



# ISKF Alaska Region Newsletter

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*Celebrating 25 years of Shotokan Karate in Alaska 1982-2007*

**September 2007**

## ***Eagle River Shotokan Karate at the Alaska Moving Arts Center***

### ***20 years of serving the Eagle River and Chugiak Communities with Martial Arts and Dance***

As part of ISKF Alaska Region's 25<sup>th</sup> year celebration, this month we will highlight the Alaska Moving Arts Center (AMAC).

The Alaska Moving Arts Center opened its doors in 1987. The purpose of AMAC, through the moving arts of martial arts and dance, is to "...create memories and foster the development of hopes and dreams within a family friendly environment." Shotokan Karate in Eagle River is now synonymous with the Alaska Moving Arts Center, which is the Hombu Dojo for ISKF Alaska.

Each Alaskan ISKF instructor and all those in Eagle River donate their time in teaching classes. Contributions of all the non-karate teachers (Dance, Yoga, Ballet, Movement, etc) support the AMAC through donating a portion of their fees to AMAC's monthly operations. AMAC truly demonstrates giving back to our community through the dedication of the twenty plus instructors and volunteers. The AMAC is a non-profit or 501c3 organization, and governed by a Board of Directors which includes karate-ka Tony and Lynette Nakazawa, Becky Hesser, Janet Hagensieker, Andy Rembert, David Horst and Amy Lindsey, AMAC founding dance instructor, and public members Tom Wood and George Laurito. Over the years, members have included Anchorage Police Dept. Captain Thomas Nelson, Jim Gorski, Eagle River community leader, former ISKF member Kevin Hagensieker and others who have contributed much over the years. Through her expertise in web design, Becky Knowlton, owner of BJ Fingerprints, has contributed our catchy AMAC web presence. We are grateful to them all.

Becky Hesser, Executive Director and Sandan, is the main stay or "rock" that enabled AMAC and the Eagle River dojo to continue to grow and thrive. Ms. Hesser's commitment was instrumental in the early years in establishing the high standards and her dedication continues today to maintain those standards and ideals. Becky volunteers teaching our junior karate program (which has produced several national team kata champions); writing public announcements and notices in the newspaper; coordinates the AMACs classes and instructors; maintains the accounting; and performs other duties as needed. Her tireless efforts have contributed significantly to an organization that makes us all proud!

The AMAC structure serves ISKF Alaska by providing logistical support to Alaska Summer Karate Camp Director Sensei Susan Jones, a former long-time volunteer at the AMAC now at the Daigaku Dojo. AMAC also provides the main training center for Team Coach Sensei Holness and the ISKF Alaska National team members.

Sensei Nakazawa and Eagle River dojo members who have assisted in volunteer teaching in addition to Becky Hesser, include Lynette Nakazawa, Janet Hagensieker, John Toms, Andy Rembert, Tom Blackley, Rebekah Martin, Hannah Martin, Sharon Dean, Kevin Hagensieker, Susan Jones, and at times Sempai Pia Wonchala and Scott Toms, and others too numerous to fully list but certainly highly appreciated.

**ISKF is celebrating 25 years in Alaska and AMAC is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year. Please join us on Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup> 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 Pat Andrews. A donation of \$25 per person is requested to support keeping the AMAC lights on for this coming winter. Thank you!**

**To place an advertisement in our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program please contact Event Chair David Horst at 907-350-5221 or 694-4208 or Board Member George Laurito at 274-1925.**

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## Calendar of Events 2007

<b>October:</b>	<b>Oct 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of AK Moving Arts Center/Eagle River Dojo</b>
	Oct 14	Kubota Cup Alaska State Tournament, Fairbanks
	Oct 19-21	ISKF US National Tournament in San Francisco, CA
<b>December:</b>	Dec 3-6	Dan and Kyu Testing, Master Yaguchi in Anchorage and Juneau
	Dec 7	Kyu Testing at UA Fairbanks with Sensei Nakazawa
<b>April 2008:</b>	April 5	Alaska State Open Championship, Anchorage

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### *Alaska Summer Karate Camp update from Susan Jones, 2007 Camp Director*

2007 Summer Camp: A Great Experience: This year's Summer Karate Camp was a great experience with beautiful weather, interesting discussions and most memorable trainings. Distinguished visiting guest instructors Cathy Cline and Hiro Okazaki brought interesting and exciting learning experiences, and increased our camp spirit and fun. Participants came from across the state: Fairbanks, Gambel, Bethel, Juneau, Palmer, Anchorage and Eagle River. Our tribute to Cheryl Phillips was very special. We want to give 'Warm Thanks' to John and Paula Toms for the hard work and excellent meals. Next year camp is scheduled for August 14-17, 2008. See you there!

Awards: The first recipient of the Cheryl Phillips Camp Spirit Award went to Joe Foltz, Fairbanks, for his consistent excellent contributions to camp, hard work, generous spirit, and willingness to go beyond normal expectations. The 2007 Meritorious Service Award was bestowed upon Janet Hagensieker for her consistent hard work and contributions to the Eagle River dojo, the Summer Camps, and the ISKF Alaska Region.

Donations to Nationals over \$500! A big and special thank you to the following contributors to the fund to support Alaskans karate-ka participate in Nationals (October 2007): Doug Murray, Mike Crotty, Diana Stevens, Candace Sherwood and Gavin Mumford, Jeffery Short, Steve Weaver, Charlie Emmi, Erik Schoff, Ryan Lavey, Pat Andrews, Anna Peterson, Morgan Johnson, Joe and Heather Foltz, Ethan Kramp, Amber and Lynette Nakazawa, Ted Berry.

Dan Exam Results: **Yondan:** Jennifer Frazier. **Sandan:** Mike Crotty, George Haynes, Pia Wonchala, Scott Toms. **Nidan:** Adrian Beebee, Phillip Murray. **Shodan:** Andrew Tooyak III, Retest: Dennis Dewinter, Jeff Spnonsler. **Congratulations to everyone who tested!!!**



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### *Message from ISKF Alaska Regional Director Sensei Nakazawa:*

In this newsletter we introduce Sensei Catherine Pinch, 6<sup>th</sup> 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. Ms. Pinch holds several ISKF kata/kumite championships and is a professional writer. She is close to publishing her book about Master Yaguchi. In this issue of the newsletter, Ms. Pinch presents an interview of Master Okazaki 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 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the passing of Master Nakayama.

#### Interview with Master Teruyuki Okazaki by Sensei Catherine Pinch

Sensei Okazaki, Chairman and Chief Instructor of ISKF, Regional Director of East Coast Region, 9<sup>th</sup> Dan, took a few minutes from his busy schedule while visiting Colorado to answer some questions. Sensei Okazaki was Sensei Nakayama's assistant and senior student for many years and here are some of his memories about those early days. ,

#### **Sensei, how long did you know Mr. Nakayama? What was it like to train under Sensei Nakayama?**

Since 1947 — about 40 years. He assisted Sensei Funakoshi in teaching and training at the university. Sensei Funakoshi would come to teach every week, and Sensei Nakayama would teach the other days. When I met him, he had just come back from a long trip in China. He also assisted Mr. Funakoshi for demonstrations to make people more aware of Karate.

Every university had dojos for Kendo, Karate, and the other martial arts. They were nice dojos, but fairly small. Often we had 200 people who would sign up for classes, and the dojo would be so crowded that there was no room for anything but very simple and basic movements. We did a lot of strengthening exercises, such as crouching down and hopping across the floor. These were long, maybe 2-hour classes, and were very hard.

After a while, the students who had come expecting to be taught Karate right away would drop out—maybe a hundred would leave by the end of the first month. The second month, maybe 50 more would leave, and the remaining 50 would have enough room to move around. Then Sensei would really start teaching Karate. Of course Karate was not taught then the way it is today—we worked on very simple techniques—punches for months at a time, then kicks for more months, for the first years of training. Mr. Nakayama had a very scientific mind, and all the while he would think of new ways to teach. His Dynamic Karate book was developed out of this long process of thinking and trying new ways to teach Karate.

### **What is your favorite memory of Sensei Nakayama?**

There are so many memories that it is difficult to pick one. Perhaps the best stories come from his hatred of snakes.

Before the JKA had a dojo, there was no place to practice Karate once I graduated from University. The only dojos were in the universities at the time. Besides, I was working very hard at the time, seven days a week in a very busy restaurant. I had my own business for a while because I thought that I would be more free to take breaks to go and train, but it turned out that I was working all the time with no time for anything else. Eventually, I started working for a very good friend who said that I could take breaks whenever I needed to for Karate.

Sensei Nakayama asked me to go to Thailand with him to introduce that country to the art of Karate. We had gotten an invitation from Thailand to go there and teach, so we went there for two months to teach, relax, and learn about the country.

We saw many things in Thailand, and very much enjoyed ourselves. One of the more popular street sports there was to pit a cobra snake against a mongoose to see which would kill the other. This happened all the time and it was very entertaining to the local people. Of course, since Mr. Nakayama hated snakes, he wouldn't go near these matches at first. But I told him, "Sensei, we are only here for a short while. We should get some pictures of this because we may never see Thailand again."

So finally he got his camera and approached one match that was going on. He stood as far away from the snake as he could, and leaned over to take a picture. Meanwhile, there was a basket of snakes off to the side, and one snake was getting out and slithering along the ground toward Sensei. Sensei, in the meantime, was focused on taking the picture of the fighting cobra and mongoose and didn't see the second snake heading toward him. I said "Sensei, look out for the snake. It's coming toward you." He just waved me away impatiently and continued to focus his camera. I said again, "No, Sensei, there is a snake coming toward you." Suddenly he looked down and there was this huge cobra almost directly underneath him. He jumped back violently, and ran. I didn't see him for the rest of the day.

At the time, Thai boxing was very big in Thailand, and the newspapers had heard of our arrival and were publicly wondering how their champion Thai boxer would do in a match against a Karate practitioner. The Thai people had a great deal of pride about their sport, and there were quite a few newspaper stories about us, comparing Karate with Thai boxing. I went to some Thai boxing matches almost every day to see what it was like, and I was very confident that I could beat them. (I was also very young then) I told Sensei Nakayama, "Sensei, I can beat them up, I know I can." At the time, the tradition was that a challenger should fight the senior assistant, and then if the assistant is defeated, the challenger could then fight the sensei. I wanted to fight the Thai boxer.

However, the champion Thai boxer came to our demonstrations, and at those demonstrations Sensei would show the basic Karate techniques—blocks, punches, kicks, movements, and all the variations and types of techniques. This Thai boxer realized that since Karate contained many more techniques than Thai boxing, any match between the two would not be fair. The two arts were too different. So we never held a match.

However, the public was not very happy with this outcome, and we got some bad press because of it. One day we were walking down the street together and a kid walked up to us and publicly challenged Sensei to a match. Sensei said "No", and we tried to continue walking. Instead of going away, this kid suddenly threw a kick at Sensei Nakayama's head. And then the kid was on the ground, unconscious. Sensei Nakayama had done something very fast, and to this day I'm not sure what it was. Then Sensei said, "Run!", and we took off from there, running away.

Sensei Nakayama was very ashamed that he had hit this kid who had challenged him, because Mr. Funakoshi had told him never to get into a fight. His body had just reacted to the kick coming at him. He told me never to tell anyone about this incident because Sensei Funakoshi would be very angry with him. Of course, now that he is gone, I think that it is ok to tell this story, because it demonstrates both his greatness and his humility.

Another incident happened at the military academy where both Sensei Yaguchi and I assisted Sensei Nakayama in Japan. Every year there was a military academy, and Sensei Nakayama taught martial arts as part of the program there. Of course, in Japan, it is customary to present gifts to the instructors, so some students came to Mr. Yaguchi and myself to ask what kind of things Sensei Nakayama liked. Mr. Yaguchi said (jokingly), “Oh, he like snakes a lot.” The students looked at me and I nodded, “Oh yes, he very much likes snakes.” Then Mr. Yaguchi and I had a good laugh about it, thinking that the students also realized we were joking, and we forgot about it.

Later, those same students brought in a beautifully wrapped gift to Sensei Nakayama. Mr. Yaguchi and I were sitting in the office at the time with Sensei. The students put the gift on the desk and thanked Sensei Nakayama for all the training and instruction. Mr. Yaguchi and I heard small rustlings inside the box, and we both looked at each other in complete shock. We couldn’t say anything—but we suddenly realized that the students had taken us seriously. As it turned out, they had gone up to the mountains and spent a lot of time hunting down a couple of nice big snakes as a gift.

Of course as soon as Sensei opened the box he threw it down and ran out of the room. We didn’t see him all day. We didn’t know what to do, so we went to his house and talked with Mrs. Nakayama. We explained what had happened, and how we didn’t know that these students would actually believe us about the snakes. She laughed, and then she said not to worry and that she would try to explain to her husband our story. It didn’t do much good however. He was very angry and he didn’t talk to us for a long time.

**Sensei, what do you feel is the most valuable thing that Sensei Nakayama taught you?**

The best thing about him was that he was the communication channel from Sensei Funakoshi to us. Sensei Funakoshi developed Karate, but Sensei Nakayama communicated the principles, techniques, and philosophy to his students. That is the best thing he could have done for us.

**What in your opinion, is the most valuable contribution he made to the art of Karate?**

Sensei Nakayama loved history, and he became Sensei Funakoshi’s successor. Sensei Funakoshi developed Karate as we know it now, but Sensei Nakayama introduced the world to Karate. He did it through his writing of a number of books, including Dynamic Karate, and more recently, the Best Karate series. He also spread the word and knowledge of Karate by traveling and teaching all over the world.

Sensei Nakayama also developed tournament rules. He was strictly directed by Sensei Funakoshi to be sure that the tournaments and the sport aspect did not ruin Karate. After all, if students just train for competing, they lose the real meaning of Karate, which is a much different philosophy than just working toward the next tournament. (The word “do” in Karate-do can be interpreted as “to make peace”). Sensei Funakoshi at first had not wanted tournaments at all, but Sensei Nakayama finally convinced him that tournaments are the best way to introduce the public to Karate.

Sensei Nakayama used to love to come to the Philadelphia Master Camp to see his “kids.” He still considered us his kids, even though we were the Senseis in the United States. When the time to come to camp got close, he would get more and more excited about the trip.

When he was very sick in the hospital (he had had a stroke), I got a telephone call from Mrs. Nakayama. I flew to Japan right away and drove to the hospital. When I saw him in his hospital bed, he could still communicate. The first thing he said to me was, “Oh, I’m very sorry I can’t visit camp this year.” I told him that it was ok, and that we would bring camp to him instead. He was happy with that idea. But then the next day he could not talk or communicate. His doctor said that he was in borderline condition, and even if he got well there would be a lot of physical therapy needed for rehabilitation. The following day I left my brother’s house early for the hospital. I left just before Mrs. Nakayama called to say that Sensei Nakayama had passed away, so I missed the call. When I got to the hospital, I felt something was wrong right away. Then I got the news from Mrs. Nakayama. All of the JKA Senseis flew in right away for final services.

Sensei Nakayama loved Master Camp so much, and he was always so happy to see us. Now we who are left feel responsible to carry on what he committed his life to.

**Note: next month we will feature the story of the “first” ISKF Alaska dojo – Boys and Girls Club Karate. We will also have Sensei Pinch’s interview with Master Yaguchi on his memories of Master Nakayama.**