



AJA NEWSLETTER

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Constitutional Amendments Increase NSCB Responsibilities

By David Boesel

In December, 2016 AJA's Board of Directors approved changes to the Constitution that add to the responsibilities of the National Standards and Certification Board (NSCB), chaired by Harold Zeidman. The NSCB is composed of the Chair and the three regional directors (Northern, Southern, and Western Regions).

A growing problem in the AJA has been the inability of black belts (Yudansha) who no longer have active senseis to get promoted. This is especially the case for senseis whose own senseis have retired or died. It also applies to Yudansha whose rank is one degree below that of their sensei, since the sensei cannot promote up to his/her own rank.

To address this problem, one part of the constitutional amendment specifies that the NSCB shall "meet at least twice a year to consider for promotion any active Yudansha who does not have a sensei who can promote him or her and to make promotion decisions regarding individuals in this group (the NSCB may take applications or initiate consideration)." So individual Yudansha who meet the criterion may apply directly to the NSCB or the NSCB may promote individuals on its own initiative. This formulation also allows for recommendations for promotion to the NSCB.

Another related problem is that some Yudansha who meet the AJA time-in-grade timelines are nevertheless not considered for promotion. This may occur because they lack active senseis or because their own senseis don't keep track of time-in-grade. To address this problem, a second part of the amendment requires that the NSCB "regularly notify senseis of yudansha whose time in grade conforms to AJA's time guidelines for promotion (e.g., two years for promotion from shodan to nidan, three years for promotion from nidan to sandan, etc.)." This provision merely ensures that the yudansha's sensei, or the NSCB, is aware that an individual conforms to the time guidelines for promotion. It is entirely up to the sensei to decide whether to act on this information. It is also important to note that the time-in-grade provisions are guidelines, not rules. Other factors include, but are not limited to, performance as sensei, advanced technical skill, and/or contribution to AJA or the art of jujitsu.

Modifying and amending the Constitution is a work in progress. The Constitution in its current form contains some inconsistencies that need to be resolved, ambiguities that need to be clarified, and outdated provisions which no longer apply as AJA procedures and policies have evolved over the last decade or more. We're going to take it slow and consult broadly before drafting any changes.

*The Board of Directors and Administrative Staff wish you,
and yours, a very safe and Happy New Year!*

Women Warriors

By Amanda Diddlemeyer

Women are definitely in the minority when it comes to martial arts. Sure, there are women practitioners—really good ones—but they tend to be few and far between. That's because society still pushes women into gender roles. Women are generally expected to wear dresses, makeup, and high heels. We are taught to avoid confrontation. Women who take charge, act aggressively, or fight are viewed negatively, especially by other women. We are supposed to "act like ladies." The trouble is, acting like a lady usually means being passive or submissive. That can make it hard for women to get into jujitsu.

As for me, I've always been a bit of a tomboy. As a kid, I was way more interested in helping my dad in the garage, climbing trees, or wrestling with my cousins than playing dress up or shopping. Frankly, I still am. Even so, I found that some things in jujitsu took a bit more effort for me to do than for the men in my class – not because of physical strength, but because of mental roadblocks. First of all, it can be a little unnerving to get up close and personal with strangers, especially men. I was nervous at first about grabbing a random guy's arm and very nervous about doing ground randori. Who wouldn't be concerned about wrestling with some sweaty guy you barely know who outweighs you by at least 30 pounds?

Beyond discomfort, many women are genuinely worried about hurting someone. Yes, we want to defend ourselves, but we don't want to hurt our fellow students. So, we hesitate and don't commit to attacks; we apologize to the people we throw and make sure they're okay after every submission—but we shouldn't. We need to stop reinforcing our own stereotype. If we apologize constantly, hold back, or give in every time, we aren't respecting our fellow jujitsuka or ourselves. The good news is, this is something we can change!

Individually, we have to realize that it's going to be uncomfortable initially and that's okay. If we are ever in a situation where we need to apply what we've learned, that's going to be uncomfortable too. Confidence is key. Women can hold their own against men: just search on YouTube, it's out there! Over time, we gain confidence and physical strength, and learn to be aggressive in a good way. It just takes a commitment to keep on practicing and genuinely try in every class.

It takes time, but we are more than capable of overcoming our hesitations and anxieties. We are our own worst enemy and harshest judge. We need to remind ourselves that we are tough women practicing jujitsu because we want to be strong and confident. More importantly, we need to encourage other women to give it a try and stick with it.

Upcoming Events

Hosting an Event?

Please send pertinent info (what, when, where, cost, how to register) to:

Newsletter@AJA-email.org

Enhancements to the AJA Website

by Scott Finley

We've been busy making improvements to the AJA website, but we haven't told you much about them. This seems like a good time to fix that.

In 2015:

We enabled sensei to renew dojos and members instantly online, with easy, secure payments through PayPal.

Senseis can now apply online for promotion certificates for their students and themselves, and approved applications can be viewed online.

We transformed the Black Belt list from a hard-to-maintain pdf file to an always-updated online list. Kristine Wiscarson (AJA's tireless Membership Coordinator and Board Secretary) added *every* past Yudansha we could find to the database.

Senseis can easily find past AJA members and renew them with a click or two if they return to a dojo after a hiatus.

Records of members who switch dojos can be retained; Kristine can easily move members (in the database) to their new dojo on request.

Senseis can manage their students' early kyu ranks on the website and record any changes in contact information.

Sankyu and higher ranks are now managed as part of the promotion certification process.

New dojos still have some old-fashioned paperwork to do, but current dojos will generally have none. Most sensei took advantage of these new features for 2016 memberships, and the feedback was quite favorable.

In 2016, we designed, developed, and released additional enhancements:

In January 2016, *all* the dojos fell off of the website's directory on New Year's Day and didn't reappear until they were renewed. Since they were not AJA-registered dojos at that moment, they did not appear on the site. Now the website will accept dojo and member renewals as early as November 1st before the new year. These early renewals are good through the next calendar year and protect a dojo from expiring at all. We've also added a six-week grace period after January 1st. We still urge you to renew your dojo before the end of the year to prevent any lapse in membership benefits, but at least our online directory will be patient about it after the beginning of the new year.

There has been some confusion about sensei re-using individual AJA member numbers after those members have left their dojo. The new database protects against that by rejecting re-used numbers.

We had been getting a lot of nonsense "new dojo" submissions caused by automated probes, so we added "Captcha" support to that screen to prevent those submissions.

We've added a large number of back issues of the newsletter to the website, though the set is still far from complete (please let me know if you have any that are missing from the website).

We had to give up one feature from 2015: a PayPal feature enabled students to pay their individual membership fees electronically using a "Public URL" from PayPal, which had to be sent to the individual by their sensei. Unfortunately the feature proved unreliable, and fixing it would have blown our budget.

Continued on page 5...

Bargain Prices For Uniforms and Martial Arts Supplies

Dave Boesel

The AJA has made an arrangement with Golden Tiger Martial Art that enables its members to buy uniforms, belts, and other martial arts supplies at bargain prices. To see their offerings, please go to www.goldentiger.com or key "Golden Tiger Martial Art" into Google.

Golden Tiger has agreed to discount their already-low prices for AJA members by 30% - 50%. Their products are of good quality. The AJA currently buys the embroidered belts that we offer to new Shodans from Golden Tiger.

To make a purchase, your sensei must do two things:

1. Order the supplies online.
2. Immediately send an email to joon-suh@goldentiger.com and to our Membership Director, Kristine Wiscarson (Membership@AJA-email.org) affirming that his or her dojo is an AJA member.



STUDENTS & PARENTS: CONCUSSION AWARENESS

Injuries or concussions are very rare in AJA dojos. However, they do occasionally occur. Here is some really usable information on concussion awareness for you as a parent and as a student. Please download this information, read it, and keep it for future reference:

For students/athletes:

www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/athletes.html

For parents:

www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/parents.html

For general information:

www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/index.html

SENSEI/INSTRUCTOR: CONCUSSION AWARENESS TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

If you're an instructor and NOT yet Concussion Awareness Training certified go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/> take the FREE 30 minute course, pass the FREE exam, and secure your FREE Concussion Awareness Training Certificate. This is an insurance coverage requirement.

Also, make sure you're making the information presented above in Students & Parents: Concussion Awareness, available to your students and their parents on a regular basis, either by printing up the documents and handing them out in class or providing students and parents with the links so they can download the information themselves.

Content

If you have content you would like published in the AJA Newsletter, please send it to:

Newsletter@AJA-email.org

Types of content requested:

- Articles about jujitsu, your students, or your dojo
- Upcoming Events
- Personal Interest events

Website Changes continued from page 3...

In addition, there are still some areas on the website that are out of date. In some cases (like the Events page) we just need better information about upcoming events. In other cases (such as the blog) we simply need contributions, or perhaps some cross-fertilization with the newsletter. Your thoughts about other neglected areas are welcome, but please keep in mind that we are all volunteers.

We are making plans for the next round of enhancements, though we haven't yet scheduled them. If you have any suggestions, please don't hesitate to send an email. The website is for *you*.

Please note that every sensei should have a username and password for the website (americanjujitsuassociation.org) to take advantage of these features. The "Sensei Login" is at the lower right corner of the home page. If you still need a username, please request one by emailing me at webmaster@americanjujitsuassociation.org.

Mudansha Promotions

Name	Rank	Date	Dojo
Chris Murphy	Nikyu	10/3/2016	Reston Virginia YMCA Jujitsu Dojo
Coral Burke	Nikyu	10/20/2016	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
Roger Chen	Nikyu	12/19/2016	Reston Virginia YMCA Jujitsu Dojo
Stewart Burke	Nikyu	10/20/2016	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
Bill Dzeda	Sankyu	12/12/2016	NOVA Jujitsu
John Valceanu	Sankyu	10/11/2016	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
Kelly O'Briant	Sankyu	10/11/2016	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
Jessica Broadwater	Gokyu	11/8/2016	Baltimore School of Self Defense
Claire Allen	Rokyu	12/20/2016	Baltimore School of Self Defense
Raphael Reggie	Rokyu	10/12/2016	Towson Daitobukan Dojo
Sol Fitzgerald	Shichikyu	10/12/2016	Towson Daitobukan Dojo

About the American Ju-Jitsu Association

The American Ju-Jitsu Association was founded in 1972, by George Kirby and William Fromm at the request of their sensei, Jack Seki, for the purpose of bringing different ryu of the art together in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and respect. Since that time it has grown from two dojo to approximately twenty-four, plus international affiliates. The AJA has established itself as a reputable organization within the martial arts community and works closely with other major Ju-Jitsu organizations in the United States and internationally in areas of mutual concern.

The AJA is a non-profit amateur athletic association registered with both the state of California and the United States government [IRS code 501(c)(3)]. It is a non-profit corporation with a charitable foundation status. Although originally recognized by the IRS as a "social club" because there was no other way to recognize the AJA as an amateur athletic association, formal recognition of the AJA as a true amateur athletic association, according to the criteria of the United States government, was secured in 1976 under the Sports Act of that year. To our knowledge, the AJA is the only martial arts organization in the U.S. that is classified by the IRS as an amateur athletic association.

Board of Directors

Position	Name	Email
President & Chairman	David Boesel	President@AJA-email.org
Vice President	Jeff Wynn	VP@AJA-email.org
Secretary	Kristine Wiscarson	Secretary@AJA-email.org
Treasurer	Marc Tucker	Treasurer@AJA-email.org
Western Region Director	Tony Damigo	WRDirector@AJA-email.org
Southern Region Director & International Competition Coordinator	Thomas Salander	SRDirector@AJA-email.org
Northern Region Director	Paul Klara	NRDirector@AJA-email.org
Director	Gene Roos	Director@AJA-email.org
Director	Scott Finley	Webmaster@AJA-email.org

Administrative Staff

Position	Name	Email
Certificates Coordinator	Barry Stebbins	Certificates@AJA-email.org
Communication Director / Newsletter Publisher	John M. Landry	Communications@AJA-email.org
Historian	Mike Balog	Historian@AJA-email.org
Materials Coordinator	Jeff Rice	Materials@AJA-email.org
Membership	Kristine Wiscarson	Membership@AJA-email.org
National Awards	Vacant	Awards@AJA-email.org
National Standards & Certification Board	Harold Zeidman	NSCB@AJA-email.org
Newsletter Editor	Will Harris	Newsletter@AJA-email.org
Recruitment	Sherry Gibson	Recruitment@AJA-email.org
Webmaster	Scott Finley	Webmaster@AJA-email.org

