

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO KARATE CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 1 • Summer 2001

President's Report

By Brenda Coles

Welcome to the summer session. There have been some changes to the scheduling and the room assignments; unfortunately this is one of the many pains that the Karate Club will have to deal with until we have established ourselves within the new Athletic Centre organization. There will be a new schedule coming up in the fall as well, so be prepared for further changes. On the positive side of things, summer is (finally) here and that means more activities outside of regular class time, including my personal favourite, Natsu Gasshuku, otherwise known as Summer Camp. Eight workouts over three days at Hart House Farm in the Caledon Hills - I hope that everyone will set aside the August long weekend to train hard and have lots of fun!

Brenda Coles (Shodan 2000) is the President of the University of Toronto Karate Club.

Executive 2001-2002

On April 21st, general elections were held to determine the Karate Club executive for the upcoming year. As had been mentioned in the previous newsletter, under the new Athletic Centre rules, two-thirds of the executive must be students.

President **Brenda Coles**
Vice President **Hadi Farashahi**
Secretary **Michelle Wendt**
Treasurer **Thivya Ponnampalam**

DIRECTORS

Membership **Simone Maillard**
Social **Gary Chan**
Tournaments **Brian Mariampillai**
Publicity and Promotions **Andrea Cheung**

Tominaga Sensei's 60th Birthday

By Kaerynne Nakamura

On Sunday, June 17th all Karate Club members, past and present, along with their families and friends, are invited to join in celebrating Tominaga Sensei's 60th birthday.



Tominaga Sensei blowing out the candles at his 50th birthday party. Steven Yap (Yodan 2000) can be seen on the left.

In the Japanese tradition, this is a very important celebration known as Kanreki or Honke-gaeri because it marks one full rotation of the sexagenary cycle - once around the Japanese/Chinese astrological calendar. At the age of 61 the cycle begins again and is viewed as a re-birth or a return to the original cycle. Basically, it is a return to childhood!

Because babies when new-born are typically dressed in red, a custom of Kanreki is that the honoree wears a red Haori (Japanese coat) or a red vest (akai chanchanko) and a red cap and red tabi. Presents given to the person celebrating Kanreki are often something red as well.

Relatives and friends gather to wish them a happy new life and many more years of joy. Lots of toasting and roasting occur at these celebrations.

So please join Tominaga Sensei in his Kanreki celebration. We will be holding it at the house of **Joy Ang** and **Kevin Northrup** in the Sheppard and Bayview area of Toronto. This will be an informal Sunday afternoon potluck BBQ. If you would like to join us, please RSVP to Mary Young at swdavey@aol.com or 416.921.9010. Further details (including directions) will be made available shortly.

Kaerynne Nakamura (Nidan 1997) and Mary Young (5th kyu) are the principal organizers of Tominaga Sensei's Kanreki celebration.

2001 National Black Belt Championships

The 2001 Canadian National Black Belt Championships were held in Charlottetown, P.E.I. on May 3-5. Jinbukai Canada sent five competitors representing Ontario:

Women's 18-20 Kumite (Lightweight)
Dorothy Yu

Men's 18-20 Individual Kata
Andrew Miller 8th

Men's 18-20 Kumite (Heavyweight)
Andrew Miller 4th

Women's Individual Kata
Mai Truong King 6th
Melissa Watanabe

Men's Individual Kata
Steven Watanabe 6th



Steven Watanabe (Sandan 1999) performing Bassai-Dai in the first of three rounds at the 2001 National Black Belt Championships.

Tournament Results

4th Karate Ontario Grand Prix April 1, 2001

Kyu Belt Team Kata
Gary Chan, Tim Chan, Michelle Wendt 4th

Women's Novice Kata
Christine Jayarajah 3rd

Women's Novice Kumite
Charlotte Morrison-Read 3rd

Men's Novice Kata
Jacob Stegenga 2nd

Women's Black Belt Kata
Mai Truong King 2nd
Melissa Watanabe 3rd

Women's Black Belt Kumite (-53 kg)
Teresa Lee 4th

Men's Black Belt Kata
Steven Watanabe 3rd

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Interuniversity (Sherbrooke) March 24, 2001

Women's Novice Kata
Lynlee Spencer 1st
Christine Jayarajah 2nd

Women's Novice Kumite
Lynlee Spencer 3rd

Men's Novice Kata
Jonathan Sy 1st
Jacob Stegenga 3rd

Men's Novice Kumite
Jonathan Sy 3rd

Women's Intermediate Kata
Yolanda Chong 1st
Thivya Ponnampalam 2nd
Beth Ryan 3rd
Michelle Wendt 4th

Women's Intermediate Kumite
Yolanda Chong 1st
Thivya Ponnampalam 3rd
Beth Ryan 4th

Men's Intermediate Kata
Tony Mittermaier 1st
Brian Mariampillai 4th

Men's Intermediate Kumite
Brian Mariampillai 3rd

Team Kata
Thivya Ponnampalam, Lynlee Spencer,
Michelle Wendt 2nd

Women's Team Kumite
Yolanda Chong, Thivya Ponnampalam,
Beth Ryan 1st

Men's Team Kumite
Brian Mariampillai, Tony Mittermaier,
Chris Sanford, Jacob Stegenga,
Jonathan Sy 2nd

Final standings for the Interuniversity Cup:
University of Sherbrooke 40
University of Toronto 32
Queen's University 8

2001 Interuniversity Tournament

By Jacob Stegenga

Our van was the last of four to arrive in Sherbrooke. Eleven competitors and ten supporting teammates and coaches had come to win the Interuniversity Karate Tournament, something the University of Toronto had never lost. After checking into the hotel we found some of our teammates in the hotel bar - they'd been dancing to 80's music. It was a little strange to see the Karate-ka in normal clothes, with smiles on their faces and drinks in their hands. Especially the black belts.

The next morning we drove to the tournament venue. I'd been studying Karate for three months, and this was my first tournament. Being the token white belt on the team, I was nervous. When I first joined Karate, my friends laughed - they thought that because I was a white belt, I'd be training with 10-year olds. I explained to them that it was a university club, and that my main concern was: would I get beaten up by a black belt? Today I'd find out.

The tournament started with the kata competition. My body was shaking with nerves when my name was called. I performed the only kata I knew: Heian Shodan. After all the novice men had performed, I was tied for second, so I had to perform once more. I was excited to win a bronze medal. The fact that a beginner could beat orange belts is strong evidence for the excellent training we receive at UTKC. Then I learned the results from the other kata categories - U of T won four gold medals in kata (the complete results are included elsewhere in this newsletter).

I was even more nervous getting into the ring for the kumite competition, but after winning my first match, sparring felt fun. **Jonathan Sy** and I had to spar each other in a later match, and I learned the hard way that you're not actually allowed to punch your opponent in the face. There was a tense moment in Intermediate Men's Kumite, when **Brian Mariampillai** lost a match because a scorekeeper didn't record one of his points. Luckily we had the match on video, and the referee agreed to have Brian and his opponent spar in a "sudden-death" match - Brian won that quickly. I didn't get to watch any of the women's kumite, but I was told later that it was more vicious than the men's.

The final event was Team Kumite. We were sparring the Sherbrooke team first, and when my turn came, I realized that I was matched up against a big, tough-looking black belt. I tried to think of the advice that the senior black belts had given me. **Brenda Coles** had told me to "fight clean", but after a few beers **John McEwen** had told me to "pummel or disqualify". **Steven Watanabe** had called kumite a "high-speed game of tag", and **Shazam Williams** had told me to "keep my fists up". Then I remembered **Tony Mittermaier's** advice: "Butterfly, you must find your own path."

So with that in mind, I entered the ring. I knew the only chance I had was to spar with intensity, to focus on my opponent with energy for three minutes. I scored two half-points very quickly, and got excited by the prospect of actually winning. The clock began to wind down, and I thought I could win by becoming defensive. My opponent backed me towards the edge, and then a thought went through my head: I'm tired. This was my fifth match, and I realized that

everything Steven had said about fitness was actually right. My opponent must have realized that I'd lost my focus, and without me realizing, he planted a beautiful hook kick to my cheek. That tied things up. He quickly scored a couple more points to end the match. Ever since then, I've thought a lot about that kick.

The next black belt didn't get off so easily, but the match itself wasn't that interesting.



Thivya Ponnampalam (5th kyu) and Yolanda Chong (5th kyu) compete in Women's Intermediate Kumite at the 2001 Interuniversity Tournament. Yolanda won gold medals in each of the three events in which she competed.

Although the University of Toronto team was great, the University of Sherbrooke won the Interuniversity Cup for the first time. We enjoyed a friendly dinner with the other teams that evening, then we drove to Montreal to enjoy the nightlife there. It was a fun weekend. I didn't get beat up by any black belts, I made it through my first Karate tournament, and twenty-one UTKC members had a chance to get to know each other outside the dojo.

Congratulations to all the competitors, and thanks to our head coach (John), the drivers (**Chris Achong**, **Ray Takabe**, John, and Shazam) and to all our supporters.

Jacob Stegenga (9th kyu) was asked to write about his first Karate tournament.

Who's Doing What

Congratulations to **Tominaga Sensei** who retired from his job as a machinist on May 22nd. He now has lots more time to go fishing.

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Congratulations to **Steven Yap** (Yodan 2000) and **Wanda Georgis** on the birth of their third son, **Jonah**, on March 24th. Jonah weighed 8 lbs, 5 ozs and was 20.5 inches tall.

Steven wrote about the story of Jonah's birth. Some excerpts are included here:

It's a beautiful day - bright with a touch of spring in the air. Wanda's in labour. It started last night, but Wanda was able to control it because she didn't want the baby at 3 a.m. We waited until 7 a.m. to call Audrey, the mid-wife. Contractions are strong but inconsistent - some nine minutes apart, some five minutes apart. They're not as strong as the earlier births.

Just before 9 a.m., we called Audrey again with an update. The contractions are now about six minutes apart. There is a sense of order and things are very calm around the house. The children (Zak and Naz) are having fun - they think it's a party.

It's started to snow outside - large flakes, but sparse. Audrey arrives with some flowers and her equipment. She checks the heartbeat - 160-180 bpm - fast, the baby is excited. The contractions are quicker and stronger now. Everything is set, even the water is boiled and the coffee is ready.

At 11:30 a.m., Wanda's water breaks. Things are now moving very fast. She is in tremendous pain. The pushing starts and she screams, very primal, very painful. I had my head beside hers and I could hear her body screaming. Her neck was taut during the contractions. Audrey was very calm and totally in charge. She helped guide us and talked Wanda through the birth, which was more intense than Naz's birth. Wanda held my hands really tightly. When she screamed through the contractions, Zak was serious and watched in concerned silence, whereas Naz seemed nonchalant, although the pictures would later reveal his concerns. We

constantly reassured them and they acknowledged us. I think that talking to them prior to the pregnancy helped them a great deal. They were very good throughout the birth.

12 noon – time of the birth. After six hours of active labour, Wanda is happy that it's over. Jonah is pink and fat, with scrunched-up ears. His hands are very active and finding their way to his mouth. He looks more Asian, but that could be just me. Wanda says, "It's strange to see my baby with fat on him", since both Zak and Naz were skinny babies.

At 2 p.m. Jonah had his newborn check. I had to put my finger in his mouth to keep him calm. He passed with flying colours. Head circumference is 35.5 cm, length is 52 cm. Soon afterwards the visitors start to flood in. Wow! What a day!



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Bruce Dietrich (3rd kyu) writes:

I just wanted to let everyone know that Toolika and I will be leaving Toronto on May 21st, as I am starting a Post-Doc in Paris (Toolika is planning to go back to school). I had hoped to be able to come to class to say goodbye, but unfortunately I have not been able to find the time since we have been incredibly busy making plans and finishing up some work in our respective labs. I wanted to take the opportunity to thank everyone at the Karate Club for making my time here (an unbelievable seven years) a very enjoyable experience and providing a wonderful environment for learning Karate, as well as providing a place to think about something other than the lab! I also wanted

to especially thank Tominaga Sensei and all of the senior black belts (you know who you are) for your excellent advice, encouragement, and dedication - it has been much appreciated.

Good luck to everyone and thanks again. I can't wait to find a good dojo in Paris.

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Paul Roy (3rd kyu) writes:

I'm currently living in Ottawa and training with the Ottawa JKA under Saeki Sensei. I finally got rid of my white belt (!) and successfully graded to 3rd kyu. I've attended both summer and winter camps here and am enjoying the training a great deal.

I'm currently the director of the Ottawa First Episode Psychosis Clinic at the Ottawa General Hospital. I submitted an application to the provincial government for \$1.5 million in funding for an expansion of the clinic, and I hope to have news about this very soon.

I will be getting married this July 21st to Claudia Serrano, whom I met in Toronto while she was doing a Master's at U of T. We will be living on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa and would welcome a call or visit from any of the U of T students or alumni.

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Ray Deonandan (Shodan 1996) writes:

It's been several years now since last I trained regularly. I'm afraid to actually stop and count the number of years since a shoulder injury put me out of commission, but it's been a few; trust me. The forehead is wider and shinier, and the belly is considerably larger and more subject to the indiscriminating forces of gravity.

Upon moving back to Toronto from London, Ontario, it was great to see some friendly old (and I mean old) faces attending Tominaga Sensei's celebration banquet last summer. It reminded me of how much I miss the unique camaraderie bred by the diligent practice of the martial arts, and of how Karate friendships really are lifetime friendships.

I originally left Toronto to pursue a Ph.D. in Epidemiology at the University of Western

Ontario. I'm happy to report that that task has been successfully completed, several grey hairs and many thousands of dollars later. As a result, I'll soon be moving to Washington, D.C., to begin a job in my chosen field - gotta pay off them nasty student loans! Alas, that means a permanent return to the dojo is once more delayed.

More importantly, the intervening years since I was last a daily Karate-ka have seen some unexpected successes in another of my careers. My first book, a collection of short stories titled "Sweet Like Saltwater," was published by Toronto's TSAR Books in 1999. Since then, the book has won rave critical reviews around the world, enjoyed partial translation into Spanish, French, and Chinese, and has been adopted in several Canadian Studies classrooms in foreign universities.

Last fall, the book won the prestigious Guyana Prize for Best First Book. The Guyana Prize is the only national English-language book prize in the Caribbean. As a result, I hastily flew to Georgetown, Guyana, last December to be awarded the prize by the President of the country...on live national television! It was quite a surreal experience, documented in detail in a feature article in the Globe and Mail this past March.

The experience was made even more surreal by the fact that I fumbled my acceptance speech and began blabbering like an idiot under the glare of television cameras and spotlights. I even forgot to shave! Some people don't respond well to sudden, overwhelming attention. I guess I'm one of them. I blame the jet lag...even though no time zones were crossed. The booze had absolutely nothing to do with it.

I have since been awarded several professional grants from the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts, all intended to fund the completion of a novel. Between working as an epidemiologist, fighting off the evil flab and watching the doctor-recommended 20 hours of television per week, I don't know where I'll find the time to write the dang thing!

Anyway, I do hope to one day return to the dojo as a full-time member. In the meantime, I post regular updates about my personal and professional activities on my website

www.deonandan.com, and encourage everyone to consider contributing articles to my casual on-line magazine at www.podium.on.ca. If you're going to be in Washington, do give me a shout!

The Globe and Mail article from March 14th that was written by Ray and mentioned here can be read on the web. Go to the Travel section of www.globeandmail.com and search for "Deonandan".

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Graduated? Getting married? Or just lost touch with the Karate Club? Send us an e-mail or give us a call and let us know how you're doing or what's been happening with you.

Upcoming Events

Jun 3	Iwata Cup
Jun 10	Karate Ontario AGM
Jun 16	Jinbukai tournament
Jun 16	Tominaga Sensei's birthday
Jun 17	Sensei's 60th birthday party
Aug 4-6	Natsu Gasshuku
Sep or Oct	Kyu belt grading test

The Karate Ontario AGM will be held at the Sports Centre (1185 Eglinton Avenue East) on Sunday, June 10. This is an election year. All black belts currently training with the Club should attend.



Another picture from Tominaga Sensei's 50th birthday party; this one shows John McEwen (Yodan 1999) and Shawn Rodie (Yodan 1999). Both were Nidans at the time.