



# MŌ ICHI DO

*I OGKF-USA NEWSLETTER*

November 2009

## I OGKF-USA

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## From the Editor's Desk

Some time ago, Randy Kopke Sensei forwarded to me a paper that one of his students wrote for school. It turns out that 12-year-old Will Ridener decided to write his school report about the history and practice of martial arts. His paper addressed the history of martial arts in China, Korea, and Japan. He dealt with everything from ninjas to people like Ed Parker and Chuck Norris who popularized martial arts in the United States. He provided brief descriptions of different martial arts, from Aikido to Tae Kwon Do. There was even some discussion of Buddhism. And, of course, there was the place of the IOGKF and Higaonna Sensei in all of this.

It was clear that young Mr. Ridener had invested considerable research and effort into this paper. And I'm certain that his practice of karate in Kopke Sensei's dojo was what spurred him to take on a project such as this. His practice of the art was the impetus for writing a good school report. And I bet his academic learning compelled him to practice the art even more seriously when he went back to the dojo to train.

It is a privilege to teach an art that benefits our students in so many ways. And like Mr. Ridener, I hope I never lose the passion to learn more.

## "Train Without Ego"

By Stacey L. Miller,  
Ohana Karate

I think that is one of my favorite sayings by Sensei Sam Larioza. When we get a new group of white belts, or many of us are having a difficult time with our training, he often tells us to "train without ego."

I wish I had listened to this statement a little more starting about a year and a half ago. That is when I really started having a lot of problems with my wrist. It would hurt for days on end, especially after working very hard in class. *Kakie* or arm conditioning would often leave me almost crying later that night. I mentioned this to my physician and x-rays were taken. I was told, "You have a hint of arthritis" in both thumb joints. I thought, okay, I am in my 40's, started karate at 42, so I have aches and pains more so than some of my younger or stronger karateka, so deal with it. I would tell myself, heck these people

are doing the same thing and none of them are complaining, so why should I? Besides I already have a problem with my back and have learned when and how to step back with that. So why could I not do that with my wrist. One word: "EGO."

My back is one thing, but a stupid wrist is another. In the summer of 2008 I had one really bad training time doing arm conditioning. Again, I thought, okay, I am a 44 yr old with arthritis "suck it up." My wrist swelled but that was not new after such an intense session. I lived with the pain again thinking, "Why should I let this stop me." Well by November I noticed a small lump growing along the outside of my wrist. I asked a couple of people in the medical field what they thought and they each said it was a small cyst or bone spur. If it does not bother you, don't worry about it.

Well, things just got worse, and I did nothing more again until April of 2009. This is when I saw a surgeon and ended up finding out that my ego had let me take things to the point of having multiple cysts, torn

sheathing and tendonitis all requiring surgery to repair and remove. Oops! Look what my ego did for me!

Now some good did come out of this whole thing. During my healing process I have continued attending class, just to watch and hopefully learn. First, I learned something I already knew I am very lucky to be training under Sensei Sam. Second, my fellow karateka are an amazing group of people. But I learned more than that. I learned that I can observe a class and still train in karate. I was amazed at what I could learn sitting there with my wrist in a splint. I was given an opportunity not to worry about the details and performing them but really learn what those details were. I was able to truly watch Sensei and my fellow students and see more than I could while being active in class. Something as simple as a tilt of the shoulders during the double blocks at the end of Gekisai Dai Ichi completely changes the way the kata looks. What about leaning back during the Archer Blocks in Seiyuchin? While watching the classes I

could truly see what Sensei was talking about when it came to how to keep my body square when I punch, what the true target point for the spear hand is in Shisochin. I would sit and watch class and go, "I really hope I do not do that, or I wonder if mine is as good at that?" I also had moments of complete "Aha! that is what you mean." I have so much to learn that I need a lot more of these moments. Train without ego means more as your sit and watch a class. I observed people getting so frustrated with a move that it has become a barrier in learning. Ego got in the way. I watched white belts come and go because they could not get the hang of what they were learning. They were not really giving it a long enough time to let their "Aha!" moments come. Now don't go and get hurt to observe a class but take the time to watch maybe a more advanced class or even a beginners' class and see what you can learn from just watching for a change. Sensei will often dismiss

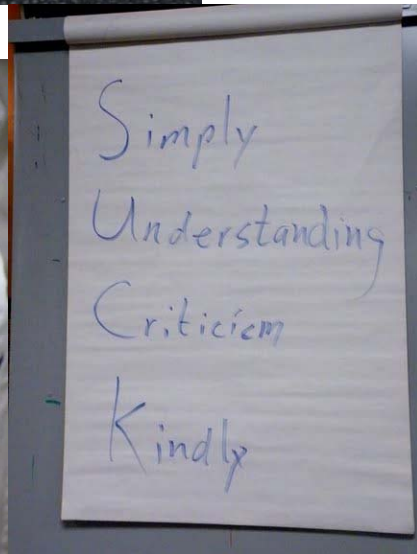
the juniors at the end of a class and just spend an extra 15 minutes with the senior students. Take that time to watch what the seniors do you can really learn something in that short time. If you're a white belt take more than a day, week or month to become comfortable with what you are learning. Karate cannot be learned in such little time. If it was that easy, why would any of us train?

Karate and Ego are not compatible. Karate is not just strength and physical, it is mental and spiritual; it is about improving yourself from the inside out. Karate is not about ego, it is about making you a better person. I know how I felt watching an adult grading instead of being out of the floor with my fellow karateka. It was the hardest thing to do. I wanted to feel what they were feeling - that sense of accomplishment at the end of the 3 hours. I felt guilty because I did not go through what they did. As I look back at that feeling now, I have to wonder if that was my ego talking or just my

addiction to karate making me feel that way. Now I am not saying that my ego is gone from my training. Today was a perfect example. Instead of bowing out of something I knew I should not do, I thought, "Hey! I can do this," even though in the back of my head I was saying "Are you stupid?" I injured my wrist because I did not stop my ego from taking over. I still have a lot to learn. I am willing to continue working towards that all too important saying:

"Train without EGO!"

# Blackbelt Gasshuku- November 2009



## Regional Events



In-House-Friendship Gasshuku  
Poteau, Oklahoma  
October 2009



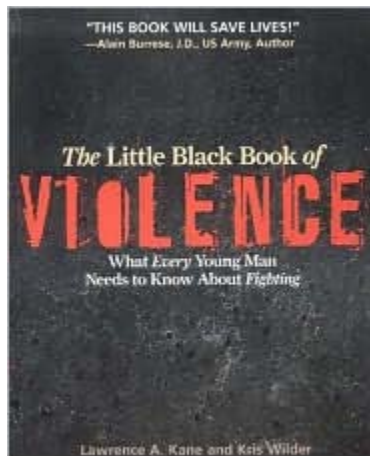
*Interested in bringing Higaonna Sensei to your dojo? Don't forget that you can find many of his videos at*

*<http://www.dragon-tsunami.org/Tsunami/Pages/section1.htm>*

*There's no substitute to training with a living legend in person, but these resources are invaluable for learning and refining your practice of Goju-ryu and improving your ability to pass on true Okinawan Karate, the legacy of Chojun Miyagi, to the next generation.*

## Book Review

Lawrence A. Kane and Kris Wilder, *The Little Black Book of Violence: What Every Young Man Needs to Know About Fighting* (Wolfeboro, NH: YMAA Publication Center, 2009).



The first thing that must be said about this book is that it has been misnamed. The book is not "Little" and its importance is not limited to "Young" men. This 335 page work should be required reading for every male (and quite a few females) for whom physical violence is a real possibility in their lifetime.

Lawrence Kane (*Surviving Armed Assaults*) and Kris Wilder (*The Way of Sanchin Kata*) have teamed up again to write a very practical, very honest look at the realities of violence, what martial artists so often refer to as "the street." The result is a book that is

informative, entertaining, and indeed quite applicable to many people's lives. Like all good works on the subject, it also undermines the fantasy world of noble fisticuffs that fill the minds of too many of us. Street fights are far more glorious in our daydreams, and the authors dispel a great deal of such silliness. This book leaves one wanting to avoid violence. I don't believe it hyperbole when one reviewer wrote, "This book will save lives!"

The first section, "Before Violence Occurs," helps the reader become aware of signs and situations that signify the possibility of physical aggression. With this knowledge, methods to avoid and defuse potentially violent situations are discussed. Topics related to environment, machismo, over-confidence, and the presence of others (friends and foes) are discussed. The style is frank but engaging. With headings like "When it Comes to Violence, Girlfriends Can Be Helpful... but Generally Not," you know you'll be getting practical advice in a prose that is anything but dull.

This section is followed by a second entitled "A Violent

Encounter." Both authors have credible experience training in traditional martial arts (both are Goju-ryu instructors) as well as self-defense experiences of their own to share. This is supplemented with the expertise of others who meet violent encounters on a much more regular basis. The resulting perspective is a look at the realities of street violence that can turn your stomach. One finds in this section an excellent snapshot or two of the realities of fighting and violence outside the dojo. Their treatment of what we might call "self-defense techniques" is extremely limited. Anyone hoping to learn practical self-defense based on them would be hopelessly lost. However, the intention of the authors seems rather to suggest a few avenues one could explore, rather than give advice on how to win a fight. Their treatment of mental attitude during a fight, on the other hand, is fairly thorough and useful.

The last section, and one rarely

treated sufficiently, is "Aftermath of Violence" - a wonderful response to all those who off-handedly remark, "Better to be tried by twelve than carried by six." The criminal, civil, medical, and emotional turmoil that follows violence is presented quite ably without pulling any punches. In addition to the disturbing consequences of violence that we would all like to avoid, there is also some good solid advice on how to handle legal and medical matters after a conflict.

In the end, what may have struck people as a book about winning fights ends up being a book about simply winning. And winning is understood to be living your life safely, without violence, without prison time, without facing massive lawsuits, without struggling with guilt over an overblown incident that ends up out of control. And that is, after all, what we all need to know about fighting.

-The Editor



"This is also the real secret of the arts:  
always be a beginner."

-Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

## Notes from our next IOGKF-USA Chief Instructor - Sensei Villa



Hi everyone! I've been asked to introduce myself to you all. Some of you know me pretty well, some only a little and others hardly at all. I hope that will change and we will all get to know one another better.

I look forward to having the opportunity to serve the organization as the new chief instructor. It is my goal that we all work together to make the IOGKF-USA better. We all need to take part in this organization and

everyone's input is important. It doesn't matter if you have one student or a thousand; we all have skills and talents that can make this a better organization than it has been. But each and every one of us needs to contribute. It's not enough to just belong, you have to get involved.

I want to see a return to the sense of camaraderie and friendship I felt when I first joined over nineteen years ago. I think this can be accomplished by every instructor making it a priority to take part in every way possible. The IOGKF-USA is every one of you. If I may be so bold, I would

like to paraphrase John F. Kennedy and say, "Ask not what the IOGKF can do for you, ask what you can do for the IOGKF." Your contributions are what this organization needs to grow and succeed.

My goal as chief instructor will be to assist in any way I can to see this organization become stronger and more focused, to aid you the members in any capacity I can. I look forward to all of us making this the best karate organization in the world. See you all soon.

## Upcoming Events

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|---------------|--|
| February 3-6  | Chief Instructor Gasshuku<br>- Okinawa, Japan  |
| March 27-28   | Susquehanna Martial Arts Symposium<br>- Nakamura Sensei<br>- Guro Wes Tasker ( <i>Pekiti Tirsia</i> )<br>- Selinsgrove, PA |
| June 3-6      | Miyagi Chojun Festival<br>- Spokane, Washington  |
| October 24-30 | IOGKF International Gasshuku<br>And World Championships<br>- South Africa  |

... and don't forget, Christmas is coming:



Dear IOGKF Members,

One of our former students is a metal arts professor in Lower Michigan. He was making these for us to sell at our gasshuku in 2003 but the gasshuku came and went before he could get them done. So, over the years we have been selling them one at a time. We have quite a few left and it would probably take years to sell them to the students that come through our dojo.

The large silver plated ones are the size of a quarter with the art engraved. We have 13 of them and are asking \$30.00 each.

The smaller silver plated ones are the size of a dime, American or Canadian. We have 27 engraved and 13 extruded design. We are asking \$20.00 each.

We also have dime sized gold plated. We have 2 engraved and 3 extruded designs and are asking \$25.00 each.

We would also be willing to lower the price a little for any dojo head that wants to buy a larger number!

Thank you.

O. Eugene Collins  
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Ichiban Martial Arts  
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