



ISKF Alaska Region Newsletter

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Celebrating 25 years of Shotokan Karate in Alaska 1982-2007

October 2007

Alaska Shotokan Karate at the Anchorage Boys and Girls Club with Sensei Patrick Andrews - The story of the “first” ISKF Alaska dojo – Boys and Girls Club Karate

As part of ISKF Alaska Region’s 25th year celebration, this month we will highlight the Boys and Girls Club Karate headed by Sensei Patrick Andrews. Niju Kun 13 - *Tekki ni yotte tenka seyo* – Move according to your opponent – a favorite of Sensei Andrews.

“The Woodland Park Boys Club is where the Alaska Shotokan Region was formed. When I was first introduced to Shotokan in 1981, I was already teaching an informal Tae Kwon Do class. The Program Manager approached me about sharing space at the Boys Club with another karate group. We agreed my class would meet on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with Shotokan on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It was soon realized that the gym being taken up every night of the week by either my class or the Shotokan class left very little time for other sports such as basketball. I was approached by Craig Hesser and Tony Nakazawa about splitting the gym on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We agreed but it did not work having two different classes happening at the same time. As we learn in our training, timing and distancing is almost everything and with two different kinds of instructions being called out it was confusing to all the students. At the time I did not have the patience, will or the experience to teach an on-going program. I was only teaching because my former Instructor, Ray DaSilva, had just moved to Hawaii. So at this time I relinquished the Boys Club to the Shotokan group and seeing how I no longer had an Instructor, I joined Craig and Tony as a student.

Over the next few years training at the Boys Club was an experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life. Craig Hesser, Tony Nakazawa and Jason Hayes did most of the teaching, with others (Art Brower, Tom Holley, Lew Baker, Lynette and others) teaching the class on occasion. These senior members had come from different Shotokan backgrounds and organizations and they had different ideas on how to do things. It was at least for me, fairly frustrating. I remember one night in particular with Craig leading the class and another Japanese man named Motoya assisting. We were all lined up in rows working on front kicking while staying in place. I had originally learned to twist my hip into the kick. Craig saw me doing this so he corrected me. Satisfied he then moved on down the line. Moto then came upon me and seeing my hip being kept straight as I kicked encouraged me to throw my hip into the kick. Well, we all managed to work through all of these differences and start forming the nucleus of our Alaska Region.

As the Club grew it was decided to bring a Sensei in for official rank testing and classes. Craig and Becky had trained in Ohio under Sensei Greer Golden. Sensei Golden was invited to Alaska in 1982. The first test and classes were very eye opening as to what can be done with proper training. We officially joined the ISKF and tested once a year. We started competing in Mr. Tanaka’s tournaments twice a year. A lot of our current Sempais made up our student body during these exciting times. Tony started to take on more of a leadership role the following year (1983). Sensei Golden was the invited instructor in 1982-83; and in 1984 we invited Master Okazaki up to Alaska (the topic of a future newsletter article).

Change is inevitable; Jason and Diana Hayes moved from Anchorage to Juneau and started a dojo there. The Hessers and Nakazawas started the Eagle River Dojo, Charles Holness started the University Club. Stan (more basics) Snyder took over the adult class at the Boys Club and I started teaching again for the youth class. Time seems to move in circles and after awhile Stan moved on and I took over again at the now Boys and Girls Club (BGC). Greg DuBois helped with classes and took over when it became necessary for me to work out of state. But Alaska is my home and I returned again to the BGC. The BGC for me is a special place a lot of ideas and dreams have started there. Many people have come and gone but for me it seems like home.” — Ossu Patrick



Calendar of Events 2007 and 2008

October 07: **Oct 6th** **20th Anniversary Celebration of AK Moving Arts Center/Eagle River Dojo**

ISKF is celebrating 25 years in Alaska and AMAC is celebrating its 20th year. Please join us on Saturday October 6th at the AMAC! All ISKF Alaska members are invited to come and participate in the festivities. The MC will be AMAC modern dance instructor 2006 Miss Alaska Stephanie Wonchala. Special guests include Mayor Mark Begich and overseeing the live auction will be former Mayor Rick Mystrom and Sensei Patrick Andrews. A donation of \$25 per person is requested to support keeping the AMAC lights on for this coming winter. Thank you

Oct 14 Kubota Cup Alaska State Tournament, Fairbanks
Oct 19-21 ISKF US National Tournament in San Francisco, CA

November 07: Nov 30 Kyu Testing at UA Fairbanks with Sensei Nakazawa

December 07: Dec 7-11 Dan and Kyu Testing, **Master Yaguchi** in Anchorage and Juneau
Dec TBA ISKF Alaska Board Meeting

January 08: Jan TBA Kan-Gei-Ko

March 08: Mar TBA ISKF Alaska State Tournament
Mar TBA Master Yaguchi Testing – Anchorage and Juneau

April 08: April 5 Alaska State Open Championship, Anchorage

July 08: July TBA Alaska Summer Karate Camp (note new date)

Congratulations to Mariko Churchill and Chris McAfee on their Wedding!!! Mariko Churchill, Sempai at the Boys and Girls Club dojo and one of the first Junior Black Belts for ISKF Alaska, was joined in marriage to Chris McAfee on Friday, September 21 at the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum. We wish the newly weds our Congratulations for a wonderful future ahead!

ISKF Alaska Team to Compete in ISKF National Tournament in San Francisco

Good Luck, Gambatte! The members of the 2007 ISKF Alaska National Team that will be participating in the ISKF National Tournament in San Francisco, California, October 20 and 21, 2007 include:

From Anchorage/Eagle River: Charles Holness, Godan; Jennifer Frazier, Yondan; Mike Tavoliero, Yondan; Dan Rogers, Sandan; Phillipia Holness, Sandan; Amber Nakazawa, Sandan; Janet Hagensieker, Sandan; Mike Crotty, Sandan; George Haynes, Sandan; Ben Cheeseman, Nidan; Tom Blackely, Nidan; Rebekah Martin, Nidan; Kyle Lyndsey, Nidan; Andrew Tooyak, Shodan; Charles Wood, Shodan; Jacqueline Wood, Shodan; Courtney Brown, Shodan.

From Juneau: Doug Murray, Sandan; Phillip Murray, Nidan; Tyrel Kramp, Shodan; Ethan Kramp, 1st Kyu; Jimmy Nguyen, 1st Kyu.

From Fairbanks: Joe Foltz, Shodan; Heather Foltz, 1st Kyu.

Team Coaches – Charles Holness, Godan, assisted by Catherine Pinch, Rokudan; and Diana Stevens, Yondan.

Message from ISKF Alaska Regional Director Sensei Nakazawa:

In this newsletter we are pleased to again have an interview by Sensei Catherine Pinch, 6th Dan, formerly residing in Denver now living in Alaska. We are very grateful she has joined ISKF Alaska, teaching with Sensei's Rogers and Tavoliero at Alaska Club South. Ms. Pinch is also helping Sensei Holness with the coaching of our ISKF Alaska National Team that will be going to San Francisco in October 2007. Ms. Pinch holds several ISKF kata/kumite national championships and is a professional writer. She is close to publishing her book about Master Yaguchi *The Way Continues*. In this issue of the newsletter, Ms. Pinch presents an interview of Master Yaguchi on his thoughts about his teacher Master Nakayama, the late great Chief Instructor of the JKA. This is especially timely as this year is also the 21st anniversary of the passing of Master Nakayama.

Interview with Master Yutaka Yaguchi by Sensei Catherine Pinch

Since Sensei Yaguchi was a long-time student of Mr. Nakayama, he knew him perhaps better than most people. We asked him some questions about Mr. Nakayama in order to get a fuller understanding of Sensei Nakayama and his impact on Karate, the ISKF and JKA, and, of course, us.

Sensei Pinch: Sensei, when was the first time you met Sensei Nakayama?

Master Yaguchi: I met him first in 1951, when I was 18 years old and in college. Sensei Funakoshi was alive then, although we only saw him for events such as examinations. Sensei Nakayama was my instructor most of the time, although Sensei Sugirua and Sensei Okasaki filled in when Sensei Nakayama was busy and could not teach. Sensei Nakayama always pointed me out because my blocks were too high. He would walk by and smack my arm (hard) so that I would learn and remember. Every day, as soon as I saw Sensei Nakayama walk in, I would think "Block! Elbow! Arm!" and I would try to get my blocks down to the right position. He would walk by and slap my arm anyway. To this day my blocks are still too high. But whenever I am teaching blocking in class, I think of Sensei Nakayama and I see him telling me again and again to correct my blocks. Although it was very painful then, I now appreciate the correction and the attention he gave me.

Sensei Pinch: Do you remember any particularly humorous or interesting stories about Sensei Nakayama?

Master Yaguchi: Sensei Okasaki and I trained at the Japan Defense University, which was really a military academy. We were Sensei Nakayama's senior students, and we assisted him quite a bit. Often the foreigners who were there would want to give Sensei Nakayama a gift before they left. One time a group of them asked me what Sensei Nakayama would like as a gift. Well, Sensei Nakayama hated snakes. Jokingly, I told the students that he would really like a snake as a gift. I was joking and I thought they knew that. Unfortunately, they took me seriously and they went into the hills looking under rocks and other places a snake might hide. They found two nice sized snakes of a local variety, put them in a box and happily presented them to Sensei Nakayama.. Sensei opened the box, expecting a very nice present. The snakes, naturally, shocked him, and in surprise he threw the box of snakes across the room. Then he called me in. He knew that I was the culprit. He was very angry, and after reprimanding me very sternly and angrily, he completely ignored me for two months. He did not look at me, acknowledge me, or talk to me during that time. Even though Sensei Nakayama was very angry with me, I still remember that incident as a very funny memory of him. I feel very close to him with memories like this because I had done something that no one else would dare to do. Sensei Okasaki at the time couldn't believe I had done that, either. He also thought that it was just a joke when I told those students about the snake, and he was very upset that the joke had gone so far.

Sensei Pinch: What was Sensei Nakayama's relationship with Sensei Funakoshi?

Master Yaguchi: Sensei Funakoshi was Sensei Nakayama's instructor for about 27 years, from the time Mr. Nakayama was 17 years old. Sensei Nakayama had a huge amount of respect for Sensei Funakoshi. When I was training, Sensei Nakayama would apologize to Sensei Funakoshi whenever his students made any mistakes. Sometimes he would tell us "I don't know what to say to Sensei Funakoshi when I see all the mistakes you make." Sensei Nakayama was Sensei Funakoshi's main student. Sensei Funakoshi brought him along very quickly and Sensei Nakayama became the main instructor under Sensei Funakoshi. He trained with Sensei Funakoshi until Funakoshi's death in 1957.

Sensei Pinch: What was Sensei Nakayama's strongest Karate technique? And what was his favorite kata?

Master Yaguchi: Sensei Nakayama had a perfect blocking technique. He was very small, so he believed in strong blocks. He also believed that a block could and should be an attack technique as well. To him, block and attack were the same. I have never seen anyone else who could block as well as Sensei Nakayama. In the middle of a soto-uke or other block, he would manage to scrape his fingers across his opponent's face, or when performing a gedan-barai, would finish with his fist in the opponent's ribs after blocking the attack. He had extraordinary body awareness and knew all of his strengths and weaknesses. His favorite katas were the Tekkis—Tekki Shodan was particularly strong. His kibatashi stance was exceptional and incredibly strong. He had amazing strength and focus with his arm techniques when he did those katas, too. He did Unsu as well, but I believe that his Tekki katas were the best.

Sensei Pinch: What, in your opinion, was Sensei Nakayama's biggest contribution to Karate, to the ISKF, and to the JKA?

Master Yaguchi: Sensei Nakayama gave the ISKF a great deal of emotional support, spiritual strength, and sound technical advice, particularly in the early days when it was forming. He came to the United States almost every year, visiting Philadelphia and Denver the most. When he was in Denver he always stayed at my house. In the early days, there was often rancor and jealousy among the different national and international Karate organizations. Sensei Nakayama was often in the midst of conflicts and disagreements between groups. Always, he was fair. He always had equal respect for each party, and he managed to keep a balance among the various groups. He was a natural diplomat and adept at keeping relationships between groups friendly. He had a very strong self-confidence and he never got angry at these times. Sensei Nakayama was a walking advertisement for the ISKF. People were naturally attracted to him and wanted to be near him. What impressed me most was Sensei Nakayama's respect and commitment to people wherever he traveled. He always researched areas where he traveled, and often knew more about the area than the local residents.

On one of his visits to Colorado, I took him to a Buddhist temple here in Denver. As he talked with the monk there, I realized that Sensei Nakayama knew more about Denver than even the monk did. The same thing happened when we went to Oregon—Sensei Nakayama knew a tremendous amount about Oregon—its history, its business, and its people. All of this was because of his respect for the local people. Everyone who met him had very good feelings toward him, and whenever we held an event with him, people would come and support that event because he was there. And this is why Mr. Nakayama remains in people's memories even now that he is gone. I want to preserve his legacy in Denver, in sports and in the Japanese community.

Note: next month we will feature the story of Juneau Shotokan Karate-do and Sensei Diana Stevens.
Advanced Saturday Classes in Anchorage/Eagle River 9:00 - 10:30 am:
1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month at B&GC
2nd, 4th and 5th Saturdays of the month at Eagle River Dojo