

**PAN-AMERICAN GOJU RYU KARATEDO  
SEIWAKAI NEWSLETTER**

**全米剛柔流空手道  
誠和会社内報**

**Dedicated to Traditional Goju Ryu Karatedo  
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All issues of the Pan-American Seiwa Kai Newsletter can be found online at:  
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Hasui, Wood-block Print, Artist Proof

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# A Karateka Mom

## By Crystal Villagran



Being a mom is, hands-down, the greatest purpose in my life. Being a karateka has been a purpose in my life greater than I ever expected. For myself, the two identities closely relate to one another. Many of the qualities of being a martial artist carry over into being a good mother.

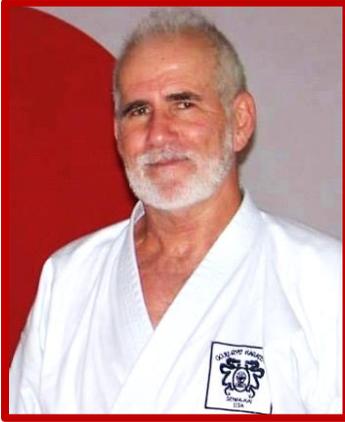
I have done karate for roughly 15 years of my life. There have been circumstances that have led me away from practicing throughout the years. Motherhood was one of these circumstances. At times, I even thought I might never get back to the dojo. In my heart, I never lost the deep connection I had with karate. There was a constant pulling of my inner-self and a longing to train. When my son was diagnosed with Autism at 21 months of age, my entire world became about our journey of behavioral intervention, speech therapy, occupation therapy, and counseling. It was an extremely difficult, and growing portion of life for me. Needless to say, karate stopped for me as I turned my focus on the fight towards getting my boy where he should be.

About 3 years of intense therapy passed for us. I realized that I needed to reacquaint myself with myself. My life became about Autism and my son; I had nothing left for myself at the end of the day. Karate was the way for me to do this. Shihan Vassie was always supportive, and his door was always open to me. This made the idea of going back to the dojo comfortable and inviting. The challenge was to get my identity and my health back.

One day, I finally decided to show up to a Saturday training. Putting my dogi on felt wonderful; I felt like I was putting armor on. I thought of how proud I was to be a karateka. I also thought about how proud I was to be a mother raising a special needs child. I was so much stronger in spirit than I was before I became a mother. I realized that the two identities were very similar.

Although it was extremely difficult to do the workouts, I found myself exhilarated. I also found myself more connected to the fundamental values of practicing karate because I had become a mother. I was more mindful; I gave more attention to loyalty, honor, and being an example that my son would be proud of. Soon the challenges became ways to sharpen the *sword of my spirit*. I welcomed the challenge of Autism and of training hard in karate. These things made me a better mother, and a better person. It was this warrior spirit that has kept me on a path of seeking mindfulness and balance.

These days, my son is 15 years old. He practices martial arts now. He has seen me train at the dojo for years. He and I even spar with one another at times. There is a certain level of respect between us because of martial arts. Karate is a way of life for me; it always will be. Being a mother has been the most important purpose of my existence. Being a karateka has been one of the best ways for me to live as an example that my boy can be proud of.



## Creating Teachers By Jim Pounds

It dawned on me recently that some of my students are better than me. Let me qualify that they are better than me in some ways, mainly in skills that require speed and excellent balance. They are certainly beginning to “out quick” me in kumite. There is that vaguely uncomfortable moment when I think that maybe my skills are fading, I’m over the hill, I don’t have it anymore, and blah blah blah.

Shihan Fujiwara, the Head Instructor of Goju-Ryu Karatedo Seiwakai, touched on the topic of growth in Ontario (2016) when he told us the natural progression of karate understanding went from physical to mental to the heart over many years of training. So yes, my physical skills are indeed diminishing with age, but my understanding and my *shin*, my spirit, is deeper than ever. My paranoia about losing my skills is unfounded when looked at from that perspective. I also realize my students *should* be getting better than me if I’m any kind of teacher. Yogi Bhajan, the man who brought Kundalini yoga to the USA, said repeatedly, “*My intent is to create teachers, not to accumulate students.*” Bravo!

I’ve met karate instructors who acted as if they could only pass along some of their knowledge or they would lose their following, as if knowledge were a finite pie to be rationed out begrudgingly and perhaps saving the best for themselves. That is not what teachers are about, and I suspect that mindset is because the teacher himself is limited. If we teach our students everything we know, then why would they stay? The solution is to keep learning yourself, keep improving, keep beginner’s mind. That’s why we have seminars. Our Shihan instructors pour out everything they can convey in the brevity of a 3-day weekend or a weeklong *Gasshuku*. Peter Urban said about a dojo, “*Everyone works.*” Your own teachers are also training just as hard as you are to improve while keeping the cup half-full so they can acquire even more to pass on.

If we aren’t giving our students everything we know and instilling a hunger to learn more, we are giving less than our best and leaving them with less than their full potential. To teach well teachers must abandon ego. Some believe that when students surpass the teacher, then the teacher is no longer Superman or Superwoman. We think that will strip away some of our mystique, but that is nonsense. Giving completely of your knowledge and skills leaves room for more. Giving completely gives students the advantage of getting on toward the creative side of learning, which is how they actually *will* become better than you, the teacher...*that* is what makes you super, man. It’s all good.

All things must pass – even ourselves. These students who are becoming better than us are not the hobbyists and fair-weather karateka that are a part of every dojo. They are the teachers of tomorrow, of a next generation. They are the ones with a proverbial fire raging in their hair. Giichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan karate, was no doubt contemplating the same conundrum when he posed his oft-quoted rhetorical question, “*The Way...who will pass it on straight and well?*”

Give completely of yourself and your knowledge and you will always have room for more knowledge and even deeper understanding. Then you pass that on too. That’s how you stay super in your students’ eyes.

*Editor's Note: Jim Pounds' student, Sam Parsons, is now teaching in her own dojo. Her student, Judie Le, recently graded to Nidan. This is precisely the principle upon which this article is based: "creating teachers."*

Congratulations to Judie Le, Karate ATX - Seiwakai of Texas, for grading to Nidan in Seiwakai International on 1/29/2022.

Also, congratulations to Jim Shihan for creating teachers.



## Seiwakai Around the Globe



## Goju Ryu Karatedo Seiwakai International

**Seiichi Fujiwara**



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**Satoru Takahashi**



**Vice President**

**Vassie Naidoo**



**Vice President**

**Ben Mare**



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**Abel Figueiredo**



**Director – Europe**

**Glenn Stephenson**



**Director – Oceania**

**Craig Vokey**



**Director – Pan  
America**

**Eddie Liu**



**Director – Asia**

*“Lead them by political maneuvers, restrain them with punishments: the people will become cunning and shameless. Lead them by virtue, restrain them with ritual: they will develop a sense of shame and a sense of participation.” Confucius 孔子 (Koshi)*

# 2022 Seiwakai International Seminar and Shinsa Celebrating 50 years of Goju Ryu Karatedo Seiwakai



## From Fujiwara Hanshi

To all overseas Seiwakai members

I think everyone is doing well and devoting themselves to practicing karate. We would like to inform you that the schedule has been decided as follows. It's been two years since the event, so, I'm looking forward to resuming it.

### **2022 Seiwakai Overseas Seminar**

**Dates:** July 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>

**Times:** 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM (including lunch break)

**Venue:** Omagari Daikyoku Budokan

### **July 9<sup>th</sup> Free Day and Seiwakai Party at 5 PM**

**Dates:** July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>

**Times:** 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM (including lunch break)

**Venue:** Kamioka Gymnasium (due to national elections)

**Date:** July 12th

**Time:** Training – 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

### **2022 Seiwakai Shinsa**

**Time:** 1 PM to 3 PM

**Venue:** Daikyoku Budokan, Omagari, Japan

**Date:** July 13 Travel Day to Tokyo

## 2022 JKF Goju Kai Overseas Seminar, Shinsa, and Competition



**Overseas Seminar:** July 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>

**Registration:** July 14<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 8:00 AM

**Venue:** Zenkuren Kaikan, Tokyo

**Date:** July 14<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM (with lunch break)

**Date:** July 15<sup>th</sup>

**Venue:** Zenkuren Kaikan, Tokyo

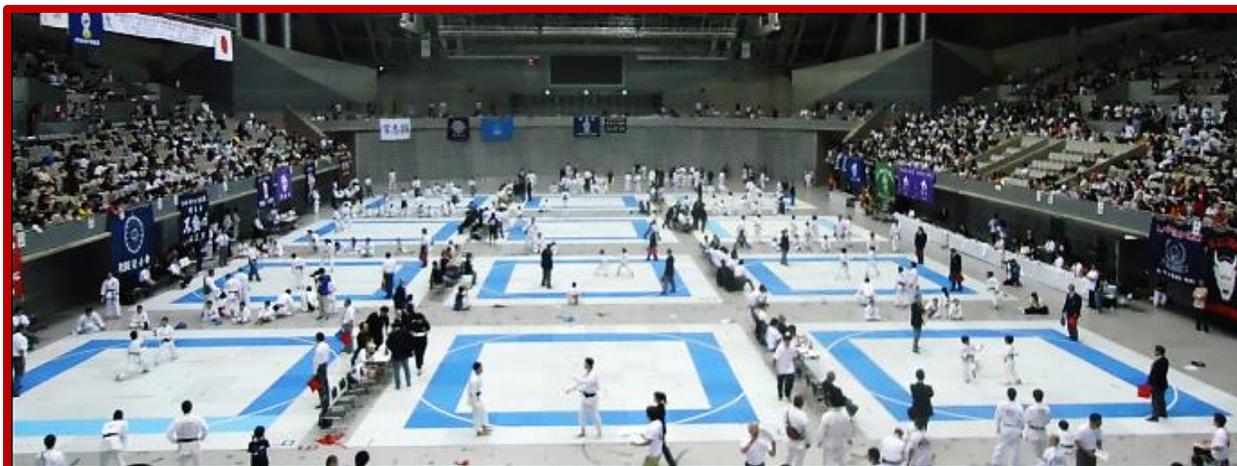
**Time:** 9:00 AM to 12:00

**Shinsa:** 1st to 5th dan and 6th to 8th dan

**Times:** announced the day before

**Venue:** Yokohame Budokan, Kanagawa Prefecture (venue is subject to change)

**There will not be a JKF Goju Kai Party this year.**



## 2022 JKF Gojukai National Karatedo Championships

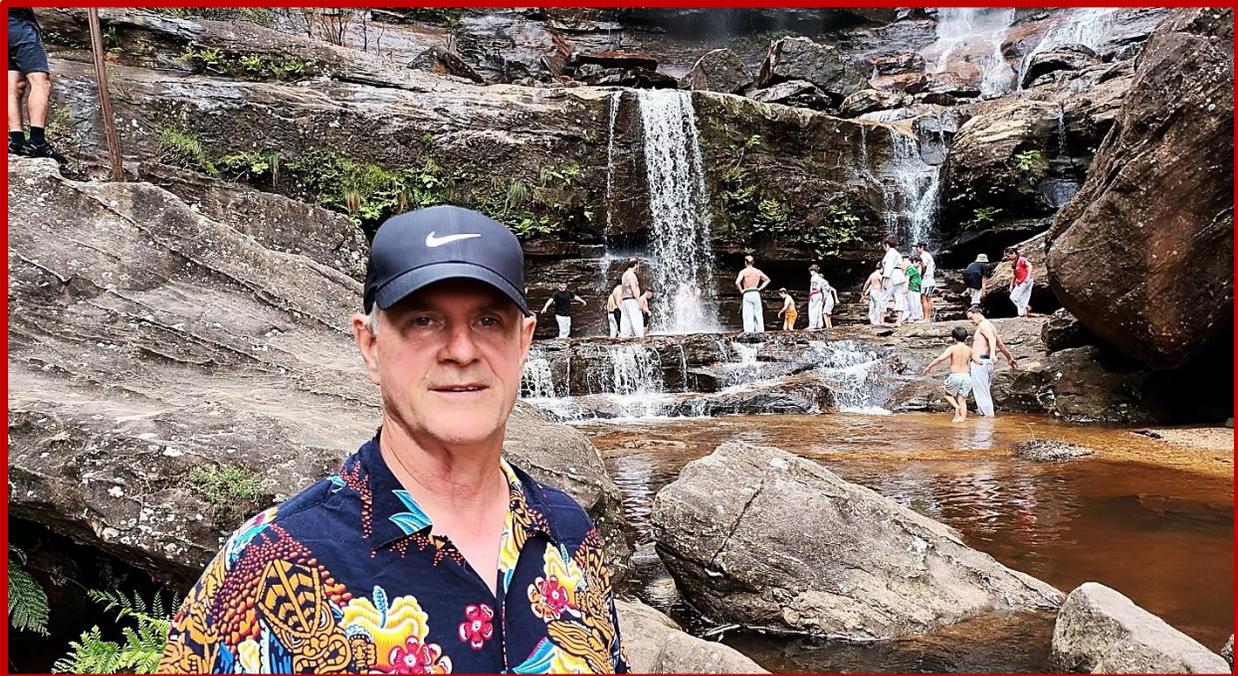
**Dates:** July 16-17, 2022

**Time:** Competition begins at 9:00 AM

**Venue:** Budokan Yokoyama, Japan

## Seiwakai – A World of Differences

Occasionally when I read a post or I see a photo, it takes me a second or two for me to makes sense of it, and this is because we are a large, world-wide organization. When it is summer in the southern hemisphere, it is winter in the northern hemisphere. So, when Glenn Stephenson Shihan posted a photo of New Year’s Day waterfall training in Australia it caused me a brief moment of confusion. We certainly wouldn’t be doing waterfall training on New Year’s Day in Ohio.



Ash Cave Waterfall in southern Ohio is frequently frozen on New Year’s Day.