

OKINAWAN KARATEDO UNION

Newsletter Edition No. 1

November 1986

Okinawan Karatedo Union (OKU) Formation:

On July 12, 1986 an instructor's clinic and organizational meeting for the Okinawan Karatedo Union was conducted at Wheeler's School of Isshinryu Karate, Powell, Tennessee. Forty-one people representing ten different states were present to participate in the founding of the new society and in the election of Officers and board members. The results of the election are as follows:

President : Allen Wheeler
1st VP : Sherman Harrill
2nd VP : Don Pickett
3rd VP : Joe L. Smith
Board Members: Don Roberts
Mark Aycock
Virgil Gammon
Dan Price
Edward King
Mike Upchurch

In addition to the selection of officers, such topics as constitution and bylaws, dues, purpose, membership requirements, etc. were discussed; significant progress was made toward the finalization of these and other issues concerning the union.

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a membership application form for the OKU; please feel free to Xerox it if you need additional copies. List all kyu rank applicants on a separate sheet of paper and provide name, grade, age, address, and telephone. At present, membership is limited to Isshinryu stylists; however, in the near future the OKU will accept members from various Okinawan styles. Please submit your application as soon as possible; dues are payable during the month of January.

Several promotions were awarded at the clinic including:

Don Roberts : Yondan
Mike Upchurch : Yondan
Dale Furtwangler : Sandan
Dan Price : Sandan
Cliff Babbitts : Sandan
Steve Byars : Nidan
Larry French : Nidan
- Dan Vincent : Nidan
* Eric Hendricks : Shodan
William Greenlee : Shodan

Congratulations to these individuals.

In addition, the seminar included instruction in such topics as basic technique, kata, bunkai, Jujitsu, ninjutsu, self-defense, grappling kumite, and Ju-Te-Do (the way of the soft hand).

Tournament News:

Recently the American Okinawan Karate Association Grand Nationals Championship tournament was conducted in Napierville, IL by Sensei Steve Armstrongs. Seven representatives from the southeast attended and represented the area in fine fashion. Scott Shamblin placed second in kata, second in weapons, and third in kumite; Ruth Ann Vest placed second in kata and first in ladies kumite; Chris Barker placed first place in Junior kumite; Harold Spencer placed second in heavy weight kumite; and Mark Aycocock won both the light weight kumite division and the kumite grand championship.

Several other tournaments were held recently in the Knoxville area and had good participation and excellent competition. These tournaments included the Second Annual Kenboka Open (hosted by Ken and Paula Davidson), the Smokey Mountain Open (conducted by Larry Turner), and the Second Annual Stroh's Invitational Tournament.

On Saturday, October 25, the largest and most prestigious area karate tournament, the Isshinryu Fall Classic, attracted over 300 competitors from ten states. Hosted by Sensei Allen Wheeler, this annual tournament and associated events included seminars by Sensei Don Bohan and Rick Niemura. Sensei Niemura was presented the first annual Okinawan Karatedo Union distinguished service award for outstanding contributions to the art of Isshinryu karatedo and to the karate community. In addition, Mr. Harvey Hastings was among the special guests at the tournament.

Sensei Mike Upchurch hosted the 1986 Clash of Autumn on October 4, in Indianapolis, IN and is all ready making plans for next years tournament. Several masters including Clarence Ewing, Allen Wheeler, Gene Gross, and Richard Hedrick have promised to attend: the tournament will be sanctioned by the OKU. In addition, Sensei Upchurch made the following dan promotions: Jay Newby (nidan), Hope Upchurch (shodan) and Greg Robbins (shodan).

On October 17, three of Sensei Sherman Harrill's students from Carson, IA attended the Nebraska Childrens Martial Arts Championship tournament at LaVista Jr. High School in LaVista, NB. All three students performed well and returned home with trophies for their efforts.

Finally, the Tennessee Karate Circuit Championship tournament and banquet is scheduled for December 6 in Knoxville and promises to be an exciting tournament with stiff competition.

Please submit your tournament news, schedules, etc., to Wheeler's School of Karate for inclusion in the future editions of the OKU newsletter: don't just read about everyone else.

Isshinryu Events:

Remember that January 16 (1954) is the founding date of Isshinryu Karate and be sure to celebrate the event in a special way at your dojo.

Personals:

Kathryn Eldridge has recently moved to NB and is pursuing a degree at the university there. She has started a class in Isshinryu and is in contact with Sensei Harrill. We wish her well in her work and studies.

Isshinryu "Trivia":

In each newsletter we will try to include an Isshinryu "trivia" question to test and improve everyone's knowledge of our system (and just for fun, as well). This edition's question: What is O'Sensei Shinkichi Shimabukuro's birthday (month/day/year)? Send in your dated response and the first person to correctly answer will be identified in the next newsletter. (Also, please identify your source of information and ideas for future questions.)

The OKU newsletter will be printed quarterly (with a special edition in January 1987). It is intended to promote communication, understanding, and friendship amongst all Isshinryu practitioners. Please help us accomplish this task better by sending in your news items, suggestions, etc., for inclusion. Just like our system itself, this organization and newsletter can be only as good as we all make it working together.