

Valley martial artist heads to European conference to instruct

• [Justin Strawser](#) Sep 6, 2016

Justin Strawser/The Daily Item



Jack Richford, 70, of Shamokin, is presenting two workshops about martial arts at the Aiki Euro 2016 conference in the village of Burwell, from Sept. 9-11. The event is coordinated with the Aiki Extensions Foundations USA.

SHAMOKIN — A 70-year-old retired Shamokin man is traveling to England next weekend to present two workshop for a martial arts conference for the second time.

Jack Richford, who has been studying Aikido for 25 years, will teach others about Aikido at the Aiki Euro 2016 conference in the village of Burwell, which is just north of the historic town of Cambridge, from Sept. 9-11. The event is coordinated with the Aiki Extensions Foundations USA.

“It’s about taking the practices off the mat,” said Richford, founder of the Center for Movement Arts in Shamokin where he instructs 25 students. “A lot of people think it’s beating people up. It’s about learning to get along with people. That’s why it’s called the Art of Peace.”

The conference is an opportunity “to participate in a festival of aikido, where we will explore the principles of aikido both on the mat, but also by participating in various workshops that explore how these same principles can be used in off-the-mat situations or in related arts,” according to its website. For the first workshop, Richford is working with Christian Vanhenten to present using techniques in the business world. Richford worked with Dr. Ted Kendris to translate Vanhenten’s book into English, a

project set to be released at the 2016 event. For the second workshop, Richford will present using martial arts movements for stress relief.

Aikido is a traditional Japanese martial art that translates as the way to unify and harmonize with universal energy. Aikido training teaches an individual to blend with energy so as not to meet force with force. The flowing movements of Aikido allow for the redirection and neutralization of the energy contained in the incoming attack, Richford said. “The ultimate aim of Aikido, like all traditional martial arts, is self-development in the face of conflict,” Richford said. “This philosophy of Aikido is used as a means of dealing with all aspects of life. Aikido teaches you how to manage confrontations and helps you stay calm and centered in the midst of adversity. The goal of Aikido is the development of patience and compassion as expressed through its techniques. The physical aspects of Aikido are just a stepping stone to the true understanding of peace and harmony.”

The conference will include a wide variety of authors and trainers that focus on using the martial arts as a model for developing leadership and organization cultures. It will be Richford’s second time presenting at this conference. He also participated in 2014 in England.

Following the first conference in 2014, Richford and Dr. Ted Kendris collaborated with Vanhenten, a colleague from Belgium, on the translation of Vanhenten’s French book about the use of Aikido and Communication Theory (AikiCom). Kendris, a published author of educational materials and an instructor of French language at Bloomsburg University and Richford traveled to Belgium last summer as part of this project. The New English translation “In Search of Martial Kindness” is slated to be released at this 2016 event.

Richford graduated from Mother of the Savior Seminary/High School in New Jersey in 1963 and St. Charles College/Seminary with an Associate Degree in 1965. After four years in the U.S. Navy he returned to school and graduated with a degree in philosophy and education from Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina in 1971. He graduated with a master’s degree in counseling in 1975 from The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. He worked in the school systems in and around Richmond, VA from 1976 through 2008. After retirement he moved to Shamokin to care for his mother in 2009, has been an adjunct instructor at Luzerne County Community College in Shamokin and opened up the martial arts center.

The Center for Movement Arts (501c3) is located at 200 North Cherry St. in Shamokin. The Center offers classes for Children and Adults in Aikido, Karate and Tai Chi. Plans are underway to offer Yoga in the near future. The Center also offers outreach programming for special events such as the Annual Peace Week Festival in September; Peace Camp, sponsored by Shamokin Rotary; Homeschool Students Special Classes; and Special Family Group Activities.

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http://www.dailyitem.com/news/valley-martial-artist-heads-to-european-conference-to-instruct/article_81f4bf56-743f-11e6-878d-7311ba3314da.html