

JANUARY 2021

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INTRODUCTION

Happy New Year, everybody!

I watched a fun mockumentary on Netflix called 'Death to 2020', in which it is said the year was so bad it was named twice (20-20, get it?). I recommend it to sum up the worst year ever (we all will remember but want to forget) with an actual smile on your face.

The current reality is that everyone is working online, meeting online, and seeing family online. Tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams, and other platforms have not only enabled us to stay in close touch with family and friends, but also to hold virtual karate classes and Yudansha classes.

For the black belt ranks, the online Yudansha class held in November 2020 was a great success, and another is planned this month on January 26th. Watch for emailed information that will be (or has already been) shared.



I am also teaching courses online, and helping fellow instructors at the University of Toronto teach courses online; and the one key thing I remind students is that if you have multiple family members online using various devices, this will affect your connectivity. This is something to keep in mind if you are having connection difficulties during your virtual karate online sessions. Not to dwell on technicalities, but essentially, if you are having technical problems during virtual karate classes, it will most likely be the limited bandwidth availability from your service provider (all your neighbours are on the same system), and/or too many people are online at the same time at home.

We have some interesting shared comments from the November Yudansha experience; and a bit of news from Club Heads. Enjoy your read! > **EDITOR ROBB DODS**

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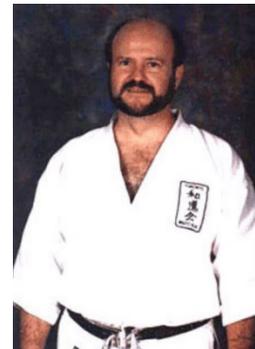
NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM SENSEI DAVE MANARA 9th Dan

Happy New Year, everyone!

I would like to thank all those who worked so hard to keep the TWKK community together by constant communication, virtual classes and general encouragement to assist everyone through 2020.

Also, thanks to all who followed public health guidelines to help get through to and improve 2021!

I wish all of you an improved and Happy New Year, 2021.

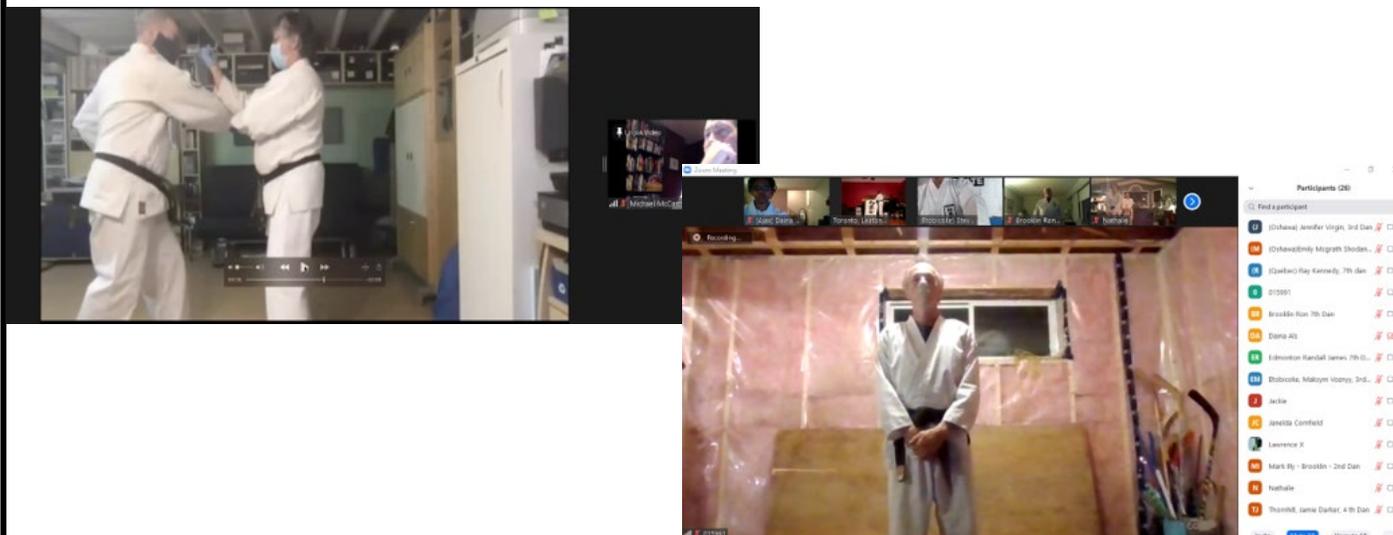


Yudansha Class a Virtual Success !

On Tuesday November 10, 2020, 28 Yudansha karate-kas participated in an on-line Yudansha class, hosted by sensei **José-Carlos Garcia** 8th Dan and **Steve Borda** 8th Dan. A feedback survey was sent out and we have shared the comments here.

The next virtual Yudansha class is scheduled for Tuesday January 26th, 2021 from 7:00-9:00 PM EST. If you are a black belt rank and wish to participate, a link to the event will be sent out to the Yudansha membership mailing list.

The following pictures show karate being practiced in this on-line computer age. There were participants from many dojos in the numerous locations: Ajax-Pickering, Brooklin, Caledon East, Edmonton, Oshawa, Thornhill, Toronto, and from Quebec.

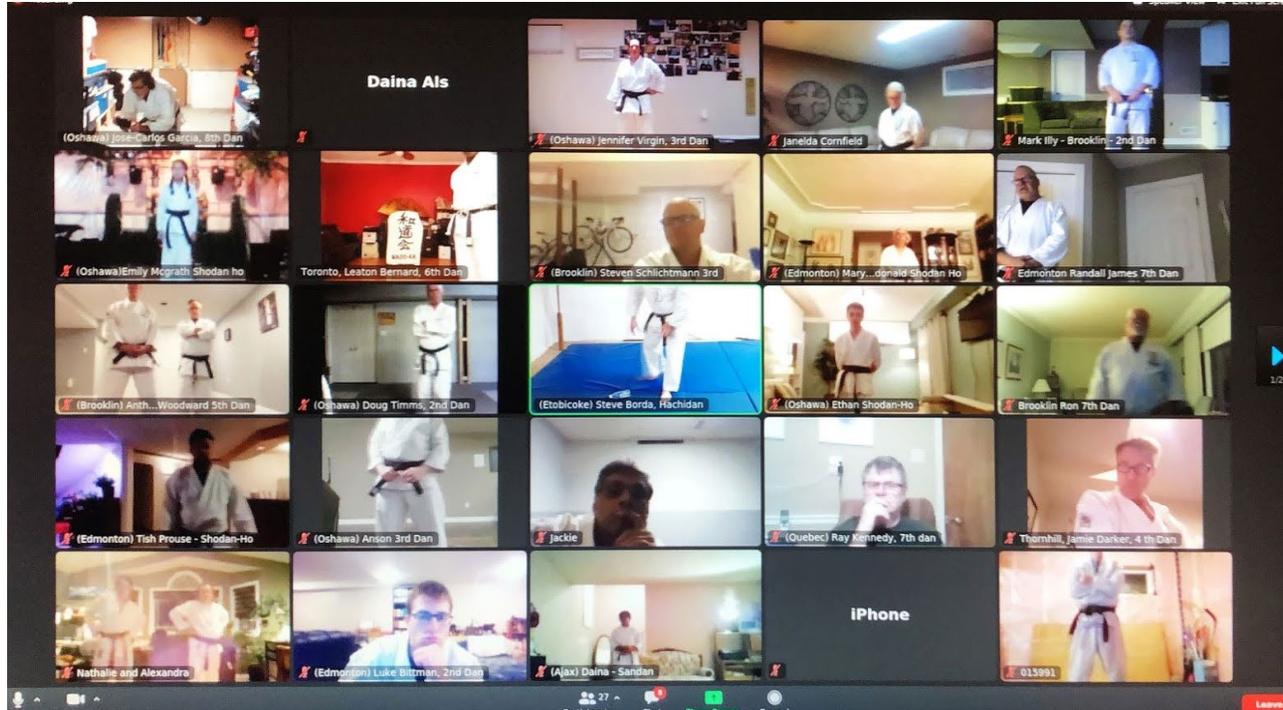


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Comments Shared from November Virtual Yudansha Class

Below are some of the feedback comments received following November's Yudansha Class. Thank you for your feedback to help us understand what and how the audience perceived the session. This helps and encourages the instructors in the structuring of future events.

>Hi Carlos and Steve. Congratulations on the class tonight. I thought you both did a great job... You both brought up some interesting points which gave me and the others something to think about, which, I suspect, is what people would want from the class. It was a good idea for you both to share the lead for the class. It would be difficult for one person to keep going for the full two hours in that format. Also, I thought that it was good for the students to have the two perspectives as well. It's obvious that you both put a lot of time and planning into the lesson. I thought the pace was fine and there was enough variety in the topics to keep everyone's interest. I'm sure you got a lot of good feedback from everyone. I wasn't sure if I could make the whole ZOOM thing work, since it was my first time trying it. I'm amazed that it did, although it turned out to be simple enough that even I could do it. ☺ I'm not really set up here, to participate. I'll have to work on that. But I wanted to support you both and I was curious as to how it would all function. It was interesting and amazing what technology can do - says the old fogey. Congratulations again, looking forward to the next one!

>Zoom is a great way to keep up our involvement in karate. The format worked well and the video clips helped with the explanation (since we do not have direct interaction with a partner), the video showing attacker and defender made it easier to follow the techniques. Future classes could focus on the black belt katas and their bunkai.

>I attended and thoroughly enjoyed the Yudansha that was held on Tuesday evening. Thank you very much for all of the effort put into setting up and executing the class. From a flow and ease of participation perspective I did find that that switching between Sensei and video to be a bit challenging and I believe that having a single instructor would be beneficial. The only other request I would make is to have an outline of what will be covered sent out so we know what will be covered. Since it has been a long time since a Yudansha was held the time dedicated to the basics was very well received. Covering the basics every class is important and I really appreciated the manner in which it was covered off. I look forward to another class and will make sure that while our Club is not getting together for classes at this time, we will ask that all [the] Yudansha [to] try to attend these all-important sessions. Thank you again for running this Yudansha.

>Great to go thru some basics, basic kata, and naifunchi kata and knock some of the rust off ☺. I think it would be better if one sensei covered the complete subject; it was confusing going back and forth between sensei during the naifunchi bunkai / oyo portion.

>I liked how we watched the videos and someone explain it too. I liked how we did the katas. It was fun.

>The last class was fun and I learned a lot. I would enjoy working on more katas from a bunkai perspective as well as working on some advanced sparring techniques (how to block and counter attack kicks, using crescent kicks to break a guard, utilizing strikes other than a kick or punch are some examples).

>Pre-registration would assist in facilitating attendees. A brief zoom tutorial may be beneficial to ensure participants get the most out of the class. This is a great initiative to keep us engaged and connecting in a time with so much uncertainty. We should keep doing these classes and continue bringing together new ideas to train virtually. The class ran well, thank you to sensei Steve and Carlos.

>I was very happy to get back to Karate! This was well done. I can see how much effort was put into it. Thanks Everyone!

>Thanks for an informative class. The technical challenges were minimal and manageable especially for a first run and with such a wide audience. The drills were well thought out and the pre-arranged videos were a great thought, given the social distancing and unavailability of a partner. The space requirements for each student were tested and we now know how to better accommodate the class. We also will make our own improvements - a bigger monitor or a TV, audio volume and camera placement. It is a different world having interactive classes on Zoom but I am looking forward to them. How about increasing the frequency to monthly? That way we meet our previous Yudansha attendance

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requirements. This is also helping us instructors devise ways to keep our classes going or just having classes to keep our students motivated until we get back to some sort of normal. Thank you.

>Suggestion - send out an approximate 'agenda' ahead of time so we can review any katas that are going to be covered during the session. Thanks for doing the sessions and I was pleased that I didn't feel overwhelmed as I am a relatively new 'shodan ho' level student.

>Wouldn't mind seeing more unconventional concepts covered because it's a higher-level seminar for shodan-ho, shodan and above. I see a lot of grappling concepts embedded in karate kata and techniques. Maybe different instructors could teach a concept or technique each session. Just my thoughts.

>Thanks to Sensei Carlos and Sensei Steve for leading our Nov. session. My students and I enjoyed the class, great to go over basics and Bunkai applications. My students in particular mentioned the importance of revisiting our basic techniques as they form the foundation for our training. Looking forward to the next session.

NEWS FROM CLUBS

ANDRE'S BUDO CENTRE, Edmonton AB

Sensei André Beauregard Rokudan
(6th Degree Black Belt)

I don't really have anything to report except that my karate studio has been on Zoom for a while now. We had a little break, when people were allowed to resume their karate training at the dojo and were happy to come back, but that was short-lived when the Alberta Government reimposed the shutdowns of all fitness and martial studios. We are still in lock-in here too. Let's hope for a better 2021.

BROOKLIN Family Karate Club, Brooklin ON

Sensei Mark Illy, Nidan
(2nd Degree Black Belt)

Happy New Year to all of our fellow karate-kas!

With 2020 behind us, we are looking optimistically to a better 2021 with a whole lot more Karate in our lives. The Brooklin Wado-Kai Karate club is still in a holding pattern with regards to reopening for classes, but we are hopeful that we will be able to be back soon.

In these days of less social activity and more stay-at-home time, it is important that we do whatever we can to keep our bodies and minds as active and entertained as possible. Keeping up with regular practice in our katas is not easy to do after nearly a year of not being in the dojo, but by setting small attainable goals, we can keep ourselves sharp and knowledgeable in our study of karate and in our own physical and mental fitness.

I, myself, have taken on a challenge, in order to keep myself physically fit during these difficult times, by starting off with doing 20 push-ups, 20 sit-ups and 20 squats twice each day; and then added one more rep each weekday while taking weekends off. It has been challenging at times, but I am now completing 70 reps of each twice a day with a goal of trying to reach 100!

Remember, small attainable goals that give you the motivation that you are making progress – that is the key. Each day, or every second day, practice a kata or two. Performing it slowly to get that muscle memory active again and then, when you are ready, pick up the pace.

We all miss the workouts and the studying of our common passion of karate, but most of all it is the people that I personally miss the most. I look forward to the future when we can all return to the dojo again and reconnect with the people we care for and the martial art we love.

I will leave you all with one final quote that really resonated with me when I read it: "Just because you are struggling doesn't mean you are failing. Every great success requires some kind of struggle to get there."

To all of you, and all of your families, I wish you all the best for a safe and happy 2021.

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OSHAWA-WHITBY Karate Club, Oshawa ON

Sensei José-Carlos Garcia Hachidan
(8th Degree Black Belt)

C.O. Theresa Virgin,
1st Kyu Brown Belt)

Well, wasn't that an interesting year; it saw so many changes in our lifestyles, but we prevailed and adapted accordingly. Not much new news to tell, except Sensei **José-Carlos** will be a grandfather for the first time any time soon now; a little grandson to start in Wado-Kai. It is my opinion that given who his grandfather is, that child will be a red belt by the time he is Six!

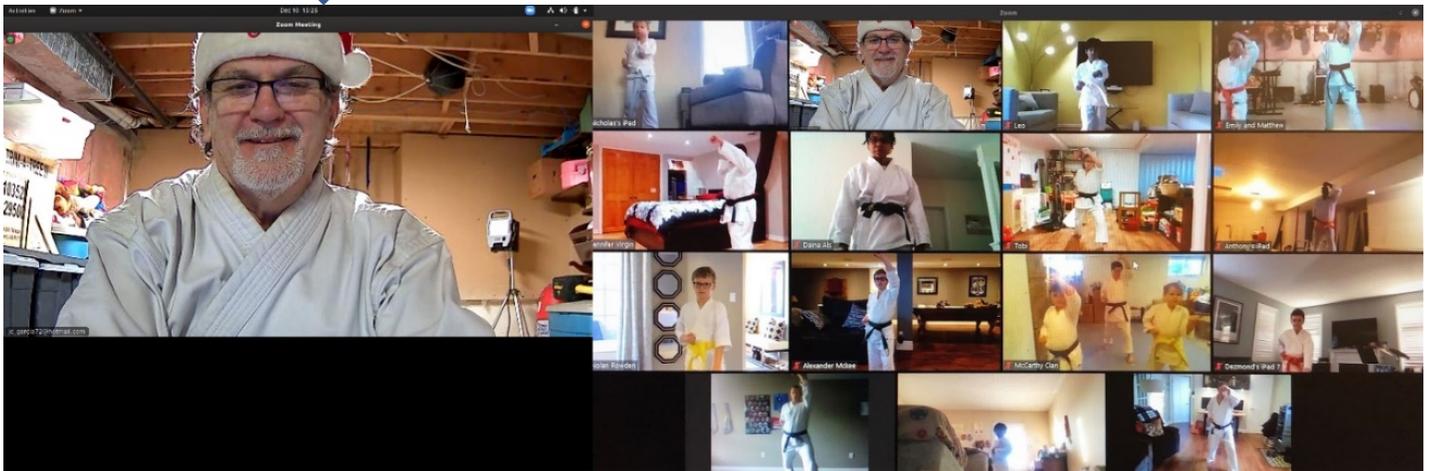
Oshawa/Whitby and Ajax-Pickering Wado-Kai are hosting the following "Zoom™" classes:

- Beginners class on Tuesdays (6:00-7:00pm)
- Belts level classes on Tuesdays (7:00-8:00pm)
- Regular classes Wednesdays and Fridays (6:30-8:00pm)

For contact information, contact Sensei José-Carlos Garcia at jc_garcia72@hotmail.com or call 647-906-9515.

THIS GUY HERE ↓

The following are some virtual Wado-Kai candid shots:



As we were talking about this Focus submission, we had just passed the usual weekend for our Children's Tournament that we ran for many years. It was our pleasure, so, to finish off this Focus submission, here are some memories from our last children's tournament—December 2016.

OSHAWA/WHITBY WADO-KAI CHILDREN'S TOURNAMENT 2016



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Oshawa-Whitby Karate Club,
Oshawa ON

OSHAWA/WHITBY WADO-KAI CHILDREN'S TOURNAMENT 2016



To all our Wado-Kai friends, from Oshawa/Whitby Wado-Kai, we wish you good health, happiness and the very best for 2021. > **Theresa Virgin**, Oshawa/Whitby Wado-Kai Communications Officer

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**BAHAMAS/
CARIBBEAN AIKIWA
Karate Do / Kubudoh
Association**

Sensei Freeman W. Thurston,
Shichidan
(7th Degree Black Belt)

After some deep thought... I decided to NOT dwell on the ills of the last year....so...

After the trials and tribulations of 2020, I'm looking forward, among many other hopes and expectations, to re-connecting with former members of my High School Wado Class (2012-2015) Freeport Anglican High School-FAHS (now: Bishop Michael Eldon School-BMES) pictured below.

Wishing the Best for all our laid plans, and the continued fellowship that keeps our organization together, prosperous, and relevant in these times.

Happy New Year to All !



**SEIKIKAI Martial
Arts, Etobicoke ON**

Sensei Steve Borda, Hachidan
(8th Degree Black Belt)

Pandemics and Fitness

Mid -2020, the COVID lockdown began. Quite a number of businesses had to be shut down, including karate classes and fitness centers. When this first happened, I couldn't go to karate and I couldn't go to the gym. Each of these had been activities that I did three times a week. I thought it would be a good time to get some projects complete on the farm.

For the next little while, I was quite busy physically repairing horse fences, clearing trails and other activities associated with owning a large property. The problem was that while I was being highly physically active, I wasn't exercising. Last year I had problems with my back. My physiotherapist had suggested some exercises that I could include with my workouts at the gym. These seemed to be working and my back issue was gradually improving. Then the gyms closed. The exercises my physiotherapist gave me were based on equipment that was at the gym, not in my home. As a result, my back gradually got worse. I also noticed a problem with my left knee. We began online karate classes, so that helped a little.

The lockdown eased up and we were allowed back in the gym, and we started outdoor classes as the weather was warming up. I found it took quite a few months to get back my usual workout strength. The old adage is true, "if you don't use it, you lose it". Due to the increase in strength training, both my back and my knee improved. Now, (in December) my knee appears to be fine and my back, while it won't move back into place without surgery, has gotten to a point where it is not very restricting. I still have to be careful with what I do, but it is not much of a hinderance.

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SEIKIKAI Martial Arts,
Etobicoke ON

That being said, I have found that while being active is good (we were never built for a sedentary life), we all require some form of exercise. In the midst of a pandemic, it makes it more difficult to achieve this, but we must do our best. It's probably even more important to put aside some time for exercise during these times as it can also act as a form of stress relief. So, keep at your karate training and any other exercise that you enjoy. Hopefully, 2021 will be a better year. Keep fit and stay healthy!

Online Kobudo Classes Available with Sensei Steve

Kobudo is the study of old Okinawan weapons. The primary weapons involved are bo (six foot staff), sai (iron truncheon with three prongs), tonfa (wooden baton with a perpendicular handle), nunchaku (two short sticks connected with a rope or chain) and kama (short handled sickles). While we started online karate classes early this year, we have fallen behind on our kobudo training. Starting this December, we have introduced online kobudo.

The kobudo is supplementary training to our karate. Many of our strikes, blocks and stances are utilized in kobudo in some manner, although there are new techniques, as well. The kobudo is an extension of our karate training. While I find it interesting, not all karate-kas are interested in weapons training and don't participate.

The classes are currently being held on Monday evenings from 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm. They are available for green belts and up in karate. I feel it's a good practice to have a good grasp on your karate basics before you begin kobudo training. If anyone is interested in joining, you may contact me, Sensei **Steve Borda**, 8th Dan at steve.borda@seikikai.ca



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OUR CONDOLENCES

Sensei Randy James let us know that “we lost one of our karate-kas” December 8, 2020.

“Brian Armstrong received his orange belt in June this year, during one of our ‘social distancing’ outdoor classes. (Edmonton Club - St. Patrick School and North Pointe Community Church).

“Brian was not only a student, but when we worked together for the Government of Alberta, I was his manager. Brian is survived by his wife Donita; he will be sorely missed”.



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OUR CONDOLENCES

Our condolences to Marion Dimand and family. On January 3, 2021, Marion shared that she “joined the Orphan’s Club. My remaining parent, my father, aged 103, died this morning, complements of the COVID-19 coronavirus. I have been very lucky to have had Dad in my life for so long. Up until sometime in 2020, he was in great physical and mental shape.

“The photo is the second last time I saw my Dad in person, September 27th, on our deck enjoying a meal with some other family members. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the last time I personally was in Dad’s presence was on October 4th, in the retirement home he resided.”



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Looking for Something to Do to Fill Excess Time?

Here are some interesting sources of learning of a different kind, for when you are not filling your 'free' time with karate. Monica (Ross) and I (Editor, Robb Dods) have been sharing the following information with friends and family, to help relieve the boredom of being trapped at home.

The **University of Guelph Arboretum** has some good **webinar offerings** this winter, most of which cost \$10 per session, some courses have multiple sessions, so the total cost is more. (*I signed up for the topic: All About Owls, yeah!*)

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/educationandevents/workshops>

With the **Mother Earth News Online Educational Fair** (usually held as a real physical event), you can sign up for \$2.99 a month or \$35 a year for access to all their courses; PLUS all of prerecorded webinars, (100 workshop videos and counting!). They have courses on a large variety of subjects, including Bread Making, Immune system boosting, Garden planning, Survival skills, Raising chickens (*raising chickens?! – oh ya, that's for me!*), Seed saving, Making fermented beverages (*ya, this one, too!*), DIY, and many other topics.

<https://online.motherearthnewsfair.com>

Visit the Toronto Wado-Kai Karate Club Ltd. Website <https://torontowadokai.com>

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André's Budo Centre (Edmonton) – André Beauregard	OSHAWA-WHITBY – José-Carlos Garcia
BAHAMAS/CARIBBEAN AIKIWA – Freeman Thurston	RYERSON (Toronto) – Leaton Bernard
BEAUBASSIN (Halifax) – Dan Duggan	SEIKIKAI MARTIAL ARTS (Etobicoke) – Steve Borda
BROOKLIN-WHITBY – Mark Illy	THORNHILL – Biller Ching & Dave Manara
CALGARY – Steve Henrich	YUDANSHA HOMBUR (Thornhill) – Dave Manara
CLARINGTON – Robin Singh	

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Hachidan (8 th Degree Black Belt)	Steve Borda, José-Carlos Garcia
Shichidan (7 th Degree Black Belt)	Randy James, Ray Kennedy, Larry O'Grady, Ron Sheyan, Freeman Thurston
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