

**PAN-AMERICAN GOJU RYU KARATEDO
SEIWAKAI NEWSLETTER**

**全米剛柔流空手道
誠和会社内報**

**Dedicated to Traditional Goju Ryu Karatedo
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All issues of the Pan-American Seiwa Kai Newsletter can be found online at:
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Kawase Hasui: *Snow at Itsukushima*

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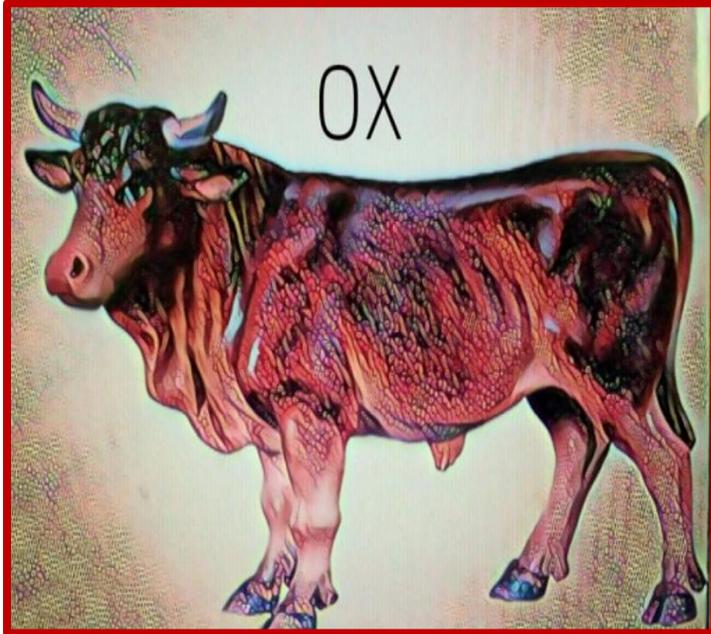
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2021 The year of the Metal Ox Akemashiteomedetōgozaimasu



Happy New Year, and welcome to the Year of the Ox or more specifically, the Year of the Metal Ox. In the Japanese zodiac, it is believed that all people who are born within any given calendar year share certain personality traits and attributes.

There are twelve animal signs in the Japanese zodiac – rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar. The ox is the second in this twelve-year cycle. Additionally, there are five elements associated with each animal in the twelve-year cycle – metal, water, wood, fire and earth.

Consequently, your animal zodiac sign will occur every twelve years, while your specific animal/element zodiac sign will occur only once every 60 years.

If you were born in 2009, 1985, 1973, 1961, 1949, or 1937 this is your zodiac year in the 12-year cycle. If you were born in 1961, this is your birth-year of a lifetime; your animal/element zodiac sign has made its complete 60-year cycle.

Japanese New Year's Traditions

Otoshidama

On New Year's, there is a tradition where children are given a small amount of money in an envelope. Although the gift isn't much, it is something that the children in Japan look forward to.

Hatsumode

Another traditional New Year's custom is the first shrine visit of the New Year. Many people visit a shrine on the first few days of the new year to pay their respects and to wish for a happy and healthy year. The shrines tend to get crowded since families tend to go together.

Hatsuhinode

Another New Year's tradition is to observe the first sunrise of the year.



Congratulations to Terri Herrera-Pounds Go-Dan By Jim Pounds



My wife, Terri recently graded to Godan (5th dan) Goju-Ryu Seiwakai. She started in 1989 when we were both Shito-Ryu practitioners, but had a few years of limited training when Jacob was born. She is an excellent Sensei and karateka, and I am so proud of her!

Her illustrious grading panel is on screen behind her. Thanks to all of you for your time and constructive comments and analysis! I was her kumite partner and very glad I had my cup on! Seiwakai women know where to place those kicks!

Omedetou gozaimasu!!!

2020: The Year of the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

By Mark Cramer

The Good

The year 2020, seemingly started off on a good note. It was the Year of the Rat, and the first sign in the 12-year cycle of the Japanese zodiac.

At Great Lakes Seiwakai, we had a fantastic Gasshuku and Shinsa scheduled for March 27, 28, and 29. Most of the senior Seiwakai Shihans from the US and Canada were scheduled to attend, and people from six US states and Ontario, Canadian were preregistered. Then COVID-19 began to spread. On March 13th the Governor of Ohio cancelled or significantly limited large gatherings and athletic events. Schools were closed across the state and directed to switch from in-person learning to alternative programs. Both of our Great Lakes Seiwakai programs are taught in schools, so we were completely shut down.

Although I was disappointed, I decided to make something good come from this situation. I decided to significantly increase my self-training. For the past decade, I've been teaching 19 classes per week on six days and two evenings. This schedule has left me with limited time for "my karate," and there were certain things that I wanted to work on. So, six days per week I went in my basement dojo for self-training. As the weeks of social isolation went by, I felt as if I had made progress in several areas.

Then when the weather improved, the Great Lakes Seiwakai instructors and some of our students resumed training together in a park which is down the street from my house. These Tuesday and Thursday classes lasted from late May to the beginning of September. One hour before the training in the park was scheduled to begin, I'd start with self-training in my basement dojo. Then five minutes before the park training was scheduled to begin, I'd head to the park. Four other days during the week I was training alone.



There were a couple of other good things that happened in 2020. When Vassie Hanshi and Fujiwara Hanshi began to teach classes through Zoom, we began to discover the potential of this venue for teaching and learning. We discovered that Zoom classes could bring our world-wide Seiwakai family together for good training and a bit comradery. Whereas the hours of training might be unusual depending on your time zone, we were still training and learning together.

When schools started up in the late summer, I went back to teaching six days and one evening per week. I was teaching via Zoom from my basement dojo, and this forced me to some redecorating to make my rather baren basement dojo a bit more aesthetically pleasing to my students.

At Toledo School for the Arts, my enrollment was stable since karate is a class offering during the school day. I had my usual 45 students, however I found it very difficult to teach beginning students on zoom. I couldn't make corrections in my customary manner, and my students could not always see me clearly. They were watching on the small screen of their iPads. Fortunately, most of the students who had already experienced a year or more of karate with me were able to make the adjustments to virtual learning.

The Bad

Karate was supposed to debut as an Olympic sport in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, but the games were postponed until July of 2021 due to the Covid-10 pandemic. Similarly, our 2020 Seiwakai Seminar in Omagari was cancelled.

Our Great Lakes Seiwakai program with Bedford Schools in Michigan is an after-school program, and it was decimated by the pandemic. We went from having more than 50 students with in-person classes to only 5 students with the Zoom format. (I hope that we will be able to rejuvenate this program when we are able to return to in-person teaching.) I am certain that others in our Seiwakai family have experienced similar effects to their programs from the pandemic.

To avoid getting COVID-19, I had been following all of the recommended guidelines and precautions. I only left the house to go to the grocery store; I always wore a face mask. I washed my hands frequently, but I let my guard down just once. We invited someone into our home for a small birthday get-together only after we were assured that they had recently tested negative for the corona virus. Three days after my 70th birthday, I developed symptoms, and tested positive for the corona virus.

I had virtually every COVID-19 symptom – a nasty cough, fever, chills, night-sweats, shortness of breath, body aches, headaches, loss of taste and smell, a burning measles-like rash, fatigue, and gastro-intestinal issues.



I had no appetite for more than a week and noticed that I was losing weight.

When I got on the scale, I was shocked. I had lost 12 pounds (5.5 kilos) in just ten days. This really worried me, and I had to force myself to eat more.

Fatigue was very real, and I was sleeping more than 12 hours per day. Five or six days into this illness, I decided to hold Sanchin dachi for as long as I could. After only 2 minutes I was exhausted.

During those first two weeks, social distancing from my wife was quite difficult. During Thanksgiving dinner, we sat at opposite ends of the dining room. Wearing a mask at home was an unusual new habit that I had to accept. The most severe symptoms improved within two weeks, but others lingered for more than two months.

I have seen posts on Facebook from other Seiwakai members across the globe who have been affected with COVID, and I feel that perhaps Sanchin and Tensho have made our lungs strong enough to help with fighting this illness.

The Ugly



Hospitals are overwhelmed, and some had to turn the ill away for lack of room.

Oxygen for the seriously ill is in short supply.

In the United States alone, more than 450,000 people have perished from this disease.

In California, air quality regulations were waived so that the dead could be cremated in a timely manner.

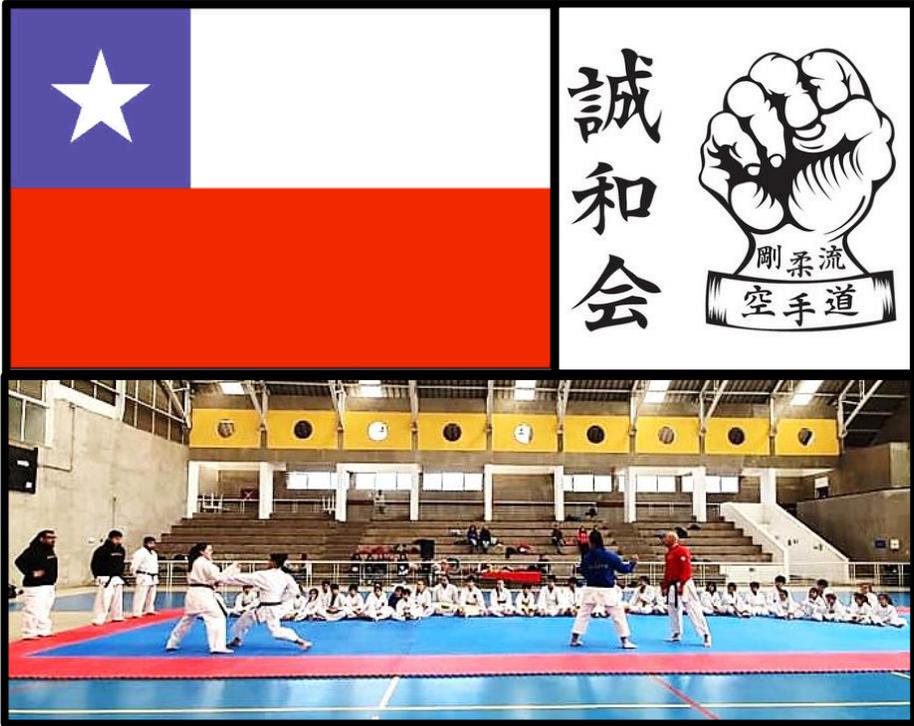


To date, more than 100,000 businesses have permanently closed, and more than 31 million Americans are unemployed. (Before the pandemic only 5.8 million Americans were out of work.)

People are being evicted from their homes and apartments.

I pray that it does not get any uglier than this.

Seiwakai Chile



We are pleased to welcome Chile into our Seiwakai family. Vassie Shihan has been working with Nelson Bostos Cisternas Sensei, and we pleased to have a new member organization in the Pan American region.



Cancellation of March 2021 Senior and Under 21 National Team Trials



The health and safety of the Karate Canada community continues to be our top priority. Given recent and ongoing developments resulting from the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, as well as recently increased public health restrictions across the country, Karate Canada is forced to cancel the 2021 Senior & U21 National Team Trials event, which was planned for March 27-28 in Calgary (AB).

Seiwakai International Women's Advisory Board

Upcoming Training

From Terri Herrera-Pounds

The Seiwakai International Women's Advisory Board (SIWAB) is preparing for their next Zoom Training Seminar. The first seminar was so successful, the SIWAB has decided to host quarterly trainings.

The next seminar is scheduled for Sunday, March 7, 2021. Two sessions will be held to accommodate the various time zones and ensure all Seiwakai Women have the opportunity to attend.

For the latest information, please following the SIWAB Facebook page, *Seiwakai Women International*. The board can also be reached via email at siwab2019@email.com. Looking forward to another great training!



An Inspiration to All



Above: Gail Oblinger (front row right) Performing Sanchin in the Pacific in November

Anyone who has ever been to a Pan American Seiwakai Seminar in Santa Monica is sure to have met Gail Oblinger. She is a constant at the seminars and a student of Robert DaLessio Sensei.

Gail who is age 83 and a retired teacher began her Karatedo training in 2005. She had been taking two-week gun and knife self-defense classes in Bakersfield, CA when she saw a notice for a karate class which was offered in the same building. Thinking that it was another two-week class, she signed up, and was actually glad when she found out that Karatedo is a lifelong endeavor. As an educator, she had always encouraged her students to become lifelong learners, and by learning Karatedo in her retirement, she was following the advice that she had given to her students.

When Gail was age 71, she had her first knee replacement, and two years later, she had the other knee replaced as well. After each surgery it was difficult for Gail to get back into Karatedo fitness so that she could continue to learn and progress. It required dedication and persistence, and her orthopedic surgeon tried to dissuade her from continuing her training. He told Gail “You know, karate is a sport for young people.” Gail knew better; she saw Karatedo is a way of life.

When practice at the dojo was cancelled due to the pandemic, Gail was disappointed. But then she heard about the Zoom classes being offered from the Hombu Dojos in the US and Japan. Gail didn’t know much about the Zoom app or how it worked so Wayland Louie (another one of Robert DaLessio’s black belt students) came over to her house to help Gail get things set up. Since then, she has been a constant at Vassie Shihan’s classes and at the seminar offered by Fujiwara Shihan.

Vassie Shihan has been quite impressed with Gail’s dedication and the example that she sets for others. He said that Gail is an inspiration to all.

USANKF National Championships and Team Trials July 12 through 19, 2021 in Chicago, Illinois



Member, U.S. Olympic Committee



Seiwa Kai Around the Globe



Goju Ryu Karatedo Seiwa Kai International



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Vice President: Satoru Takahashi



Vice President: Vassie Naidoo

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Goju Ryu Karate-Do Seiwa Kai International
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All Japan Karate-Do Federation
All Japan Karate-Do Federation Goju Kai

Seichi Fujiwara (President)

“Lead them by political maneuvers, restrain them with punishments: the people will become cunning and shameless. Lead them by virtue, restrain them with ritual: they will develop a sense of shame and a sense of participation.” Confucius 孔子 (Koshi)

Seiwakai South Africa Seminar December 6th, 2020

Posted by Timmy Singh

So many thanks to Fujiwara Hanshi for such an informative seminar in South Africa this weekend. Also so well organized by Africa director Ben Mare sensei. Thank you. It was nice to see support from karatekas from abroad.



Student Review December 13 at the Omagari Budokan
Posted by Seiichi Fujiwara Shihan 藤原聖一



Seiwakai Russia From Vasily Zyukalin

On January 16, 2021, Vasily Zyukalin organized and hosted a kata competition tournament for Goju Ryu Karatedo clubs in Russia. The following organizations took part in this tournament: Seiwakai, Kenbukan, Ryusyokai, IOGKF (Higaonna's group) and Shodokan.



Seiwakai Russia Results:
Juniors 15-17 years old - 1st and 2nd place
Women - 3rd place
Men - 1st place
Veterans 40 and older - 2nd and 3rd place



Seiwakai International Seminar



The following information is from Fujiwara Hanshi, and it is subject to chance or cancellation. If you are attending, **you must first have your vaccine for COVID-19.**

Venue: Omagari, Japan Budokan
July 28 through August 3
Training days July 28, 29, and 30
Rest day July 31
Training days August 1, 2, and 3

JKF Goju Kai Overseas Seminar and Tournament



Venue: Osaka Prefecture Gymnasium
Training Days August 5 and 6
August 6, Shinsa for Roku Dan and above
Tournament August 7 and 8