

Students flip over an art that can't be pinned down

By CRAIG PIECHURA

Amused by John Belushi's "Samurai Tailor" routine? Intrigued by films and stories of real samurai warriors wielding swords and shouting loudly in Japanese?

Well, there's no need to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Fuji to learn the secrets of the masters of the martial art. A class in Aikido is held Tuesday and Thursday evenings at Southfield High. The instructor is a demure-looking woman named Anita Schnee, 30, of Detroit, who wears a black belt after only four years in the discipline.

Ms. Schnee is quick to point out that persons looking for a fight or trying to train themselves to be deadly killers had better look to karate or judo. The idea of Aikido is harmony between two combatants.

"There is no competition in Aikido," Ms. Schnee says. "We practice harmony instead. We do not practice fighting."

It is a usable martial art but we don't concentrate so much on how to use it in a street situation."

THAT DOESN'T MEAN Aikido classes are one big encounter session. Its origin is a very fierce martial art. And in class things get very physical. Flips, flops and falls abound.

It's just that students don't care whether they're doing the flipping or being flipped. The skill is being smooth at it.

"In our society we train our mind and body separately," Ms. Schnee explains. "A couple of good reasons to study Aikido is, number one, it's very good exercise, and, number two, it's very good for coordination. We like to think about the coordination of mind and body together."

One of Ms. Schnee's students, Rick Matz, says when he first saw an Aikido demonstration, he was sure it was fake. "I was in karate then and I thought

this stuff was foolish," Matz says. "It looks fake when you see a demonstration. But when you do it yourself, you find out how much is involved."

Now, 4½ years later, Matz says he finds he's able to concentrate better and gets fewer colds through increased mind-body coordination.

The instructor, Ms. Schnee, admits that like many she was attracted to Aikido for self-defense reasons.

"I soon learned that self-defense was a very limited way to look at the art. I now believe this is the best self-defense mechanism you could have, but I can't think of it in terms of self-defense. It's hard to pin Aikido down, it doesn't want to stay in one place. But I will say, after a few years in Aikido, a person can be invincible. But I wouldn't highlight that."

TEN MEN and one woman attend the class. Although drawn by students such as 250-pound Joe Balazich, Ms. Schnee is acknowledged as the best in the class. She says that shouldn't surprise anyone, because women have an advantage.

"Aikido training gets away from the usual strengths: lifting barbells, punching through walls, because the less physical strength you use, the smoother the movement is."

"That translates to calm, smooth movement with a flexible body," she adds. "We use techniques against joints which helps you cooperate with your partner because you have no choice. As a result of a technique applied to the wrist, elbow or shoulder, it takes smooth movement to follow."

Insurance man Spike Neesley, 36, of Southfield, says he joined the class to limber up.

"I do a lot of sailing with a catamaran and that's a very active sport," Neesley says. "The coordination I learn here helps. I can only go so far with physical strength, weighing 135 pounds. But I can apply this training in other areas besides fighting."

DISAPPOINTED? You thought this story would explain the secrets of the samurai? Sorry, you can't get that in a newspaper story.

However, for reading this far we'll let you in on a few authentic samurai shouts.

First, there's "Rei," which means bow.

"Hajime" means begin. "Arigato" means thank you. And if you want to get fancy, "Arigato gozaimashita" means thank you very much. Don't take those words lightly. After all, it's a two-edged sword of samurai.



Joe Balazich, his face intent, prepares to go into action. For practitioners of the art, Aikido is more a ballet of mind and body than a method of protection.

However, according to Ms. Schnee, a seasoned student is nearly invincible in hand-to-hand conflicts.



A flurry of action preceeds a flip for the brothers Matz. Flips and flops abound in this class. Floor mats are a necessity.

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

SWEETEST DAY CAME a wee bit late for Farmington Hills City Clerk Floyd Cairns. But Cairns isn't at all displeased. Coming into work recently he found an arrangement of plastic flowers out on the back stoop of city hall. Attached to the bouquet was the note: "Thanks for not getting us into the same financial mess as Wayne County." It was signed John Q. Public. (Seems like some people are singing Wayne, Wayne go away.)

THE JAYCEES AND THE Farmington Hills Park and Rec Department are talking turkey to the area's seniors. The two organizations are sponsoring a Thanksgiving luncheon with turkey, mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce for area seniors on Nov. 21 at the Gathering Place in Mercy Center, Eleven Mile near Middlebelt. Seniors, call 474-3333 for reservations. The cost? That's the best part of all. The turkey and the transportation are provided by the two groups. The Senior Adult Transportation Service will whisk you to your dinner in style.

OUR OWN CALLIGRAPHER Suzanne Ebel won recognition for her entry in the Eberhard-Faber Design Art Marker competition. She received honorable mention for her work entitled, "My Beautiful Balloon." She was selected as one of 10 Americans to represent this country at the University of London where she studied advanced techniques in calligraphic illumination last year. Her current winning piece will be shown around the country.

Mrs. Ebel is the president of the Michigan Association of Calligraphers.

SPEAKING OF ARTISTS, the Farmington Artists Club is exhibiting and selling from Nov. 16-18 in Mercy Center, gate 4, Eleven Mile east of Middlebelt. Show hours are from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and from noon - 5 p.m. on Sunday. If you go, don't expect to see the Audrey Di Marco work pictured in the Observer Nov. 5. That work is still unfinished. (Shubert had an unfinished symphony)

ST. GERALD'S ROMAN Catholic Church in Farmington is having a Mass of Rededication at 5 p.m., Dec. 1. Bishop Thomas J. Gumberton will celebrate the Mass. There will be a potluck dinner in the church hall at 6:30 p.m. The parish will provide the meat dish. Visitors are asked to bring a dish to pass. All former parishioners are invited back to St. Gerald's. To reserve a place at the potluck call the parish by Nov. 25. Call the rectory at 477-7470 or Erma at 476-0129 after 3:30 p.m. or evenings.

DAN HARRISON, a Farmington Hills bicyclist who is determined to travel around the world has been popping up all around the continent. As you remember Harrison, 30, left last May on his once-in-a-lifetime trek.

At last report Harrison was in the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico mending a torn ligament in his leg. He was traveling with a German tourist in a trailer. Biking through Mexico was tough for Harrison, according to his brother Michael. Besides having to dodge the buses, a plucky cyclist has to make sure he doesn't run off the road into a cactus. Harrison is toying with the idea of writing a book about his adventures on the road. He'll have a lot of time to make up his mind before he returns. His journey should last for about three years.

JOURNEYING OF ANOTHER KIND is the subject of "Tell It Like It Is" on Nov. 26 at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College. Bill Banks will begin his talk at 7:30 p.m. in room 294 of J building where he'll reveal AAA's secrets of compiling the radio broadcast of road conditions during the winter as well as sundry other traveler's tidbits. (Angles still wonders what it's like to have a voice associated with hazardous road conditions.)

ALBERT Zolton of Farmington Hills and David Cylkowski of Southfield will participate in a concert reading of "A Child's Christmas in Wales," by Dylan Thomas at 9:30 a.m., Dec. 2 in the Church of Our Saviour in Farmington Hills.

TICKETS ARE on sale for the special train and bus service to the J.L. Hudson Thanksgiving Day parade on Nov. 22.

Round trip bus fare will cost \$2. Children under six who don't occupy a seat may ride free. Bus and train tickets may be purchased at the SEMTA General Offices, First National Building, 660 Woodward on the 12th floor. Train tickets can also be purchased at Oakland Mall's Hudson's store. Bus and train tickets can be purchased by mail or phone order. Checks or money orders should be sent with a self-addressed stamped envelope to SEMTA Traindeer/SEMTACLAUS (ain't that cute) 660 Woodward, Detroit 48226. Phone orders can be made by calling 255-6700. Master Charge or Visa orders over \$10 can be made by phone. Mail and phone orders must be done by Nov. 15. (So hop to it.) Bus service is available at 8:30 a.m. Thanksgiving from Northland Center and at 8 a.m. from Twelve Oaks. Buses will depart Detroit 15 minutes after Santa appears.

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Give the fragrance of Grey Flannel by Geoffrey Beene, now in a beautifully boxed sampler, just \$8.50 with any Grey Flannel purchase. We suggest the 4 oz. cologne in its own grey flannel drawstring bag, a favorite, \$18. The bonus sampler includes: 1 oz. cologne, 1 oz. after shave balm, 3 oz. soap, 3 oz. shaving foam, 160 bonus units* in Men's Toiletries, all stores.

*Total units available at Metropolitan Detroit Hudson's stores while quantities last.

