

SEUSKF Newsletter

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A Spirit of Unity: The 2009 SEUSKF Championship Tournament and Shinsa

By: Bob Eitel

With a spirit of unity, more than 260 participants from Florida to New York and New Jersey to California came together to show the result of their hard training and make new friends. To make a good experience for an event of this size, the event was co-hosted by Northern Virginia Budokai, Baltimore-Annapolis Kendo, and Annapolis Kendo Iaido Club. Honored guests included Ohta-sensei 8th dan, Shinobu Maeda-sensei 7th dan who served as Shinpan Cho, Susumu Yazaki-sensei 7th dan, Robert Stroud-sensei 7th dan, Phillip Hyun-sensei 6th dan, Kunitoshi Arai-sensei 6th dan, Vincent Lan-sensei 6th dan, and William Holt-sensei the Founder of the SEUSKF.

The venue was the field house at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. After a lengthy search of facilities the co-hosts chose a building large enough to accommodate six courts for competition. The tournament competition began promptly at 9:30 a.m. and lasted until 7:00 p.m. All six courts were in use for the majority of the day. There was exciting competition at a high skill level especially in the semi-final and final matches. A list of the winners is posted on the next page and at www.seuskf.org.

The following day over one-hundred kendo-ka of all skill levels tested from kyu to 4dan. Everyone tried their best in front of two panels of high-ranking sensei. The co-hosts had significant help from the SEUSKF Board



**Pictured (L to R): Robert Stroud,
Shinobu Maeda, and Yoshiyuka Ohta**
Photo by Connie Philbeck

Members. In particular, Tina Canada and Mike Canada, worked very hard to make the promotional run smoothly. Congratulations to all those who were successful.

A special "Thank You" goes out to Don Seto-sensei for his contributions to the growth of kendo in the mid-Atlantic region. Seto-sensei has served as the lead instructor at Northern Virginia Budokai, is currently the head instructor at Baltimore-Annapolis Kendo, and has been an occasional guest instructor at Annapolis Kendo Iaido Club. The co-host dojo ran into challenges finding affordable space near the Nation's capitol large enough for this event. Fortunately for all, Seto-sensei stepped forward and was successful in convincing the University's Athletic Department to make the space available in a spirit of enriching the Mason student's opportunity to learn about Kendo.

On a personal note, there came a moment when each of the co-host committee members could step back and see the big picture and realize that their volunteer efforts had a profound positive effect on the spirit and growth of kendo in the Southeastern United States. It is humbling to be reminded that kendo is bigger than any one person or dojo. The process of preparing and co-hosting the SEUSKF Championships brought many kendo-ka together in a spirit of unity. We gained many new friends, brothers and sisters!



SEUSKF 2009
Championship Tournament
Results

Youth "A"

- 1st Andy Kim (Hong Moo Kwan)
2nd Stephen Bomberger (N. Virginia Budokai)
3rd Brian Kim (Hong Moo Kwan)
3rd Rintaro Tanaka (Georgia Kendo Association)

KantoSho

- Rintaro Tanaka (Georgia Kendo Association)

Youth "B"

- 1st Todd Choi (Young Moo Kwan)
2nd Grant Gallas (Shidogakuin)
3rd Joshua Cho (Hong Moo Kwan)
3rd Tae Hyun Park (Hong Moo Kwan)

KantoSho

- Todd Choi (Young Moo Kwan)

Youth "C"

- 1st Paul Chung (Hong Moo Kwan)
2nd Hayato DeSouza (Georgia Kendo Alliance)
3rd Dustin Broglio (N. Raleigh Kendo)
3rd Augustine Lee (Hong Moo Kwan)

KantoSho

- Sulchan Yoon (Hampton Roads Kendo Club)

Mudansha

- 1st Sung Soo Kim (Hong Moo Kwon)
2nd Sanghun Chung (Virginia Tech Kendo) Club
3rd Alberto Torres (Hong Moo Kwon)
3rd Raj Subrahmanian (Shu Do Kan)

KantoSho

- John Bauer (Virginia Tech Kendo Club)

Women

- 1st Takako Furukawa (Shidogakuin)
2nd Sonoko Mori (Gulf Coast Kendo Club)
3rd Masumi Kamimura (Memphis Kendo Club)
3rd Ryoko Barr (Georgia Kendo Alliance)

KantoSho

- Arisa Nakamori (East Bay Kenyukai)

Seniors

- 1st Keun-kab Song (Young Moo Kwan)
2nd Hoon Chang (Hong Moo Kwan)
3rd Bob Eitel (Baltimore-Annapolis Kendo Association)
3rd Bob Mack (Battle Creek Kendo Kai)

KantoSho

- Phuong Hoang (Koryo Kendo Club)

Shodan/Nidan

- 1st Tracey Choi (Young Moo Kwan)
2nd Ryan Tatu (Shu Do Kan)
3rd Andrew Hamilton (Koryo Kendo Club)
3rd Yongkyu Choi (Georgia Kendo Association)

KantoSho

- Ahmed Obeidallah (Hong Moo Kwan)

Sandan & above

- 1st Tomoya Tanaka (Georgia Kendo Association)
2nd Jason Lane (Charlotte Kendo Club)
3rd Katsuyuki Tamura (Georgia Kendo Association)
3rd Pavel Litterbach (Georgia Kendo Alliance)

KantoSho

- Kensaku Matsushita (Shu Do Kan)

Team

- 1st Georgia Kendo Association "A" (Georgia)
2nd Charlotte Kendo Club "A" (North Carolina)
3rd Triangle Kendo & Iaido "A" (North Carolina)
3rd Hong Moo Kwan "B" (New Jersey)



Yoshiyuki Ohta (L), Craig Philbeck (M), Ryoko Barr (R) *photo: Connie Philbeck*

College Kendo Clubs: Balancing Books and Bogu

By D. Michael Canada, Jr.

At the time of this writing, I am preparing to begin the twenty-second semester of practice at William and Mary Kendo Club. A lot has changed since the start of the club. My wife Tina and I, now 3rd dan, attend once a week to instruct. We were both there for that very first practice in the fall of 1999. As embarrassing as it is to admit as an adult, it all started with an anime club.

I remember the club activity fair at the beginning of my Freshman year at William and Mary in the Fall of 1998. I walked up and down endless rows of booths staffed by members of sports and social clubs. Fencing grabbed my attention. So did the various and sundry martial arts. I took the most interest in William and Mary Anime Society. Anime was popular among my friends in high school. It was what I knew. It was the club I followed up on.

The anime club was a tight-knit group. I'm still in touch with a lot of folks I met that first year. Tina joined as a freshman alongside me. Rob "Ota" Dieterich was also a freshman. He and I gravitated towards each other. He reminded me of old friends.

Rob was the son of a Foreign Service officer. He grew up in Mexico where he studied kendo when he was very young. My father was an Army Chaplain. I studied kumdo for about a year when we were

Meet Your Board of Directors

This issue's BOD member is Mike Watson. He is currently in the second term on the BOD. Mike is involved in many aspects of kendo from the organizational end. In addition to being SEUSKF secretary he established and maintains the SEUSKF web site as well as the Facebook page. A founding member of Triangle Kendo & Iaido, Mike is the club's Programs Officer. He also maintains the TKI web site and is an instructor for the UNC dojo of Triangle Kendo & Iaido, is the faculty advisor for the UNC dojo and maintains the UNC dojo web site. Fortunately Mike also has time for kendo. He has been doing kendo for about 13 years and looks forward to many more.

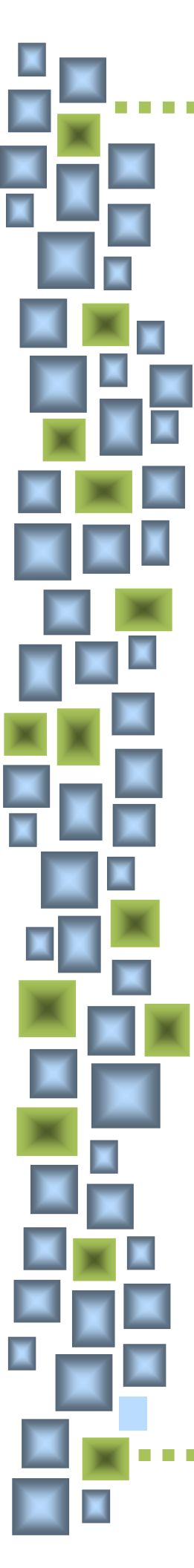


Mike (R) with past SEUSKF president Col. James Parker (L) *photo: David Castrilli*

stationed in Seoul, South Korea right before I came to William and Mary.

Rob and I eventually learned we had both practiced kendo when we were younger. Sometime around winter break, we were walking near the cafeteria together. "So I've been thinking. Why don't we start a kendo club?" he said. It was an idle question and it resulted in the creation of a monster.

Rob contacted Phuong Hoang-sensei of Koryo Dojo in Richmond about teaching college students. We held an informational session on a weekend that Spring and advertised it with posters. There, I got to meet Hoang-sensei for the first time. He was a friendly, soft-spoken man.



He didn't bat an eyelash when only four prospective students showed up for the informational session, one of them to "kill" me as part of a game of "assassins". Despite the low turnout, the club proceeded as planned. Rob and I applied to create the club with William and Mary's Department of Recreational Sports. We co-wrote a club constitution. He became the first president and I became the first vice-president, but we needed at least three officers to form a club. Our friend Tina, having never done kendo before in her life, was drafted as secretary/treasurer. We effectively forced her retirement from field hockey. A couple of meetings and a few yards of college red tape later, "The Kendo Club at William and Mary" became official. Our sophomore year, Rob, Tina, and I were back at the activity fair, only this time with a booth of our own. We got a lot of bemused questions. I do not think a lot of students knew what to make of us. These were the days before *Rurouni Kenshin* on Cartoon Network and *The Last Samurai*.

Things were somehow simpler then.

We ended up with a staggering number of students at our first practice. Over the weeks, that number whittled down until we had a core group of only about half a dozen by second semester. There were classes towards the end of the semester to which only a few members showed up. Only in hindsight do I appreciate the patience Hoang-sensei must have had with us. His gentle urging convinced us to be persistent and creative in keeping up membership.

Just about every source with whom I have spoken has affirmed that the attrition rate is high for new students in kendo. Add to it classes, numerous other activities, necessary part-time work for some, and lack of personal finance; it is easy to see why college can present special challenges to an aspiring *kendo-ka*.

In other ways, college is a fine primordial soup for creating lifelong practitioners. Clubs and organizations are an important aspect of social life in college. Most students at William and Mary are young and away from home for the first time. When I was that age, I remember wanting to try new things; expand my horizons; meet other people with common interests.

New recruits have always been a peculiar mishmash of different personality types and interests: sort of like *The Breakfast Club* with

wooden swords. "Otaku" anime fans, martial artists, Japanophiles, dancers, backyard samurai, athletes, SCA'ers, and the rare experienced kendo/kumdo practitioner: there has always been amazing diversity in a batch of new students.

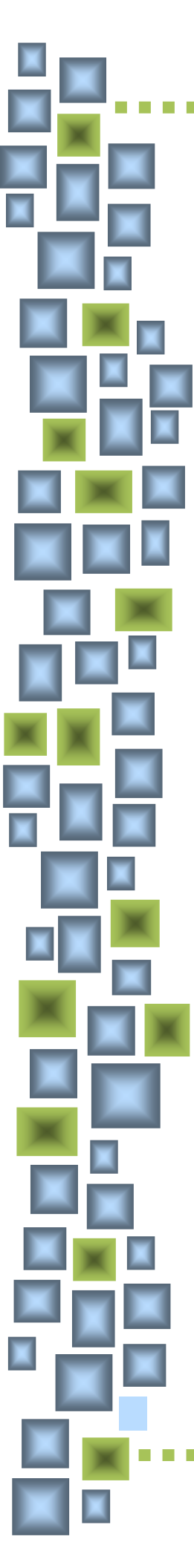
A 4th dan instructor visiting from Japan once told me, "Everyone has a different reason for doing kendo... You have to find the balance to keep them there." The ones who stuck with it sometimes surprised me. At least one experienced practitioner stopped abruptly for little apparent reason. One of our students who started out shinai-fighting with friends in his backyard made it to ikkyu in college. He still practices.

Part of me wishes I knew what decides whether or not someone will stick with kendo. Is it something in the style of instruction? Is it something in the circumstances in one's life? Or is it something more elusive? I've always felt as though the reasons in a college club are not necessarily the same as they are in a formal dojo setting.

Being out of college, practicing at a standard dojo, I am convinced college kendo has a culture all its own. Students have their own way of connecting and networking. A few years after the founding of our club, Tina and I visited Virginia Tech's kendo club and became acquainted with its members. Some time later, we discussed holding a series of exhibition matches between William and Mary and Virginia Tech. The idea evolved into the William and Mary Tournament, now in its seventh year, having grown to over a hundred participants annually.

Yale and Harvard University are notable in that, apart from having active clubs, both hold annual college invitational tournaments. Harvard hosts the annual Shoruyai Intercollegiate Kendo Tournament. Every year since 1997, Harvard has invited college clubs from around the country to participate. The prize: a traveling trophy donated by former prime minister of Japan and proponent of kendo, Hashimoto Ryutaro. Tina and I were fortunate enough to attend during our college days and remember not only the tournament itself, but also the fellowship and networking that took place amongst the different groups based hundreds of miles apart.

College was a special time in our lives. We were still young and bright-eyed; filled



with enthusiasm. We would cheerfully load Tina's Civic full of friends and *bogu* for the six or more hour drive to Cleveland annually. Sunday afternoon, we would drive back to school ready for a week of classes.

There were challenges, however. Practice space presented its own issues. Every semester, we had to request times and places to practice. We were never guaranteed our first choice. We were given space in Adair Hall: a big gym with old and resilient wood flooring. It was a generally nice facility, though I remember the year in which the gym suffered from a chronically leaky roof. Sometimes when it rained, we had to practice with large trashcans filling with rain water on the gym floor. Large spaces of flooring stayed warped for most of the academic year until the college replaced it.

Nearly every semester we had to share space with another club. Badminton tended to blare loud music and move around our equipment without asking. During volleyball practice, we had to dodge stray balls in the middle of *keiko*. We were most often partnered with Shotokan Karate and that was probably the best fit. In some levels, it was challenging: we were loud and they were loud, but our *reihou* was similar. We both knew when the other club yelled "seiza" to wait quietly until they finished. I felt we understood each other better than many other clubs.

Reihou does not always come naturally to college students without martial arts experience. I remember at the Harvard Invitational there were many student spectators cheering loudly. The *shinpan* and dan-ranking participants did not appear to appreciate this. The *shinpancho* even stopped a match to chastise the noisy onlookers. He started the second day of the tournament with a long lecture on *shiai* etiquette.

At William and Mary, for scheduling reasons, Hoang-sensei was only able to make the hour-long drive to Williamsburg once a week. For our second weekly practice, we had to work out amongst ourselves what to practice and how. This bred a certain degree of informality in the club, especially in the days before any of us were dan-ranked. We were lucky even to have had Hoang-sensei. Many college clubs may have a senior student, but not

necessarily a "sensei" of high rank due to availability or location.

Being a college club, our members typically stay with us no longer than four years. After that time, they graduate. As such, turnover is even higher than in non-college clubs. Every academic year is a reinvention of the club with mostly new students. Juggling time with abject beginners and more senior students in *bogu* has always been a challenge.

In a way, club members have always had to answer to two "masters." Apart from the instructor, club members must also follow rules and guidelines laid forth by the college Department of Recreational Sports. These rules have grown more complicated over time. Officers must attend a variety of meetings throughout the year or risk losing their club. At least two participants at every practice must be certified in CPR and first aid and carry a first aid kit. Everyone must sign a short stack of releases and provide insurance information. Recently, non-students were restricted from practice unless they purchase an expensive pass allowing them to attend campus activities. When I was still a student, one of our most active members was a French student working on his thesis at a laboratory in Hampton Roads. The Department of Recreational Sports explicitly prohibited us from driving in the same vehicle with him to the annual SEUSKF tournament. Though specific rules may differ, all college clubs must answer to someone beyond the dojo.

And then there is the college schedule. Practice locations close over breaks and final exam periods. Most kendo students take some time around midterms and finals off from practice anyway in order to study. Some students could be absent for most of a semester due to an evening lab or RA duty. College life can be a juggling act and for many students, kendo is just another ball to juggle. Still, when we were that age, it was a time in our lives when juggling came naturally.

Having started kendo as William and Mary's secretary/treasurer, Tina would go on to serve as treasurer for the SEUSKF. At the time of this writing, Rob lives in Japan. He participated in the JET program and, while there, served as faculty advisor to a middle school kendo club.

Cont. next page

He still talks about becoming more active in kendo from time to time.

As much as I wish everyone who passed through our club developed a lifelong passion for kendo, I can only name a handful still practicing. That said, we have made a lot of lifelong friends and we had some good times.

College kendo is different from dojo kendo and in some ways the college experience can limit the kendo experience. Regardless, we were more than a club or dojo. We were a community. Most of us lived within walking distance. We grabbed milkshakes and pizza after practice. We met for lunch at the cafeteria. We hung out on weekends and chit-chatted while oiling our *shinai*.

How could I ever forget my first trip to Cleveland with Tina? Stargazing with friends on the James River Ferry on our way back from the SEUSKF tournament? Getting lost in Cambridge, at 2 a.m. with Rob and calling for directions from the unfortunately named "Ware Street?" Practicing kendo in college was never just about the kendo. It was about so much more.

Annual William & Mary Taikai

By: Mike Watson

The William & Mary taikai has become a favorite for many people. The tournament itself has grown to over a hundred competitors and is always a lot of fun for everyone due to the hard work of organizers Mike and Tina Canada with help from the rest of the William & Mary kendo club. The 2010 tournament was no different. Phillip Hyun sensei (6 dan, Knoxville Kendo club) was shinpancho this year and things ran very smoothly. The action was good with many fine matches taking place. North Virginia Budokai and Virginia Tech were both forces to reckon with but the level of competition was good across the board. One match between David Castrilli (Triangle Kendo & Iaido) and Ash Vouvous (Baltimore-Annapolis kendo club) in the shodan-nidan division ended up running over 12 minutes. The sandan+ division matches were fun to watch with Stefan Locklair (Charlotte kendo club) turning in a fine jodan performance on his way to

winning the division. It was interesting to note several kenshi played nito at the tournament as well.

Some of the more interesting matches however were by Xander Castrilli (Triangle Kendo & Iaido). Xander is only 8 years of age. While he did not win his matches in the mudansha division he was able to score points. Young Mr. Castrilli ended up receiving the kanto sho spirit award on Saturday and was promoted to 5 kyu on Sunday. This is the future of kendo.



Xander Castrilli Photo: Nikki & Dave Castrilli

2010 William & Mary Results

Mudansha Division

- 1st Jason Cox (Virginia Tech)
- 2nd Zachariah Cox (Triangle Kendo & Iaido)
- 3rd Samuel Ku (Northern Virginia Budokai)
- 3rd Edward Ahn (William and Mary)

KantoSho

Xander Castrilli (Triangle Kendo and Iaido)

Womens Division

- 1st Arisa Nakamori (Northern Virginia Budokai/Berkley)
- 2nd Hiromi Robinson (Northern Virginia Budokai)
- 3rd Tina Canada (William and Mary)
- 3rd Yatsuki Hoang (Koryo)

Shodan/Nidan Division

- 1st Adam Wattereus (Northern Virginia Budokai)
- 2nd Isaac Kim (Virginia Tech)
- 3rd Aric Lin (Shidogakuin)
- 3rd Jae Kwan Cha (Shudokan)

Sandan and up Division

- 1st Stefan Locklair (Charlotte)
- 2nd Summerlin Walker (Shidogakuin)
- 3rd Mike Canada (William and Mary)
- 3rd Wayne Scanlon (Shudokan)

Teams Division

- 1st Northern Virginia Budokai A
- 2nd William and Mary B
- 3rd Virginia Tech A
- 3rd Shudokan



William & Mary 'B' team. Pictured left to right: Tina Canada, Mike Canada, Stefan Locklair, Yatsuki Hoang, Craig Philbeck. Photo: Connie Philbeck



Robert Stroud sensei photo: *Connie Philbeck*



Shinobu Maeda sensei photo: *Connie Philbeck*

Other Kendo News

To the many people that passed shinsa in the past 6 months, although we don't name everyone I would like to pass on my congratulations. There are two SEUSKF kendoka I would like to especially recognize. Tomoya Tanaka sensei from Georgia Kendo Association and Ken Strawn sensei from the Charlotte Kendo Club both passed their godan shinsa (5 dan exam) in Florida earlier this Spring.



(Above) Shinsuke Demoto (R) and Jay Lane (L) photo: *Connie Philbeck*

Contributions

If anyone has an idea for an article they would like to write for the SEUSKF Newsletter please contact Mike Watson (mwatson@seuskf.org)

Congratulations Kato sensei

In addition I would like to pass on congratulations to Shozo Kato sensei (shown in picture to the right at the 2009 AUSKF summer camp hosted by the Memphis Kendo club) of the GNEUSKF for passing his hachidan (8 dan) exam on May 1st, 2010 in Kyoto, Japan.

(Right) Shozo Kato sensei photo: *Rogers Gossett*

