



## Editor's Note

By Chris Earl

Thanks to Candice Lawrence for newsletter content this month!

Deadline for the September issue is September 30<sup>th</sup> 2001. Submissions can be handwritten, on diskette as Microsoft Word or text file or you can email me at [cearl@odyssey.on.ca](mailto:cearl@odyssey.on.ca)

### **Next Test Dates** **Carling Heights**

Adults: Thursday September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Amos Parker Workshop**

at TigerLily Tai Chi and Aikido Friday **Sept 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday Sept 9<sup>th</sup>**. Contact TigerLily for more details at (317) 579-9055 or [tigerlily@iquest.net](mailto:tigerlily@iquest.net)

**Terada Shihan** clinic at Sensei Hurst's dojo in Detroit **October 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>** There will be a **car pool** to this event. To signup see Sensei Jaimie!

**Amos Parker Sensei** will be conducting a seminar at the Fox Valley Yoshinkan Aikido Club (Meishinkan Dojo) in Aurora, Illinois from **September 20<sup>th</sup> to September 23<sup>rd</sup>**. Contact: Kevin Bradley at [aikidorat@msn.com](mailto:aikidorat@msn.com) or Chris Showerman at [showe@megisnet.net](mailto:showe@megisnet.net).

## **Where's the Duct Tape When You Need It?**

(or Ramblings of a Travelling, Smiling Aikidoka)

by **Candice Lawrence**

Anyone who has gone to an aikido gathering at another dojo knows how much fun it can be to meet others who enjoy aikido as much as they do. Thus, it was with great pleasure to run into Sensei Leslie Mills at an aikido clinic in Georgetown last year. She encouraged other women to learn to accept the intensity of training that comes with ongoing aikido practice and play, and left me with a very positive view of the unique energy that women bring to their training. When I met her in Georgetown, the idea of a women's aikido gathering and retreat seemed like its time had come.

### **Aikido Attracts an “Interesting Lot”**

It has been my experience that those who are attracted to Aikido seem to be an interesting lot. The passion and commitment that our Senseis bring to our training can be seen in the ongoing motivation and dedication that I see developing in junior, intermediate and advanced students. The calibre of teaching is top notch, and this enthusiasm and love of teaching is also evident in all of our black belts.

In the past 3 years, I have seen more women come into the Dojo and stay, along with men, eager to learn and happy to train with an enthusiasm and energy that is inspiring. I believe that this is so, in large part, due to the respect and genuine interest that the Senseis of Aiki Budo Centre have in teaching both women and men alike.

### **Women as Role Models**

Seeing Christine Earl and Ester Tadgel receive their black belts has inspired me beyond words. I recall my first encounter watching a female instructor teach in a large forum at an Aikido clinic in London. As I sat in seiza, I found myself crying tears of joy as I watched Chisuko Matsuo Sensei from Japan execute and demonstrate her aikido techniques with energy, power and intense focus. I remember Christine Pickersgill, who was sitting beside me at the time, beginning to giggle at my spontaneous display of emotion. It is a moment etched in my mind, when I fell in love with aikido all over again.

When a woman watches and learns from another woman, who has worked hard to demonstrate a level of competent performance and skill that is powerful and intense, with a focus and beauty that compliments and dances alongside that displayed by men, she can really connect with her own potential. Balance and harmony, yin and yang. Having a healthy mix of men and women on the mat can only serve to balance the energies and increase the respect that we all have for each other.



### **Women’s Perspectives on Aikido Training**

It was great to hear some women’s perspectives on training. Some interesting things that I noticed were that most of the women there came to aikido for different reasons than perhaps many men. Both men and women appreciate physical skill development, the thrill of learning, and the development of discipline and focus that comes from honing and polishing their skills. However, many women present, said that they were also interested in self-defense. They were looking for a martial art that would enable them to protect themselves and possibly prevent assault, or facilitate escape. A universal fear among women is that we may be subjected to an assault, possibly sexual assault. Many women feel a need to limit their personal freedom in order to deal with this fear.

Another common thread was the development of self-confidence and comfort with our bodies that comes with learning Aikido. A number of the women stated that they felt more mind/body connection. In reflection on my own experience, I now feel a greater sense of myself as a strong woman as well as a comfort with the softer sides of my feminine soul. Before I started taking aikido, I used to wear a lot of baggy, nondescript clothing. Now that I have developed a certain level of skill, I feel greater comfort in wearing feminine-style clothing, and know that I am a combination of inner and outer strength, yin and yang.

### **The Journey and the Experience:**

Our trip and our stay was inspiring, adventurous and fun. Travelling with Sue, Catherine, Therese, Christine Pickersgill, Kristen Lepine, and Ester from Strathroy was a treat and a half. Off we set, thinking it would probably take 6-7 hours. It was more like 9! After pulling over for a Mc-PitStop, and then missing an exit, or shall I say "boldly going where we weren't planning on going", Catherine's rear tire went flat, having picked up a sharp object along the way! Here we were, on a busy, loud, humming highway on a Friday afternoon!

But, Catherine was prepared! CAA, and a cell phone to the rescue! After another hour or so, a few calls to the Tigerlily Dojo, and a trip to the Pep Boys, we were on the road again, following Sensei Teddie Linder and her trusty canine friend to the Tigerlily Dojo. There we were greeted by smiling aikidoka and FOOD! Once introductions were made, we settled in at the home of two wonderful women, who very graciously and generously opened their home to all of us from London. We slept in various rooms throughout the house, and awoke to an exciting day of aikido, talking, eating and bonding. What I found most enjoyable was seeing how much the others were enjoying themselves, particularly the younger girls and women such as Christine, Therese and Kristen. Christine was our official "camera GRRRL", and Therese & Ester did amazing jobs as ukes for Senseis Leslie & Teddie. Kristen, our adventurous world-traveler, and camera hambone, seemed to enjoy herself in the company of her aikido buds. They were a pleasure to have as travelling companions.

Saturday, we ended our aikido workouts with some T'ai Chi, which was new and exciting to me - a very connecting and intuitively flowing session which topped off the day's activity nicely. Our Saturday night food extravaganza was held at one of the women's homes. After eating (again) and more discussion, we brought out the percussion instruments and got a little rhythm section going, with some help from the children of the house! Harmony and Rhythm; Drumming and aikido; These are a few of my favourite things!

Sunday morning was spent focussing on self-defense, particularly from positions where one is lying down on the ground. Some of these techniques were extremely practical and helpful. I hope that none of us ever have to use them, but they are good to know, just in case.

### **Oh, yes. The duct tape!**

I almost forgot. Along route, I seemed to have "lost" my gas cap! However, I did not realize this until stopping for gas on the way out of town, in what looked like an impending Wizard of Oz thunderstorm tornado. "Hmm", I thought. "Gas and water. Not a good mix!" Darn it, I couldn't find my duct tape! With a little ingenuity, and some quickly purchased electrical tape, a plastic cup and a handy-dandy Swiss Army knife, Ester and I rigged up a make-shift gas cap!

So, our training included pivots, harmonizing, and blending with each other on the mats. And the journey itself involved some interesting off-the-mat aikido as we pivoted and blended with flat tires, and missing gas caps. I think I made some good friends along the way, and some new friends from Indianapolis. I hope that I am able to continue to train with all of them in the

future.

From a women's changeroom in Georgetown, to a women's gathering in Indianapolis, I think we are onto a new tradition and hopefully an annual event that will include more women and girls as they come to participate in the wonderfully intense and joyful world of Yoshinkan Aikido.

**“Duct tape is like the force; it has a light side and a dark side, and it holds**



**the universe together.”**

This month's favourite link:

<http://www.aikidofaq.com/songbook/index.html>

## **Class Schedule**

### **Tuesday**

6:15 to 7:00 Children Only  
 7:00 to 7:50 Beginners & 9th Kyu  
 7:55 to 9:00 8<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Kyu  
 9:00 – 10:00 5<sup>th</sup> Kyu and above

### **Thursday**

7:00 to 7:50 Beginners, 9th & 8th Kyu  
 7:55 to 9:00 8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Kyu  
 9:00 to 10:00 5<sup>th</sup> Kyu and above

### **Saturday**

9:15 am to 9:55 am Children Only  
 10:00 am to 11:00 am Open Class  
 11:00 am to 12:00 noon Weapons Class

***Carling Heights Community Optimist Centre***

***(entrance off McMahan St.) and***

***Earl Nicholls Recreation Centre***

***Homeview (White Oaks Road) and Southdale.***