



# ISKF Alaska Region Newsletter

*Alaska Shotokan Karate since 1981  
May 2009 Issue*

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## New Web Site Design

We have a brand new Web site design! Please look at our new site with an Alaskan look and lots of new information. [www.iskf-alaska.net](http://www.iskf-alaska.net)

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## Featured Dojo

### **Homer Shotokan Karate Club**

The Homer Shotokan Karate Club opened its doors in 1986 under the direction of Sensei Gary Richardson. It was known as Way of Japan Alaska, with its parent dojo being Sensei Robert Halliburton's dojo in Fresno, CA. The club was affiliated with SKIF and followed the instruction of Master Kanazawa. Sensei Richardson retired in 2007 with senior students Dean Sundmark and Martie Krohn keeping the club active. Dean met Sensei Susan Jones via email while exploring the possibilities of attending the ISKF summer camp in 2008. He was unable to attend due to his work schedule, but a relationship was established that helped propel the club to become a part of ISKF.

The Homer Club officially became members of ISKF in the fall of 2008. Our members are joining and testing into the system with this process anticipated to be completed this spring. There are two students of note who studied in Homer before moving on to Fairbanks: Andy Krohn and Dylan Hitchcock-Lopez. The Homer Dojo is proud to claim these two karateka in its lineage and appreciates their visits home. Dylan was part of the motivating force behind the move to ISKF.



**Sensei Susan Jones posing with the Homer Karate-ka**

The Homer Shotokan Club generally has up to 40 active members on the books at any one time. Some people practice for a while, take a break and then return. Others practice for a short time and then move on. A few have practiced for a number of years. Homer has the difficulty of being a small town with students being involved in many activities in school and the community and schedules that often overlap. This forces many young people to make choices that cause sporadic enrollment. The club functions well

in spite of the fluctuating population and serves students from age 5 through adult. The club moved to a new location in the Fall of 2008. The new dojo features a “floating floor” with a lot of give and a “soft” response. It also has a large old wrestling mat that was inherited from the Homer (Nome) Judo Club when our judo instructor, Dan Levinson, passed on. Add two heavy bags, two stretching bars and a bunch of kids, and you have a very active and dynamic workspace.

Martie and Dean share the teaching duties of the club with the assistance of Josiah Wise, age 16. Martie began studying karate in 1988, one year after her son, Andy, who began at age ten. Martie has training in shotokan, tai chi, aikido and some kobudo—bo staff and sai. Dean began studying in 2002 after watching his children having fun learning karate. Josiah began studying martial arts in 2007. He also studies kenpo, jiu-jitsu, and krav-maga.



*Article respectfully submitted by Martie Krohn*

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### **ISKF Alaska Demo Team at Fur Rondy**

The first few months of 2009 have been filled with exiting and uniquely Alaskan events. The demo team, headed up by Catherine Pinch, performed at the Fur-Rondy Asian Cultural and Martial Arts Expo at West High Auditorium on February 28. They demonstrated a mixture of basics, kata (including team kata), and sparring. Other groups demonstrated martial arts, dancing, and the ever-inspiring Taiko Drums.

The ISKF Alaska Demo Team also participated at the AMAC Recital, and will be staging a demonstration at the Eagle River Bear Paw Festival and other events in the various communities. If you are interested in participating, please let your instructor know, or contact Sensei Pinch at 830-5456 or [catherinepinch@gmail.com](mailto:catherinepinch@gmail.com).

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### **The 2009 ISKF Alaska Regional Tournament**

The regional tournament was held on March 28, 2009. Many young people (and some older ones) competed from around the state. Results of the tournament were emailed out and are posted on the web site, [www.iskf-alaska.net](http://www.iskf-alaska.net). Below are a few photos, taken by George Haynes, of some tournament moments. You can see more photos by going online to <http://501blues.smugmug.com/>.





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### **Alaska State Open Karate Championship 2009**

The Alaska State Open Karate Championship was hosted by Sensei Jim Grady of the Renbukai of Alaska. Students from the ISKF Alaska competed in both kata and kumite events, with several taking top awards.





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## Sensei Yaguchi's Visit

Sensei Yutaka Yaguchi visited the weekend of April 25. Testing on Saturday lasted almost four hours, beginning with the youths and finishing with the adult dan testing. On Sunday Sensei taught a seminar in which both beginners and advanced students found themselves working hard. His special combinations of techniques encouraged us to continue to develop our skills. Sensei Yaguchi is known for teaching unique classes everywhere he goes; it is hard to go to a seminar of his and NOT learn something new.

### ***Dan Test Results***

A number of our brown and black belt students tested for their next rank with Sensei Yaguchi, and we have a whole new group of upper-ranking karate-ka! It was clear that Sensei was pleased with the overall quality of the students. Congratulations to our new high-ranking students!!

**Sandan:** Andy Rembert, Lance Davis, Duane Kujala, Thomas Blackley, Rebekah Martin

**Nidan:** Annemarie Acord, Shayla Pederson, Joe Foltz, Faith Rogers, Birger Baastrup, Ira Rosen, Jody Vick

**Shodan:** Ted Berry, Stacey Poulson, Thomas Scott Davis

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## Guest Training Tip by Sensei Todd Hardy, Whitehorse, YT

**Breathing** is probably the single most important aspect of the martial arts. We can all learn the basic techniques whether, blocking, kicking and striking, but each rely upon our breath to execute properly. Central to this idea is what breathing does. It is a cleansing within, getting rid of old and bringing in new. It is reinvigorating and relaxing. I will discuss five methods which are quite beneficial for all martial artists. For practice, everyone should use the nose, both inhaling and exhaling.

**Attention Breathing** is focusing your awareness on the natural rhythm of your breath. Expand the abdomen gradually by lightly pushing out and down as the oxygen fills the lower lung cavity. Focus the mind on expanding the abdominal area. Don't be overanxious and forcefully protrude the abdominal wall. Instead, try to achieve a gentle and smooth expansion in time with the inhalation. When the abdomen is full, exhale through the nose and pull the abdomen gently back into the body, compressing the lungs from the bottom. With each inhalation the abdomen expands; with each exhalation the abdomen contracts.

**Reverse Abdominal Breathing** is more difficult than Abdominal Breathing simply because it reverses the natural flow of the breath. Reverse Abdominal Breathing is a breathing method best suited for those who study the martial arts since it concentrates focus on the centre during exhalation. Inhale through the nose. Slowly draw the abdomen in and up. The upper chest will naturally expand as oxygen fills your lungs.

As you inhale, contract the muscles of your perineum. The perineum is the area between the anus and the lower edge of the pubis at the front of the pelvis. Again, don't be overanxious and forcefully squeeze the abdomen. Instead, focus on keeping a smooth and relaxed motion. When the lungs are full, exhale through the nose, release, and push the abdomen out and down.

**The Nose Pant** is a great exercise for charging yourself up with energy. Imagine something in your nose that needs to be blown out by sharply puffing out through the nostrils. Immediately follow by a sharp intake of air through the nose. Abdominal Nose Panting consists of contracting the abdomen as you puff.

**Reverse Abdominal Nose Panting** expands the abdomen on the puff out. After completing a session of Nose Panting, always follow with a couple of deep slow breaths to calm the body down.

**The Complete Breath** is another breathing exercise. Regular practice expands lung capacity, slows down unconscious breathing and makes it smoother and more regular. The Complete Breath maximizes oxygen intake and enables oxygen-rich blood to flow to the extremities.

Begin this exercise from a lying-down posture so maximum concentration can be achieved. Inhale through the nose. Expand the lower abdomen, pushing out and down, same as Abdominal Breathing. Once the abdomen is full, continue inhaling and expand the chest, filling the upper lungs. Raise the collarbone and shoulders as you continue inhaling. Fill the throat and the nose. Hold the breath in. After a count of 10, exhale through the nose. Contract the lower abdomen pushing in and up. Continue to exhale by squeezing the air from the lungs and chest. Lower the collarbone and shoulders. Blow the air from your throat and nose. Empty it all out. Hold the breath out for a count of 10. On the next inhalation don't gasp for air. Calmly and smoothly inhale just as before.

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### ***Keep Training...more about Sensei Hardy.***

I am very pleased that Sensei Todd Hardy has contributed this article to our newsletter from his *What's Up Yukon!* series. Sensei Hardy due to health concerns recently stepped down from his position in the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Over the last 25 years, many of the karate-ka of Alaska Shotokan have either trained with Sensei Hardy or have trained with his family or his students (the first was when a small group of Canadians journeyed to our dojo for the Master Nakayama training and testing in 1984). For most of the 38 years Sensei Hardy has been involved in karate, he has lived and trained in Whitehorse and visited Alaska several times. From his experiences in karate-do, life and work, he has developed many insights such as he is sharing with us in this newsletter. His writing is like his karate is strong, dynamic and always insightful. I would like to say "Thank You!" to Sensei Hardy for sharing and we look forward to future conversations with you.

Keep training!

Sensei Tony Nakazawa

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## **Summer Training**

*Saturday Training 9:00 to 10:30 AM classes continuing this summer 2009*

**ISKF-Alaska members in Anchorage, Eagle River and Mat-su:** To get ready for the rank testing, all 4<sup>th</sup> kyu and above (adults and youth) **are required to attend at least one session per month** before they will be allowed to test for rank. The focus will be on advanced kihon, kata and kumite. If you have any questions please see your instructor. The first and third Saturday classes are at the Anchorage Boys and Girls club and the second, fourth and fifth Saturdays the classes are at the Eagle River.

**Summer Camp (August 13-16) registration forms are now available.** Your instructor has received the summer camp information, and will distribute it in class. Also, please be sure to read through the information; we've changed some of the requirements for campers, particularly the younger campers, as of this year.