.A. in 2008 and then again in 2009. Each of these experiences would prove to be magical and powerful for me as well as providing me with insights about myself and lessons I still find valuable.

When Sensei Joanne Factor, first approach me about going to PAWMA I was more than a little nervous. I did not feel I had the finances to attend but that roadblock was quickly removed. I was offered a scholarship through PAWMA. (Thank you Sensei Joanne for your encouragement, and thank you PAWMA for your help.) I was also a little concerned about being in an unfamiliar environment due to vision issues. I travel with my friend and guide dog named Pagoda. I really had nothing to worry about.

There were so many great classes to choose from that first year that I had a difficult time deciding. It was suggested that I try classes that sounded interesting and taught skills that I might not learn at my own dojo. Really good advice. (Lesson one: be willing to be a little uncomfortable.) The class that caught my attention, that sounded very intriguing and a little magical was The Way of the Sword, led by Kore Grate and Naomi Munzbeer.

We started off the class with introductions and a meditation on focus and relaxation. We were asked to look out into the horizon and pick a point to focus on. We were then asked to relax our eyes so that we could take in more visual information all around us. I adapted this exercise to my own needs. I chose an energy point to focus on. I then relaxed my whole body, not just my eyes. For me, in that moment, everything became still, with no sound, and all internal dialogue stopped. What stopped was all the chatter about how this exercise should be, like "Am I doing this right, is this the correct way to do it?" All the self-doubt stopped. (Hold this thought - we'll get back to it in a moment).

We then continued on with sword basics. We went over points like how to put the sword into the sheath, how to remove it from the sheath, and the proper way to hold it. We also covered the proper stance to take while holding the sword. Although it felt like an awful lot of information to take in, when I got stuck, one of the assistants came and helped me reposition my hands. I appreciated this very much, because an experienced swordswoman I am not. I appreciated the willingness of the instructors and the other students around me to assist me in positioning my hands and stance. All of this information became very useful in setting up the last exercise in the class. This is what we were asked to do: We each found a partner, and we were each given two bamboo chopsticks. We were also given a white sheet of paper. It was explained to us that the paper would become the sword, and that we would slice through the chopstick with this piece of paper. (You can just imagine what my internal dialogue was about!). Remember that little meditation exercise I mentioned earlier? This would prove to be extremely valuable.

We took our piece of paper, we folded in half, and then in half again. We were asked to hold the piece of paper as if it were a real sword. Remember the game we played as children - Rock, Paper, Scissors? Where the rock smashes the paper? That was what was going through my mind. So I took my paper sword, and I brought it down on the chopstick, once, twice. The first time I was locating the chopstick by feel only. The second time, I was going back to the meditation, where I found that energy

Continued on Next Page

Kiera (continued from previous page)

The second time, I was going back to the meditation, where I found that energy point to focus on. I relaxed my whole being. All sound stopped - all the chatter of my own and other people's doubt. I brought the paper sword down onto the chopstick. Indeed, paper cuts wood.

This lesson in focusing will come back around again in the next year's PAWMA.

You can imagine my excitement when I was invited to attend PAWMA again in 2009. I was a lot more at ease, I knew more about what to expect and I was excited about going for the pure pleasure of learning. Again, I chose classes that seemed really interesting, and offered skills I wouldn't learn in my own dojo. As I was choosing classes, I saw one that sounded intriguing and powerful to me. That was the breaking class offered by Kristen Kleinsasser. I was really excited about taking the class; I had never tried anything like that before.

Again, we had a short introduction to the different ways you could break wood - a palm heel strike, an elbow strike, and even a front kick. We were told the various stances we could take. Then we got partners and broke up into small groups. Sensei Joanne was willing to work with me, and suggested I use a palm heel strike, because it is a fairly easy strike to use for the first time. She explained that I should imagine my target on the other side of the board, and not stop. Oh, by the way, I'd like to mention that Sensei Joanne chose one of the smaller boards, explaining that a smaller board would be easier to break. So I took my zenkutsu stance. My internal dialogue went like this: "I've never done this before, I'm not sure I can do this, etc." So I went back to the meditation we learned in the sword class. Found that point of energy, entered that space where all voices drop away, and did a palm heel strike, and broke the board.

But that isn't the true lesson here. The true lesson happened after I broke the board. Sensei Joanne asked me if I would like to try again; and this time she grabbed a larger board. Remember my internal dialogue - "small board, easy to break, large board, hard to break"? I was so pleased with myself for breaking the board the first time that I didn't go back to the meditation, so didn't break the second board. It was a good lesson on the importance of maintaining focus.



Kiera, Pagoda,
and Sensei Kore Grate
At PAWMA Camp

Switching Schools *by Elana Mabrito*

When I was at Lowell Elementary School in Seattle, I would walk past the school gym on the way to the bus. Inside would be a group of students, in their gis, getting ready to start karate practice. I was interested because I did karate at another dojo closer to my home in North Seattle, Minakami Karate Dojo. Little did I know that, eight years later, I would be joining the very same group, the Feminist Karate Union, to continue my development as a competitive karate student.

The eight years at Minakami Karate Dojo were life changing. Under the instruction of Shihan Akio Minakami I was able to progress to second-degree black belt. I competed in USANKF Karate nationals two years ago and I give credit to Shihan and Minakami Karate Dojo for helping me achieve this level.

In the past two years, however, I realized that my needs were changing, and I had to look for an organization that would support my athletic growth. As a 14-year old blackbelt, I was anxious to fight other girls my age, so as to truly prepare myself for competitions. Finally, in January 2008, I attended a seminar at Northgate Community Center taught by Sensei George Kotaka. I called Sensei Aleeta soon after that.

Because it was such a difficult decision, it took me about a year to decide to make the transition. I feel incredibly lucky to have the training of two such wonderful dojos behind me and I am really glad I made the decision I did.

I hope to honor the Feminist Karate Union by carrying its traditions forth. FKU has supported me in a way I've never felt before. Sensei Aleeta and Sensei Joanne have been very gracious in making time to train me. I've really enjoyed the camaraderie with the other students in both the kids' and adult classes. With the Feminist Karate Union, I feel I am firmly on my path to reach my goals.

Yes! I want to help FKU support women and children in the 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: _____

Board of Directors

Board Notes –1st Quarter 2011

The current Board of Directors will have served for one year at the end of January 2011. They have been a very productive and busy Board, moving FKU to a new level of organization and operation. The year's accomplishments include:

- *revamping the financial operations systems,
- *moving FKU accounts to a new bank,
- *creating and operating within a budget
- *setting up new scholarships and reviewing financial aid offerings
- *creating a scholarship committee
- *effecting dojo improvements:
 - a changing area for the boys
 - reorganization of the office & women's changing room

Elections for the Board will take place at the Annual Meeting on Feb. 12th. There will be 3 open positions and 3 Board members asking for re-election to continue to serve. One of the open positions is the Treasurer's position. We must have a Treasurer and hope some of you will consider not only serving on the Board but especially serving in this capacity.

Board goals for the coming year include further improvements to the dojo space (painting, more reorganization & upgrades), and putting on the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Feminist Karate Union.

CHAIR:
Sue Williams

TREASURER:
Open

Members:
Richard Farr
Eileen Michel
Laura Mueser
Aleeta Van Petten

OFFICE MANAGER:
Donna Hargus

**NEWSLETTER
EDITOR:**
Eileen Michel

Scholarships Offered by FKU

FKU has long offered financial aid in the form of tuition discounts and scholarships. Scholarship forms are available on the dojo floor in the brochure display or from the office. The Board has created a new Scholarship Committee to oversee financial aid requests. Any FKU student may and is encouraged to apply for financial aid at any time of need. Specifically, aid may be requested for general tuition discounts, either temporary or long-term, travel to black belt testing in Hawai'i, and for ongoing karate training costs of any sort for our black belt senseis. The Scholarship Committee will consider aid requests in complete confidentiality and will review requests on a yearly basis. If you are in need or if you have any questions about the financial aid program offered by FKU, please contact the office or any Board member for more information.

New Credential

Sensei Joanne is now certified by the Positive Coaching Alliance for completing Double-Goal Coaching I: Coaching for Winning and Live Lessons. Joanne reports that in the future this certification will be required for coaches and refs in AAU tournaments.

NEW - Boys' Changing Area!

The Board is very happy to see the completion of an enclosed changing area for the boys training at the dojo. Up till now the boys have had access, one at a time, to the dojo bathroom for changing. Now, the west end of the seating area on the dojo floor can be closed off to allow all the boys to change in privacy at once. Soon to come are individual cubbies so the boys can store their gear there as well. We hope this makes the transition to & from class go more smoothly for our fellas.

Events Calendar

Wednesday, February 9th	Board Meeting 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Saturday, February 12th	Kickathon, Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections, Pizza Party 9:30 A.M. - Noon
Wednesday, March 9th	Board Meeting 5:30 - 7:00 PM
Friday and Saturday March 18-19	IKF Black Belt Test Honolulu, HI
Saturday, April 2nd	AAU District Championships Edmonds, WA
Wednesday, April 13th	Board Meeting 5:30 - 7:00 PM
Sunday, May 1st	40th Anniversary Celebration and Spring Demo Miller Community Center
Saturday, June 4th	Hayashi-ha Tournament Bellevue, WA
September 2-5	PAWMA Camp Seattle, WA
Saturday, October 22nd	Pacific NW Karate-do Classics Tournament Edmonds, WA

Advanced training and black belt test practice will be held **every Friday evening**, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM, through March 11th.

Dates for the 2011 Adult Class open hand and Kobudo evaluations TBA. Open hand evals are usually held in January, May, and Sept/Oct, so please plan accordingly.

PAWMA (Pacific Association of Women in the Martial Arts) Camp will be held in Seattle this year, which is a rare occurrence. Female FKU'ers of all ages are encouraged to attend!

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