



Another Fantastic Summer Camp

By Jamie Lynne Kennedy



Mid-America Summer Camp Karate-ka - Photo courtesy of Sensei Kim Weber

Summer camp is always a much anticipated event. *Karateka* from Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky and Indiana all congregated at Camp Copneconic in Fenton, MI. This year I was very disappointed & frustrated to have to sit on the sidelines and observe due to a back injury. Watching training does have its positive attributes however. Having the ability to observe, take notes, and pictures was my mental training. Below is a summary of the important key points of body dynamics as presented by Sensei Vaughan and Oberschlake.

Our first evening training on Friday set the stage for the rest of the weekend where students were taught many concepts including punching, kicking, hip rotation, cat stance, and *shuto* techniques. We did a number of drills aimed at fine tuning punching. Sensei emphasized snapping strongly with the draw hand and to relax most of the punching muscles until the very end, then release 100% of the tension. We also positioned our arms to ensure the punch comes from the hip to the ending point at the

target. In addition, we worked on drills that varied the number and timing of successive punches.

Hip rotation strategies were also reviewed, emphasizing proper stance as the foundation. In addition, more advanced ideas, including *neko ashi dachi* (cat stance) and *shuto uke* and *uchi* (knife hand block and knife hand strike) were reviewed.

Saturday was a very full day of training, with a wide range of basic through highly advanced ideas. This included a training geared specifically for instructors and more advanced students.

Continued on Page 2

In This Issue...

Be Proud of Your Gut - Page 2

Samurai Song - Page 4

September Regional Training - Page 5

Reflections on Sensei Golden - Page 6

Thank You! - Page 7

Another Fantastic Summer Camp

Continued from Page 1

During this training, Sensei Vaughan broke down the idea of making *kime*, an important concept for Shotokan karate. Sensei shared his insight on this and is composed of three separate, but equally important parts; physical, breathing, and intent.

We were also fortunate to get detailed instruction on several highly advanced kata. These included *Unsu*, *Chinte*, and *Gojushiho Sho*. As a critical component of several of these kata, we also spent time working *fudo dachi*, or rooted stance. We did many drills where one moves from rooted stance to front stance. This helped demonstrate the point Sensei has been showing us over the past few months where the back leg straightens sharply to drive power in to your technique. We also

practiced a five-person drill applying one of the key parts of *Unsu*, where one fends off four attackers coming from multiple directions.

Between trainings, we spent time enjoying the outdoors, swimming, napping, hanging out, reading, discussing karate (of course), self training, and some even went to "Back To The Bricks," a classic car event in lovely downtown Flint. At night we socialized in the dormitory living room and outside on the deck. If you missed camp, try to attend in the future. Remember karate is a life long endeavor, karate is life! OSS!

Be Proud of Your Gut

By Adam Clouser

"Be proud of your gut." It's something I say to people in training. Satisfied by the bewildered look, I stick my gut out and walk away. No, I haven't joined the body acceptance movement and no, I haven't lost my mind. When I speak about the "gut," I'm referring to the body's center of mass, right behind the naval and

encompassing a large portion of the abdomen. This area is critical when it comes to correct body dynamics, alignment, and the creation of power. Our *Chi/Ki* is housed in this area. So, why do *karate-ka* are try to hide it rather than driving it forward?



Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Fig 1-2: The stomach is both pulled in, curving the spine and also behind the support leg, drawing the center of mass away from the target. **Fig. 3:** The stomach is tensed incorrectly, pulling it in and locking the hips, rather than driving out, yielding a shortened distance and weak structure.

Continued on Page 3

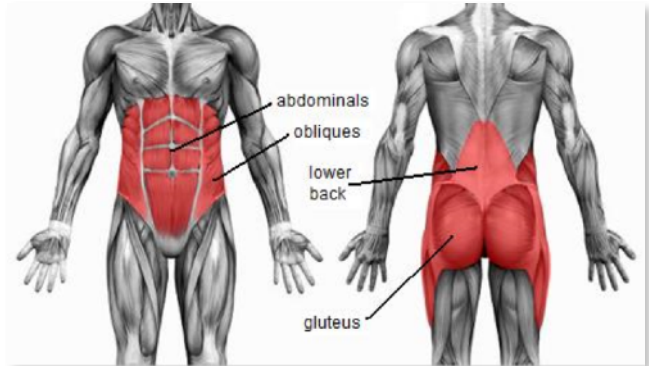
Be Proud of Your Gut

Continued from Page 2

Most people aren't aware they are "hiding" their stomach. We have all been told not to stick our butts out when making technique; it disrupts the alignment and posture, slowing us down and reducing the effectiveness of the technique. Tucking, withdrawing, or "hiding" the stomach causes the same disruptions to ideal movement, and can also affect your ability to breathe properly for karate technique. When the stomach is pulled back it curves the spine, separating the connection between the hips and the upper body, and compressing the organs, hindering the ability to breathe with the full capacity of the lungs. The result is that your techniques will lack connection and proper breathing, which in turn negatively impacts balance and power.

Karateka often find themselves and/or their students fighting the same common issues as they begin their training, such as poor natural posture, overuse of the shoulders and limbs to reach, and the above referenced "sticking the butt out." These are often found together and can be complementary; which makes fixing them a challenge. What they have in common however, is that they all look like you are trying to hide the stomach. If you want to fix all of these problems, begin by treating the common denominator. Train yourself to expand the body by coordinating the tensing of your core muscles to drive forward with the feeling that the gut is leading.

You can start by learning how to tense your core properly. This begins with recognizing a simple truth about your muscles; muscles pull, they don't push. If we only tense part of our core, the disparity in pulling can result in a curved spine. Imagine the way the back of a bow bends when the string is pulled tight. So, both when conditioning your core muscles and when tensing your core to make a technique, make sure to use not only the abdominals, but the entire girdle of muscles around the trunk, including those muscles in the lower back, obliques, and glutes. Everything has to be tensed together to create a strong core and straight spine. Practice in front of a mirror to make sure you are tensing symmetrically, rather than pulling the stomach in.



The girdle of core muscles around the body that work together to create stability and strength.

Hiding the stomach doesn't just reduce your stability and connection. It hides a large source of your mass and, as a result, slows you down and reduces your power. If your center of mass is contracted in, then when you drive forward, the body has to stall and wait for the center to rejoin it before the motion can be completed. This will not only slow you down, as you wait for the mass to be pulled forward, but can lead to strain on the smaller muscles as they try to compensate for the imbalance. When you pull weight in a vehicle, you want it close to the engine. Imagine your legs as the engine and try to keep that weight balance over, or possibly even slightly forward, of your "engine."

Let's break down our motion with a basic front kick. In the images below, you will see three variations on where the bodies mass is being kept. Figure 5 (below), shows a "hidden gut," with the stomach contracted in, forcing the weight behind the motion and disrupting the bodies balance and connection.

Figure 6 below, shows a correct basic technique, where the body's mass is centralized over the support leg and the core is working with the legs to complete the motion. Don't hide your gut when performing a technique; instead, expand, driving it forward as a source of power.

Continued on Page 4

Be Proud of Your Gut

Continued from Page 3



Figure 5

Figure 6

Internal muscle control can be challenging to master, and many people settle for simply “squeezing real real hard” on their muscles. This is counterproductive and will only slow your development in other areas by

disrupting the core of both our body and our karate as a whole. Spend some time practicing tensing and relaxing different muscles. It is helpful to alternate core building exercises such as crunches with slow practice of tensing and holding the muscles in a karate technique. These are simple exercises, but will have a dramatic effect on your karate.

Hiding the gut is counterproductive to karate development. Learn to move as though you are proud of your gut and your body will fall in line. There is no substitute for practice and practicing internal muscle control will take a lot of experimentation to get it right, so you best get started right away. See you in the dojo.

Samurai Song

By Robert Pinsky, Three Time U.S. Poet Laureate

Here is a poem by Robert Pinsky. Karate-ka may find it intriguing. Submitted by Wendy McVicker, who suggests to read aloud for best results...

When I had no roof I made
Audacity my roof. When I had
No supper my eyes dined.

When I had no eyes I listened.
When I had no ears I thought.
When I had no thought I waited.

When I had no father I made
Care my father. When I had
No mother I embraced order.

When I had no friend I made
Quiet my friend. When I had no
Enemy I opposed my body.

When I had no temple I made
My voice my temple. I have
No priest, my tongue is my choir.

When I have no means fortune
Is my means. When I have
Nothing, death will be my fortune.

Need is my tactic, detachment
Is my strategy. When I had
No lover I courted my sleep.



Image courtesy of wikipedia.org

Ohio Valley Karate Hosts Regional Training

By Jeb Brack

I walk through the red doors of the dojo for training all the time, but on September 16, it was different. Ohio Valley Karate was hosting a regional training for the first time, and we expected about fifty *karateka* to attend—which meant that the floor would be filled with strangers, most of them far more experienced than myself. I'm a relatively new black belt, and I've only attended a couple of Regional Training events in the past, so it's fair to say that I had a case of nerves that day. I needn't have worried.

As the dojo filled up, we warmed up and chatted with folks from all over the Region. Sensei Vaughan's instruction felt familiar while highlighting elements of karate that I often perform without thinking. For the first hour we worked as a group, fine-tuning our technique in things as basic as front stance and as challenging as cat stance. During the second hour, Sensei Oberschlake took the colored belts to another room for instruction while Sensei Vaughan took the rest of us through the finer points of each of the *Heian* kata and *Tekki Shodan*. Like all of us, I have performed these kata many times, but I found Sensei Vaughan's coaching extremely valuable. His instruction helped me think of my kata in new ways, from new perspectives.

Sunday morning's training session, while smaller, was even more illuminating. It interspersed kata training

in *Bassai Dai*, *Jion*, *Kanku Dai*, and *Empi* with sparring practice, from one-step sparring all the way to free sparring. What an opportunity, to spar with experienced *karateka* you don't normally face! I had gotten used to squaring off with folks from my own dojo, and I know their habits and combinations, perhaps too well. It was a challenging session, and I felt exhausted and exhilarated by the end of it.

But as illuminating as the training was, perhaps the best part of the weekend was the cookout after Saturday's training. There I got to meet and talk with some of the men and women I've seen at Regional events and learn a little about them while sharing burgers and beer and conversation. This, more than anything else, made me feel like part of the larger organization. Now when I attend an event, I'll be able to say hi to Laura or Jeff or Carol as friends rather than strangers. (Of course, if we meet in the ring, I expect they'll still kick my butt.) So I plan to participate in more Regional events in the future and build on this experience. And on behalf of Ohio Valley Karate, thanks to everyone who visited us in Cincinnati. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did, and I hope we can do it again soon!



Images courtesy of Neil Geoppinger

Reflections on a Conversation with Sensei Golden

By Jerry Baker

“Keeping your sword sharp”

Some years ago, Sensei Golden and I were on one of our road trips to visit some historical sites from The Civil War. During one stretch when Sensei was driving and each of us was lost in our private thoughts, Mr. Golden began to throw a series of knife-hand blocks. I watched quietly as he worked both hands in a seemingly mindless manner, each block sharp and efficient. He noticed my interest and then told me that he was always training, always visualizing opponents, always keeping the feel of movements alive and sharp. Needless to say, I was much impressed by these seemingly simple actions and his mindless yet mindful intent. I was watching my sensei quietly practicing his art. There was a lesson here to be learned.

Sensei Golden often spoke of the unlimited training opportunities that surround us every day. A piece of paper hanging on the refrigerator, the fronds of a fern in a pot in the living room, a curtain on a window, or a gi draped over a chair – all excellent targets for kick, punches, blocks, and strikes. You could see that Sensei had truly adopted at 24/7 sense of situational awareness in the way he carried himself, observed his surroundings, and could execute a technique toward any target that came along.

I was reminded of the many times in both readings and training sessions that admonitions had been given to “train every day”, to “sweat every day”, and to “seek perfection” in both physical and spiritual terms. These had not been mere words used to make my instructors seem knowledgeable. These simple directions had been offered as a way for the student to grasp the deeper meanings of movement and perseverance through repetition and consistent training. Watching Sensei go through the movements in his mind showed me that even the experts were always seeking a deeper understanding.

Mr. Golden often made reference to “polishing the sword” by always being ready to practice a move while always quietly assessing your surroundings for potential threats or opportunities for a chance to train. His ability to strike quickly infused his very being. Karate was not something he did; it was part of who he was. He carried it with him at all times, and to our great luck, he was willing and eager to share what his karate life had taught him. We all watched him and openly

dreamed of one day catching some of what he so effortlessly demonstrated.

When I think of what Sensei taught us, and when I try to follow his guidance, I begin to see beyond the scheduled karate sessions and formal training spaces. I begin to understand the concept of a portable dojo – an understanding that one can train mind and body and spirit in any place and at any time. Of course, training in a formal dojo with other *karateka* is one of the major attractions for all karate students. However, if group training is the only venue for learning, then the student is missing one of Sensei Golden’s other maxims of training – “Group training develops intensity; self-training develops depth of understanding”. It is the solo training time, whether it be in a home dojo or captured moments in any place one can step out of the world and step into a state of karate mindfulness, where one’s personal karate understandings are developed. “Polishing the sword” can occur during a hike in the woods, out on the deck behind your home, or even in a hotel parking lot during a vacation-morning walk. Your dojo travels with you.

Karate training can be so much more than putting on a *gi* and going to class. We need to recognize that any flat surface at any time can provide us with the chance to change our level of consciousness and give us a chance to reach out and, as Mr. Golden would say, “Touch it.” Anyone who trains diligently knows that any moment that enables us to step into our karate minds brings us peace, joy, and a chance to learn.



*Sensei Golden (right) competing in his early years
Image courtesy of Mid-America ISKF*



Thank You

ありがとう
Arigatou

Mid-America ISKF would like to thank all participants and donors who supported our 2017 golf outing.

Together, with 72 golfers, we raised over \$5,700 which will be used to support attendees/competitors for the 2017 US National Tournament as well as the 2018 International Pan-Am Tournament

Sensei Vaughan



Chief Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Martin Vaughan trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki for over 40 years and is our Regional Director. He is also the Chief Instructor of Indiana ISKF and Vice President of ISKF.

Sensei Oberschlake



President and Assistant Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei James Oberschlake trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki starting in 1974. He is also the Chief Instructor of Brown County Shotokan Karate Club.

Sensei Golden



Instructor Emeritus, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Greer Golden graduated from the Instructor Trainee Program in 1969 and was sent to Ohio University in Athens to begin sharing his knowledge with Mid-America karate students.

Calendar

October 14-15 - Fall Camp

Hosted by Creekside Karate in Youngstown, OH

November 10-12 - ISKF US National Tournament

Hosted by ISKF Southwest Region in Los Angeles, CA

December 9 - Regional Training & Kyu / Dan Exam

Hosted by Dayton Shotokan Karate in Union, OH

Contributors

JAMIE LYNNE KENNEDY

Ms. Kennedy, 4th *dan*, is a senior student at the Swartz Creek Karate Club in Fenton, MI.

ADAM CLOUSER

Mr. Clouser, 2nd *dan*, is the Chief Instructor of The Ohio State University Shotokan Karate Club in Columbus, OH.

WENDY MCVICKER

Ms. McVicker, 4th *dan*, is an Assistant Instructor and senior student at the Athens Karate Club in Athens, OH.

JEB BRACK

Mr. Brack, 1st *dan*, is a senior student at the Ohio Valley Karate Club in Cincinnati, OH.

JERRY BAKER

Mr. Baker, 4th *dan*, is the Chief Instructor of the Dayton Shotokan Karate Club in Union, OH.

Editor

MARTY SCHRAGER

Mr. Schrage, 5th *dan*, is the Chief Instructor of the Ohio Valley Karate Club in Cincinnati, OH.

Associate Editor

MICHELLE RANDALL

Ms. Randall, 2nd *dan*, is a senior student at the Indiana ISKF club in Indianapolis, IN.