

September, 2013

## SUMMER - A SEASON OF OPPORTUNITIES & GROWTH

I can't believe it's September already and reflection of the fading summer brings pleasant memories living indelibly in my thoughts.

As school came to a close for summer break, students were eager to fill their time with sleeping longer, swimming, camping, traveling, BBQs and carefree living. For some, it was to bid farewell to high school and open a new chapter in their lives to find purpose in college, work or the military. Special thanks to Matt Collins, Richard Smith, Scott Williamson and Nina Mercer for their service to our country.

Our TKFI International Taikai in Lleida, Spain was a fun experience. Many wanted to attend but because of finances it was only possible for a few fortunate ones to travel to Catalonia. Nevertheless those able to make the journey had a great time. Much appreciation goes to Joan Gombau Shihan and his staff for their dedication, preparation and fulfillment of the clinics, competition and gasshuku. Touring Barcelona, Lleida and Andorra satisfied our appetites for exploring new places. And if you haven't made it to the Caldea Spa, you must include it in your bucket list.

Despite the numerous fires in the Southern Oregon filling the air with uninvited smoke, the welcome smiles of Alessandra Arabi sensei brought clearer skies to all of us. She and her brother Francesco heads one of our dojos in Italy and it was an honor to have her presence with us for a month. Many thanks to the Burstein family, the Hamilton family, Shae Pastrell, Julie and Ariana Lee, Sean Marquez, Chuck Closterman, Stetson Sundin, Quintyn Fazio for being such great hosts.

The Saito Karate-do Classic was a complete success thanks to Tournament Director Tony Mendonca Shihan, Dwight Grover Shihan who served as our Chief Referee, Ceci Cheung Shihan for her administrative support, and all of our sponsors, supporters and volunteers. Electronic scoreboards were a great improvement from the manual flip boards used at our past events. A stimulating Kumite clinic by Carlos Perez sensei from El Salvador was well attended and greatly appreciated. Congratulations to all of our participants!

Members who took advantage of having more time to practice, realized tremendous growth in Karate-do as well as in their personal well-being. It always brings satisfaction to me when our members volunteer for non-profit organizations needing their services. Their effort in community involvement gives them a better sense of purpose and the smiles and appreciation received brings immeasurable rewards.

As the Fall season approaches, let us bear in mind (especially those teaching), that the responsibility in providing the tools for your student's growth and excellence rest on your shoulders. Seize each opportunity and adequately prepare yourself in order to continue your purpose with passion and focus. Do not let excuses and unnecessary habits pull you away from being an effective teacher. TKFI demands our teachers to lift themselves above mediocrity or be the status quo. You must demand of the highest level of growth equally for yourself and those you serve. This requires continuous study, practice, development and interaction with those entrusted to pave the "Way".

To assure fulfillment of our task, be it for learning, teaching or both, let us be reminded that the only solid foundation for truth is to have a relationship with God. He foretells that those who seek His wisdom, guidance and love will always be held in His presence. It is not for philosophical argument that I say this, but rather a reality that will always keep you steadfast and not stray from righteousness.

Allow each opportunity to grow physically, mentally and spiritually into this Fall season.