

# The Seidokan Communicator

## *Aikido for a Modern Way of Life*

### Camp Impressions

I was energized to see instructors and students practicing and working out together, no matter the individual's ranking. It shows the unity we have established in our Seidokan organization. And I am always excited about being exposed to and learning new aikido techniques shown by the instructors. I'm pleased and hope this camp will help further connect us and open additional lines of technology between all Aikido students.

Stewart Chan

The Michigan dojos put together another great summer camp, under the direction of Dr. Mark Crapo and Janean Crapo Sensei's, with lots of helpers. The weather cooperated as we managed to get in dozens of classes representing over 20 hours of training. We enjoyed a delicious and entertaining banquet Friday night and we all enjoyed the high level of instruction and spirited training by all present. No doubt Kobayashi Sensei was smiling down upon Kalamazoo Michigan during our practice, as we all felt his spirit nearby.

Doug Wedell

It appears that everyone survived another summer camp. I hope everyone enjoyed the nice Michigan weather. I've had a few days to go over my notes and reflect back on the weekend. This was probably my most enjoyable camp, partly because I only had to drive 30 minutes to get there. As always, it was great to see familiar faces and meet a few new members. I think everyone had a good time in the evenings, getting together and talking. I survived the energy strikes I received, apparently to lasting side affects. I have several notes from all the classes I participated in and I'll be going over them for quite awhile.

To those instructors I took class from, thank you for helping me gain a better understanding. Whether it was in my attitude toward my training, or positioning my body correctly to blend with my uke better. I particularly enjoyed the co-teaching that Senseis Crapo, Wadahara, Wedell and Fonda-Bonardi displayed while teaching the jo and ken katas. After reviewing my notes, it seems that the overall lessons were reminders of the basics. Move from your 1-point, blend with uke, let ki flow, keep your movements natural, practice shodo-o-seisu and chudo. And a reminder that it's ok to fail, that's how we learn. Great lessons and it's important to remind ourselves from time to time.

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I wish I had space to thank all of the instructors that I took class from. But I need to leave room for others' comments. I would like to acknowledge and thank Mrs. Koybayashi. We are all fortunate to have such a great teacher to learn from. Thanks for sharing your knowledge and insight with all of us. We are all better students of aikido because of you. I look forward to seeing you all next year. I hope everyone has a great year.

Darrell Ettleman

Looking back at camp, I begin to see how the basic principles of Seidokan Aikido were expressed in the learning and the laughter. Several instructors directly addressed the principle of oneness and the one point by moving numerous ukes at the same time. One class redirected the lessons: Two person teams raced across the mat in oneness and ushiro-waza. Mrs. Kobayashi also shared in application and the laughter.

The principle of circular motion made itself known in two ways. First, the many class choices allowed the camp to regroup several times. Students had different sets of uke partners for each class. The kanshu, kancho, head instructors, yudansha and senior kyu students generously gave time and attention to junior students. The deliberate mixing of ranks and schools also helped me deal with range of effectiveness. I constantly had to slow down, calm down and refocus on the technique instead of myself. Whenever I got anxious, I sped up or grasped hard, or both

Sensei Bruce Fox's "Failure is not an Option-It's a requirement" and his application of "Root Beers, Thank You" helped me stay mostly calm even when Sensei Fox was delivering shomenuchi to me. The applied principles added to the ki flow. This was a very good-humored camp, very welcoming and very affirming. As someone who seldom gets to the dojo, it felt good to feel "at home" while at camp.

(continued on page 2)

## Camp Impressions (Continued)

All of this leads to a deep and grateful sense of "Masagatsu Agatsu." I left camp with more resolve and clarity for my next kyu test. I gained and renewed many acquaintanceships. I appreciated more fully all of the efforts of all the teachers and students, and especially camp directors Dr. Mark and Janean Crapo.

*In harmony, Jim Brazell*

### *The Misogi Experience*

I was shouting in unison with the others, "TO HO KA MI E MI TA ME". Yet this time I was experiencing something new. I was a bell ringer. Though only being at Sankyu rank, Mrs. Kobayashi invited me to ring a bell (suzu) during Misogi-barai on Saturday morning during Seidokan Aikido Summer Camp in Kalamazoo MI.

I sat relaxed in seiza, my right arm rising and dropping, each spoken syllable forcefully expelling harsh air. My concentration was on trying to do everything right and follow Doug Wedell's lead.

As Misogi progressed I breathed deeply. For a short time I pictured in my mind the discomfort in my legs and feet being exhaled like little dark particles of pain. And as I inhaled, light and good particles flowed into my body. My legs went numb. I breathed in unison, now to purify my mind and body. The wood clappers (hyoshigi) sounded and the training was over.

Not knowing there was a theory to leg and feet recovery, I found it easiest to just fall over. Andy Munson and Bronson Diffin helped me to my feet. I soon learned that the backward shuffle was considered a good way to get the blood flowing to your leg without toppling over. (*Misogi pictures by Joann Wendling*)

During meal time Janean Crapo did a fantastic rendition of 'soggy noodle' arms that whip around her body, demonstrating what ones arms feel like after ringing the bell during Misogi. This reminded me why my right arm and shoulder were so sore. For me, it was a unique opportunity to ring the bell and an honor I am glad I didn't miss.

**Deanna G. R. Cöckburn**



## Summer Camp 2008: Kalamazoo Michigan







## Aikido Beginnings: Stephen Joseph McAdam Sensei

*By John Robertson*

At first glance it would be very hard to convince anyone that this mild mannered gentleman, Steve McAdam Sensei, Shichidan, is a seventh degree black belt. Picture him in a hakama, standing in front of a Shomen, teaching an Aikido class, and it's still a hard sell. If you've been as fortunate as I, having been chosen by him to uke at more than one summer camp or workshop, you know that you can't judge a book by its cover.

In conducting an interview I like sitting down for breakfast or lunch at one of the small quaint Los Angeles restaurants, casually talking to a fellow Aikidoist with whom I normally don't get to have a one on one with. I'd do some research and have my questions set up and ready to go, to make the interview more professional. Not the case here, everybody wanted to have lunch with Sensei McAdam.

As good as I am at research, I couldn't find much of anything on him; and when it came to asking questions, he had already anticipated the questions and effortlessly started answering them. We literally did most of the interview in sections, going from one place to the next. Never a dull moment – it brought up the image of Indiana Jones. A seasoned college professor, fighting his way through one obstacle after

another, the experience was just more mental than physical.

He was very sincere in explaining that he felt his real talent was in teaching, not so much as a practitioner of Aikido. He said, "My skills on the mat are pretty good, but my real talent is taking students with better, natural ability and showing them easier ways of doing it." When he sees that a student is a good athlete, he always hopes that the student will stick around long enough so that maybe he can export his knowledge/ability of Aikido into the student.

He's even surprised when a student who has considerable training (not just in Aikido) chooses him as their teacher. He gave an example of a student from New Zealand who was with him at the University of Texas for a couple of years. Jared was a big guy who had studied various martial arts and had worked as a bouncer in a bar for ten years. Pretty much the rule of thumb in New Zealand was to go to a bar on weekends and start a fight. Jared had a lot of fighting experience - he would get into two or three fights a day. McAdam Sensei couldn't believe it when Jared asked him to be his teacher, he asked him why? His answer was, "because you analyze it, and you experiment. If you do things wrong, you say, ok I did that wrong, I'm going to try it again and I'm going to change it, I'm going to keep on looking at it and learn how to do it right."

So, how did our non-athletic, college professor, get to be a Shichidan, I asked the question: "How did Aikido come into your life?" As I said before, he anticipated the question and listed his entry into the art. As a child, Stephen Joseph McAdam, use to watch an old television show, which I'm sure most of you would have never heard of, called: *You Asked For It*. The format of the show was basically, if you saw, heard or read about an event and you wanted to experience it again, they would go out with a film crew and photograph it for television.

Someone had been to Japan and seen people breaking boards, and so they showed an episode of a bunch of Karate guys breaking boards. It left an impression on young Steve, and he wanted to break boards, as any kid would. Time passed and when he got into graduate school at the University of Chicago, he saw that they had a university karate club, and that old desire to break boards came into play. He joined. It was taught by a nice gentleman by the name of Sensei Sugiyama. This training lasted about three good years. Steve made it up to about blue belt.

He graduated and moved to Austin Texas, where he looked for more karate. No surprise, the Karate in Texas was really MARTIAL arts, as opposed to Martial ARTS. (Basically you beat the other guy up.) It was too macho for Professor McAdam. He felt that Martial Arts should be just that, balanced, and not aggression as the ultimate focus. In short, he lost interest in Karate and looked around for something else.

That something else turned out to be the University Judo Club. He said he spent two years in Judo, getting into pretty good shape, without getting pretty good at Judo.

At the end of the second year, a new guy came to Austin, a gentleman by the name of Bill Lee, who held the rank of Shodan in Aikido. He had been trained in San Diego under a teacher by the name of Ben Sekishiro. Through Sekishiro Sensei, Bill trained with Rod Kobayashi Sensei. Even though Ben Sekishiro Sensei was pretty much his own man, he still considered Kobayashi Sensei as his spiritual mentor. Bill studied with both Kobayashi and Sekishiro Sensei.

## Aikido Beginnings: (continued)

After moving to Texas and scoring a job as a lab technician Bill wanted to start a dojo. Looking for mats he hooked up with the Judo Club, which is where he met Steve, and that was the quick beginning of a very long and deep friendship. Bill was the first person to come and teach Aikido in Austin, which makes Sensei McAdam the first person to be taught Aikido in Austin, and makes their group (initially Bill, Steve and Wynne, Bill's wife) the oldest Aikido group in Austin. They went through several spaces, at times piggy backing on the Austin Judo Club's space. They picked up more students (about half a dozen) when they moved to the YMCA, some of whom are still doing Aikido at other dojos. At that point it was like any beginner's dojo, with the population expanding and deflating like most groups, Steve McAdam being the group's constant.

The first test McAdam Sensei took was a Sankyu exam. The only reason this was done was because Lee Sensei knew that Steve needed some experience at testing, so he gave him a Sankyu exam. Knowing eventually that Steve would be in a larger system and would have to test for black belt, he gave him an Ikkyu test as well. Other than that, there would not have been any testing, with friends working out together, it just seemed silly – end result, Sensei McAdam doesn't put much emphasis on testing. McAdam said that when he finished his PHD at the University of Chicago, on graduation day one of his professors shook his hand and told him, "Congratulations, that diploma and a dollar will buy you a cup of coffee." Emphasizing that the degree was just a symbol, not reality. "Ranking doesn't show how good you are, you show that on the mat or on the streets."

I've always been interested in, well more accurately, engulfed with the fact that Aikido comes from a very mystical founder. Mystical maybe the wrong word, O-Sensei was a very religious man. During his workshop at headquarters, Sensei McAdam stated that he was a scientist, and being such, didn't buy into the esoteric explanations and directions that often time come with Aikido. He needed things explained, physically.

He said from what he had heard of O-Sensei teachings, it was somewhat mystical - "To say the least," I interjected – but Tohei Sensei (Ki Society) put it on a physical basis with his four principles (his principles to unify mind and body), so he tried to analyze it. He added that Kobayashi Sensei carried that program further, he was very mechanically oriented – in fact he was a helicopter mechanic for a long time. Kobayashi was a man who understood the physical world, so he continued the work that Tohei started and made it more physical. Sensei McAdam says this was the reason why Bill Lee Sensei and he appreciated Sensei Kobayashi's teachings.

McAdam Sensei feels that in most dojos, certainly in Seidokan dojos, the mysticism, to a large extent, had been exorcized. So now when he goes to most places what he hears sounds like a good physical analysis of what's going on. He says he no longer hears things like, "just extend your ki" without any concrete explanation of what that phrase meant in terms of the physical world. He hears things more like, think about your balance, think about how you're using your muscles. He continued to say that some places do it better than others, but he'd like to think that Seidokan in particular has gotten rid of the mysticism, but kept the subtlety. That is the subject that interests him the most in Aikido, because it is so very, very subtle, that it almost does look like magic. Sensei Steve is still trying to investigate the physical reality behind the magic.

Sensei McAdam was the first person to be taught Aikido in Austin, and the University of Texas Aikido Club, founded in 1972, is the oldest Aikido group in Austin. When asked if he planned on spending more time with Aikido since he was retiring soon, he said, "I hope that I have a little more time to do a little more, to be honest with you, I only have sketchy plans as to what I'm going to do, but certainly Aikido plays a significant role in how I intend on filling my golden years."

I know what I would like to see him do in his golden years, I'd like to see a book from him, something like, *Demystifying Aikido, examining the subtlety behind the physical* – but, that's just me.

## Promotions

### Shichidan

<b>Stephen McAdam</b>	06/21/08
AIA / University of Texas Aikido Club	

### Godan

<b>Seth Sommer</b>	06/21/08
AIA / Seidokan Aikido Heisei Dojo	

### Nidan

<b>Shalomi Sagiv</b>	05/18/08
Aikido Institute of Jerusalem	

### Shodan

<b>Clifford H. Kamida</b>	05/18/08
Aikido Institute of America	

\*\* Correction to the Winter 2008 Promotion Announcement: "Geoffrey Squier - Petersen Family Dojo 10/06/07" should read Geoffrey Squier Ahsa Aikido". We deeply apologize for the error.\*\*

## Congratulations!

## Misogi 2008 A Personal Reflection

*By Lawrence Hawkins*

I woke up early on Saturday morning. It had been raining, and I was thinking about whether I should push myself and go to our annual Misogi Barai, which I have missed once in the past decade or so. That time I had been physically ill and did not think it fair to spread the wealth among my fellow Aikidoists. This time I was suffering from an emotional illness. My family and I were going through some really painful episodes with my father that is beyond the scope of this article. My wife was definitely of the opinion that I should stay at home. She feared that with the rain (rain is a big thing here in sunny southern California, no one knows how to drive in the rain) and my present emotional state, I was likely to get into an accident. I decided that attending Misogi was the best thing I could do for my mental health.

Misogi comes from Shinto training to purify the mind and body. At A.I.A., Misogi Barai is conducted the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of January in order to cleanse both the dojo and ourselves so that we can practice safely and further our training in the coming year. This year Joe Crotty Sensei led us through the Misogi. We sat in seiza while chanting "TO! HO! KA! MI! E! MI! TA! ME!", ringing the "suzu" (bells), and doing our utmost to stay in harmony. As the pace quickened, the chanting changed to "TO! HO! KAMI! E! MI! TAME!", then to "TOHOKAMI, EMITAME!", and finally "TO! E! TO! E!", culminating in a crescendo of ringing the bells, and then a decrescendo to silence. A loud clap of the "hyoshigi" (wooden clappers) signaled the beginning of the breathing exercise. As the final exhale was signaled, those of us who could still feel our feet after 45 minutes of sitting in seiza made our feeble attempts to stand up. A very spirited and enjoyable practice followed, led first by Crotty Sensei and followed by Chan Sensei, Kawakami Sensei, Fonda-Bonardi Sensei, Hessing Sensei, and brought to a close by Wadahara Sensei.

I definitely felt that my mind and my body had been cleansed. I was focused on my enjoyment of Aikido and of the positive Ki from all my friends at the dojo, rather than the negative Ki I have been experiencing from my problems. This stood me in good stead as I was traveling home in the rain. As I was driving on the freeway, my front passenger tire suddenly blew out, and I started to lose control of my car. Rather than panic, I kept my one-point, settled down, and guided my car safely from the fast lane across to the right shoulder of the freeway. I calmly changed my tire, slowly and safely drove my car to the tire store, and had the tire replaced. I must have had a lot of positive Ki flowing, because I had forgotten that I had the tires under warranty, and the episode only cost me \$11! We sometimes forget that Aikido is something that we need to practice both on and off the mat. Kobayashi Sensei always emphasized the importance of making the principles a part of your daily life. This is something I was not doing in dealing with my problems. I was vacillating, unsure of what course to take, changing directions, and grasping at

straws. After Misogi I made a clear decision to apply "Hitoashi Yokete", taking a step aside and cutting down immediately. Whether this was the best solution or not, I will find out over time, but it certainly has been the best thing I could do for the health of my immediate family and for myself at this time.



## South Carolina Aikido Workshop

*By Doug Wedell*

Seidokan of South Carolina was pleased to have Dan Kawakami Sensei lead our Spring workshop again this year. As always, Sensei encouraged us to focus on the process of aiki rather than on the outcome of the technique. Tenchi nage provided one such example in which nage, with no intention to throw, maintains a calm center, good posture, flowing ki and calm breath to lead uke off balance. We continued lessons in walking calmly whether alone or with our partner grasping our arms or shoulders. We were encouraged to practice tanto tori with a calm attitude in which the mind is not drawn to the weapon but takes in the entire flow of ki and hence naturally calms the situation. Domo Arigato Gozai Mashita, Sensei.



*Kawakami Sensei's affect on South Carolina Aikidoka.*



## Renewed Vigor

By Sureya Melkonian

On the morning of Saturday March 29 Joe Crotty Sensei visited Victory Dojo. We started the class by testing the principles "Keep One Point" and "Let Your Ki Flow," and went on to several techniques from the *Katateriyotemochi* grab, both empty handed and with the Jo, including *Kotegaeshi*, *Nikyo*, *Ikkyo*, and *Zenpo Nage*. These techniques probably could have been taught by any instructor, but when Sensei Crotty brought them to our class he made them seem very new. I began to revisit what I thought I had learned well enough before. It felt slightly like learning from scratch.

Being confronted with new information and working with new people forces a student to learn faster and to learn more in a shorter amount of time. It also keeps repetitive motions from becoming redundant. The same principle or technique could be taught by seven different instructors and each time it would be different because of the Sensei's personal take or perspective on what is physically being done. Being taught by many different teachers gives one a broader view of the principles and allows students to figure out what they are doing. It also reinforces the idea of learning the Aiki Taiso and the basics well. Judging from what little experience I have, most Sensei's teach those basic movements similarly, but each diverges when teaching a specific technique.

Crotty Sensei's years of experience were evident in the way he taught our class. He connected everything to actual happenings in daily life. This kept the class engaged and didn't allow for any momentary phase-outs. He also frequently used humor to get a point across. About a week after Crotty Sensei's visit, he sent our dojo a pastel yellow greeting card adorned with musical cows, on which he wrote: "I believe that our time on the mat should end with a feeling of renewed vigor; and with excitement towards our next time." This desire to learn and understand more is always heightened by teachers who make the process of learning fun.



## Adventures in Japan

By An Ahsa Aikido Student

I am not one to travel. In-fact, if it were not for the reason to travel to an annual Aikido camp, seminar or workshop, I probably would have never traveled. I have never gone anywhere for just site-seeing. The one place I have always wanted to travel to is Japan. Wadahara Sensei had been invited for an Aikido seminar being sponsored by the Seidokan of Tokyo. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity; I had the opportunity to attend and knew that I must not pass it up.

An eleven-hour plane flight was long, but the TV in the seat was helpful on passing the time. I didn't know what to expect once the destination had been reached. I was very glad to have Wadahara Sensei, Ron, and Daniel there to lead the way when we made it Narita airport, they made short work of finding the way to the bus that would take us to the hotel.

The Tokyo Hilton Shinjuku was the nicest I have ever stayed at. Koprowski Sensei was in the area and was waiting in the hotel lobby to greet us. I had never seen skyscrapers like those in Shinjuku. It was very clean and I always felt safe, even at night walking around in the street. Wadahara Sensei had planned on going to a place called Tokyo Disney Sea. I did not know what to expect. I have never been to Disneyland, so I would have never have thought to go while in Japan. In fact this was a trip of first times for many things. Disney Sea was great. I was impressed by the buildings and the different locations that had been represented from around the world. I guess that was the point. What a fun and exciting adventure for the first full day in Tokyo.

The next day we planned on taking the shinkansen to Kyoto. I had never rode on a train or subway before. The Shinjuku train station is the busiest in the world, what seemed like a sea of people that flowed endlessly to their platforms. I was glad most of the signs had the names in English as well as kanji. The shinkansen (bullet train) was really a nice way to travel, quick, quiet, spacious seating. We all bought bento (boxed lunch) for the journey to Kyoto. Kyoto station was amazing. It did not seem like a train station to me, it was really modern.

I think Kyoto was the place I liked the best. I was excited Yoshito, from the Tokyo dojo, was able to arrange for us to stay in a ryokan. I have read about them and hope if I ever made it to Japan to have the opportunity to stay in one. The biggest problem was finding the ryokan in the Gion district. There were very few signs, and none in English. With the help of the shortest cab ride ever, we made it back less than a city block to a place we passed a couple of times before. We went to a temple, a park and the main tourist shop street, but had to hurry because dinner would be waiting for soon back at the ryokan. Dinner was top-notch, one delicious course was followed by the next, which was even better. I had a good nights sleep on a futon, and the next morning had the best breakfast of the trip.

## Adventures in Japan (Continued)

We spent the day walking the streets of the Gion area, seeing the Imperial Palace and Nijo castle, before having to get back to Kyoto station for the return trip. I was able to see a temple near the station that was being restored known as the (Goei-Do). It was just closing as I got there so I had to take a really fast tour. I was tired on the trip back as it had been long two days by the time we made it back to the hotel.

Friday was here. We lucked out as we ended up having Yoshito as our personal guide for the day. We planned on going to a couple of museums and doing some shopping. One was a Museum of Japanese Sword Preservation. I was amazed by what I saw. I had read about such fine blades and their famous makers- but to actually be there in the presence of such precious pieces of history and national treasures was an experience I will never forget.

Saturday had come, and it was time to train. We met up with Koprowski Sensei and headed to what would be the first of three locations we would be training at. I did not know what to expect, however it turned out to be an excellent training hall. The only thing that could be better than a trip to Japan is getting to attend a seminar instructed by Wadahara Sensei in Japan! We had to share the space at times with others, once with a corporate Aiki-kai group and another with a Kendo group in the room next door. It was yet another new experience to practice aiki-ryoho to the blood-curdling kiais of the adjoining Kendoka. I had a great time, learned, practiced and made some new friends on the mat. We all went out for a group dinner to celebrate at a great restaurant.

Training continued on Sunday at another recreation center. We were all tired by the end as it had been a long week. Koprowski Sensei invited us over to his apartment and ordered us a Japanese style pizza with corn and tuna. (It was actually really good, if you are ever in Japan I would recommend it).

Monday came and it was time to pack up, check out a get on the shuttle to Narita airport. It was a good ride back and I was able to see more of the city this time, as it was during the day. The flight went ok on the way back, it was actually a little bit shorter coming back and we got in about an hour early.

Having achieved my goal of traveling to Japan, it makes me want to travel back again. It was overwhelming to travel to a foreign country. It really put my very limited knowledge of the Japanese language to the test. I lucked out and had the help of the others I traveled with, plus those Aikidoka in Tokyo to make the trip go well. I found if I made an effort, the Japanese people were always happy to help too.

Polite and clean, fabulous food, traditional culture, high-tech and historic; Japan was more than I could have imagined and worth every experience. I hope to have the opportunity to return someday.

## Calendar

**September 26 - September 28, 2008; Jo Workshop at the Aikido Institute of America;** Friday Session (7:00 - 9:30 p.m.), Saturday and Sunday (1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.); For more information, please email [info@aikidoinstitute.com](mailto:info@aikidoinstitute.com).

**June 2009 (Tentative):** Seidokan Summer Camp hosted by University of Texas Aikido Club; More information coming in the following months.

## More Scenes from Summer Camp...

### Line Dancing?...



### Ahhh, a little to the right please...



### Dance of Ikkyo...





## More Scenes from Summer Camp...

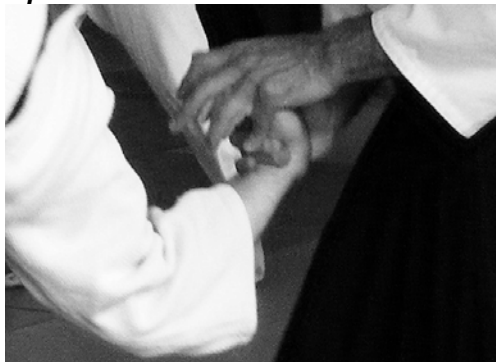
*The Joy of Kotegaeshi...*



*Chan Sensei is Impressed...*



*Hands on practice...*



*Feeling the Flow...*



*The dance of Ikkyo...*



*Contemplating the Sword...*

