



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

January 2025



Words from Sensei Mitch

Happy New Year! 2025 will be the 52nd year of training and friendship at WSA. We look forward to another great year.

Remember that karate training is similar to life, the effort put in equals the results received. Karate training is life distilled down into a personal one-hour slice. Some days are more difficult than others, some days are more active, some days require more explaining. There will always be problems to overcome and work around. In training there are injuries, strains, sprains, aches and pains. There is never a day where the body and mind in perfect shape and in perfect unison. If these problems overwhelm your training, then improvement will never arrive. If you push yourself beyond your comfort level and problem solve around your injury issue, then success will arrive.

Instructor Highlight: Sensei Mary Murphy

We would like to congratulate Sensei Mary Murphy on her professional retirement from Providence, where she worked as an executive business director and chief of staff. She loves to travel and plans to spend 2025 going to Atlanta, Chicago, Milwaukee, doing a small ship Alaskan cruise, seeing Istanbul, Athens, Santorini, and sailing with friends in the Aegean Sea on a catamaran.

For those who don't know, Sensei Mary is always one of the first to volunteer and fill in when a fellow instructor is unable to teach. We truly appreciate her willingness to step up! She will continue to teach with Sempai Kate on Fridays at 5:30 PM as she sees the world.

Upcoming Events

- January 20th
MLK Day (**Dojo closed**)
- February 10th
Black Belt Presentation
(After a combined 6:30 adult class)
- February 15th
Youth Exam (Saturday, 8:00 AM)
- February 17th
President's Day (**Dojo closed**)
- March 12th
Adult Exam (Wednesday, 6:30 PM)





News from the Board

- Thank you Sensei Mostafa for many years of service on our dojo executive board. Sensei Mitch will now serve in the role of WSA President.
- With the end of Sensei Mostafa's term, we now welcome Sensei Jack as a Trustee

I am grateful that I had the opportunity to be part of the Board from day one and contribute to the success of Dojo. I also had the privilege of working with many great and talented Sensei and Sempai along the way. I cherish the memory and times we had together and will continue my help and support the Dojo and all of you as best as I can going forward.

Oss, Sensei Mostafa



Congratulations to our new black belts!

This November was a month of challenge and the culmination of many years of hard work and dedication. Come celebrate this achievement at our Black Belt Presentation Party Monday, February 10th and congratulate the following:

Shodan-hos: Sempais Nikitha Anand, Dhruv Joshi, Nandini Khanderwal, Ria Khanderwal, Eric Nguyen, Evan Sumanaseni, Ibrahim Welton, Sabriya Welton, Zara Welton

Nidans: Sempais Becky Bottemiller, Andrew Chen, Brian Oliveira

Godans: Senseis Richard Garcia, Jack Showalter, Dean Lee, Mark Ganley, Robert Johnson, Michelle Tran, Kristina Tran

Rokudan: Sensei Adam Birnbaum

***Once students attain their black belts, they enter a one year probationary period and are asked to give back to the dojo through assistant teaching and continued training. After fulfilling this, they are then rewarded the full Shodan rank. This year, we would also like to congratulate Sempais Scott Boyer, Lisa Metz, Stephen Verstraete for their ongoing dedication.*



A little throwback to Sensei Jack and Sensei Richard's shodan exam

Not Just Bowing: The Opening and Closing Ceremonies



The opening and closing ceremonies in Shotokan Karate hold significant importance. The rituals are not just about etiquette but are deeply rooted in the philosophy of karate. They underscore the core principles of self-discipline, respect, humility, and mindfulness, which are essential in both martial practice and daily life.

Opening Ceremony (*Shomen-ni-rei*):

The opening ceremony includes bowing to the front of the dojo (called the *shomen*) and to the instructor

1. *Mokuso* (Meditation):

- The class begins with a brief moment of silence to clear the mind and focus on the upcoming training. Practitioners sit in the *seiza* (kneeling) position with their eyes closed. This moment of mindfulness helps karateka leave behind any distractions from the outside world and become fully present for training.

2. *Shomen-ni-rei* (Bow to the front):

- A bow is directed toward the *shomen*, which has the photo of our dojo founder, Sensei Dulce. This symbolizes respect for the art and the history of Karate.

3. *Sensei-ni-rei* (Bow to the instructor):

- The bow to the instructor shows respect for their guidance and knowledge. It reinforces the importance of humility and the teacher-student relationship.

Closing Ceremony (End of Class):

The closing ceremony mirrors the opening with the added significance of reflection on the training session.

1. *Mokuso* (Meditation):

- Practitioners again engage in a brief moment of meditation to calm the mind, reflect on what they learned, and return to a state of mental clarity and composure.

2. *Shomen-ni-rei*, *Sensei-ni-rei*:

- The same sequence of bows is performed again. The final bow is a way of expressing gratitude for the opportunity to train, respect for the teachings, and acknowledgment of the progress made.

Say What?

Pronounce these words like a pro!

Strikes (*uchi* or *tsuki*) are fundamental techniques used for offense and counter-attacks. They include punches, thrusts, and strikes with various parts of the body, emphasizing precision, speed, and power.

Oi-zuki (*oy-zoo-kee*): "lunge punch"

- Delivered stepping forward with the same-side leg as the punching arm.

Gyaku-zuki (*gya-koo zoo-kee*): "reverse punch"

- Punch is delivered with the hand opposite the forward leg

Kizami-zuki (*kee-zah-mee zoo-kee*): A jab or quick front-hand punch

Uraken-uchi (*oo-rah-ken oo-chee*): "back-fist strike"

- Fist snaps out and back, hitting with the back of the knuckles.

Nukite (*noo-kee-teh*): A spear-hand strike delivered with the fingertips



Autumn Recap

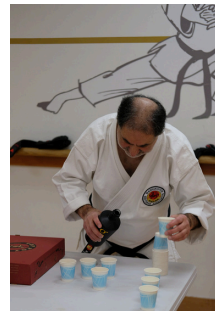
Goodbye Sensei Maria!

Thank you to everyone who came and celebrated Sensei Maria's many years of teaching. She is already very missed, but of course is having trouble keeping off the dojo floors. She has found a new home at Roxy Dojo in Romania. We wish her the absolute best of luck and cannot wait for her to be back on our dojo floors soon!



Kan Geiko

Our New Year's Kan Geiko is a black belt tradition and marks a fresh start and embodies the idea of purifying the mind and spirit to enter the new year with focus and determination. The 8AM training is preceded by a one mile run and concludes with a new year's toast.





QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

March 2025



Words from Sensei Adam

Greetings Fellow WSA members, students, and parents!

One of the consistent highlights of my week is my time training or teaching at the dojo. Any issues from earlier in the day all melt away as soon as I walk through that front door. It's almost as if, when I remove my shoes in the lobby, that I'm also removing any stresses I might have brought in with me from the outside world. I feel an undeniable, and now very familiar, spiritual lift as I walk down the hallway to the changing rooms.

I played various sports growing up, and had some pretty cool uniforms and safety equipment in that time. But getting suited up for a game or a race was never the same as putting on my karategi before training. Sure, there was always the "lucky" pre-game customs, or having to wear things a certain way so you didn't jinx a win, but there was never the same sense of occasion or journey that I get every time I put on my karategi. Although I'm not wearing the same belt or gi that I did when I started training back in 1987 (both are bigger in the middle, Lol.) it feels like I am. I think that because unlike playing traditional sports where you suit up for "the game", in karate, every time we suit up, we are in a sense picking up where we left off last time and moving a little further down our lifelong karate journey.

[Cont'd on page 3]

Upcoming Events

March 31st

Spring Barbecue (Monday, 7:30 PM)
(after a combined 6:30 adult class)

April 5th

Youth Exam (Saturday, 8:00 AM)

April 7th - 12th

Youth Spring Break **(No youth classes)**

April 12th

Dojo Spring Cleaning (Saturday, 8:00 AM)

May 6th

Memorial Day **(Dojo closed)**

May 18th

Youth Tournament

June 11th

Adult Exam (Wednesday, 6:30 PM)

June 14th

Youth Exam (Saturday, 8:00 AM)

June 16th

Pre Nidan/Sandan Exam
(Monday, 7:30 PM)

June 19th

Juneteenth **(Dojo closed)**



News from the Board

IMPORTANT: CERTIFICATION FOR INSTRUCTORS

- WSA is now requiring a certification process for all lead instructors and all assistant instructors who may act as “substitute” in the absence of the lead instructor
- Lead instructors are responsible for seeking out a qualified instructor (sandan or above) to observe their class in its entirety
- Please email findings to the Youth and/or Adult Committee Leads (Senseis Jason and Abhishek respectively)

Reminder: Instructors should remember to keep CPR certifications active (good for two years). Annual classes are hosted by Sempai Don for those whose licenses will be expiring in the coming months.

Instructor Highlight: Sensei Kristina

Please help us celebrate our youngest ranking Sensei, who will be entering the last year of her 20s this month. Currently she is enjoying her per diem life, but looks forward to continuing with a role in medical sales soon. In the meantime, she is taking time to travel, weight lift, and eat good food everywhere.

Sensei Kristina has recently taken over as head instructor of our Sunday morning black belt kata class, where each month, a new kata is broken down and reviewed. With a background in physical therapy, she focuses on body mechanics and proper technique in this seminar style class.



Her life motto: *“Don’t think, just do.”*

Event Spotlight: WSA Youth Tournament



We are so excited to announce our upcoming WSA Youth Tournament on **Sunday, May 18th**. All students under 18 are encouraged to participate in our kata and kumite events.

Led by Sensei Adam, this is an event that we always look forward to putting together. Last year all of our black belts participated in helping to create a successful and fun day for everyone involved. Our team is hard at work to be sure that this year will be bigger and better than the last.

Please keep an eye out for more details to be announced soon!

Why do I have to clean the dojo?

Cleaning the dojo is a deeply rooted tradition in martial arts. It is much more than just physical cleanliness. What does it mean to take part in the cleaning?

Respect for the Dojo

The dojo is considered a sacred space where karateka develop skills, character, and discipline. Cleaning the space shows gratitude and respect for the place that facilitates this growth.

Cultivating Humility

No one is above maintaining their environment. Even instructors and senseis are responsible for cleaning our space.

Fostering Discipline

Cleaning is a form of discipline, requiring focus, effort, and attention to detail. It reinforces the importance of taking care of one's surroundings, a value that extends beyond the dojo into daily life.

Building Community

Cleaning is often done as a group, reinforcing the sense of community at WSA. It creates a shared experience, strengthening bonds and mutual respect within the dojo.

Preserving Tradition

Cleaning the dojo is a long-standing martial arts tradition that connects us to the history and values of karate.

Cleaning the dojo is more than a chore—it's a practice that embodies the core values of karate: respect, humility, discipline, and unity. It is a reminder that martial arts training is not just about physical skills but also about cultivating a responsible and respectful mindset.

Convinced yet? Be sure to join us for our annual Spring Cleaning on Saturday, April 12th at 8:00 AM.

Just a little tip that we do remember the students and families who show up to help make our dojo shine.



From Sensei Adam (cont'd)

Coming onto the floor, there is always a sense of anticipation knowing that you are going to be physically and mentally working hard for the next hour, and the challenges that it will bring. But there is also a sense of fortitude, because you are out there with your fellow karateka (karate students), all training hard together. It is awesome that at WSA, we can have such a wide variety of practitioners, of all ages, ethnicities, body shapes, and abilities, all out on the floor at the same time getting it done. It's a testament to WSA that we are able to maintain such diversity in our members and students in the training of karate, and that our dojo radiates such an inclusive and welcoming environment.

At the end of class, we share in stating the dojo kun ("training hall rules"), the first of which is "Seek Perfection of Character". Traditional karate training presumes that all practitioners are starting at a different point, and that their journey will take them each through their own path. A successful karateka is one that understands that it is the journey that is the tool to fulfillment, and that perfection of character is a lifelong pursuit.

I look forward to continuing my lifelong pursuit with all of you out on the floor.

Oss!

Sensei Adam



Winter Recap

Congratulations Black Belts

Thank you to the Shodan-Ho group for hosting a wonderful presentation party with more food than we could all eat!



A Look Back...

Five years ago, we entered our first phase of “unprecedented times” with outbreak of Covid-19. Who remembers these days? Zoom classes, social distancing, and extra extra extra cleaning. Hoping to leave this era completely behind!

