

The Niseido® Warrior

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A new year is upon us...

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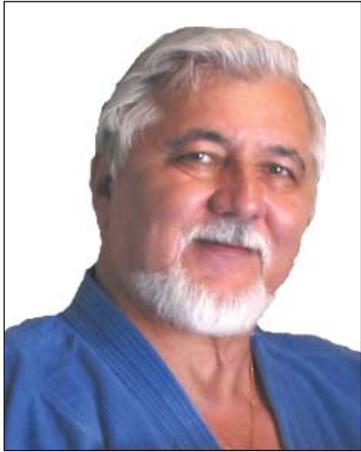
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From the Desk of the Old Prof:

Congratulations Sensei Able Pavon

On Saturday November 1, Abel Pavon of the Santa Fe Dojo successfully tested for Black Belt. His test was hosted by the Hombu Dojo and spearheaded by Renshi Tom Holste the Hombu Chief Instructor.

Sensei Abel arrived five days earlier along with James Mann, Nikyu and Davie Soukup, Yonkyu. This was Davies's second visit to the Hombu. Upon their arrival they immediately met up with Hombu Sensei's and Students who would serve as Uki's and training partners. In the next few days they put in many hours bringing Sensei Abel up to speed. On Wednesday, Renshi David and his family arrived.

As it was for the others, it was a grueling test for Abel. He got pounded out and did some pounding of his own. In the end, he did an excellent job and was lifted over the heads of an elated bunch of his Hombu brothers. We were all very proud of Abel.

Also in attendance and on the grading board were, Prof. Mike Junsch, 8th Dan, Prof. Nic Alonso, 7th Dan, and Sensei Dr. Kent Strickman, 3rd Dan, all of Bay Ridge Dojo in Brooklyn.

The banquet on Saturday evening was at DiNapoli's Italian restaurant. We all had a great time and enjoyed celebrating Niseido's newest Sensei. Congratulations Sensei Abel on a job well done.

A special thanks to Renshi Tom, Sensei Rich and everyone at the Hombu for making this test the great event that it was. A special thanks to Sensei Dave (Sarge) Nissensohn, 3rd Dan for securing the testing venue again. Thanks Sarge!

A New Legal Team Appointed

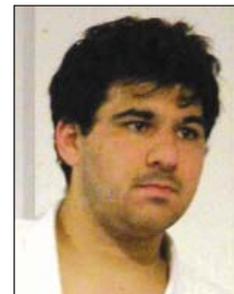
I am pleased to announce that Howard Wilson Yonkyu, BSK Niseido Ju Jitsu Club in Murfreesboro, TN has agreed to serve as our General Counsel. Joining Howard will be Alex Penagos, Yonkyu, Hombu Dojo who will serve as the Senior Paralegal and Waka Sensei Paul Riccardi, 1st Dan will serve as a Paralegal.



Howard Wilson



Alex Penagos



Waka Sensei
Paul Riccardi

We Have A New Black Belt Registrar

Waka Sensei Paul Riccardi has assumed the post of Niseido Ju Jitsu Black Belt Registrar. Congratulations Paul!

The Niseido© Warrior Needs You

By Jim Mahanes, Nikyu, co-editor
Louisville Dojo, Louisville, KY

Greetings fellow Warriors, I really need your help with something. I am working hard NOT make this issue of the Niseido Warrior the last published by this organization.

I received a submission recently from Prof., to be published in this issue, that basically put an end to the Warrior once and for all. Below are excerpts from that e-mail:

“About fourteen years ago I started publishing the first of the Niseido News letters. ... however over a period of time I stopped publishing because I was tired of doing a “one man show.

... I started to publish again, (and) ...after a few issues, I was asked to please publish it as a national publication and was assured cooperation and input from all the dojo Chief Instructors.

Back then it was published four times each year (but) ... after countless efforts which consisted of many phone calls, e-mails, etc., to get participation, we reduced publication to three times per year.

We needed help, I asked for it issue after issue, but with the exception of one or two, especially Amanda Arcieri, my pleas fell on deaf ears.

Well ... once again seeing a lack of interest, we will cease publishing the Niseido Warrior. This will be your last issue.”

In his e-mail, Prof. asked that the cover of this issue consist of a tombstone touting the end of the publication.

Well, I called Prof. immediately after receiving this and pleaded with him for one more chance. I personally felt somewhat responsible since the last issue was several months overdue because of some duties I had at my place of employment. (I'm a firm believer in “out of sight/out of mind” and wondered if the lack of producing a summer issue caused a lack of interest in this current one).

I have to tell you, he was not receptive to the idea in the slightest – but to his credit, he did allow me to make a final plea for help with the Warrior.

While it is a tremendous burden to put together, it's a labor of love for me. I feel this publication brings us all closer and helps us maintain our sense of family, rather than being a collection of individual dojos all answering to a single Hombu.

As I've said many times, if there's something lacking that you'd like to see, or changes you'd like to see made....Professor and I are open to suggestions. In the past, I've received e-mails and phone calls from some who have suggested “this or that” be included, but none have stepped up to the plate to help implement them. As Prof. said, “everyone always leaves it up to the other guy to do.”

So here we are at a crossroads with the Niseido Warrior. Professor is giving us (and I stress US) one more shot following this issue. It is my hope that WE can keep this publication flourishing.

In the Spring, as we prepare for what I hope will be the next issue and not the final one – I will re-circulate this article on the Makikomi to refresh everyone's memory on what's at stake here.

In closing, I want to say thanks for your past support and please.... please...please....let's keep this thing going.



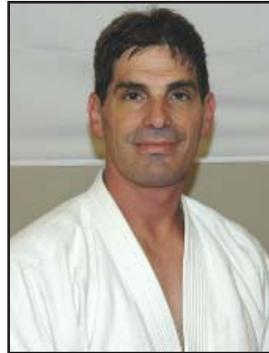
The Year That Was

By Renshi Tom Holste, 5th Dan, Chief Instructor,
Regional Director, Southern Region

I thought having kids was the ultimate measuring stick to let you know how old we are getting. But no - it's the end of the year issue of The Niseido© Warrior. Here we are again and where did the year go? Every year that passes is filled with so many highs and lows, losses and gains, and tears and cheers.

My goal right now is to have my year filled with more in the positive than in the negative and with having kids that is usually pretty simple. Well, in looking towards the Niseido© future it seems we're going to be having many cheers in the upcoming year. By this time next year we could possibly have no less than 4 new black belts here at the Hombu. Of course we will have to see if their plans match ours and if they can rise to meet those expectations. We would have been nearing completion of one of those if not for the injury sustained by Carlos Ayala. He is currently rehabbing and very eager to get back on that horse. Don't worry Carlos, many of us have been through injuries and surgeries to get to that goal - and you sir, will be no different - you will reach that goal. It also looks that we might be having the opportunities for some growth in our region and I will keep you all posted on that front.

Now to the year that has passed. I want to congratulate Abel Pavon and the Santa Fe dojo on a job well done. It was very exciting for all of us to not only be a witness to, but be a part of a crowning achievement for the Santa Fe Dojo, the testing and promotion of Abel to Shodan. Abel did an excellent job in not only the test but enduring the trials and tribulations to get to that point. Renshi David is very proud of his student - as he should be, for nothing makes an instructor look and feel better than to see them perform at such a high level. So congratulations to you as well Renshi David. Santa Fe is definitely on the road to continued



Renshi Tom Holste

success. James Mann, I hear that Abel is looking for company (hint, hint). It was a pleasure having Abel, James and Davey here for their extended visit leading up to the test. I also want to let everyone know we at the Hombu enjoyed the visits of Prof. Junsch, Prof. Alonso, and Sensei Dr. Kent Strickman (who made his first appearance at a Shodan exam here at the Hombu).

As time continues to pass, and we all continue to get older, one thing remains certain. When push comes to shove it's the people we train with that we can count on the most. I want to thank everyone in Niseido for reaching out to others in their times of need. I have witnesses on many occasions, people being there for others and not because they were asked but because they saw there was a need. I guess amid all the stupidity and shocking violence I hear about every day, it's nice to see we can offset that in some small way. I'm honored to call all of you my friends and family.



Shoulda, coulda, woulda...

By Jim Mahanes, Nikyu, co-editor,
club facilitator Louisville Dojo, Louisville, KY

Some of you might find this interesting (others may not), but this article is really for the younger members of the Niseido Ju Jitsu federation. Below is a photo of a young Jim Mahanes – ME - after a particularly hard training session when I was 13-years-old. I've been searching for this photo for more than 10 years now, ever since I got back involved in martial arts. My mother found it behind a couple of other photos stashed away in a closet in her house.

Seated is Tsuyoshi Chitose O Sensei, founder of Chito Ryu Karate-Do (my first style, and the style I trained in when I moved back home to Louisville). Yes, that's me; the zit-faced kid standing directly behind O Sensei's left shoulder. The bearded gentleman to my right is my first Sensei.

Being of Okinawan decent (rather than Japanese), Chitose's background reads like a who's who of karate-do – long before it was introduced to mainland Japan by Gichin Funakoshi; before we had a million different styles; and even before it was called "karate."

Chitose began training at 7 years old with Anko Itosu. Itosu, who by then was well into his twilight years, was a very famous master of Okinawan Tode (later known as Karate), and is believed to have developed "the corkscrew punch" into its present form. Itosu also originated the Pinan (Heian) katas and taught them to his students – one of whom was Gichin Funakoshi.

Chitose also trained under another famous Okinawan Tode master named Chotoku Kyan. His fellow students at the time were Chojun Miyagi (Goju Ryu founder) and Kenwa Mabuni (founder of Shito-ryu karate). Because of the connection to Itosu, Chitose would later train with Funakoshi for a brief period (Funakoshi was Chitose's grade school teacher at the time).

But probably the coolest (to me at least) part of his lineage, is the fact that Chitose's great-grandfather was Bushi Matsamura – considered to be the originator of the kata Chinto (practiced in both Chito Ryu and Wado Ryu as well as many other styles of karate).

OK, so I'm rambling.....what does this have to do with Niseido you may ask?

I am very proud of the fact that every rank I have in Niseido (with the exception of Yellow Belt) was awarded me directly by Professor Riccardi – O Sensei – the grandmaster and founder of our style.

Now look at me at 13. After this photo was taken, O Sensei Chitose would make two more trips to the US before his death. Some of those in this picture tested for rank in front of him on his last trip. In fact, the guy to my left in this photo – my fellow Yonkyu – tested for his Shodan in front of

OSensei (he is now a 6th Dan by the way).

I could have been there with him. I should have been there with him. I could have stood before this true "master" and received his most distinguished honor - a "black belt" in HIS style. But I didn't. Sadly, several months after this photo was taken, I dropped out of martial arts to pursue what I thought were more interesting endeavors. And I ended up wandering aimless for the next 15 years.

Yeah, I dropped out – dumb kid! So many opportunities, down the tubes.

We have each been given a gift. That gift is the ability to train in a martial art and be within one lineage step from its founder.

Our OSensei is very much alive and available to us. Professor Riccardi doesn't live another country, he doesn't speak a foreign language, and he's quite adept at 20th Century technology (e-mail, cell phone, etc.) and, best of all, he cares about each one of us. I ask each of you to seize that opportunity.

To those Warriors under the age of 13; what will you have to say when you reach the age of 41? Will it be, "I took Ju Jitsu when I was a kid" or will you be the one standing in front of your own students in your blue gi and say things like, "Professor used to tell me to do it this way."

You are the future of Niseido© Ju Jitsu. You will be the ones to carry the torch (or the fisted lightning bolts in this case) on for future generations.

Seize the opportunity you have before you. Don't be the one to find a dusty photo in your parents' house that makes you look back and regret.



An every day reality

By Jim Mahanes, Nikyu
Louisville Dojo, Louisville, KY

On January 7, 2009, a snow plow operator was shot in Spokane, Washington for simply honking his horn at a motorist while trying to clear a parking lot. On November 26, 2008, two men were shot dead in a Toys “R” Us in Palm Desert, California, after they argued over a toy during the post-Thanksgiving rush.

Random acts of violence? Maybe. But some are pointing to our tough economic times as the reason for a national increase in what used to be senseless crimes.

It’s no secret the downturn in the economy has hit epic proportions. And some analysts are predicting that the worst is yet to come. It makes me wonder if the mantra of Niseido Ju Jitsu – “Survival is an everyday reality” – may be more pertinent now than when it was first coined following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks seven years ago.

In a recent Associated Press story, Dr. Timothy Fong, of the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute and Hospital, warns of rash behaviors exhibited by more Americans as the looming recession undermines a lifestyle built on spending.

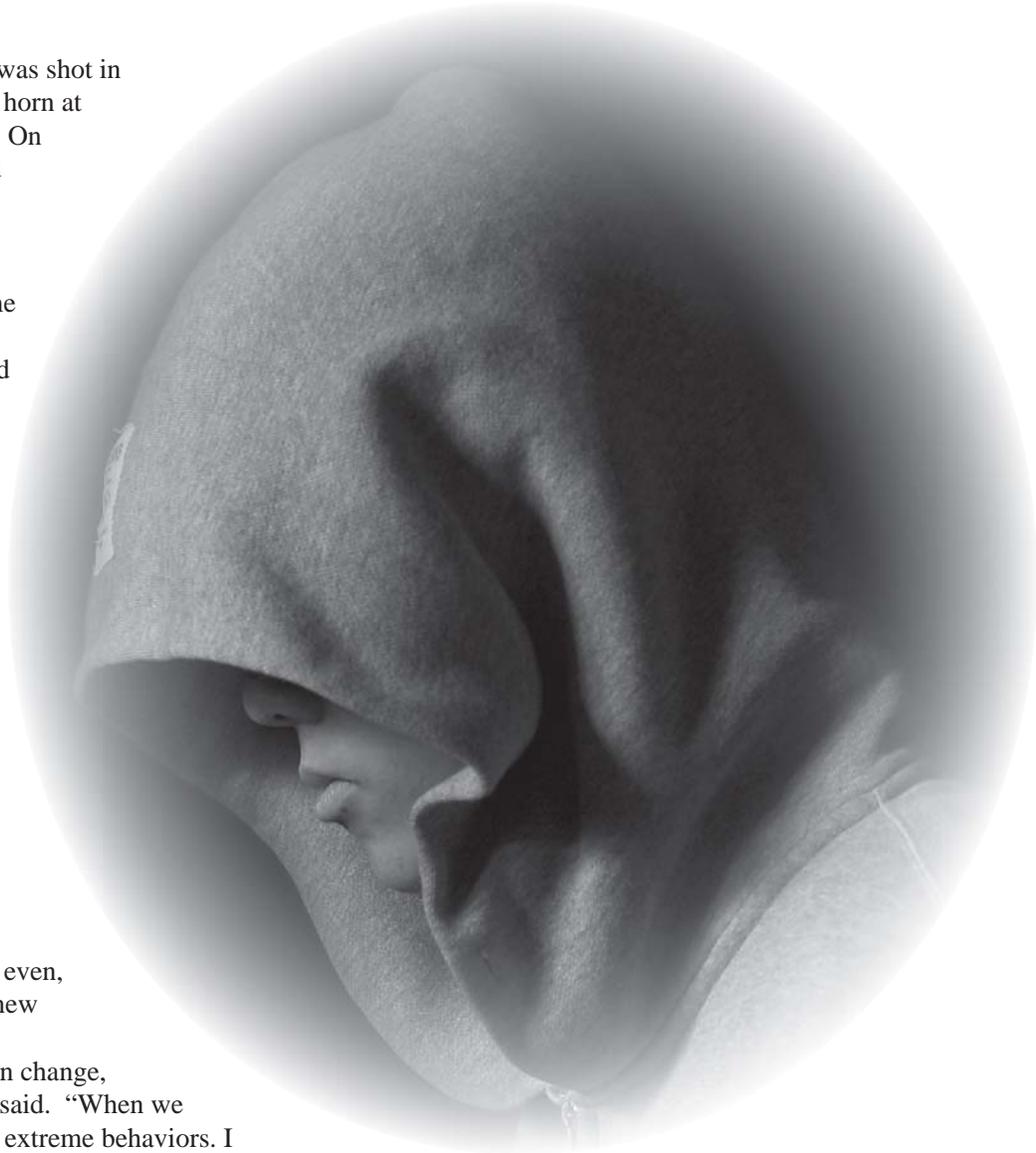
In fact, mental health experts across our country are bracing for a rise in depression, anxiety and crime such as theft, drug use and even, yes, violence as Americans confront a harsh new reality of living within diminished means.

“People start seeing their economic situation change, and it stimulates a sort of survival panic,” he said. “When we are in a survival panic, we are prone to really extreme behaviors. I wouldn’t be surprised if we see more domestic and workplace violence and more violence at the malls.”

After reading this and several other stories on this subject, I took a hard look at what potential dangers may lie out there for myself and my family – and frankly, it scared me.

As martial artists, we should already be prepared for potential dangers, and constantly alert of our surroundings, but we may be heading into uncharted waters here. Not since The Great Depression have we faced such trying economic times – and since there are very few of us (if any) who were actually around during those times – it’s hard to know what to expect.

I’ve never been an alarmist, and I don’t write this article to scare us into a false sense of dread or impending doom, but rather I would like for all of us to think of the immortal words spoken by the commander on the 80s television show, Hill Street Blues, at the close of each roll call: “Let’s Be Careful Out There” – because now more than ever we need to hold true to the Niseido Ju Jitsu mantra “Survival IS an everyday reality.”



Briefly

Congratulations Students of the Year

Amanda Arcieri, Nikyu – Brown Belt

Bay Ridge Dojo
Brooklyn, NY

Phillip Klarer, Nikyu – Brown Belt

BSK Niseido Ju Jitsu Club
Murfreesboro, TN

Alyssa Stuve, Gokyu – Yellow Belt

Gulf Coast Niseido Ju Jitsu Club
Naples, FL

Jesus Chavez, Nikyu – Brown Belt

Hombu Dojo
Lake Worth, FL

Regional Promotions

Hombu Dojo, Lake Worth, FL

Jaime Gonzalez to Gokyu - Yellow Belt
Sebastian Soto to Gokyu - Yellow Belt
Carlos Rubio to Yonkyu - Green Belt
Randy Smith to Nikyu - Brown Belt

BSK Niseido Ju Jitsu Club, Murfreesboro, TN

Matt Slipher to Gokyu - Yellow Belt

Gulf Coast Niseido Ju Jitsu Club, Naples, FL

Alyssa Stuve to Yonkyu - Orange Belt

Santa Fe Dojo, Santa Fe, NM

Abel Pavon to Shodan - 1st Degree Black Belt

Congratulations to these Warriors

Prof. Riccardi • Editor-in-Chief • Jim Mahanes Co-Editor

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