

WSKF Newsletter



3rd Quarter

September 2026



Upcoming WSKF Events

9/18 – Black Belt Class – Troy Dojo

10/16 – Black Belt Class – Troy Dojo

11/13 – Embu Tai Kai – Troy Dojo

11/14 – Kuro Obi Kai – Troy Dojo

11/26 – Thanksgiving Virtual Workout

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Congratulations Hanshi Leistner & Hanshi Olin

Glenda Olin and Jeff Leistner Promoted to Ju Dan (10th Degree Black Belt)

Congratulations to Hanshi Glenda Olin and Hanshi Jeff Leistner who both received their 10th Degree Black Belt rank in June during our 2026 Internationals, held in Greenville Ohio. 10th Degree Black Belt, or Ju Dan is the highest rank awarded in Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate-Do, with very few receiving this honored and respected designation.

Glenda Olin began her Martial Arts training in Tae Kwon Do in 1972. After three years study she received her 1st degree black belt before switching to Matsubayashi-Ryu under Hanshi Frank Grant. Hanshi Grant sensed something special in Glenda. He challenged her to train extremely hard and told her she could test for 1st degree black belt in Matsubayashi-Ryu in one year. Glenda trained 7 days a week and never gave up. Hanshi Jack McPeck stated that her test was the most impressive Sho Dan promotion he had ever witnessed.

In 2001, Glenda founded Partners Against Crime (PAC), a non-profit organization funded by individual contributions and fundraising events that Glenda personally created and organized. PAC's goal is to provide a safe supervised environment to assist boys and girls to become involved in organized activities such as karate as an alternative to crime and drugs. PAC emphasizes character development, mental conditioning, personal discipline and physical training. Through Glenda's dedication and extraordinary efforts, she personally has impacted and influenced hundreds of intercity kids over the years since its founding. For 52 years, Glenda has continued to train and teach Matsubayashi-Ryu. She diligently serves in the role of WSKF Vice President. Glenda is an exceptional leader, sets her training as the highest priority and strives for the upmost excellence in not only her technique but her character as well. She fully supported Hanshi Grant as well as the WSKF, so in 2004, Glenda was inducted into the Budo Hall Of Honor.

In 1974, Jeff Leistner began his karate training in Greenville, Ohio under the instruction of Hanshi Jack McPeck. This started his lifelong path in the pursuit of karate-do. Jeff opened his first karate school in his home and was soon able to open his first commercial dojo in Troy, Ohio in 1982. His dojo continued to grow into the large dojo he and his wife, Christine Leistner now own and run which is nestled in the cornfields of Troy, Ohio. Hanshi Grant saw exceptional traits in Jeff and appointed him as president of the WSKF in 2004.

Jeff's excellent karate skills along with his dedication to his students and fellow karate practitioners as well as his many years of service to the WSKF organization led him to be inducted into the Budo Hall Of Honor in 2014. In recent years, Jeff was instrumental in creating the Shorin-Ryu karate museum located on the Troy dojo site. He also took the lead and was instrumental in getting both the Shorin-Ryu Museum and the WSKF registered as 501c3, non-profit organizations. More recently, with the intent of WSKF growth through fellowship and sharing, Jeff formed a relationship our sister organization the WMKA (World Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate-Do Association), headquartered in Okinawa. We are now aligned at the highest levels of the WMKA leadership, providing benefits to both organizations and helping to expose the teachings of Hanshi Grant to a wider audience. In his 52 years of training, teaching and his dedication of service to the WSKF, Hanshi Leistner has accomplished quite a lot!

SEE YOU ON THE BRIDGE

Joyce Bentle, 5th Dan

Many years ago, when the larger Troy dojo was still an unfinished barn, the WSKF produced a play about Hanshi Grant's life in the martial arts. Written by Dale Pike and directed by Jeff Bentle, it was performed during Internationals to a large and appreciative audience. One aspect of the play was an impressive Bridge, built into the back of the stage, from which our karate ancestors spoke. Ankichi Arakaki, Chotoku Kyan, Choki Motobu and others added certain philosophical, creative and instructional thoughts about martial arts throughout the play. Near the end, Grand Master Nagamine joined them on the Bridge as his earthly life came to an end.

I think about that play often, and it still affects me the way it first did when I watched it that day so long ago. Perhaps it's because I'm older, but the idea of the Bridge itself has become more meaningful. I capitalize "Bridge" here because it's a sacred concept to me. I like to think Hanshi Grant is there, finally conversing with the Masters and his Sensei once again, debating certain ways to teach kata and kumite. And another very special person has joined them on the Bridge - Ron Cyphers.



I don't remember meeting Ron, which is odd. It seemed like I had always known him, like he was part of my training from the beginning. In reality, Ron and Kevin O'Reilly, his son-in-law and trusty sidekick, began training together in 2008, eight years after I began my own martial arts journey. They both quickly became part of my budo family, as did Kevin's wife Kerri and their sons and grandchildren.

Ron and Kevin trained with me for 18 years. We came up through the ranks together, attending black belt and Kuro Obi Kai classes and helping each other prep for promotions. Ron passed away on May 13, 2026, and it just seemed unbelievable that I wouldn't be seeing him in his usual spot in the dojo; that I wouldn't hear him say "Well hello, Miss Joyce" and get one of his famous hugs. During the summer that has passed since he left us, I've been thinking a lot about what he meant to me. He was steadfastly in my corner, always rooting for my success, always quietly believing I could improve and pass those promotion tests, helping me understand kata from a different perspective. That was a unique and beautiful gift I'll never forget.

So, Mr. Cyphers, goodbye for now. Thank you for your kindness, instruction and for sharing your heart.

See you on the Bridge

Exciting News for the WSKF!

On July 10th, 2025 the Internal Revenue Service granted tax-exempt status to our new organization, **Friends of Matsubayashi-Ryu, Inc. (FMR)**, under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). This process was spearheaded by Kyoshi Chad Sheets, who chaired a committee starting in summer 2024 at the request of Hanshi McPeck and Hanshi Leistner, with financial support for attorneys and fees from the WSKF.

What This Means:

The purpose of FOMR is to support both the historical preservation and educational missions of the Museum of Shorin-Ryu Karate-do and the WSKF. This tax-exempt status brings many benefits:

Tax-deductible donations - Contributions to the museum or FOMR can now be deducted when filing your income taxes (consult your tax advisor for details)

Tax exemptions - Money earned by FOMR is exempt from sales tax and income taxes (state and federal)

Employer programs - Some employers allow employees to donate volunteer time to tax-exempt organizations or offer matching donation programs. *If your employer offers these benefits, please contact us—this could greatly benefit FOMR!*

Grant eligibility - We now have increased access to grants from government agencies and private foundations

How You Can Help

We're establishing committees for students and other interested individuals as we continue to define our operations. We welcome your input and participation! Here are ways to get involved:

Make a tax-deductible donation - Contact any Board member for details

Share historical items or stories - Do you have artifacts, photographs, or memories related to Shorin-Ryu history? We'd love to hear from you

Volunteer your time - Committees are forming—let us know your interests

Check employer benefits - See if your workplace offers volunteer time or donation matching

Board of Directors

Please contact any Board member with your thoughts, ideas, or questions:

Chad Sheets, President

Patty Blakesley, Vice President

Linda Beasley, Treasurer

Lennie Wilson, Secretary

Jim Sage, Director

The current email for FMR is: **friendsofmatsubayashiryu@gmail.com**

We're excited about the opportunities ahead and look forward to building FOMR together with the entire WSKF community!

A Journey of Remembrance: 2026 WSKF Internationals

Lisa Shank Go-Dan, Sylvain Shank Yon-Dan

In June, Matsunoki Martial Arts in Greenville, Ohio, had the honor of hosting the WSKF Internationals for the first time. Under the theme “A Journey of Remembrance,” federation members came together for four days of training, fellowship, celebration, and reflection.

The event was a tremendous success, with approximately 70 federation members participating. The training sessions were filled with knowledge, hard work, and the spirit of traditional Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate. Throughout the four days, students and instructors had the opportunity to deepen their understanding, sharpen their technique, and continue strengthening the bonds that connect the WSKF family.

The training also included dedicated weapons instruction, giving participants the opportunity to further develop their understanding of Kobudo and its connection to traditional Karate-Do. Another meaningful moment was the virtual class with footage of Hanshi Frank Grant, allowing members to continue learning from his instruction and to honor his lasting influence on the WSKF.



The event was not only about training, but also about remembering and honoring the history of the federation. A special art gallery was created featuring past and present Sensei of the WSKF. These portraits served as a powerful reminder of the dedication, leadership, and sacrifice of those who helped build and preserve the organization. The artwork was later auctioned as part of the fundraiser, which was also a great success.



On Saturday evening, members gathered at Sure Shot Tap House for the banquet. The evening included fellowship, awards, and recognition of outstanding dedication to Karate-Do. During the banquet, the federation also honored the memory of Ron Cyphers with a special art piece that was presented to his family. This meaningful tribute reflected the respect, gratitude, and lasting impact that our dearest Ron had within the WSKF community.

A Journey of Remembrance: 2026 WSKF Internationals

A very special highlight of the evening was the awarding of 10th Degree Black Belt to Hanshi Olin and Hanshi Leistner. This is the highest honor a karate practitioner can receive, and it was a memorable moment for everyone in attendance.

The success of the WSKF Internationals would not have been possible without the support of many people. We would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of the Matsunoki parents, students, volunteers, and supporters who gave their time and energy throughout the event. Your dedication, hard work, and willingness to help made this event possible and helped create a welcoming experience for all who attended.



Hosting the WSKF Internationals at Matsunoki Martial Arts was a proud and memorable moment for our dojo. The four days were filled with hard training, shared knowledge, laughter, friendship, and respect for those who came before us, and a great way for Matsunoki to celebrate their 10th year of serving the Greenville and nearby communities through Matsubayashi-Ryu martial arts.



Lots of Learning in LALA Land

Seminar with Hanshi Taira held August 14-16 in LA by Joyce Bentle, 5th Dan

Los Angeles. The City of Angels, they call it. I've been there several times, but usually it has been for work. This visit would be a different kind of work...

In mid-August, Kyoshi Jeff Bentle and I were delighted to attend a 3-day seminar in Los Angeles with Yoshitaka Taira, 10th Dan, Hanshi and Kaicho of the World Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate Do Association. The seminar was hosted by Renshi Art Takashi Ishii, head instructor at Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate-Do of Little Tokyo, at the Terasaki Budokan. Hanshi Taira has not been to the United States in over 25 years, so it was a special honor to be there. Our small WSKF delegation, which was invited by Hanshi Taira, consisted of Hanshi Jack and Lori McPeck, Chris Bosma, and Jeff and I. Hanshi Jeff Leistner and Kyoshi Chris Leistner couldn't attend, but we were all happy to hear during a pre-seminar phone call that he was feeling better after his recent surgery and that they were with us in spirit. Hanshi Jeff told us to "make WSKF proud!" I think we managed that quite well.



We flew to California on Thursday and classes started Friday at 5:00. We arrived early in order to change into our uniforms, and discovered people had come from all over the country to train. We even saw some old friends, among them Sensei Tony Roberts. There were several huge drums in the middle of the floor, and we were soon treated to a fantastic taiko performance with three talented drummers, which was a thrilling way to start the weekend! After a brief welcome from Renshi Ishii, we launched right into practicing basics, kata and repetition exercises. Hanshi Taira spoke to all of us through an interpreter, and arranged us first in two lines, then in two concentric circles so we could all hear and understand his instructions.

That night after class many of us went out and ate dinner together at a nearby Japanese restaurant. The fellowship amongst Matsubayashi-ryu practitioners was priceless and the food was excellent. The Terasaki Budokan is in the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles, so there was no shortage of wonderful places to visit. Our time there was also during Nisei Week, the oldest and largest Japanese cultural festival in the United States, so everyone was looking forward to the upcoming festivities.

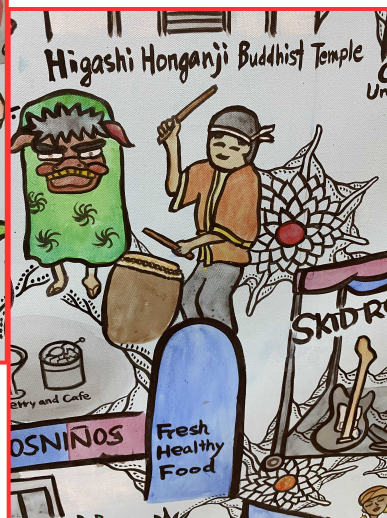
Lots of Learning in LALA Land – Continued

Saturday was an interesting day. We rose before the sun, as Chris had done some research and found a Zen temple where we would be welcome to come for meditation. It was within walking distance, and we arrived in plenty of time to get some instruction from one of the monks there. It was such a peaceful practice; 40 minutes of seated meditation followed by 10 minutes of walking meditation, and then 40 more minutes of seated meditation. It was a great way to clear our minds for the classes ahead.



We again arrived early at the Teraski Budokan, and Saturday meant longer classes that included not only basics and kata, but some fun arm training and many drills. Each dojo also participated in demos at the end of the day. After some deliberation, our group decided to perform Ananku, and then honored Hanshi Grant by presenting Yakusoku Kumite Group A, Number 4. There was a banquet that evening hosted outside on the patio of the facility, and we were all able to mingle and get to know one another better over a delicious meal prepared by Renshi Ishii's organization.

Jeff and I were unable to stay for Sunday's parade and festivities, but were extremely grateful for the chance to attend such a once-in-a-lifetime event. Many thanks to the WSKF for making our travel to LALA Land possible.



Dojo Updates

Martial Arts and Family Fitness Dojo-Centerburg, OH Lori McPeek – Roku-Dan

August was a busy month for us at the dojo. Sensei Jack McPeek and Sensei Lori McPeek traveled to Los Angeles, CA the first part of August to attend a seminar put on by Sensei Art Ishii of Los Angeles. Taira Kaicho, the president of the WMKA, taught the seminar. He asked Sensei Art Ishii to invite the WSKF members to this seminar. Three other WSKF members Jeff and Joyce Bentle, and Chris Bosma also attended this seminar. It was an honor for the WSKF to be invited to the WMKA seminar. We all enjoyed the training and meeting new people. Everyone was welcoming. The last evening we all were treated to dinner. After dinner groups of students participated in a demonstrations. Our group performed Ananku and Hanshi Grant's Yakusoku, number 4 of group A. Attending this seminar was another great step in the building of a relationship with Taira and the WMKA. In the later part of August, Evan McPeek traveled to Martha's Vineyard to train with Sensei Peter Cronig and his students.

The North Atlantic Shorin Ryu Karate Association-Martha's Vineyard, MA Peter Cronig – Hachi-Dan

During the month of August we were honored to have Evan McPeek from the Martial Arts & Family Fitness Center spend a week with us on Martha's Vineyard. It's always nice to get together with Evan and train with him. As many of you know Evan brings a lot of knowledge to share when it involves Shorin Ryu Matsubayashi Ryu and our Federation. He has a lot of energy and makes training a lot of fun. We spent time on the details of our basics, katas and yoko soko forms. One class was exclusively on the kata Kusanku. We used Master Nagamine's book and Hanshi Grants book to help us through our analysis. By the time class ended we were drenched. But we learned an enormous amount going through this fascinating kata. The next day it was tough to walk.

When we weren't training we explored each town of the Island and ate at some of the local restaurants and breakfast shops. We got together with Sensei Tod Bassett and his wife Lee and sailed on their sailboat Magic Carpet. Evan and his family had sailed on this boat almost 25 years ago, so it was a great reunion.

Evan, Thank you for traveling out to the Vineyard, sharing your knowledge and having some fun with us.

I hope to see everyone in June 2027.



Black Belt Book Club

Lori McPeek – Roku-Dan

The black belt book club had its first meeting Sunday, September 6th. We discussed the first 51 pages of Master Nagamine's book, *The Essence Of Okinawan Karate-Do*. Discussions were held on topics that captivated many of the individuals of the book club. We talked about the forward by Jugo Toma where he pointed out that Master Nagamine stated "karate must be a defensive art from the beginning to the end." One of the members of the book club stated that this saying was a paradox as the karate we study can be so deadly. We had a lively discussion about this topic.

Another topic discussed was that the Okinawan people are peaceful people and how this peacefulness permeates their culture and their martial arts. Someone pointed out the paragraph in the book where Master Nagamine was writing about true world peace. It was stated that Master Nagamine said it ("true world peace) can only be achieved when all weapons of mass destruction are put aside. The peaceful and weaponless Okinawans are living proof of the possibility of a world without war. All people could live in peace if they would follow the example of the Okinawans." (Page 13). This topic lead into a discussion by the students in the book club group who visited Okinawa last October. We talked about how peaceful the atmosphere was and how kind the Okinawa people were to us. We also talked about walking around during the nighttime and feeling completely safe.

An additional topic discussed was what karate-do is according to the various examples given by Master Nagamine in these first 51 pages. We all had different ideas from the book to share on this topic.

We also discussed Master Nagamine's three teachers. Someone said interestingly that Master Nagamine learned from a dancer, a fighter, and a poet. This was likened to what idea of what karate-do is. We had fun discussing this topic too. It is not to late to join the black belt book club if you are interested in becoming a part of the group.

Martha's Vineyard Visit

Evan McPeck - Yon-Dan

At the end of August I was fortunate enough to take a week off work and visit Martha's Vineyard. My visit was mostly a work vacation, but also the Martha's Vineyard dojo was the first satellite dojo of the WSKF, and it was a great opportunity to connect with the history of the island and the dojo, and to train with the great folks of The North Atlantic Shorin Ryu Karate Association.

During the day, I visited the many sites of the small island, including several museums, and many art galleries. We also took to the open water by sail boat. Sensei Tod Bassett may have retired from training, but he is a part of the island's karate history as well. His boat, Magic Carpet, was beautiful, and I don't know what they were thinking, but he and his wife Lee let me steer it for what seemed like half the trip; I was having a fantastic time at the helm, even as we dipped to what seemed like a 40° angle as the wind picked up. I developed my sea legs during my time in the Navy, so I was comfortable with the angle, but not everyone else was as sure, but Tod and Lee were still smiling and chatting as we took the angles, which reassured everyone that this was expected. Throughout the trip there was abundant opportunities for fresh and delicious seafood, and I took full advantage.

By night, we either trained, or had social gatherings with old WSKF students and other island inhabitants and friends. During the social gatherings we exchanged stories from our training, or from other aspects of our lives and journeys; we reminisced, reflected, and discussed the future. It was enjoyable to hear some stories of the early days of training; some I had heard before but from different viewpoints, and some I was hearing for the first time.

The highlight of the trip was the training. Firstly, the dojo is beautiful and peaceful, However, it's the people on the deck that make it valuable. Training with another dojo is a great opportunity; exchanging knowledge, discussing theory and application, and exploring techniques in depth is different when you're away from your home Dojo or hosting visitors. We had a black belt class just on Kusanku, and while I know we all felt it the next day, I think we all learned something new. I would like to thank Sensei Cronig, Sensei Eldredge, and the students of The North Atlantic Shorin Ryu Karate Association for the excellent training and shared knowledge.

I would also like to again express my appreciation to Sensei Cronig for his amazing hospitality. It was a wonderful experience, and I'm thinking about trying to go back again next year. I discussed with Sensei Cronig the possibility of arranging a small group visit next year, and he seemed excited by the possibility. We decided that an early fall visit would be the most feasible. So, I'd like to extend the opportunity to anyone who is genuinely interested in visiting and training on the island with me next year to please reach out and let me know. We don't have all the details worked out yet, and the trip will carry a cost, but I can guarantee that the experience, and the training, will be worth it.



Traveling Training Group Opportunity

Evan McPeck - Yon-Dan

Something that has become increasingly clear to me as I have advanced in my own training is the importance of training with others. Master Nagamine credited multiple other sensei with shaping his karate, and we know that Hanshi Grant also sought out the master because he felt something was missing. While each of our home dojos, and each of our senseis will always be the most important aspect of our individual training, we have to understand that our federation holds a great deal of distributed knowledge and experience.

While I was struggling with certain kata while preparing for both my San-Dan and my Yon-Dan promotions, I sought assistance from outside of my dojo. I asked my sensei for permission to train with other senior black belts in the federation, I explained to him what I was looking for, and why I thought those black belts could help me. He understood my desire, and agreed that they would be a good choice to help me overcome the difficulties I was experiencing. I was also fortunate that the black belts I had chosen were willing to help me, and we set up several classes a few months apart. Thanks to both my sensei, and these senior black belts, I felt that my last promotions were my best.

In discussing the early days of Matsubayashi-Ryu, and of the WSKF with people who were training at the time, I am further convinced of the value of gathering to train. When the WSKF was smaller, each year members from the Martha's Vineyard dojo would travel to Ohio for a week to train, and each year member's from the Ohio dojos would make a similar trip to the Vineyard to train. I believe these frequent trips ensured the dojos, which were separated by distance, stayed connected and advanced their training together.

Additionally, I have spoken before how each of us are on a unique journey. While we're training the same style, we all learn and unlock its secrets in a different order. There isn't a right or wrong path on this journey, but there is an excellent opportunity for us to meet and exchange our knowledge, and to learn from those who came before. In last quarter's newsletter we republished an article written in 1989 about the biggest mistakes in training. That article opened by saying "there are two ways to become a champion. The slow way is to learn from your own mistakes. The other way, which is more efficient, is to learn from the mistakes of others." It is in this spirit that I am trying to organize a traveling training group within the federation.

The idea behind the training group is that once a quarter we will organize a class with another sensei in the federation. We will travel to their dojo or place of training for a special class. For a few hours, we will learn whatever they most desire to teach us; whatever knowledge they want to ensure they can impart so that we can carry it forward to the next generation of the federation. After class, we'd also have a social gathering so that they can share stories, knowledge, or philosophy, and so that we can all grow the comradery of the federation.

This idea is not fully formed, so I am inviting others who think it's a worthwhile endeavor to help me develop it. This opportunity is open to all ranks within the WSKF, however, you must have your sensei's permission to join. Also, since we'll be traveling to other dojos, you'll need to have your own means of transportation, or a very good friend/parent who is willing to transport you! If you're interested, please send an email to newsletter.wskf@gmail.com with the subject "traveling training group."

Budo Aspirations

Jim Sage – Yon-Dan

I would face the light fully
From that first moment
When it slams across the skies
To belittle the powers of night.

Mountains I would straddle
To greet the gale
As it moves and molests
And cuts its opening.

Oceans I would drink
For their currents of life
And ceaseless surges
To encompass the land.

Thunder I would sing, and lightening shower
To wake the surface sleepers
To sources unknown
And causes unlearned.

Everywhere would I be
To watch the turn
To feel the swell
And fondle the blemish.

For ages I would recur
To glance again and again
On sweet struggle, prudent sorrow
And efforts of love.