

15 MINUTES

## 80 years of jujitsu

Chico Kodenkan's story is one of tradition, cooperation and family. The dojo practices Danzan Ryu jujitsu, an integrated martial arts system founded by Japanese-Hawaiian Master Henry Seishiro Okazaki during the 1920s. After studying with Okazaki in Hawaii, Merlin "Bud" Estes brought Danzan Ryu home, opening the Chico Judo and Jujitsu Academy in 1939. Along with Bay Area instructor Ray Law, Estes is credited with spreading Okazaki's system throughout the mainland. In 1978, Estes partnered with sensei Richard Radcliffe and renamed the dojo Chico Kodenkan to honor Okazaki's Hawaiian institution. The dojo moved several times before settling at its current location at 254 E. First St. This marks its 80th year in Chico. Delina Fuchs (pictured) has been with Chico Kodenkan continuously since 1978, first as a student, then as a sensei, board member and school head. The CN&R caught up with Fuchs to discuss the dojo, which welcomes all ages and skill levels with a variety of classes. Go to [chicokodenkan.org](http://chicokodenkan.org) for more info.

### Tell me about Danzan Ryu.

There are several styles of classical Japanese jujitsu that are part of [Master Okazaki's] system, as well as influences from Chinese boxing, Okinawan martial arts and Filipino martial arts, but perhaps an even greater influence is Hawaiian lua, the tribal martial art of Hawaii. Then there is the healing arts component, Seifukujujutsu, which includes massage therapy, sports medicine, bone alignment and physical therapy—comprehensive body work.

### What makes Chico Kodenkan unique?

We're a volunteer nonprofit. Our nonprofit status accompanies our attitude about serving and empowering people. I'm an educator and we're not financially motivated—I don't get a paycheck here, there's no belt-testing fee. The Hawaiian influence is this thing called kokua, which is to cooperate and to help one another. This is the core of our interac-



PHOTO COURTESY OF KODENKAN

tions because we are ohana, Hawaiian for family. The dojo and the people—this is our ohana and we practice kokua—giving each other massage and helping each other out.

### A lot of people default to Brazilian jiu-jitsu and Ultimate Fighting Championship when they think of jujitsu. What's your distinction?

I don't stereotype any martial art, but the focus in this country is towards sport. Sport has a different goal. We're a traditional martial art. This is really about mastering yourself—personal self mastery for a lifelong practice. Hence the healing arts are just as important, if not more so, than the martial arts aspect. Jujitsu that is true to its core is not about force against force, but utilizing force efficiently to execute technique.

### What other classes do you offer?

I also have a black belt in Nishio Ryu Toho Iaido, which is Japanese sword drawing. I opened up a weapons class for people who want to practice. The Capoeira Malês group is here and there's also Aikijujitsu, which has its roots in both aikido and jujitsu. The Asian Healthcare Association is run by Michael Turk, a master teacher, writer and acupuncturist, who has a clinic here two days a week. We've got a lot going on.

—NATE DALY

## THE GOODS

## Repurposing and craft-beer nuptials



by  
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As we all know, especially here in Butte County following the Camp Fire, housing is a major issue. I was encouraged last week to see the Board of Supervisors take a major step to address it—and homelessness—via a new program and four county staff positions. Local municipalities also are taking up the issue, at workshops and in public meetings. Let's see where this goes!

In the meantime, I've noticed quite a bit of infill happening. Two moderate-size properties near where I live in southwest Chico were recently razed and are in the process of being replaced by what appear to be duplexes. I'm sure it'll affect traffic in my neck of the woods, but people need places to live, so I'll deal with it.

There's an innovative project going through the planning approval process and being proposed for the old **Chico Racquet Club** building on Rio Lindo Avenue, which has sat vacant for many years. Instead of tearing it down or putting a new club in its place, **Airehart Construction** has proposed to turn it into apartments—19 of them. The pool will remain, as well as the indoor bike parking. And there are already enough spots in the parking lot. It's cool to see people thinking outside the box and addressing two issues at once: blight and a need for housing. Keep it up.

**CRAFT-BEER WEDDING** I mentioned a few weeks ago the contest being held by **Sierra Nevada Brewing Co.** to choose an engaged couple to get married at this year's **Oktoberfest**. Well, the winners have been chosen. **Andrew and Katie**, who live in San Francisco but hail from Chico, were deemed most worthy of the extravagant occasion: They'll get transportation, a honeymoon suite, cake, flowers, food and photos, plus tickets to Oktoberfest for 50 guests. Not bad!

One of the main criteria for the contest was demonstrating—via personal video—a deep love of craft beer. Their story was pretty compelling: "I knew it was her when she ordered a Sierra Nevada Oktoberfest on our first date," said Andrew. "And I had a Pale Ale in my hand when I asked her to marry me." The wedding will take place on opening night—Sept. 27—in front of approximately 3,500 people.

**SHOUT OUT** To the mystery woman who saw me having a bad morning while trying to cheer up with good food at **Old Barn Kitchen**, thank you for breakfast. Your quiet generosity—and the Icelandic Benedict—brightened my otherwise murky day.

**NEW FACE** I had a feeling when Gridley welcomed its huge community of fire survivors that business would start to ramp up. The first new face I've seen is a reinvention of the **Gridley Grill**. The former was down-home delicious, but the **Gridley Grill & Crab Shack** will certainly add something new to that stretch of Highway 99. Grand opening set for Sept. 28. (For more on Gridley's Camp Fire Community, see "Home, sweet temporary home," page 18.) □

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