

# AIKIDO NEWS

## DOJO FINANCIAL STATUS

As you recall, we were successful in our fundraising drive last year to catch up with a rather significant rent increase. We did explore other options for renting or leasing a place to practice, but in the end decided to stay with the Mason Center rental. So we were able to pay the Summer 2010 rent check with the funds on hand, supplemented by additional funds from the generous fundraising. Thanks to everyone's support and good-heartedness in the matter.

The next significant cash flow situation was this Jan 2011. Here we needed to pay 6 months rent, only from membership dues. We went through the Summer and Fall being frugal and encouraging everyone to stay current with their dues. We also paid for our insurance and expenses associated with Imaizumi Sensei's visit in September. When the January check was due, we had the funds and paid for the next 6 months rent. Not much extra, but a good accomplishment nonetheless.

We continue in our commitment to keep member dues as low as possible, making the training as available as we can. And we will continue in our efforts to be responsible and frugal as we gather up funds for the June 2011 check. Just so you have an idea, these payments are around \$4200 (per 6 months). So we need to create over \$700 per month in membership dues. (i.e., 8 full paying adults and 12 kids.)

We will look to create additional fundraising events and activities during the year to support our general expenses, to begin to build up a reserve fund, and to help some students with partial scholarships attend seminars with Imaizumi Sensei.



## PROMOTIONS

During 2010 many of those training aikido tested for and passed the requirements for their next rank. Testing is first an individual affair, in that one must be able to come to class regularly to practice all the required techniques and weapons kata. Each subsequent test increases in length, complexity, skillfulness and intensity. Plus, the student testing must learn to move-with and integrate the nervousness and pressure of the test itself. Secondly, testing is a community affair in that all the many others contribute sweat and bruises while getting the student ready for the test.



### Kids Class testing and promotions:

Steve Jobson, 3/2010, blue belt  
 Abby Allsopp, 3/2010, blue belt  
 Julian Colby, 10/2010, orange belt  
 Sam Atchison, 9/2010, yellow belt  
 Chris Atchison, 9/2010, yellow belt  
 Kai Brabeck, 10/2010, orange belt  
 Malcolm Kelly, 12/2010, orange belt

### Adult Kyu testing and promotions:

Cory Kitch, 2/2010, 2nd Kyu  
 John Partenope, 5/2010, 5th Kyu  
 Kory Samson, 5/2010, 5th Kyu  
 Robert Juskevich, 7/2010, 4th Kyu  
 John Partenope, 9/2010, 4th Kyu  
 Kory Samson, 1/2011, 4th Kyu

### Dan level promotions:

Mark Winkworth, Chief Instructor,  
 9/2010, Yondan  
 (4th degree black belt, by Imaizumi Sensei)

***"Shugyo is the ceaseless  
 engagement of new  
 challenges."***

Shizuo Imaizumi Sensei

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Kids Aikido	Mon & Wed	4:30 - 5:30pm
General Aikido	Mon & Wed	6:00 - 8:00pm
SBK Weapons	Mon & Wed	5:30 - 6:30pm
Ki Class	Thursday	5:30 - 7:00pm
Adv Aikido	Saturday	9:00 - 11:15am

## INTRODUCTION TO AIKIDO

First Saturday each month, 11:00 - 12:00,

beginning April 2, 2011. Come early to sign the release, wear loose sweats to move around in. We will learn a bit of aikido, and experience what it is and how to start. Free. [Info](#)

## KIDS CLASSES MICHAEL WILKINSON - INSTRUCTOR

While we do aikido games and techniques, we focus on the development of the whole person, not just the martial artist. Cooperation and communication create confidence and we learn the difference between strength and power, how to center and ground, how to focus, and ultimately how to flow with the forces around us.

We practice responding appropriately to whatever conflicts we might encounter, be they physical, verbal, or emotional. We learn how to be members of a community founded on respect. And we have fun doing it. [More](#)

## KI CLASS STEVE SELF - INSTRUCTOR

This class practices the inner arts of aikido. We directly train our capacity for having a calm, one-point mind and from that, connecting and extending ki. There is no falling down and the class is not strenuous.

The essence of aikido is practicing nondissension mind, a way of being beyond reaction and passivity. It is complete connection and openness. Moving with the moment. And leading without attachment. This unified state of being is our natural state. But we have learned many habitual patterns that separate us from our birthright. So we practice exercises and ki testing to regain confidence in our one-point, our unified bodymind. We also train in ki breathing meditation and kiai. [More](#)

## AIKIDO TRAINING

In the beginning it can seem overwhelming in details and complexity. Plus we're supposed to learn all this while being relaxed! But take heart. All of us went through the initial confusion and it's a really good time to begin exploring how to stay present in the middle of confusion. Relax, breathe, and continue.

We practice and learn techniques for responding to nine different basic attacks. Like someone grabbing your arm, punching your middle, or grabbing you from behind. Unlike other forms of learning, you are encouraged to NOT attempt to hold on to and memorize the techniques. Learning Aikido is not about grasping hard, and trying to hold on to something. Yes, the techniques do eventually become "memorized" in your bodymind, but this comes from repetition with awareness. Practicing this way allows the magic of Ai-Ki (harmonizing energy) to polish us.

As we go, we also learn how to fall and roll so that we can be safe. As our capacity for falling safely increases, we can open up our attacks. We come faster or with more intensity. We learn that in Aikido, the harder the attack, the bigger and faster the fall. We transform the fear of falling into the joy of flying and rolling. Soon we learn how to attack different people, at their level, so as to encourage the best learning experience, the best Aikido.

As we keep coming to class and practicing, day in and day out, we begin recognizing patterns and techniques as we see them again and again. Each night we may feel clumsy at times, and occasionally we feel smooth and powerful. Gradually we are learning this! We begin enjoying the feel of pressure as someone grabs our wrist for we know how to move with this incoming force and guide them into a fall.

We learn specific sets of techniques for different tests as we advance. We also practice with the wooden sword and staff, learning solo and paired katas. There are techniques for taking away knives, for throwing with the staff, and for multiple attackers.

Soon we are learning to move with three or four attackers all at once. Called randori, we start by just moving around with them as they walk toward us. Not avoiding, not conflicting. Then as we progress, they come more continuously and we begin to throw them with technique. As our confidence grows and our capacity for calmness expands, they come faster and harder and we discover the joy of moving with all the energy and intensity of randori.

# ALWAYS TRAINING SOMETHING

*"We're always practicing something. We're always getting better at something, creating some kind of future. We might as well choose something worthwhile..."* - Curtis Sensei, Maui Ki Aikido.

As we practice aikido, we come to see that our responses to an attack, or a series of attacks, begin to open up. Initially we may have felt some shock or fear, we might have felt a sense of contraction away from the threat. Or we might have felt an aggressive and forceful counter reaction. But as training progresses, we discover an alert relaxation and experience a connected flow as we practice hour after hour, day after day.

As we train further, we notice that this opening is more available in life, moment to moment. We can open our awareness to the present moment, whether it is a calm quiet time alone, or if it is an intense moment of relational conflict. Our experience of opening up to what is actually happening, letting go of resisting, of protecting, of trying to express our *right* view, and seeing more and more of what is actually going on in the present moment is a wondrous development. No longer do we believe our instant interpretation of things. We open to see newly, in each new moment.

It is a bit of a paradox. Training in aikido (or any mature martial art) can seem repetitive. Yet in that very repetition, as we stay present, we find that each moment is completely fresh, fascinating in its depth and connection.



Whether this is in the midst of flashing wooden swords in a bokken kata, or in the intense pressure of randori, or in the silence of predawn ki breathing meditation... We cultivate the capacity for staying present, unattached, free, open, and moving with whatever arises.

Each moment in life becomes the opportunity for "keeping one point", for opening even more, for extending ki and moving with non-fighting mind. This is not in any way passive, it is *Aiki*, the spirit of nondissension. In this all-time-practice (shugyo) we are creating our future and the evolving person who will be there to meet the future.

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## Shugyo

### *Polishing One's Spirit*

The moment by moment process  
of unifying mind and body,  
and opening to life.

Challenging oneself to see  
with greater awareness and consequently  
move with greater harmony.  
Cultivating great curiosity and unfettered  
positivity in all engagements.

## PATRONAGE

There is a long and honorable tradition in the East of people supporting *Dojos* (place where men and women practice a discipline of self-realization). Some continue supporting after they stop active training and others support the dojo because they see value for their family, the community and society in sustaining the practice.

Our dojo is an unusual place of practice for a number of reasons. First, we are a registered non-profit educational organization, and none of the instructors are paid. We keep our eye on the authenticity of our instruction in aikido, aiki-weapons and ki development. We train for vitality and confidence, and in the longer-term, for polishing and opening of awareness. This kind of practice illuminates all of life and grows deeper and richer the longer one perseveres. The training is always fresh and new, and as layer after layer of habitual patterns become conscious and then fall away, we become more connected, more aware and more capable people.

Secondly, while the aikido we teach and practice is detailed, structurally sound, and physically effective, we always endeavor to cultivate the essence of the art: non-conflict mind and respect. Aikido began as a martial art and its study dissolves slackness, passivity and submission. It polishes away aggression, superiority and arrogance. We learn, over time, to develop a calm open confidence, dignity and integrity based on our natural condition of unified mind and body. Our training is cooperative, heartfelt and exuberant.

Boys and girls, men and women, young and mature, people of any faith, race, creed, or orientation can come, with an open mind and interest, and train together. We often have highly regarded *Sensei* (teachers) from other aikido schools teach seminars to broaden our views and open possibilities. We also travel to other dojos for special seminars and events, bringing back interesting aikido details and exercises that enliven our practice further. And while we do follow much of Aikido's traditional etiquette (bowing, Japanese terminology, traditional training uniforms, etc.) we do not hold to this too rigorously.

We take training seriously, while at the same time enjoy ourselves. We do not concentrate on physical conditioning in our practice sessions, leaving that to each person to manage as they need and desire. People of a wide range of capabilities can train well together in Aikido, given the emphasis on harmonizing energy rather than trying to overcome or overpower.

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For those wanting to contribute toward sustaining the dojo, we have created a page on our website for donation: [patronage](#).

You can also mail a check to: **DSBK Aikido, c/o Steve Self Treasurer, 120 Trail Ridge Road, Durango, CO 81301**. Durango Shin-Budo Kai Aikido is a registered 501 C3 Non-Profit Corporation, ID number is **32-0083806**. You may claim your donation appropriately on your tax return. Thank you for your attention and support.

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On the first Saturday of every month, we will have an **Open Dojo & Aikido Introduction** from 11am to 12 noon, in the dojo, room 3-4, Mason Center, 333 E 12th Street, Durango. Our Advanced Aikido practice runs from 9am to 11am, so you are welcome to come early and observe if you want. The introduction is free. Please consider coming around to see what we do, what we offer, or just to share in the beauty and fun that Aikido is. You can just watch and listen, or come on the mat for some easy aiki exercises to begin to experience the spirit of aikido. [details](#).

*The first Saturday Open House and Introduction will be April 2, 2011.*