



ISKF 2014 U.S. Nationals Mid-America Visits Alaska

By Kim Weber

A small but spirited group of five from Mid-America traveled to Anchorage for the 36th ISKF US Nationals, arriving late into the night Thursday evening before the tournament. The late arrival was exhausting, but it did allow us to have a good night's sleep to help adjust to the 4 hour time difference.

Friday was full of activities associated with a National Tournament. It rained for about 2 days, which made that fact that we would be inside those days more acceptable. There were meetings for Sensei Vaughan, our regional representative; team trainings for the team members (Jeff, Carol, myself); and a very important exam for Sensei Oberschlake. We all had different obligations, but managed to stay in touch. After the busy day, our group of Mid-Americans reconnected and went to an enjoyable dinner at a Japanese Restaurant, on a suggestion from Sensei Cline. She highly recommended the deep fried Oreos. As I enjoyed the evening, I remember thinking that Sensei Oberschlake seemed relaxed, and hoped that that meant he felt good about his exam.

The tournament began early Saturday. It started with the youth eliminations and finals and ran smoothly throughout the morning. I was glad to see Mid-America judges represented in all 4 rings. After lunch, it was time for the senior competition. For the first time, seniors were divided into 3 age groups, with the top two from each division making it to the finals Sunday. With a small group of senior women competitors in her division, Carol only had to perform her *tokui* kata. And with only two women sparring, they bypass the eliminations and would face each other for the finals Sunday. In the men's kata division, Jeff won one or two flag rounds to make it to the top four. Those four performed their *tokui* kata. Jeff scored in the top two of that group to make it to the finals. In the team kata event, we thought our toughest competition would be from the Northwest, as they were the silver

medalists at Nationals last year in Cincinnati. They were well aware that we were there and felt the same about us. As we lined up to compete we found out that one of the top competitors for the Northwest Senior Team, Joji Mercado, was slightly injured and had decided to step out and have their alternate take his place. Their team performed their kata well, and we wondered if it would be good enough to get them a spot in the finals. We were the last team to perform; we received our score and stepped back. Then we lined up and they announced that it would be us and the Alaska Team in the finals on Sunday. *Continued on Page 2*



Sensei Vaughan with Senpai Carol Glenn, Sensei Jeff Weber, Sensei Kim Weber, and Sensei James Oberschlake

Photo courtesy of Kim Weber

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Saturday evening, we went back to the Japanese Restaurant for dinner and had some Alaskan friends join us. On our way there we were lucky to see a complete rainbow. It was nice to see that the rain was on its way out.

Sunday would be filled with many proud moments for Mid-America. The doors officially opened for the finals late morning Sunday, which gave our team some time to sneak in earlier to check out the floor. We found that the floor was made of puzzle mats and had a nice cushion to it. Our only concern was that we may not be able to shift as well as we would like for *Jitte*, our team kata. We were able to practice the kata a few times, and Jeff and Carol were able to get in some individual kata practice of their own.

The opening ceremonies included the usual parade of regions, introductions, and oath of competitors. We were also lucky to have Master Okazaki speak to us prior to the beginning of the finals. After his speech, the competitors went to the staging area to wait for the competition to begin. The first division was the collegiate competitors. We did not have any competitors in this group, however we had our own Sensei Vaughan as the referee for the kata event! Sensei Vaughan was called out to referee numerous other events including the men's black belt *kumite*. In addition, Sensei Oberschlake was asked to judge throughout the finals as well. It was great to see members of our region refereeing and judging that level of competition.

There were 2 demonstrations during the finals. Sensei Hiroyoshi Okazaki and Li Ryu performed a technically wonderful demonstration prior to the start of the tournament. Alaska had a two-part demonstration. The first part was done by women showing defense against men using the one-step sparring model. A lower belt showed the basic form of defense (block, counter), then at the same time, Heather Foltz, showed a more advanced defense against an attack. I liked having women being highlighted in a demonstration. Then Joe Foltz, from Alaska, performed a demonstration showing defense against multiple attackers. It was a very vigorous and an exciting demonstration.

Carol was the first Mid-American to compete in the finals. For the kata event, she performed *Chinte* and received a gold medal in her division! Carol also faced the same opponent from Alaska for *kumite*. Carol quickly scored a half point for a *jodan zuki*, then backed off some to wait for the right time to score her 2nd half point. She was successful on her second attack and won the match to achieve a gold medal for *kumite* also! Jeff's event followed and chose to perform *Sochin* and did a nice kata. His performance earned him a silver medal, just .03 points behind the reigning champion, Joji Mercado from the Northwest Region. Even though he beat Jeff, I was glad to see that he was feeling well enough to compete. The Senior Team event was next and we were called up first. We were able to apply most of the points we had been working on during our practice time in Alaska and successfully defended our title, winning the event for the 5th year in a row! Even though Mid-America was a small group this year, it felt much bigger with our friends from the Mountain States cheering us on as if we were one of their own.

The finals ended earlier than in the past, and gave everyone a little unexpected time before the banquet. We joined the Mountain States with a walk thru town, and stopped at a restaurant on the way.

The Banquet Sunday included good music and good food. As you are aware, announcements for exams and Meritorious Service Awards are given at the banquet. With about 50 % of the dan examinees being a re-exam, I became more nervous for Sensei Oberschlake as the higher ranks were announced. I had no need to worry however, because it was announced that Sensei Oberschlake achieved *Shichidan* (7th degree black belt)! I was so happy for him, and glad to call him "my Sensei."

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Sensei Jeff Weber, Rachel Ryu, Senpai Carol Glenn, Li Ryu, and Sensei Kim Weber

Photo courtesy of Kim Weber

was a wonderful host. Everything went very smoothly.

On Monday, Carol, Jeff, and I joined former Mid-Americans Rachel & Li Ryu for a couple of days of R & R. We drove down to Seward, hiked to Exit Glacier, and spent some time at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation where we saw baby moose, and some very comical brown bears, among other animals. We enjoyed some great Alaskan food, including king crab legs, seafood chowder, and salmon. This was a very peaceful trip due to the fact that we had no cell service for much of the time we were traveling. There's something about "no cell service" that allows you to enjoy the beauty around you.

Marty Schrager was our Meritorious Service Award recipient, and Sensei Vaughan received the award on his behalf. Here is what was written about him:

Marty Schrager, Yondan, began training with the Ohio University Shotokan Karate Club in 1994 and has been part of the Mid-America team for many years. His contributions to the region include playing major roles in the 2004 and 2013 ISKF National tournaments, as well as being the editor of the Mid-America newsletter. Marty is the chief instructor of the Ohio Valley Karate Club.

As you may remember, Mid-America started the "Best Fighting Spirit Award" in honor of Sensei Greer Golden, to be given to one competitor that demonstrates great spirit in competition, regardless of winning or losing. The recipient is chosen by the hosting region and announced at the banquet. The Alaska Region chose Shaka Smith, from the East Coast, as the recipient of this award.

The after dinner entertainment was a comical display of musical chairs, and a karate quiz where the consequence for missing a question was a pie in the face. The rest of the evening held up to the tradition of staying up too late and catching up with our karate friends from across the country. Alaska



Photo courtesy of ISKF Alaska Region

2014 Mid-America Karate Golf Outing

Another Successful Fund Raiser

By James Oberschlake

The 2014 Mid-America Golf Outing Fund Raiser was a success. The weather was pleasant with only a hint of rain before the outing started. 22 teams played this year. The teams were made up of local golfers and karate people from 9 different Mid-America Clubs. Everyone ate a lot of food and seemed to have a really good time. A special thanks goes out to Mt. Orab LaRosa's for providing a free lunch of pizza and cookies.

The golf outing is an important fund raiser. Money is used to bolster the scholarship and grant funds of Mid-America clubs. Money is also used to provide financial assistance to participants of the ISKF National Tournament, the Pan Am Games, and the World Shoto Cup. All these things help elevate the level of karate-do within our region.

Besides the 22 golf teams, we were able to secure 51 hole sponsors and about \$900.00 in cash donations. A number of items were donated for our raffle. We also made money from the putting contest and Microsoft matching funds secured by Andrew Wolff.



Image courtesy of Christian Moore

In all we showed a net profit of around \$8,000.00.

I want to thank the many volunteers from Swartz Creek, Shotokan of Anderson, and Brown County Shotokan who worked the day of the outing. A special thanks goes out to Laura Graham and Kathy Williams for organizing the putting contest. To Roma Ritchie, our food coordinator, and Greg Esz, our chief cook. To Lynn Gordon, our photographer. To Christian Moore for creating our golf outing program. To Jeff

Weber for being in charge of our hole sponsor signs. To Kim Weber for organizing our raffle. And to Jim Nelson for keeping all the finances organized.

Summer Camp 2014

Mid-America Welcomes Back Sensei Gary Swain

By Carol Glenn

This was the 33rd year for the annual Mid-America Summer Camp, held at Camp Copenonec in Fenton, Michigan. There were 37 full time campers and many that came for only one or two trainings; a total of 51 *karate-ka* were in attendance.

Sensei Gary Swain, 7th Dan, was the guest instructor this year. He is the Chief Instructor of the Shotokan Karate at Lone Tree club in Colorado. He is a graduate of the ISKF Instructor Training Program, member of the ISKF Technical Committee,

Chairman of the Mountain States Technical Committee and Regional Director for the ISKF Mountain States Region.

I was unable to attend Friday's training, however from what I gathered from talking to those in attendance, and from subsequent trainings, it was the foundation for the rest of the weekend trainings. It was about shifting your weight to your support leg, loading it for rotation on the support leg for changing directions.

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Summer Camp 2014

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By Carol Glenn

Friday night campers were treated to an “Interview with the Sensei”, as Sensei Swain chatted with us about his karate life experiences (see the summary of this interview on page 6).

Saturday’s trainings build on this. Sink into the support leg, rotate the hips back (& trunk together), then drive forward with your back/support leg. One of the trainings we did to emphasize hip rotation was with kicking. In front stance, front kick with the rear leg, turn 90degrees to the side and step down and as you step down, down block and reverse punch.

Then, working on our support leg, using it to pull our moving leg and drive forward, we did another combination. Start in *kibadachi* stance, double punch. Pull your moving leg in with your support leg, and use your support leg to drive your moving leg forward into front stance lunge punch. Then use your support leg to pull your moving leg back, driving it into back stance knife hand block. Then use your support leg to pull your moving leg forward and drive it into *kibadachi* stance again and double punch.

Sensei Swain had us do a couple of speed training drills. One of them was simply in front stance bringing your rear leg knee-to-chest as fast as you could five times in a row, 10 sets on each side.

Sensei Swain led the Instructor training class at camp this year. The katas for instruction were *Bassai Sho* and *Kanku Sho*. We broke into two groups for discussion of application for both katas and I found it to be very helpful listening to many ideas for different application techniques for each kata. We also did a little chair self-defense.

Saturday evening we had our “Ice Cream Social”, and we had the pleasure of surprising Sensei Martin Vaughan and honoring him with a birthday celebration.

Sunday morning Sensei Swain tied everything together and summarized the weekend, continuing to emphasize the importance of our support leg, and using our hips. One of the drills started in front stance, jab, and reverse punch in place. Use the front leg/support leg to pull the rear leg forward and rotate 90degrees, set down at the same time jab, reverse punch. Continue in all four directions. We did the same with front leg front kick, rear leg front kick, in place, turning 90 degrees as you set your rear leg down from the front kick.



Sensei Gary Swain

Image courtesy of Lone Tree Karate Club

More than once, Sensei Swain repeated his “Slow is smooth, smooth is fast” motto, as a reminder to us that we shouldn’t rush our techniques and make them sloppy. He also reminded us to *kiai*, especially the first and last techniques.

The weather was beautiful at camp all weekend. The training was excellent all weekend. The friendships and memories created last a life time.

Please mark your calendars for next year’s camp: August 14-16, 2015.

In Depth - An Interview with Sensei Gary Swain

By Chibo Bare

Sensei Swain was born in Nebraska and was an only child. His family moved to South Dakota when he was 8-years-old. Later, he graduated from the University of Iowa where he played football and majored in Economics. At the age of 29, it was recommended he start Karate at the local YMCA. He did not know anything about it, so he purchased books on the subject and studied. He started karate on a Tuesday and by Saturday, he had already started free sparring.

When he was a brown belt (3rd *Kyu*), his instructor quit teaching Karate. It was only a year since he started karate and Sensei Swain asked Sensei Yaguchi, "What should I do?" Sensei Yaguchi said "You will teach."

It appeared as if Sensei Swain's karate journey was a smooth sail, but the story doesn't end here. He became a black belt in 18 months (This is the shortest to be a black belt as far as this author knows). However, on two occasions, he had to test multiple times - 6 month re-exams for *Nidan* twice, *Sandan* exam three times, *Yondan* twice, and *Rokudan* twice. No matter who we are, we all have room to improve and must overcome own problems.

Sensei Swain and his family moved to Denver 27 years ago. His wife said later in their life the reason they moved was Sensei Yaguchi - Karate. Sensei Swain agrees with her insight.

Kata training

One day Sensei Yaguchi asked Sensei Swain, "which kata you do not like?" He said, "*Jitte*". Sensei Yaguchi said, "You will study *Jitte* from now on." So he did the same kata 50 times a day for 3 months. Sensei Swain's words, "Kata starts teaching you."

In Sensei Kanazawa's book, he suggested to do the same kata three times. The first time, do kata thinking about the applications. The second time, the hand and the leg stop at the same time with *kime*. The third time, with 50% speed. Sensei Swain did 26

katas three times each. So 26 times 3 equal 78 katas a day. It took about 90 minutes at the beginning and later only 25-30 minutes.

Yaguchi: Master of Karate and Human Nature

Sensei Swain wrote about Sensei Yaguchi as a master of two things. One is of course karate; another is "Human nature." Sensei Swain said, "Sensei Yaguchi reads people better than anyone else." One time Sensei Golden told Sensei Swain, "Do karate long enough, you will form the personality." As an example, Sensei Swain talked about his Tai Chi instructor who came to Sensei Yaguchi's dojo. Sensei Yaguchi did the training as usual and that Tai Chi instructor watched his class. As soon as the training was over, Sensei Yaguchi told Sensei Swain, "That person is very dangerous. Be careful." Sensei Yaguchi did not exchange words with the Tai Chi instructor at all. Sensei Swain approached the Tai Chi instructor and asked him what he thought about the training. He told Sensei Swain that this kind of training does not do any good for anybody. Sensei Swain listened quietly, but he finally said to him, "You are #@%@!. Get Out of here." Later I asked Sensei Swain, "So Sensei, can you tell what kind of individual one is when he/she steps in the dojo for the first time?" Sensei smiles and says, "Kind of" with confidence.

Sri Lanka

Later in life, Sensei Swain went to Sri Lanka to teach a Karate seminar. Sensei was picked up at the Hotel and his car was put in a convoy with gunmen in front and back. They took Sensei Swain to "the dojo" which was located in the safest place, a prison, with no air-conditioning. The temperature was over 100 degrees.

One of the students has practiced Karate for 17 years, but he did not have enough money to take the exam. Since this trip, after witnessing how others survive, Sensei Swain decided not to complain about living conditions in the US.

In Depth - An Interview with Sensei Gary Swain

By Chibo Bare

At last, I asked Sensei Swain to give us any suggestions for all of us. Sensei Swain talked about 84-year-old person at his dojo still teaching and training regularly. Sensei Swain said, "No matter how old you are, set a Goal and Challenge yourself".

Thank you very much Sensei Swain for sharing your karate life story with us.

Mid-America wishes a very happy 60th Birthday to Sensei Vaughan!



Sensei Vaughan receiving a surprise 60th birthday cake at Summer Camp, with Sensei Swain looking on in the background.

Photo courtesy of Roma Ritchie

Mid-America Karate Represents the U.S. At the 2014 Pan American Karate Championships

By Jeff Weber

On August 13, Kim & Jeff Weber traveled with 28 other competitors from the ISKF U.S. Karate Team to Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico, for the ISKF Pan American Karate Tournament. Approximately 10 countries competed during the eliminations on August 16th, with the finals being held on the 17th.



*Sensei Jeff Weber with his teammates at the 2014 ISKF Pan Am Games
Photo courtesy of Jeff Weber*

Kim competed on the U.S. Senior Women's Kata Team along with Marcia Ransom (formerly from the Mid-America karate region) and Amy Okazaki.

Jeff competed on the U.S. Senior Men's Kata Team with Dwain Vaughns and Tony Cuffie.

Both represented Team USA very well. Kim and her team took first place in their division. While Jeff and his teammates took second place in theirs.



*Sensei Kim Weber with her teammates at the 2014 ISKF Pan Am Games
Photo courtesy of Jeff Weber*

The U.S. Youth and Adult competitors also performed very well and brought home numerous medals.

Holding B level judges certifications, Kim and Jeff had the opportunity to corner judge during the elimination rounds of the tournament. Additionally, Kim was also asked to assist with judging during the finals on Sunday.

When the events were all over, the banquet gave everyone an opportunity to keep up with international relations, and establish some really good friendships, before everyone had to catch their flights home.

Sensei Golden



Chief Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Greer Golden graduated from the Instructor Trainee Program in 1969 and was sent to Ohio University in Athens to begin sharing his knowledge with Mid-America karate students.

Sensei Vaughan



Assistant Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Martin Vaughan has been training under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki for over 40 years and has been our region's Assistant Instructor since 1999. He is also the Chief Instructor of Indiana ISKF.

President, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei James Oberschlake has been training under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki since 1974. He is also the Chief Instructor of Brown County Shotokan Karate Club.

Executive Director, Mid-America Region

Sensei James Nelson is the Chief Instructor of the Swartz Creek Karate Club and has served as the Executive Director of the Mid-America Region since 2003.

Calendar

November 15-16, 2014 (Tentative)

Fall Camp - Ohio State University - Columbus, OH

December 13, 2014

Regional Training & Dan Exam - Willis Middle School, Delaware, OH

11:00 AM -3:00 PM

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Sensei Weber, *godan*, along with Sensei Jeff Weber are the co-instructors of Shotokan Karate of Anderson in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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