

# Dojo Members

Year joined the dojo:

1972 (38 years)  
Don Scott

1982 (28)  
Mike Ullman

1983 (27)  
Joel Hartshorne

1986 (24)  
Bruce Brown

1991 (19)  
Kathleen Dolan

1993 (17)  
Russ Fish

1994 (16)  
Ruth Pattison

1996 (14)  
Tom Flener  
Jim Doulong

1997 (11)  
David Miller

1998 (12)  
Barry Lasky  
Belinda Frazier

2000 (10)  
Carrie Lafferty

2001 (9)  
Bill Ross

2002 (8)  
Adam Gherke

2003 (7)  
Burk Dowell

2004 (6)

Joe Schneider  
Geri Rajeshvari  
Ed Baxa

Above are current club members. Most of them (not all) have been practicing consistently at the dojo since they started! Also, several had been practicing for years before joining. Some also teach at other schools.

So, beginners and new members, when you see a club member having an easier time with learning or practicing, take into consideration how long they've been at it. If they seem to have a quality to their practice and technique perhaps they've been baking longer than you.

The other point is that we have a riches of experience and training in the club. Some have also studied with our grandteachers. Get them to share some of their experiences.

Also take a look to see if you're where you want to be after your study. Examine your health, priority, and skill level. Time to focus or take it easy?

## THANK YOU

A super thanks to the Seattle School of Aikido for letting me join their fund raiser. It was great. About 30 participants all highly skilled and a very nice group of people.

The space is beautiful and the new mats are awesome. The school is now home to several different Aiki and Iai groups. Check out their website: [seattleschoolofaikido.org](http://seattleschoolofaikido.org)



## Moving Outside

As spring approaches it's time for classes to move to lower Woodland park. Saturday classes may be moving in April depending on temperatures. The evening classes will still have to wait until May due to no lighting in the park.

We will be at our usual place inside the park NW of picnic areas 1,2,&3. We may roam a little from there since the park employees don't want us to kill the grass by constant use. Remember to bring a sweatshirt, gloves, and perhaps a scarf. Be prepared. Also, being outside we have plenty of room for new members. Spread the word classes are open, we need more members.

A.T.Dale Internal Martial Arts



# Spring 2010

## LET'S HAVE FUN

This winter I've been thinking lots about the function of martial arts today. There is a definite need for self-defense.



Unfortunately, it doesn't come easy. If you're interested in becoming skilled at self-defense or even fighting then you have to commit to a particular training schedule and attitude. Then, you have to decide on an art. Wing Chun, Aikido, Brazilian Jujitsu, Capoeira, Bagua, or ?

Each are excellent in teaching how to take care of yourself but each isn't complete. Brazilian jujitsu has lots of merit but if you're facing several opponents? Wing Chun is great but if you're facing a wrestler?

The bottom line is that each art teaches us to move our bodies, sharpen our minds, and develop muscle memories to help us deal with various situations. I've known students of many arts, skilled in the art, brilliantly able to protect themselves. I've also known skilled practitioners who were at the wrong place at the wrong time and it didn't turn out well. I've known beginners who brilliantly were able to defend themselves. So . . . If you're studying for that one time when you might need it, buy a gun or get a bodyguard.

Harris sensei, the most proficient martial artist I've seen, insisted on practice being like playing. Most of our club members, especially those working on applications and sanshou do so because it's fun. The most skilled ones are there to have a great time. Harris sensei often would mention that most animals learn to fight by playing. Cats, Tigers, Lions, the cubs and kittens play-fight with each other. It's still playing. Can we learn from this? It's play, not winning or losing. Skill is developed this way.

The most important thing, I believe, is the healthy aspect of our interactions. There's lots of non-verbal communication going on with contact and body language. This is an important part of our education. Contact with others is very nurturing.

Playtime! We all work too hard, we need to play. The partner work helps us escape, release, and understand many of the complex aspects of interactions. I'm writing this mostly for you younger members who don't understand it yet. Yes, the applications and function are important, but it's to play, and the play will make the applications better.

The best part of this is it'll make us healthier. Not just due to the exercise but the contact and flow with another person. The listening and surfing of energy.

## Real Bagua?

Will the real Bagua stand up.

Now a days we have many, many, many different Bagua styles and form. Each claiming to be the original, true, or oldest. Master Zhang Jie points out that in essence this may be true since each variety represents the principles of the art, but the forms may be not be that old.

As the records go, Tung Haichuan taught each of his students to their ability. He only accepted students who were already proficient in other martial arts. It's recorded he had 4 confirmed students. The others, that were labeled his students, were listed as his students since traditionally or politically it wasn't proper for them to be students of his apprentices, someone younger than them, or classmates under another teacher.

What Tung taught is speculative. If we look at the various styles from the lineage of his top students we see there are certain similarities. These similarities I believe must be traced to Master Tung. The more differences between them, I'd guess were added by the student, though based upon his teachings.

### ***THIS SPRING/SUMMER***

Weapons

Monday = Sun Taiji Quan

Tuesday Yang Taiji = Taiji Cane

Thursday Bagua = 8 direction short staff

Saturday Chen Taiji = Chen 13 Sword

Xing Yi Quan = 8 directions 7 stars

Check the web site for details  
[www.wuji.com](http://www.wuji.com)

From my exposure I've noticed some (not all) animal forms as well as the single, double, and flowing palms being similar. Master Zhang talks about traditional Bagua is what Tung taught and modern Bagua is what his students teach. Traditional Bagua was very simple and in one article I read didn't have 8 changes!

I get inquiries asking if I teach Cheng Bagua. Well yes but there are may flavors of Cheng. Cheng's son's taught a method nicknamed Flowing Water, whereas his student Lui Bin teaches the Rooted method. There is also the Sun Lu Tang method which seems economical, to me, when compared to the other. There is also the Gao style from his top student Gao Yishen and the list goes on. They are all Cheng Bagua with different attitudes on training and some forms.

Most, if not all, of the weaponry and miscellaneous forms and sets taught today were added by the following generations to elaborate on what they were taught. They're fun but to develop skill our training should return to the core and simplify.

### ***THIS AUTUMN***

We're not moving.

Next September we'll be back at Xin Qi Shen Dojo due to the landlords support.

Things to look forward to:

Chen Pao Chui

Sanshou

Bagua Swimming Body

Qi Gong: Tian Shan

## Feel & Listen!

When I teach an application or a drill, one of the most common responses I get is: "How do you get out of it." Answer: "It doesn't matter until you've committed the movement into muscle memory." You need to learn the specific drill or applications until you can do it smoothly. You need to be a good uke for your partner so they can learn it deeply. Also, in order to understand the neutralization you have to first know the application thoroughly.



Our training is to instill certain reactions to muscle and cell memories. Most of what we're trying to learn in the internal arts is counter-intuitive. Relaxing when pressure is applied, listening to the force and direction, using our entire body with each movement, always moving centered, using efficient force. Not anticipating but surfing movement, energy, and flow.

This is martial arts, not chess. I can show several ways to neutralize or counter a variety of movements, but that won't help you develop the skill to apply them. Once in a while I'll show a few escapes from a move we're practicing only to see class members struggling with them. The reason for this is as I've stated, you don't understand the initial technique enough.

*"Progress comes to those who train and train; reliance on secret techniques will get you nowhere." - Morihei Ueshiba*

I know it's hard not to jump to the next step but as we practice we need to be in the present. My focus is to develop skill not tricks or strategy. When in the middle of a fight or emergency you can't think or calculate your way out. Thinking is too slow. The training has to take over.

One beginning club member a few years back was frustrated at her lack of progress and slowness in learning and memorizing the Yang form. She mostly practiced the basic step and single hand ward-off. She was assaulted while trying to open her car door. The guy came from her blind side and grabbed her. All she remembered was turning with single hand ward-off and caught the guy off balance and him falling into the bushes. She jumped into her car and drove off. Muscle memory and lots of practice!

It's not just important to learn the techniques but to be present and feel what's happening to your body as your partner does the technique. Don't try to outsmart them, experience it and let the feeling go deep into your muscle memory so eventually your body wisdom can take over when needed.