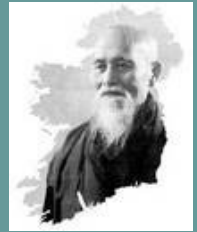




Water Oak Aikikai Shimbun



March 2009

O-Sensei's Dokas

Ten

All the principles of heaven and earth are living inside you. Life itself is the truth, and this will never change. Everything in heaven and earth breathes. Breath is the thread that ties creation together. When the myriad variations in the universal breath can be sensed, the individual techniques of the Art of Peace are born.

Eleven

Consider the ebb and flow of the tide. When waves come to strike the shore, they crest and fall, creating a sound, your breath should follow the same pattern, absorbing the entire universe in your belly with each inhalation. Know that we all have access to four treasures: the energy of the sun and moon, the breath of heaven, the breath of earth, and the ebb and flow of the tide.

Twelve

Those who practice the Art of Peace must protect the domain of Mother Nature, the divine reflection of creation, and keep it lovely and fresh. Warriorship gives birth to natural beauty. The subtle techniques of a warrior arise as naturally as the appearance of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Warriorship is none other than the vitality that sustains all life.

Hagihara Shihan to Visit Water Oak Aikikai

We are very excited to have Hagihara Shihan, 7th Dan, coming to Water Oak Aikikai May 15-16, 2009. Hagihara Shihan is the Chief Instructor of Long Island Aikikai (<http://www.liaikikai.com/>) and is one of the highest ranking Aikido instructors in the United States and is a senior instructor in the United States Aikido Federation.

Hagihara Shihan has dedicated over 45 years of his life to the art of Aikido. As a founding member of the original New York Aikikai, Hagihara Sensei is the longest running Aikido instructor in New York and is thought to be the longest running Aikikai Aikido teacher in the continental United States.

Known for his soft, yet powerful Aikido technique, Hagihara Sensei has taught a countless number of students, many of which have opened their own schools. To this day Hagihara Sensei stays true to O'Sensei's message of peace and harmony; teaching Aikido that does not rely on physical strength. His focus on relaxation and the extension of Ki, coupled with his deep knowledge of the inner philosophies of Aikido, continues to be a source of inspiration to many.

It is a distinct pleasure to have the opportunity to learn directly from such a distinguished Aikido instructor. We hope that everyone will be able to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

**Hagihara Shihan to
Water Oak Aikikai
May 15-16, 2009**

Welcome Our New Students

Ed Brown—Ed is an IT professional who brings a wealth of knowledge about Japanese culture after having lived in Japan.

Sandra Ells—Sandra is an ER Doctor as well as a blackbelt in Tae Kwon Do.

Michael & Mina Stephenson—Michael is a 3rd Kyu in the USAF who took some time off to start a family. He is returning to the mat now that his daughter is old enough to join him.

Don McConnell—Don is a 2nd degree blackbelt in the USAF. Don and I go way back in our training together and I am very happy that he is joining us on the mat.

Maury Eastwick—Maury is a Service Operations Manager for CarMax and in his free time enjoys playing the guitar.

Calendar of events

January 10	O-Shogatsu and Winter Testing at Water Oak Aikikai
January 9-11	Yamada Shihan to Midwest Aikido Center Kagami Biraki
January 11	"Celebration Seminar" with Kaufmann Shidojin, Main Fukushidojin and Crandell Fukushidojin to Aikido Of Charlotte
January 30-31	Halprin Shihan to Peachtree Aikikai
February 21	Berthiaume Shihan to Raleigh Aikikai
March 14	Kaufmann Shidojin and Main Fukushidojin to Raleigh Aikikai - POSTPONED
April 17-18	Bernath Shihan to Peachtree Aikikai Spring Seminar
April 24-26	Yamada Shihan and Demko Shihan to Midwest Aikido Center USAF Yudansha Seminar
May 1-3	Lehrman Shihan and Keller Shidojin to Open Sky Aikikai
May 15-16	Hagihara Shihan to Water Oak Aikikai
June 19-20	Yamada Shihan to Atlanta Friendship Seminar at Peachtree Aikikai and Aikido Center of Atlanta
June 27	Waite Shihan to Raleigh Aikikai

more information at <http://usaikifed.com/calendar.htm>



Sensei's Thoughts

A Family Program for Everyone

There are thousands of martial arts schools out there. Yellowpages.com lists over a hundred martial arts schools in the Charlotte area alone. Some of them teach adults, some teach children and some teach both. Even when a school teaches both adults and children they typically separate them. The kids classes are in the afternoon after school, while the adults train in the evenings.

At one point Water Oak Aikikai did the same thing. Brenda taught a kids class in the afternoons. Our Children's Program was great and the kids had a good time while they learned Aikido, but Brenda felt that something was missing. When we talked it through we both realized that what we wanted to offer wasn't a Children's Program but rather a Family Program. In order to do this we had to come up with a few "ground rules" that would make the program succeed in the way that we envisioned.

First, the program is designed to teach martial arts. It is not a babysitting service. So we do not allow parents to just drop off their children and leave. We personally feel that parents should have more responsibility in what their children do. When our kids participate in an activity (Tae Kwon Do, skating, music, sports, etc.) at least one of us stays on site with our child. We do this partly to be involved with and support our children but also to protect them. We require that a parent remains on the mat when their child is in class. As it turns out this has worked out really well since all of the parents in our program want to study Aikido also.

Second, the program is designed to teach Aikido. We teach Aikido and Ukemi concepts, exercises and techniques. We will limit or modify the teachings to make them age appropriate. An example of this is that we do not teach them nikkyo or sankyo because their young bones and tendons have not developed enough to do joint locks safely. That said we are very careful to not fill the classes with "fluff" just to keep the kids busy. Every activity is designed to either further their understanding of Aikido or to help them develop the skills and body mechanics to execute Aikido techniques.

Third, we integrate the children in with the adults. During the first portion of each Family Aikido class the kids are on the mat with their parents and the rest of the other adults giving the children a unique opportunity to train with adults. This is particularly beneficial because adults and larger kids are the primary threat our children face in today's world. An added benefit is the opportunity for the adults without children in the program to train with children. It gives them an entirely new insight into the gentler aspects of Aikido. The second portion of the class we split into children and adult groups so that we can focus on age appropriate instruction. But even when we split we continue to share the same training space.



Sensei's Thoughts

(continued)

A Family Program for Everyone

Brenda and I both think that the Family Program is a fantastic way for parents to bond with their children. One thing to note is that we do not require the parent to train in Aikido if they do not want to. In cases such as these we still require the parent to participate in each class. They would be assistants, or helpers, to the instructor rather than a student.

One unexpected side affect that we have seen from the Family Program is that it has promoted a much stronger feeling of "family" among all of the dojo members. The children bring a humor and a level of energy to the dojo that infects everyone.

See you on the Mat!

O-Tanjobi Omedeto Gozaimasu

Happy Birthday wishes to everyone celebrating their special day this quarter and to everyone in the coming quarter:

01/25	Yuka Frunzi
01/30	Norv Clontz
02/07	William McLuskie
02/10	Edward Estrada
02/12	Dan Grano
02/18	Liz Kelsey
03/16	Michael Stephenson
05/08	Holly Robbins
05/08	Ariel Balda
05/15	Mina Stephenson
05/25	Simone Davis
06/24	JC Fedorczyk



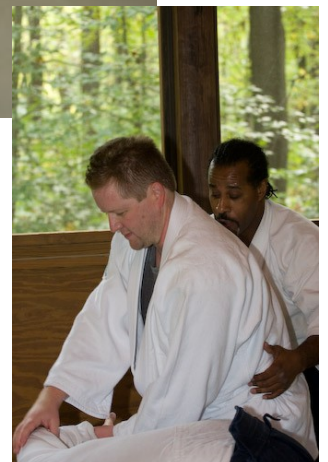


Waite Shihan at Water Oak Aikikai October 17-18, 2008

We had a wonderful visit from Waite Sensei. Over the course of the weekend Sensei taught katame-waza, nage-waza and suburi. Even for the old-timers on the mat there was something new to be learned. I know I had to stop and think about what Sensei was focusing on so that I could bring it into my personal training. It was also great to hear from him about the upcoming changes that we can expect with regard to testing within the USAF.

That said, I have a feeling that most everyone will remember the barbecue and bonfire on Saturday evening as the best part <grin>.

Look for Waite Sensei to be back October 16-17, 2009.





This newsletter is produced by Water Oak Aikikai.
<http://aikikai.water-oak.net>



2009 O-Shogatsu—January 10, 2009

The O-Shogatsu was fantastic. We had a beautiful morning for training and a full dojo. We started out with 1000 sword cuts. I was very proud to see Logan (our youngest member at 6) and Mina (our newest member attending her 2nd class) staying with the adults to the very end. Next, we practiced a fundamental Maki-Otoshi technique which we evolved into an advanced Jo-nage technique. We then held our Winter Testing. With 13 candidates (8 adults and 5 children) the testing was long. Especially for the 2nd Kyu candidates who had to take ukemi for the other tests. [Click here to see the promotion list.](#) Afterwards we went to lunch together. Kudos to La Unica Restaurant for handling 22 hungry, thirsty and somewhat boisterous Aikidoka and family.

It was really nice to see all of the dojo members, their families who came to watch the testing and our fellow Aikidoka who were visiting from other dojos. It was definitely a great way to celebrate last year and to welcome the coming year.

I wanted to say a special "Thank You" to the Water Oak Students for making this last year such a great experience. Without you the dojo would be just a large, empty room. You all bring the warmth of your own personal energy and your desire to learn Aikido to fill the space making it a joy to be in. I also wanted to thank you for your beautiful gift. When I opened it I knew instantly that I loved it, but when I read the inscription I was at a loss for words. I was truly touched by it. I look forward to training with all of you in the coming years. Sincerely Bill McLuskie.





2009 O-Shogatsu (continued)



Congratulations to everyone who tested during the O-Shogatsu

The testing looked fantastic.

1st Kyu

Dan Grano

2nd Kyu

JC Fedorczyk

Scott Frunzi

Ken Robbins

3rd Kyu

Ed Estrada

4th Kyu

Erik Dutton

5th Kyu

Norv Clontz

Charlene Davis

Children's Program

8th Kyu

Jordy Davis

9th Kyu

Sarah Dutton

Connor Frunzi

Caitlyn McLuskie

Logan McLuskie



Our Shops Have New Products!

Our shops have been updated with new designs, new colors and lower prices! Visit the website at <http://shops.water-oak.net>.

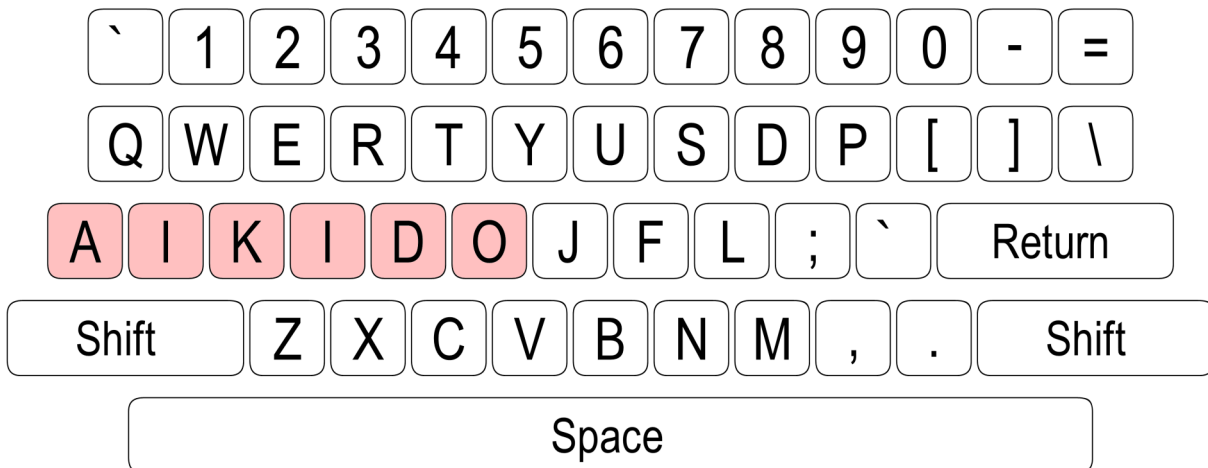
If you have an idea for a new design then let us know. If your idea is used we will send you the first t-shirt printed for free as a thank you. Then for every 10 t-shirts sold we will send you another free t-shirt of your choice.

Note: Our United States Aikido Federation (USAF) and Aikido of Charlotte (AOC) shops are currently shuttered. If you are interested in an item from one of these shops please contact me directly.



One does not need buildings, money, power, or status to practice the Art of Peace. Heaven is right where you are standing, and that is the place to train.

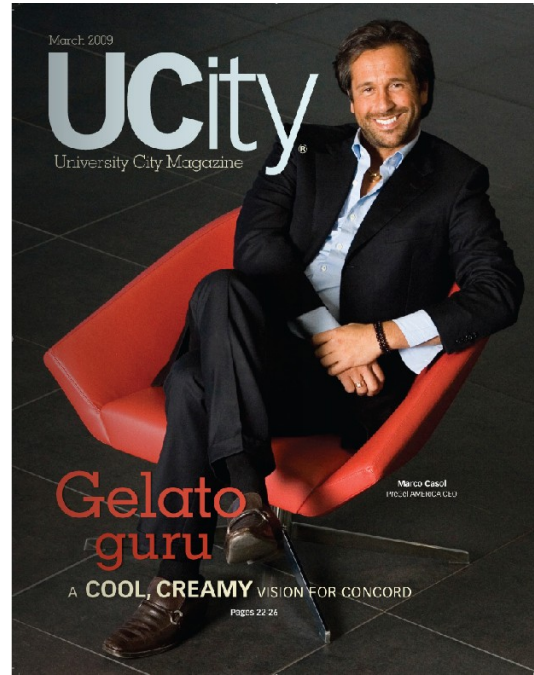
Morihei Ueshiba, Founder of Aikido





Seen Around the Dojo

If you have a chance grab a copy of the March 2009 issue of University City magazine. Our own Dan Grano is featured in a great article. You can also read it online at <http://www.universitycitymagazine.com/0309/>



[community]

A compassionate voice

Daniel Grano works hard to insert a little humanity into the immigration debate.

By Elizabeth Dowman
Photos by John D. Simmons

He's passionate about politics, sports, academia and immigration reform. When it comes to immigration issues, he wants us to get our story straight, the story that's older than our nation. The one where hard-working people move from around the globe to this land seeking a better life, leaving their home, and often their family, for an opportunity to construct their own version of the American Dream. That's the real story, he says, and it doesn't equal the one painted by some politicians and talking heads who would like us to believe all "illegal aliens" are criminals trying to take advantage of the system. [more >](#)



“ He combines his love of politics and his love of the church. He has a keen sense of politics and knows who you can write to get things done. ”

Editor: Debra Singer
Co-Chair of the Social Justice Ministry