

## My Karate Journey, Part 26 - Summary of 2022; the PROMISE of

2023!!!

This year has indeed been an “INTERESTING” one!! Following MORE than two years of COVID and all its evil cousins, 2022 started with a huge NEGATIVE bang! The Omicron variant spread like wildfire to remind people that the disease is NOT ready to say “goodbye.” As I write this in December of 2022, Hawaii lost 5 more to Omicron last week, with almost 1000 more cases! And, as if THAT wasn’t enough, this year’s flu season has been devastating for many, plus the emergence of the RSV virus!

On the world scene, aside from the continuing Omicron and flu/RSV scare, several significant events have created MORE fear and hatred! Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, China’s shutdown of its factories due to COVID, and Saudi Arabia’s cut in oil production have ALL created worldwide shortages in food, tech, production, and commerce. Global warming has accelerated, and climate changes are more apparent, with record-breaking extremes of summer heat and drought, and winter cold, including massive winter storms and tornados!!

On the national scene, aside from weather extremes, the January 6 Committee’s focused attention and efforts have finally shed light on those involved, including Donald Trump, who instigated this tragedy. The country STILL suffers from anger and divisiveness, and we have yet to recover! Mass shootings seem to have overtaken caring and understanding, and the Supreme Court’s decision to rescind Roe Vs. Wade has driven the stake even deeper into the division! Trump, indeed, opened Pandora’s Box, unleashing evil upon our country!!

Here in Hawaii, the DOH (Department of Health) and Hawaii officials have loosened restrictions radically. They have begun to allow unmasking in public areas, and tourists to once again travel to Hawaii with NO restrictions or requirements. Their rationale? COVID is here to stay, so we might as well learn to live with it! This decision has been GREAT for Hawaii businesses and the travel industry, which suffered for 2 1/2 years, many of them forced to shut down due to lack of business. At the same time, it has been AWFUL for those who are immune-compromised, have health issues, or are elderly.

There IS, however, some GOOD NEWS!!! HSK persevered, with online classes on Zoom for two years, and the reopening of our dojo for in-person instruction at the MJLS (Manoa Japanese Language School) in April. Needless to say, this opening was highly anticipated ... AND highly worrisome!!! HSK has “stuck to its guns,” requiring all students, instructors, and parents to be fully vaccinated, have a temperature check before each training, AND masking during each session. These “hard-line” requirements have kept us open AND HEALTHY since our return!!! Some members HAVE gotten sick, but NOT because of HSK or its activities. ALL feel a sense of responsibility and family, and are very careful that they are well before returning to the dojo.

After 4 months of training in the judo facility, the decision was made to move to the classrooms, where the conditions were much better suited for our training. Although the space is still limited, the solid floors and ventilation make for GREAT workouts. Our move was in August, and we have been there since.

“Normalcy” is slowly sinking in, and our classes have been doing VERY well. Today, 12/3, marks another milestone for HSK. We are having the return of our annual Christmas party!! In fact, this is our FIRST social

event since COVID hit three years ago!! I'm certainly looking forward to THIS one!!!

We have already held several belt promotion exams, with one scheduled for next Saturday, 12/10. Our beginners class has been working very hard since their first exam for yellow belt back in September, with their next exam for blue belt scheduled for mid-January of 2023.

As we wrap up 2022, I feel good about the prospects for 2023. After struggling to walk in heavy fog for 2 1/2 years, I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel — and it brightens with each passing day!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY, HEALTHY, and SAFE NEW 2023!!  
LOVE YOU ALL!!!**

Alan Sekiguchi, December 07, 2022