

1st An Maide Mear Eire Stick Gathering



From William Flynn Sanders

I wanted everyone to know our very first annual gathering in the USA of An Maide Mear Eire was a fantastic success. With around 25 in attendance and students driving in from various states it was a perfect seminar. It was great seeing old students from Michigan, others I had only known by letter and internet and brand new friends as well. Danny Hoskins was the best of hosts and the facility for the seminar was professional with showers, mirrors, work out equipment and my accommodations provided were first class. The best part was seeing how great the skill level was from people who had never seen the stick before except from the DVD's and the forum. The quality and integrity of the people present were above board. The Police Chief of Troy as also in attendance as his son was a skillful participant. He told me afterwards how much he and his son had enjoyed it which was great to hear. This will be the home for the stick Gathering next year as well. The stick is growing all over the world and today we welcome a new member and study group in Switzerland to join the growing family of ardent An Maide Mear Eire practitioners as we all grow together worldwide. I am honored to be a part of this growing family and I show nothing but respect for those who are on the distance learning program breaking new personal barriers daily.

From Danny

Hi All. Thank you all for the kind words. Pendekar the seminar was awesome. You are a great teacher, deadly martial artist and a true class act. Jason, Scott and Phil thanks for coming out and look forward to working with you guys again. My group thanks you for the support. For those who missed out there's always next year. Take care.

From Phil

I just wanted to post a write-up of the swift stick Gathering this past weekend.

First of all, the facilities were great. We worked out in a room in a small gym, so there was plenty of equipment, mats, punching bags, etc. It got warm, but not overwhelmingly hot. Danny (the host) ran it like clockwork and was very personable and gracious. You could tell by the way he worked with some of the kids who showed up that he has a good relationship with the people that he works with and is a talented coach. Incidentally, there were a number of kids in attendance along with adults. I'm terrible at estimating these things, but I'd say there were about ten kids and as many adults in the seminar.

Email is a good way to communicate quickly, but it isn't a good way to get an impression of what someone is really like, so that was a good side benefit of the seminar as well. I got to meet some of the people who correspond on this list in person and really enjoyed all of them. Great people in this program. If you've watched any of Master Sanders' seminar DVDs, you've seen that he's very personable, a good communicator, patient, etc. That is actually how he is in person, and to me, that says a lot. Having seen my share of "masters" who sort of hold themselves aloof from their students, Master Sanders was very accessible, friendly, and happy to share. You got the feeling that you could have just as easily been hanging out in his backyard with him. Having only seen him by way of DVD and communicated by way of email, this was another seminar benefit that I appreciated a lot. Not to mention the new friendships and camaraderie that meeting the other guys in the program built up.

The seminar itself started with taking the 39 Thorns (those kids really knew their stuff, Danny) and breaking them apart into different drills. Speeding up the hits. Flowing into multiple attackers from multiple angles. The whole time, Master Sanders walked around helping with various corrections of technique. This section was helpful for me, not just for the drills themselves, but it gave me a good idea of how to take someone new to the system and give them new ways to work on it and move with it.

After that, we worked on new drills and applications for things such as whirlpool, cradle the baby, and the stick dance. We did not so much cover those specific things as we got tips on them and new ways to fight with them and new ways to practice them. Many different applications were also explored and practiced as drills. This was great because, rather than spend most of the time just rehashing material you could get on the DVD, the overwhelming majority of the time was new material supplementing and utilizing what you already knew to broaden your knowledge and application of it. In other words, you couldn't have gotten that knowledge anywhere else, and that alone made the seminar worth many times over what it actually cost. We did learn a few brand new attacks, such as the faerie darts and clearing the battlefield, but by and large, most of the seminar looked like, "You already know how to do X, but what you don't know, yet, is that you can use X for this, and this, and this, and you can flow into Y from X, like this, and that lets you do this, that, and the other thing." We also spent some time on stick vs. empty hand.

Very much an elaboration, synthesis, and advanced applications of knowledge.

The second day, we did some more advanced applications with cradle the baby. We also did some work with ground fighting using the stick as well as getting into fighting positions from casual positions.

The last leg of the seminar was spent on the internal aspects. We sat around Master Sanders as he read to us from his notes, and we learned about how to draw the solar, lunar, and telluric energies into the stick, bonding with the stick, and how to train in a natural setting and some of the additional benefits one gets from that. We learned rituals to facilitate these things as well as connecting with nature in general. Included in this were also snippets of poetry, story, and history that helped put these things in the historical context of the ancient Celts. I'm not exaggerating when I say that just this portion would have been worth the price of the seminar.

All in all, the amount of knowledge shared was immense, and virtually all of it was unique material that you wouldn't have gotten just from the DVD series. The opportunity to practice these things with other skilled practitioners under the watchful eye of Master Sanders himself is an experience that you can't put a price on. I feel like my skill with the stick magnified exponentially, and I still have so much more to learn and so much room to improve and grow. I felt like the seminar was not only a storehouse of new knowledge but was very useful in correcting me and keeping me in the right flow with my stick work. Also, from Master Sanders and others, I got a lot of great ideas about the study group, drills, etc.

I highly encourage people to attend these and, if the distance and/or cost seem too impractical, at least spend some time thinking about whether or not you could make the sacrifices necessary to make it practical. Obviously, you can't always realistically do that, but it's worth seriously trying to work it out. Like I said, the value of the actual seminar was far, far more than the actual costs, and if you have the opportunity to realistically attend one, I recommend doing what you can to make it happen.

From Scott

I wanted to give some input as well. I wanted to thank Danny for putting it together. Danny is a true gentleman and a great guy. He and his guys were a pleasure to train with and get to know, both during the seminar and afterward. The facility was great and everyone was especially nice.

Of course I have to thank Pendekar Sanders for his patience and kindness in teaching and answering all our questions. It was truly amazing to attend one of his seminars after quite a few years. The material was stuff we can spend months working on. I would urge any of the students not to miss an opportunity to learn from him in person. Despite all of the amazing things that he is into, he is a very approachable guy and was willing to listen and answer questions about all sorts of topics.

I would additionally like to thank Phil for being a great training partner and a good guy. I was happy for the opportunity to meet him.

Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to my regular training partner & PCP Brother, Jason, for proposing the trip down in the first place.

My best regards to all the students who came out for this event. This is the first event like this that I have ever attended with children. It was genuinely fun to work with them and help them out. I give credit to Danny for doing such a great job with them. They will be scary when they get older.