

Mako, Christina, Bill Arcudi

JAN 12

We celebrated Christmas at home here in Monterey. Danielle's mom flew out from Cleveland a few days before Christmas and stayed until January 5. Two days before she arrived we had a very cold winter storm pass through - hitting us with a very rare daytime snow flurry. Made it feel very Christmas-y as we listened to Christmas music on the radio and prepared mincemeat in the kitchen. The day after Christmas we drove up to my sister Sharon's house in Vacaville. My mom was there (having just been released from the hospital from back surgery) as was my sister Jeanne and youngest brother, John. Jeanne is still fighting the cancer. The latest evaluation from her doctors was not very encouraging though. It seems that the chemo-therapy is at best maintaining status quo. She showed me an article on a new therapy, derived from rice bran and 3 Japanese mushrooms, called MGN-3 <http://www.dynastyintl.com/mgn3.htm>. I got her and Danielle's mom several bottles each as Christmas presents (it's pretty expensive stuff).

Today I'm battling either a very bad cold or the flu or something worse. Having unsuccessfully tried to avoid catching it from Danielle who has been suffering from it for over a week now. Pretty nasty, deep chest, coughing type of thing. Hope I can recover before this weekend. Ikeda Sensei is teaching a workshop at Mt. Madonna (near Watsonville).

Of course, I'm still unsure about my shoulder. About a month ago it started giving me problems (for no obvious reason). Finally it got so bad that I went to see my doctor last week and he injected my shoulder with a cortisone-like medication. In addition, I've been taking anti-inflammatory drugs. It's better, but I'm not in 'battle-ready' shape.

Ever since that snowfall a few days before Christmas we've been blessed with pretty nice weather. A few days ago we had a daytime high of 72F. The annual New Year's Day misogi was 'almost' pleasant. I've been riding the trike to work everyday, and running errands on the weekend with it. In a little more than one month of riding I've accumulated almost 300 miles and have had it up to 36mph.

Last weekend we attended a sold-out performance by "Altan" at the Sunset Center in Carmel. But the main reason we were there was to hand out flyers at the end for an upcoming concert by an American group called "Cherish The Ladies". Perhaps you remember the name, Joanie Madden? She's the tin whistle player that I am in love with! And Cherish The Ladies is her concert group. They've recorded several albums and have had several highly successful tours in the U.S. and in Europe. Newspaper articles have compared them favorably with "The Chieftains". At any rate, they have never toured anywhere in the Western U.S. and I happened to be looking at their concert schedule on the website and noticed that they were playing a one-night concert in Arcata, CA (about 300 miles north of San Francisco - yeah, kind of like nowhere!). Anyway, I got in touch with Joanie via email and with Barbara Murphy from Portofino Presents (local show promoter) and it looks like we're going to make a Monterey concert happen. I'm in ecstasy. I hope Joanie will play "Women of Ireland" for me...

On the subject of concerts, we are going to a "Kodo" concert in a couple weeks up at Stanford. I bought the tickets about 4 months ago. Frank Doran & Ursula were going to go with us, but Frank won't return in time from the funeral activities in Tokyo for Kisshomaru Ueshiba.

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FEB 4

Danielle's cold degenerated into a case of pneumonia - fortunately not too severe, but scary nevertheless. She is mostly recovered from it now, but still needs to take it easy to avoid a relapse. My cold still lingers - going on 3 weeks now.

The Kodo concert was fabulous. Rita and Jordan ended up going with us. And now Jordan is thinking of joining the taiko drumming classes that are just starting at our dojo (a Japanese teacher from the Watsonville taiko drum group is teaching there on Sundays).

The highlight of the past few weeks was the "Cherish The Ladies" concert. The concert was a great success even though financially it only broke even (not bad, though, given such short notice). Weather-wise, we had a beautiful day on the Peninsula. The group was able to get around to the Aquarium and 17 Mile Drive before heading over to KAZU radio for an interview. During the interview they performed several numbers from their latest album. They also acknowledged Barbara and I for helping arrange the concert. That evening I had a chance to meet with Joanie Madden and the other members of the group during the intermission. We talked for a few minutes and eventually I got up the nerve to ask Joanie if she would play "Women of Ireland" for me. It was like a dream come true when, in the second half of the show, Joanie and the group played the song and dedicated it to me. Of course, we had front row center seats. Then at the encore they said they were going to play 3 more songs and as they were trying to decide among themselves what the second song would be, I said "The Bergen" and the singer, Aoife Clancy, daughter of Bobby Clancy of The Clancy Brothers (ask Brendan), said "Tonight, whatever Michael wants, Michael gets." She has a beautiful voice - and I was totally charmed by the song. Then, just to top it all off, after the show I asked Joanie if she would play my whistle (it's a concert quality instrument made by Michael Copeland). She happily obliged me with a short piece as we stood at the exit to the concert hall.

[http://www.irishedition.com/Aoife\\_Clancy.html](http://www.irishedition.com/Aoife_Clancy.html)

<http://cherishtheladies.com/revs.htm>

<http://cherishtheladies.com/bios.htm>

They all said they had a great time and would love to come back. I hope they do.

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MAR 8

Now it's me taking a long time to reply! It's been a colder than normal winter. Danielle has recovered from her bout with pneumonia, but I'm still wrestling with a sinus congestion problem that seems to go away, but keeps returning. As a result I haven't done much Aikido or Kyudo training lately.

Speaking of "Riverdance", did I tell you that I was going to be seeing it again next month? This time in Cleveland (of all places!). I'll be going there to see the opening night performance in Cleveland, which happens to be on my birthday, with Danielle and her mom. We'll also be driving to Dayton to see the Air Force Museum of Flight. On the return trip we are planning on going through Omaha, Nebraska for a couple of days. Growing up, I lived there from grade school (3rd grade) through my second year of high school, but I've not been back there since we left in 1968. It's a trip purely for nostalgia. We may also run in to Steve while we are there.

Altura had a nice year end bonus (around 20% I think). I'm working on some of the CatalogCity stuff - getting a bit more experience with website creation and management. In fact, I recently proposed creating a website for the Aikido Association of Northern California.

Two weeks ago, Danielle and I went up to Redwood City for the twice annual AANC training and meeting. At the end of the day, Doran Sensei came up and asked me if "that Inn down in Big Sur" still had special, low-season rates for locals (we had reserved a stay for him at Ventana Inn once before). I mentioned that it did - and that as a matter of fact, Danielle and I were going the next week. As it turned out, Frank and Ursula ended up joining us for an overnight at the Ventana Inn. We had a nice time enjoying the hot baths, dinner at the restaurant, and

just plain lounging around in the sunshine and fresh air discussing all manner of things (including Aikido!). By the way, in January, Frank McGouirk Sensei was promoted to 6th Dan.

The current issue of Aikido Today Magazine contains a curious little article entitled "Aikido and the Klein Bottle". Do you get the magazine over in Ireland? If not, I can send you a copy if you'd like one. The editor changed it very little (only a couple of words here and there).

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APR 5

I'm off tomorrow for the Cleveland / Omaha trip. Looking forward to seeing "Riverdance" a second time, as well as seeing one of my old hometowns for the first time in over 30 years.

Winter is still putting up a pretty good fight. The past few days we have had some pretty wild weather - swinging from warm, bright, clear to cold, dark, wet and WINDY. Some places up in the Bay Area even reported seeing snow! Ridiculous!

Still, there was one moment - a couple of weekends ago - when a spectacular, 180 degree double rainbow appeared in the sky. The most impressive rainbow I've ever seen.

Mitsue, our housemate, is now gone. She was definitely not a 'low impact' sort of tenant - it took a bit of work to get the room back in shape. But it's nice to have the room back. We won't be looking for another housemate as we really want to have a true guest bedroom.

I went up to Redwood City on Saturday to train in the morning class with Doran Sensei. Later in the day I drove up to San Francisco because I wanted to go to a particular music store "Lark In The Morning" <http://www.larkinthemorning.com>. They carry an almost unbelievable variety of musical instruments. I wanted to find some books on playing the bowed psaltery. I just finished building one from a kit. <http://www.musikit.com/psals.htm>. While there (I couldn't resist) I asked one of the salespeople if I could try out the Uilleann pipes practice set. I guess I asked the right person, because he had always wanted to try them himself - so we went to a separate room and played with them for about 30 minutes. Fun, different, challenging, and, suprisingly, quite a physical workout. I even managed to get a few notes out it!

I now have over 550 miles on my trike. I'd have more but the weather hasn't been cooperative (see above). I had entertained the notion of riding the "Poppy Century" - a 100 mile ride held every spring that loops from the Salinas Valley and Carmel Valley. But it is the same day as the upcoming Doran Sensei seminar here in Monterey.

As for the "Klein Bottle" article, I simply sent it to the editor of the magazine, along with a cover letter, as an unsolicited article. But it was almost a year before they actually published it.

Rita and Jordan recently made reservations for a 3-week Centennial Cruise in the South Pacific. The ship will cruise along the International Date Line on December 31, 1999 - so the passengers and crew will have the opportunity to celebrate the New Year twice!

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APR 13

Hi everyone,

Danielle and I returned early (3am!) Monday morning from our trip to Cleveland and Omaha. While visiting her mom in Ohio, we went to the opening night performance of "Riverdance" in Cleveland (fabulous!); drove down to Dayton to see the Museum of Flight, and had dinner in Lebanon with Danielle's college room-mate and her husband at the Golden Lamb Inn (which is surely the only thing that puts Lebanon "on the map").

Lebanon is a small town, northeast of Cincinnati, but for some reason the Golden Lamb Inn has, over the years, entertained guests such as Mark Twain, Henry Clay, Charles Dickinson, and 12 presidents.

We stayed overnight at a motel.

We awoke the next morning to discover that at around 5am a category F4 tornado (200mph+ winds) had ripped through the housing division where Danielle's friend lived - narrowly missing their house - and had only just disappeared from radar close to where we were staying! Hundreds of homes had been reduced to flat piles; at least 4 people were killed and scores injured.

All in all, a lot of excitement for such a short visit.

And as if that wasn't enough - we followed that with a 'whirlwind' trip to Omaha, Nebraska. It was during the 8 year period from my 3rd grade of elementary school through second year of high school that we had lived there. So it had been about 31 years since I had been there, and yet in a lot of ways it was so familiar it was as if I had only left it a couple of years ago. I easily navigated about the town and environs, finding all the places I wanted to see. Distant memories refreshed themselves at many turns, further collapsing the tunnel of time. The houses on Crawford Street, and on 25th Ave. (Capehart), and on Harlan Drive are still there - the biggest difference being the trees. The large vacant lot that was across the street on Harlan is now a small housing division, but the vacant lot diagonally across the corner on Crawford is still there! The Dairy Queen is still there, but now it's a Dairy Qwik. Baker's Market only recently closed. And (Dan will remember this place) although the Space Lanes bowling alley is no longer open, the (now dilapidated) building and sign are still standing. The Spud Nuts shop is now a dentists office. I saw that Fred Longo has an orthodontist practice in downtown Bellevue. And much of the open land between the Harlan house and the main road in to Bellevue has been built up with a motel, some office buildings, and a strip mall. The house where Scott McIntosh lived is now a child daycare center. The house where Larry Morse (?) lived is now the offices for an insurance company. St. Mary's school is still there, as well as the church, and they look the same as they did. We were not able to drive onto Offutt AFB, but we did drive out to the base lake (which did seem much larger). We went up to the Columban Fathers Mission. It too is almost exactly as I had remembered it, though they obviously sold off some of the property to the east side because there was not as much forested land. We walked to the grotto of St. Mary - still there, but the statue (wasn't there one?) is gone.

We even went to Stella's and got a hamburger and some fries. The place looks almost exactly the same - like a funky, old, edge-of-town bar. Stella passed away several years ago and her son now runs the place. The burgers are still great!

On Saturday evening we met my friend Steve Reynolds (up from Dallas to visit his mom) in Omaha and had dinner at Johnny's Steakhouse. We had wanted to experience "Omaha steaks", but we found out that the Omaha stockyards and meat packing companies have all been closed for years now. So, while the beef was very good, it still wasn't the same as having "Nebraska corn-fed" beef.

On Sunday we visited Richard and Margaret Leise. Margaret mentioned that she had had a recent conversation with her daughter Susan in which my name had come up! Something having to do with when we were in school together at St. Mary's and Susan told a lie that got me into trouble... I later called Susan and we had a nice conversation - she did remember me and she remembered the incident (though I don't). At least 33 years ago. Apparently her mother never let her forget it!

We took a brief walk through Fontenelle Forest, and made an even briefer pass by Creighton Prep high school (where I attended for my freshman and sophomore years) before heading back to the airport for the trip home to Monterey.

I'll send some pictures later.

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APR 15

It was so nice to talk with you last Sunday. Throughout my brief visit back to Bellevue, I had had the feeling that in all my driving around and seeing all the old places and buildings and houses, that somehow I still wasn't really 'feeling' the sensation of being in touch with part of my past. It really wasn't until I met with your Mom and Dad and spoke with you that I connected with the part that was missing - the part that makes it all meaningful - and that is the people.

I also know that I remember names better than faces from 33 years ago - but after your Mom showed me some recent pictures of you and Bob, the images did seem to link up with some faded memories. I remember Myra Smith - but only the back of her head since I always had the desk behind her! I can almost picture Tim and Tom Adams (if I could picture one, I'd have the other), Jimmy Burnett, Bridget Philbin, Ken Holcomb, and Greg Crnkovich. I can picture Christine VanGreen, but only because we were in the same senior class in high school (Camp Springs,

Maryland). I can also picture Janice Bloemer - but then again, I suppose all the guys from that class could...

I attached a couple of photos of Danielle and I: at the grotto (Columban Father's mission), and at Stella's.

If you're interested, here's a couple of web page addresses. I write a one-page 'newsletter' every year and put it up on my website. These are from the last two years and contain some 'family' information in addition to me just yammering on about Danielle and myself.

<http://www.mbay.net/~michaels/News97/>

<http://www.mbay.net/~michaels/News98/>

And if you'd like to catch a peek of the website our company is building:

<http://www.catalogcity.com>

I understand from talking with your Mom and Dad that your sister (Diane?) actually lived out here some time ago. Your Mom wasn't sure exactly when it was but it would be weird if it she was living here in Monterey/Carmel after January 1977, which is when I moved here.

It was a 'whirlwind' trip back in time. And I very much enjoyed it. Come out some time and visit Monterey!

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MAY 14

Frank Doran Sensei was here last weekend. Had a great time and a wonderful seminar (I'm still a bit sore)!

Danielle's mom arrived Saturday afternoon, just after the workshop ended. Yesterday they left on their 11-day Alaskan adventure. Maybe, I forgot to mention it in my earlier emails.

Danielle's mom has always wanted to see Alaska. It's really a wonderful gift for the two of them to be able to share this time together. Danielle's mom is feeling pretty well these days and hopefully she will be able to ward off the cancer for a long, long time. After flying to Anchorage, they spend the first 3 days traveling by train to Fairbanks - traveling through and staying overnight in the scenic Denali National Park. They then fly back to Anchorage and board their cruise ship, the Ryndam ( <http://www.canada.co.uk/ship/rynd.htm> ), for a 7 day cruise through the "Inside Passage" to Vancouver, BC - with opportunities to visit the glaciers, and ports of call at Sitka, Ketchikan, and Juneau.

One very nice surprise: the travel agent called a few days earlier and said that she had been able to get them upgraded at no cost from M-level accommodations (inside cabin, several decks below the main deck), to E-level, main deck and with an outside cabin and view windows.

The weather here is still struggling to throw off the effects of La Nina, which is now manifesting itself with a particularly cold and windy Spring. Indeed, the weather forecast for Fairbanks, Alaska ( in the CENTER of Alaska ! ) is for a high temperature of 20C, while in Monterey we will be lucky to hit 16C.

Danielle has arranged for Tom Read, Sensei to be the guest instructor at this year's Weapons Retreat. He's the teacher I wrote to you about last year that has developed a very high level practice with the 'bo'. He calls his art 'aikibojutsu'. Should be fascinating and challenging. I'm really looking forward to it.

Oops, almost forgot to mention that Danielle (finally!) bought a new car. It looks so cute, I almost want to pet it!

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MAY 25

Riding the Harley was sort of like going skiing after missing a few seasons - while at the same time going from short skis to long skis for the first time. Basically I just took things nice 'n easy, basically sticking to the speed limit - sometimes a bit less (although I did rev it up a couple of times when the road was totally wide open) :-).

Technically I was operating the bike with a "Learner's Permit". In order to get a license I would have had to pass a driving test - and I didn't think I could without some practice. The only hard part of the driving test is the slow speed, tight slalom - you can't take your feet off the foot pegs - and on an unfamiliar bike it's a challenge. Not an everyday driving situation anyway, though it does display a certain 'mastery' of the machine.

Danielle and her Mom really had a good time travelling together on the Alaska trip. Both say that it is a trip everyone should make. Last night we (Cathy Jaeger came over) watched the 8mm video they took. Both of them said that pictures and video do not adequately convey the beauty that they saw. Still, when I can get a few of the better pictures scanned in to the computer I'll send some to you. The good news is that Danielle's mom gained 2 pounds on the trip. Her doctors have been worried because her weight has been dropping. So now we know what they need to write for her prescription!

This Friday we leave for Mt. Baldy. This will be my 13th year attending the retreat. Danielle's mom is going with us - she wants to do the Qi Gong practice.

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JUN 23

Mt. Baldy was really good this year. I think we had the nicest weather of all the years that I've been going. Virtually cloudless. The really big news is that - after all these years of their rumored coming - the flush toilets are finally here! The monks (and some volunteers) built a real nice building behind the zendo (see attachment). Danielle's mom participated in the morning Qi Gong practices; Frank even had her come up front with him on the last day. She did the Full Moon practice (one hour long) without taking a break! Pretty impressive.

Last week was the annual Aikido Summer Camp at San Rafael. Because of work, and limited vacation days, I missed the first 3 days. So, I guess I tried to make up for it in the 4 days I was there, because I sure was sore and tired by Saturday afternoon. I trained with Ikeda Sensei again this year. In Doran Sensei's class on Friday morning. Whew! He just gets stronger while at the same time his movements become smaller and more subtle. His comments to me afterward were that I "did better... lasted a few minutes longer than the previous year... keep working on center... and timing... and breathing..."

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JUL 20

Recently we have been attending a number of workshops and retreats up in Santa Cruz. Linda Holliday, Sensei, North Bay Aikido invited Motommichi Anno Sensei, 8th Dan to come over from Shingu and he has been here for several weeks, teaching numerous classes and workshops (<http://www.northbayaikido.org/annoworkshop.html>). This year's summer retreat in Santa Cruz featured Anno Sensei together with Linda and Mary Heiny Sensei. Linda and Mary both trained in Shingu with Anno Sensei and Hikutchi Sensei (10th Dan) very early in their training. When Danielle and I travelled to Shingu in 1994 we met Anno Sensei and were very much impressed by his generosity and cheerfulness. During the time we were there

he twice took us on day-long excursions to visit some of the sacred and majestic sites of the Kumano region. Though he spoke no English (and we only a minimal amount of Japanese) we 'communicated' quite well and developed a close friendship. We were delighted when Linda asked us if she and Anno Sensei could visit us in Monterey. We arranged for them to have dinner and stay overnight at our house following their day-trip down the Big Sur coast. Danielle helped arrange for them to visit Esalen (Colin was there on a 1-month work/scholar program) and to have a massage. Well, that turned out to be a 'memorable' occasion for Anno Sensei! Although up until the middle of this century the traditional onsen in Japan were often unsegregated, the baths at Esalen turned out to be a bit of an 'uncomfortable' experience for Anno Sensei. But one it seems certain he will laugh and joke about now for the rest of his life! He really is a wonderful man, and so much exemplifies the spirit of Aikido in everyday life. While still encompassing technical details, his teaching guides us towards feeling and

expressing the large-ness of Nature, Love, and Compassion, and the ideals of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

On Friday morning of the Santa Cruz retreat, I was training in Anno Sensei's class, doing techniques from hanmi handachi. As I went to stand after finishing a turn as nage, I felt a sharp pain in the middle toe of my right foot. I continued to train, but the pain remained and seemed to get worse. I finally took a break and found an ice pack and iced it down for a few minutes; then resumed training. Mary Heiny Sensei taught the class immediately following, which consisted of a lot of irimi nage. Near the end of her class, I finally mentioned to Denise Barry, my training partner, that my foot was giving me a lot of trouble. As soon as class ended Denise caught up with me and introduced me to a student of hers who is an orthopedic doctor. He looked at my foot and said there was a good chance I had broken the toe, but couldn't be certain without x-rays. He gently 'set' and 'splinted' the toe by bandaging it together with the toes on each side, which is about all they would do in a doctor's office anyway. Training after that, would depend, he said, on how it felt to me. I hobbled off to lunch. On my way back to the gym, I passed by Anno Sensei who noticed my uneven gait and asked

what had happened. I said that I might have broken the toe, but that I would still try to train - perhaps just a bit more slowly. The afternoon class started at 2:30 with Linda Holliday Sensei announcing that it would be a bo class. After bowing the class in, Linda, still sitting in seiza, started to say that since Anno Sensei would not be attending this class - that he was taking a much needed nap instead - that she would 'attempt' to teach a bo kata she learned from Anno Sensei back in her early days of training in Shingu. Suddenly she stopped in mid-sentence as out of the corner of her eye she saw through the open 'hangar' doors of the gym, Anno Sensei walking down the steps toward the gym... Linda collapsed, as in a deep bow, and everyone in the dojo broke up laughing.

But Anno Sensei had not come down to train in the class.

Quietly he motioned for me to come off the side of the mat and, pointing at my foot, he produced two tubes of ointment with Japanese writing on the outside. Instead of napping, Anno Sensei had come to the dojo to try to help care for my injury. The point of my story is not anything about my feeling special. But about how special a person it demonstrates Anno Sensei to be.

The following day, Anno Sensei taught a two-hour black-belt class, primarily on irimi-nage. And he made a deliberate point of coming around and taking ukemi from each of the more than 100

yudansha present. Later, in a general class that Mary taught, he did the same thing with all the mudansha present. When the format switched to 'line' techniques, he joined one of the lines and took his turn with everyone else. Impressive to see this man, 69 years of age, an 8th Dan who has trained for more than 45 years, demonstrating such spirit, open-ness, and humility.

Do I sound impressed?

By the way, my foot was virtually 100% by the following morning! I'd love to know what was in those ointments, or where to get them.

JEANNE:

I don't know if I've updated you on my sister's progress in her battle with cancer. Last May, when the reappearance of cancer was first diagnosed, the main tumor the doctors were concerned about was the one in her liver, about 3cm in size. The initial treatments of radiation and chemotherapy brought that tumor down to about 1.5cm in size. However, since that time they were doing little if anything to reduce the cancer further, but were making her feel constantly sick and low energy. So, last December, Jeanne decided to quit the chemotherapy treatments. Since that time she has been doing the healing chi gong practice, taking MGN-3 ( a natural Bio-bran, arabinoxylane compound, derived from rice bran and Japanese mushrooms), and Herceptin

(one of the new class of cancer fighting drugs, but not well-matched for her particular cancer). Last month, her scans showed that the primary tumor in her liver had shrunk to 2mm! Wonderful news! Jeanne is even back working one 12 hour shift a week in the Emergency Room at a local hospital. She and her physician boyfriend just returned from a vacation to Kauai. Our prayers remain for her continued recovery.

#### DOG DAYS:

Summer did finally arrive in Monterey. Although in keeping with the general wierdness of weather we've had this year, it has manifested itself with some atypical displays of cloud / fog patterns and temperature fluctuations. Nevertheless, today happens to be one of those days that confirms that we here are on the doorsteps of Paradise.

#### MORE AIKIDO NEWS:

This weekend we're going up to Denise Barry's dojo in Santa Rosa for an Aikido workshop with Doran Sensei. As soon as class finishes we are rushing down to San Francisco to meet up with Robert Nadeau Sensei and his partner, Rosella, for a dinner and theater evening in San Francisco. We'll spend the night at their place in The City and train the following morning. Before we head back to Monterey, we're hoping to meet up with Tom Read Sensei (who will be teaching aikibojitsu at our Weapons Retreat) who is scheduled to be in the Bay Area for a few days, and do some training with him. Whew!

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JUL 28

Monterey is having a typical summer - mostly overcast. Hopefully we will have a typical Fall, when the sunshine is more dominant and the days turn much warmer. You asked about the Monterey Pines. Well, they still do not have any effective treatment for preventing or curing the disease, so it continues to spread throughout the forest. However, the Forestry Division conducted an extensive program to identify resistant strains and is now helping to plant these trees around the Peninsula. But I think that they have said that it is not their intention to entirely restore the forest of Monterey Pines - that the natural evolution in the forest would tend towards the Monterey Oak coming to prominence. Still I think they want to keep a good number of the pines growing here - I hope so. We have over 12 on our property alone - most of them very mature - and most of them showing signs of stress, perhaps related to the pitch canker. Eventually they will all have to come down (EXPENSIVE!). We have already planted 3 seedlings. This past weekend we were planning on driving up to Santa Rosa to Denise Barry's dojo (Kuma Kai) for a workshop with Doran Sensei. But the workshop had to be cancelled due to Doran Sensei somehow suffering a back injury (slipped / ruptured / herniated ? disk). I haven't heard any other news about it - except that (in humor) some people are wondering if perhaps it might have been 'honeymoon' related...

We did still meet up with Nadeau Sensei and Rosella in San Francisco. Had a nice dinner at a new restaurant and then went to a performance of the musical 'Rent'. Rosella and Bob have a beautiful apartment on one of the hills of San Francisco - from the balcony you can see across the city, and from the Bay Bridge down to the San Mateo Bridge. Actually, they just sold the place and will be moving down the peninsula as soon as they can find another house. Did I mention that they were engaged?

We had a great time visiting with them - also trained in his class the following morning. It has been so much more enjoyable for me to train in his classes lately. I noticed a difference at San Rafael; so did a number of other people. He's much more relaxed and he seems to be communicating and demonstrating more clearly, more meaningfully than ever before. We also had a great time with Tom Read Sensei - spent about 5 hours together, mostly training. We had a quick lunch together and then we drove over to Golden Gate Park. He's developing a new kata to teach at the Weapons Retreat and he showed it to us and then 'walked' us through it. The power and beauty of his movements are truly awesome! Several of the fundamental moves

comprising the kata are quite different from anything we learned in the basic jo suburi of Aikido. It will be both challenging and fun to learn. Check out his website:

<http://www.aikibojitsu.com/welcome.html>

Have you heard the album 'Carmine Meo' by Emma Shaplin? Frank McGouirk introduced us to her music while we were down at Mt. Baldy. I hear she is quite popular in Europe and South America. Such a beautiful voice and some lovely music. When I finally located the CD (an import) I bought 3 copies (the extras to give as gifts to friends).

<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Arc/9816/emma/index.htm>

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SEP 1

We are in the midst of (yet another) very active workshop schedule. Two weeks ago we went to San Luis Obispo, where Danielle taught a one-day workshop. Last weekend was the semi-annual Division 2 training (Saturday) and the AANC (all divisions) training and semi-annual meeting (Sunday). Frank Doran and Richard Heckler taught the Sautrday classes. If I didn't know that Doran Sensei had a back problem, I would not have been able to guess from watching (or taking ukemi !!) from him on Saturday. I guess he's getting regular chiropractic treatments and being more careful, and is obviously feeling much better. Richard Heckler Sensei demonstrated some interesting techniques from one-hand choke attack. Each of the Division heads (Witt, Doran, Nadeau) taught a 40-minute class on Sunday. The afternoon was taken up with the semi-annual meeting. After attending these meetings for 8 years, my slow-burn fuse finally hit the powder after last February's meeting. Talk about 'strange' politics! It seemed that the only point of conducting meetings was to ensure that the meetings closed exactly on time! Items of agenda were routinely sacrificed to this one, over-riding goal. Sincere people with genuine issues of concern would spend considerable time and effort preparing to discuss an issue - only to be 'gonged' by the 5-minute bell. I was totally frustrated. So last March I wrote a letter to the AANC secretary (Cyndy Hayashi) expressing my thoughts and outlining several procedures for

ensuring that we actually achieve closure on every agenda item. I also proposed that the AANC establish a web-site for the purpose of facilitating communication and community among the member dojos and aikidoka within the AANC. It was especially gratifying to have the assembled body readily endorse all my proposals - apparently I wasn't the only one with pent-up frustrations! The meeting ran smoothly and effectively - and, as the greatest indication of SUCCESS, closed 15 minutes late!! As far as the web-site, I already have a prototype in my own webspace. And I have secured the domain name [www.AANC.org](http://www.AANC.org) for our site, when we go 'live'. Our busy schedule continues this week. Doran Sensei will be teaching a two-day workshop down in San Luis Obispo. The following week-end is our 8th Annual Weapons Retreat in Big Sur (still time to register if you want to come). It was an interesting evolution to come up with the design for this year's camp t-shirt. Though a relatively simple design, would you believe me if I told you that it expresses a relationship between the Chinese calligraphy for 'man', Aikido, the jo, the samurai uniform, the four elements, the number '8', triangle and circle, the yin-yang symbol, and the Klein bottle?

(NOTE: t-shirts will be available at camp in a variety of earth-tone colors and in all popular sizes. First-come-first-served. When they're gone, they're gone! Still time to register if you want to come!)

The issue of Aikido Journal that I sent is the one with the interview of Bob Nadeau that you had asked me to send you when it came out. You can see bits of our living room in the background of a few of the pictures.

By the way, I just finished building another musical instrument. This time I bought a kit for an Uilleann pipes starter set. The bellows and bag are of typical materials and construction, but the chanter is quite unusual being constructed of concentric brass tubes and CPVC. (Related links: <http://www.daye1.com/pennychanter.html> and <http://www.daye1.com/sskit.gif> )

I spent quite a few hours on this project. Building the chanter was by far the most challenging. I ruined 3 of them (at various stages of the process), before finally getting one right. Next project (if I do another) will be something simple - like a drum or something! Anyway, I finally got everything all hooked up, with me in the middle, last Friday. And it made sounds - more like 'honks' and 'screeches' - but what the heck, it was very satisfying. I can see why this is considered such a difficult instrument to learn (much less master). But I hope to spend enough time on it to learn to play a tune or two so that they are at least recognizable. I've also joined Na Piobairi Uilleann, the worldwide pipers' club in Dublin, Ireland.

Still doing a lot of commuting and errand-running on my tricycle. I now have 1000 miles on it!

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SEP 20

Well, we missed you at the 8th annual Big Sur Weapons Retreat. We had 100 people attend this year's camp! Exhausting, but lots of fun. Tom Read Sensei's Aikibojitsu was fascinating and challenging. We were not able to finish going through the "Big Sur" kata he devised for the camp, but everyone enjoyed learning and practicing as far as we did go.

Tom and his wife Marily stayed a couple extra days in Monterey with us. It gave us an opportunity to socialize. They are both really interesting people - with a rich Aikido background. Tom started Aikido in 1969, and spent some time in Shingu studying with Hikiutchi Sensei. We were also able to get some personal instruction from Tom on more of the basic movements of Aikibojitsu - and he was able to guide me through the remainder of the kata. Difficult, but I'm trying to practice it everyday. Wish you could see Tom doing some of his stick 'magic'. And the power he generates is something else. He has actually broken 5 jo in mid-strike (not from hitting anything, but from being flexed beyond their breaking point)!

I've learned the first few bars of "The Sun in the Stream" by Enya on my Uilleann pipe. Danielle says it looks and sounds as if I'm holding a goose under my arm with my fingers around its neck. Critics!  
But if I learn it well enough, I'll play it at the Aiki Follies next year!

Danielle might be headed off to Tuscany, Italy this weekend for a 5 day stay with some old friends who have rented a villa for 3 weeks. Work is at a frenzy and I've only one or two vacation days left for the remainder of the year - so I won't be able to go. Sigh! I need a 'real' vacation.

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SEP 23

Looks like Danielle's trip to Tuscany will fall through. She was planning on using her frequent flyer miles to get a free ticket, but it turns out that they limit the number of seats on each flight that can be filled under that program and the flight she wanted was already filled.

Jeanne is still doing okay. She and the rest of my sisters just got back from their almost-annual camping trip up in the Sierras. She's also working again at the hospital, two 12 hour shifts a week in the Emergency Room. It's great for her spirits to be able to work.

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OCT 8

By the way, I've been working on building a website for the AANC and we just went 'live' today with it. It still has a few glitches (counter isn't working) and some incomplete areas, but at least we're up. Check it out at <http://www.aanc.org>

Tom Read is coming down this week-end for some more Aikibojitsu. I've been working hard to learn the first 20 'movements' of the Big Sur kata (most 'movements' involve several steps, hand changes, and in some cases multiple strikes). We'll see if he thinks I'm ready to learn the next part.

Jordan celebrated his 35th birthday on Wednesday. Danielle and I joined Rita and Jordan, Brigitte and her new husband (forgot his name) and 2 others for dinner at the Gallery Bistro. As usual Patrice cooked up a wonderful feast. We were the only party that night and we were there for almost 4 hours!

Tomorrow night we're going up to Cabrillo College to hear the Watsonville Taiko give a concert. Rita and Jordan will be performing with the main group on several numbers. They also have a duet!

Next week we're going up to San Francisco with Rita and Jordan to see "Riverdance" again. We have really nice seats this time - center section, about 12 rows back from the stage.

We've been having a short spate of 'Summer' weather recently. We're so overdue for it! I've even been wearing shorts in to work. I rode my tricycle in to work; took a nice ride along the ocean at lunchtime...

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OCT 18

Rita and Jordan have been doing taiko for at least 6 months. I think they have practice twice a week. They don't have taiko drums of their own - yet. But taiko drums come in a lot of different sizes and shapes.

Riverdance was a wonderful experience - even being our third time! The Harlem dancers (including a great female dancer) were very entertaining. The principal dancers were skillful, graceful, and powerful, without going "Michael Flatley" over-the-top. A real highlight of this group was Kevin Deas (see "The Lagan company" / "Heal Their Hearts" <http://www.riverdance.com/biog/index.htm> ). His voice sent surges of emotional energy through me. Wow!

Brigitte and Mick (?) got married sometime in the last 2 months. We were out of town at an aikido seminar - so we missed it. Her husband recently graduated from UC Santa Cruz and works in bio-engineering (I think). I think he recently was offered a job in New Mexico so they will be moving soon.

Let's see: Lora (Toribio) is still living in Italy (near Milan, I think) with her daughter and 2 grandchildren. Janet and her husband (who I forgot to mention also joined us at Gallery Bistro on Jordan's birthday) are living in Salinas. Cyndi is still living in the same house up in Palo Alto. She and John divorced several years ago and the last I heard he was somewhere on the East Coast. Dennis sold the Laureles Grade house and bought a new one over in Oak Hills (between Castroville and Prunedale). I think they are not planning on moving to Colorado until Amber (Debra's daughter) graduates from Stanford (she's in her sophomore year now).

Danielle leaves on Wednesday for Cleveland, Ohio to spend 10 days visiting her mom. Colin is going also, but only for 5 days. Danielle's mom is doing well.

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NOV 29

Yes, TOO much turkey! We traveled to Sonora and spent a few days visiting my family. My sister Jeanne is looking and feeling pretty well - we went out Friday afternoon and played some golf. She is still battling the cancer - kind of to a draw at this point. My mom had bought a new home since last year and we all gathered there for Thanksgiving dinner. Nice place with a pretty view of the surrounding hills. Returned on Saturday and had Colin, his girlfriend Angela, her mom and sister over for Thanksgiving - Round 2!

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DEC 3

Woke up last night around 4am and as I was returning to bed I looked out to crystal clear view across Monterey Bay. One of those spectacularly clear views that comes every now and then. There is a power station at Davenport, about 55 road miles from Monterey, and it seemed as visible as the Moss Landing station. I could even make out the pinpoint of automobile headlights driving along Highway 1 some 60 road miles away! The straight line distance is probably closer to 40 miles - but still quite impressive.

We have two new employees here at Catalog City. Both are native Japanese and will be working on both the Japanese version of Catalog City as well as the other international projects. Too bad if the opportunity with Catalog City Europe does not work out for you - a rare chance to be on the groundfloor of something that has a real chance of becoming a big success. I did mention to Lee that there might be better reasons for considering Dublin as the homebase for Catalog City Europe vs. London. The abundance of high-tech personnel, language specialists, tax advantages, etc. Don't give up on it!

Jeanne's cancer has stabilized - neither improving or worsening at this point. She and all of us are hoping that one of the newer treatments will become available to her and that it will finally bring her a full cure. Meanwhile she is doing pretty well.

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DEC 17

Things have been quite busy (as usual, and beyond) around here lately. Especially with Rita and Jordan heading off for their 3-week (!!!) cruise vacation. They leave tonight for Sydney, Australia. We'll probably stay close to Monterey through most of the holidays - just in case I need to deal with emergencies on the website. Danielle's mom arrives next Monday. We'll probably go see the new Bond movie sometime while she is here. Perhaps we'll take a few days off and go to Yosemite. As for the New Year, well no big deal really for me. It isn't even the "New" millenium as most people are calling it! That won't be until Jan. 1, 2001. But most people don't care, the marketing folks are pushing this one. Then, they'll just do it all over again for the real "New" millenium - if they can.

The weather has been generally pleasant lately. Cool, but sunny. I've been taking the tricycle to work most days.

Went to Redwood City last Sunday for a workshop with Saotome Sensei. Lots of lecture; less training. But interesting techniques when we did get a chance to move.

The dojo will have it boninkai party next Monday, and last class of the year on Wednesday. Right now it appears that we will break a longstanding dojo tradition and NOT include an ocean musubi. Yeah!!!

As for Catalog City Europe, Lee is moving ahead with establishing that without a European partner so far. I have been given technical responsibility for the internationalization of the site. We've made an initial start, mostly to establish our strategy, which you can see at: <http://dev.catalogcity.com>. There are links at the bottom of the page for German [DE], French [FR], Spanish [ES], and Japanese [JP]. Whaddya think? As for Lee, well, he is the kind of person who responds best when people approach him. He's been known to hire people 'right off the street', even without knowing exactly where to put them to work, simply because he was

impressed by their pro-active approach. I'd say, give him a call or email, asking how things are going and where he can make use of your skills (interpretation? or translation?).