



East End Aikikai Newsletter

Second Anniversary Seminar

I am very happy to announce that David Halprin, 6th Dan, Shihan will be the guest instructor at East End Aikikai's Second Anniversary Seminar. The seminar will be held Saturday and Sunday, December 3rd and 4th.

Halprin Sensei was one of Kanai Sensei's senior students and one of my instructors at New England Aikikai. Halprin Sensei was a frequent uke for Kanai Sensei at New England Aikikai and at seminars throughout the country. He is currently the chief instructor at Framingham Aikikai in Framingham, MA. He teaches seminars throughout the United States and is one of the shihan who teaches at the USAF East Coast Summer Camp each year.



Halprin Sensei

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The Difficulty of Aikido Practice

Aikido practice is difficult for many reasons. It is difficult because the movements are complex and require coordination of many body parts. It is difficult because it involves falling, which is scary and brings with it some risk of injury. Many aikido techniques involve joint manipulation which involve some amount of dis-

comfort. At higher levels of practice, as one begins to train faster, the practice can become a hard, taxing, cardiovascular workout. The partner aspect of aikido practice also is challenging, especially when you do not like your partner, when your partner does not move his or her body the way you want them to, or when your partner

takes advantage of your vulnerability during ukemi.

The longer we train and the more that we strive to perfect our technique, the more we discover aspects of ourselves that contribute to the imperfections in our own practice. Constantly confronting these short-

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www.EastEndAikido.com

Upcoming Events:

- > October 28th:
Kyu Tests
- > December 3rd - 4th:
Second Anniversary
Seminar
- > Dojo Closed:
October 10th
Columbus Day

November 11th
Veterans Day

November 24th - 25th
Thanksgiving

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October 28th Kyu Tests

Kyu tests will be held on Friday, October 28th. Test applications must be turned in no later than Monday, October 14th. Students must have a minimum of 20 hours of practice prior to testing for 6th kyu, a minimum of 60 hours of practice prior to testing for 5th kyu, and a minimum of 80 hours of practice since 5th kyu exam prior to testing for 4th kyu. Test fees must be turned in with the test application.

Aiki is Love by My Gibeaut

As a married woman studying Aikido, quite often my husband teasingly chides me not to abuse him with the techniques that I have learned. Recently I was blessed with the awareness to reply, "But don't you know? Aikido is love!"

When O Sensei said "Aiki is love." what did he mean? And what does it mean to you and me? I imagine it can mean many, many things. For me, O Sensei was affirming that we, everything and everyone that surrounds us, good or bad, is a part of one creation, and therefore we are all one family. So

our goal is to keep love in our hearts, and learn to live in harmony.

In that grain, I want to thank Hannah Sensei, for making a nice home for our Aikido family at East End Aikikai. A poet once said, "Work is love made visible." and I can see the love that Hannah Sensei holds for his beloved Kanai Sensei and his current students, through the grace he assumes each time he puts on his hakama and begins warming up to teach.

I am also grateful to my fellow Aikidoka, who have themselves

been patient and forgiving teachers, and Demko Sensei and his students for having us up to their dojo in New Castle. Most especially, I must extend love to my husband, for being so very supportive.

But as to the reprise of universal love, I wonder how this love extends beyond the walls of the dojo? How does the dojo fit into the surrounding community, the greater Aikido community, or the world at large? How can I share with the world, my love for Aikido? It seems to me, that East End Aikikai really needs to share the love!

The 2011 United States Aikido Federation Summer Camp

East End Aikikai had three representatives at Summer Camp this year. Summer Camp was held at the Seaview Resort in Galloway, NJ near Atlantic City. The week long Summer Camp featured eight hours of class per day taught by Yamada Sensei, the head of the United States Aikido Federation, Osawa Sensei, the guest instructor from Hombu Dojo, Tokyo, and many other senior shihan. It was great to have others from East End Aikikai to share the experience of summer camp with. I hope that more students will be able to experience summer camp in future years. Although camp is very tiring, one leaves camp more energized about one's Aikido practice.



East End Aikikai members at the 2011 USAF Summer Camp.

The Difficulty of Aikido Practice: Continued

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comings can be very frustrating. Confronting our own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual limitations is difficult. Constantly attempting to push our practice higher and to avoid complacency is difficult. If one practices long enough, practice can become boring. Persevering through periods of boredom, dissatisfaction, injury, and frustration is difficult. Sometimes just getting to practice is difficult. We live in a fast-paced society with many demands on our time. Finding ways to set aside a regular practice schedule is difficult for many students.

Given all of these difficulties, why would anyone practice aikido? Well, most people don't practice aikido and most people who start aikido, do not continue with it. I suspect that many of the difficulties that I listed above explain why this is so.

Kanai Sensei once noted that people in the United States like the idea of aikido: the idea of love and harmony. They want

these good feelings. He lamented, however, a tendency for practice in this country to become "too easy". He said, "without going through such a struggle...to suffer...you never can get the inside of that [the essence of aikido]." He continued, "It is nice to enjoy, everyone's together, everybody's happy, But nothing is there. They get nothing." These comments suggest that it is actually in the struggles of practice where the benefit of practice lies.

I have seen aikido instructors who curried favor with their students by creating an atmosphere of frivolity on the mat. They only taught techniques that allowed uke to fall without really being thrown. People laughed and talked during practice. Some of these classes were better attended than Kanai Sensei's classes, but they lacked substance. The goal of aikido is not popularity, but rather grasping this elusive essence by facing and examining the difficulties of practice.

This does not mean that prac-

tice should be an endless, grueling, masochistic trial or that we should create added difficulties for each other. Aikido is hard enough as it is! Aikido practice can be very enjoyable and, as one progresses, leave one with a profound sense of calm and wellbeing. But this only happens if one is willing to confront and overcome difficulties.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that Kanai Sensei also believed that there are different ways of practicing aikido and that it is important for each person to be free to choose their approach. Beginners will not train the same way as advanced practitioners.

"The longer we train and the more that we strive to perfect our technique, the more we discover aspects of ourselves that contribute to the imperfections in our own practice."

Older people will not train the same way as younger people. It is not fair to impose your idea of practice on others. However, it is also important not to compromise too much in the interest of avoiding conflict. We must strike a balance between being too soft and too hard in our approach both towards ourselves and towards others. This also is very difficult!

You may hope that practice will get easier as you progress, but Kanai Sensei said, "the more you do this kind of training, the more difficult it becomes!" This endless challenge is what has sustained my motivation for practice all of these years.

Second Anniversary Seminar: Continued

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This will be a great opportunity for students to see very high-level aikido without having to travel out of town. All students should plan to attend regardless of level of experience. All classes will be open to students

of all levels. Classes will run from 9am to 4:30pm on Saturday and from 10am to 12pm on Sunday. There will be a pot-luck party Saturday night beginning at 6pm. We had a great party last year with delicious food and high spirits, so don't

miss the party!

We will be hosting many students from around the eastern United States for the seminar, so we will need help from everyone preparing for the seminar, housing students from out of town, transporting guests,

preparing food for the pot luck party, and cleaning the dojo before and after the seminar.

Be sure to register early for the seminar in order to get the discounted price. Details will be posted at the dojo.

Visit us on the web:
www.EastEndAikido.com

Aikido is a Japanese martial art which utilizes circular movements to redirect the momentum of an attacker. Although Aikido is a martial art founded on techniques of self-defense, its ultimate goal is perfecting the spirit. Through diligent practice, students overcome discord in themselves and learn to remain calm and centered in all situations. Aikido is practiced with a partner, does not require physical strength, and can be practiced by people of all abilities.

East End Aikikai is the only Aikido dojo in the Pittsburgh area affiliated with the United States Aikido Federation. The United States Aikido Federation is the premier Aikido organization in the United States with direct affiliation with Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan.

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1918 Murray Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
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Pittsburgh's only United
States Aikido Federation dojo.



Class Schedule beginning January 2011:

Monday	Adult Class	6:00pm – 7:00pm
	Weapons Class	7:15pm – 8:15pm
Tuesday	Free Practice	5:30pm – 6:30pm
	Adult Class	6:30pm – 7:30pm
Wednesday	Free Practice	5:30pm – 6:30pm
	Adult Class	6:30pm – 7:30pm
Thursday	Free Practice	5:30pm – 6:30pm
	Adult Class	6:30pm – 7:30pm
Friday	Adult Class	6:00pm – 7:00pm
Saturday	Adult Class	10:30am – 11:30am
	Ne-waza Class	11:45am – 12:45pm

1918 Murray Avenue
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Phone: 412-421-3686

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Dues:

Adult Membership:	\$75 monthly (unlimited classes)
Young Adult/Student Membership*:	\$60 monthly (unlimited classes)

* To qualify for this rate one must be under the age of 18 or a full-time undergraduate student at an accredited institution. Valid student ID and registrar's receipt must be presented.

