

May 2011
Monthly Communication
Sensei Cline, NW Region Director

Throughout life, there are many goals and milestones that we strive to achieve; we earn a diploma, we earn one or more degrees, we decide upon a career, we earn a black belt, choose to marry, decide to raise a family, develop hobbies and passions. These are just some of the goals or milestones that mold or shape our character. If you believe that character continues to evolve and develop as you age, then you know that there is always room for improvement and the process does not stop just because you have reached one or most of your goals.

Individuals who choose to make karate training, or martial arts, a lifetime endeavor, know there is no end to learning, therefore, there is always room to further develop your character. Think back to when you first began training, how important it was to earn the next kyu and a new color belt. The time it takes to advance through all the kyus and dan ranks, is the time it takes to realize what really matters, not rank, but the person you have become or are becoming.

Life experiences help determine who we are, and the way we interpret each experience and incorporate it into our character is influenced by dedicated physical, mental and spiritual martial arts training. Training affects our thoughts, our decisions, and the way we live our lives. The guiding principles help shape and steer us in a direction that calls for justice, fairness and selflessness.

Challenges present themselves each and every day and the way we deal with these challenges, in turn, changes us. We learned from the niju kun that 'it takes your entire life to learn karate' and we know that the opportunities to grow and develop are endless. This, in itself, is a message of hope, knowing that learning is endless, regardless of our physical limits.

Niju Kun

Karate-do no shugyo wa iss sho de aru: It will take your entire life to learn karate.

Kata of the Month

Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced: Tekki Shodan, meaning "iron horse # 1", has 29 movements; the kiai points are movements 15 and 29.

Black Belts: Gojushiho- sho, which means "54 steps – minor", has 65 movements; the kiai points are movements 57 and 64.

Technical Focus

Tekki Shodan: shifting to the side in a straight line, making power without shifting or stepping

Gojushiho-sho: striking techniques including seiryuto (ox jaw), uraken tate mawashi uchi (round house back fist), tate empi (vertical elbow), soto and uchi shuto mawashi (outside – in and inside-outside knife hand) and blocking techniques including kakiwake (wedge block), tate shuto (vertical sword hand), bo (stick), keito (chicken head wrist)

Instructor Spotlight, Cogen Bohanec Sandan



Although my desire to train in Karate started when I was a young child, I did not have the opportunity to pursue my calling until I was 20. After a couple of years of training in various different martial arts, and being dissatisfied with several different schools, I began training with Sensei Callahan at the Santa Rosa Junior College in 2000. The reason I chose to stay with the ISKF and Sensei Callahan was the high technical standards, the solid lineage, and in particular how Mr. Callahan focused on the psychological/spiritual/social aspects of the art that I felt was lacking in the other dojo's that I had tried.

For many years I would go to his morning classes about 3-4 days a week. He and I would train before class for an hour with him on one side of the room and me on the other. He would often come over and correct me, but I mostly benefited from observing how diligent, mindful and supremely disciplined he was in his own practice. Also, because this was a college course, semester after semester he would repeat the importance of following the dojo/niju kun, and we would spend countless hours discussing the subtle meanings of these profound teachings.

After my first few years of training I began to teach several classes at the

dojo. I also taught at various after school programs for at-risk youth under the tutelage of Karen MacDonald whose passion for making karate a vehicle to help young people is absolutely remarkable. Mr. Callahan paid me to do this, but he accepted no money in return for our services. I was very impressed at his generosity for doing this. I learned that karate could be used as a way to help those in our community who didn't have the same opportunities, and have since always sought to use karate to benefit as many young people as I can. In the evenings I would attend class at Sensei Callahan's dojo. I would take 1-2 evening classes with either him, Eric Metz, or Jennifer Metz, who were extraordinary technicians in their own rite. Usually, at the end of class we would all sit in a circle and discuss other aspects of karate philosophy as it applied to daily life. Mr. Callahan constantly sought to teach his students that karate was a holistic way of living, a method of transforming an individual to be more disciplined and mindful of how our lives affected others. This was the message of karate that I learned from Mr. Callahan, and that is why he has been one of the most influential people to me both in my training and in my life.

When I parted ways with Mr. Callahan, I had a lot of anxiety about losing my Sensei, and began to look to the larger ISKF community for support. I began to attend the clinics with the exceedingly hospitable Sensei Joji Mercado, and local clinics that Dr. Hiner had been hosting with Sensei Cline. I had emailed her several times to discuss various issues, and was always impressed with her kindness and understanding. But I was even more impressed when I met her for the first time. I was completely shocked when she greeted me like a dear friend and gave me a welcoming hug! If Sensei Callahan has taught me the mind of karate, Sensei Cline has taught me about its heart. I was astounded by how warm and compassionate she was, how being around her seemed to make all of the inner conflict and inadequacies that we feel around training dissipate. Everyone else felt it too. I find it amazing

to watch her interact with other karateka at the clinics, and how people gravitate to her. She truly embodies the love of the art, and I aspire to learn this quality every time I am fortunate enough to train with her.

Finally, the last person who I must pay homage to is the highly venerable Sensei Yaguchi with whom I have had the privilege of training several times a year for over a decade. While I am of course in awe at his discipline and devotion to the art, as well as his insightful instruction, to me he represents a larger ideal of Karate's potential for international peace. One of the greatest and probably least appreciated stories in modern history is how these remarkable people brought karate to the world. I cannot fathom how Mr. Yaguchi and the other first generation of international Japanese karate masters found the courage to forgive the horrors of the Second World War, and instead of hating the former enemies of their fatherland, chose to dedicate their entire lives to bridging a vast cultural chasm bearing karate as their olive branch of peace. This power to transcend differences between individuals, within our communities, and between nations is the

true essence of Karate, and Mr. Yaguchi's extraordinary life is a perfect embodiment of this much-needed principle.

My daily training involves the attempt to consistently apply what I have learned from my teachers into my life, and bringing these lessons to my students, who themselves are often my best teachers. I am also constantly seeking to understand the profound connection between physical karate and the way of Zen, and have recently spent a semester studying Buddhism with a Roshi (priest) of the Rinzai Zen lineage in order to better understand karate's roots.

On a physical level, I have been examining various shifting ideas, particular shifting on one foot, and using slow movements as a way to keep karate training sustainable to the body. For example, slow movement kicking requires more strength, flexibility and balance than full speed kicking, thus providing the physiological reinforcement necessary to have full speed movement that does not degrade the body. I hope to be able to train at a high level of proficiency, and continue teaching and learning about karate until I am a very old man!

Camp Brotherhood

Mark your calendars! Camp Brotherhood will be from May 26-29 this year in our usual beautiful setting near Mount Vernon, Washington. Sensei Larry Loreth from Manitoba will be the guest instructor and the One World Taiko Drummers will be back to entertain us! Visit www.iskfnw.org for the brochure.