



# Bachi Beat



Summer 2007

Bachi Beat Editor: Karri Barry

## Join Us At Natsu Matsuri, Watsonville Taiko's Summer Festival

Would you like to learn how to roll sushi? Put on a kimono? Practice your origami? Or perhaps you enjoy taiko drumming, shamisen or Japanese folk singing? Watsonville Taiko invites you to join us for our Summer Festival at the La Selva Beach Club House on Sunday, July 29, 2007 from 12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M..

For the last seven years we have invited the public to celebrate summer which is a Japanese tradition. The Natsu Matsuri festival offers you the opportunity to hear Japanese songs and music, to listen to Japanese instruments and explore Japanese crafts. The day is organized to give everyone, from children to adults, an opportunity to enjoy a festive afternoon.

The crafts include: calligraphy - which you can use to make your own Tanzaku (banner), origami, Daruma making (good luck gourd), and flower arranging.

And you won't want to miss our great food which includes teriyaki chicken, salads, chicken curry over rice (the best you'll ever have), cold somen, Italian soda offered by our youth group, and, although not traditional, strawberry shortcake. Or, you may decide to make your own sushi for lunch with help of expert sushi makers

Our famous silent auction opens at 12 noon and tables begin to close at 2:30 P.M. and continue through the afternoon. You will be surprised at the variety of items on our tables which include bamboo plants, gift certificates, gift baskets and much more. All items were collected by our Watsonville Taiko drummers. And once again this year to our delight, there will be a handmade quilt, made by two of our members.

And don't miss the raffle at the end of the day. With your paid admission, you'll receive one raffle ticket and have the chance to designate which raffle prize you want once you are inside. Just put your raffle ticket in the container in front of the item you want, and hope your number is called!

Our drumming community wants to share our cultural heritage and deepen the community's understanding of Japanese culture and arts. All proceeds go to supporting our classes, performances and the making of our drums.



This festival is funded in part by a grant from the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County



We hope you will join us.

**When:** Sunday, July 29, 2007  
12:00 – 5:00pm

**Where:** La Selva Beach Clubhouse  
314 Estrella Avenue  
La Selva Beach, CA

**Tickets:** Adults \$10  
Children 12 & under \$3  
Children 5 & under FREE

**Contact:** Taeko D'Andrea  
Watsonville Taiko  
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[www.watsonvilletaike.org](http://www.watsonvilletaike.org)

## Watsonville Taiko in Natto Commercial! By Taeko D'Andrea

You might wonder what Natto is, and its connection to Watsonville Taiko. Natto is fermented soybeans and is a popular Japanese food. The fermented soybeans are sticky and slimy, and one must definitely acquire a taste for this food. A company has created a food supplement by extracting an enzyme from Natto; this enzyme cleans the walls of blood vessels, and the company claims its product is good for the heart. Taiko drumming reflects heartbeats, and this is the connection between Natto and taiko.

The company is planning to market its product in the U.S. and contracted with a production company in Scotts Valley to produce a commercial video which Watsonville Taiko was hired to perform in. The staff of the production company viewed many of Watsonville Taiko's performance videos, and selected "Kuniumi" for the commercial. The song's composer and the director of Watsonville Taiko, Ikuyo Conant, was asked to shorten the song to 100 seconds to fit the commercial.

The recording of the taiko footage took place on April 26, 2007 in the auditorium of Aptos Academy. Hiroshi Musselman played Odaiko. Bonnie Chihara, Jordan Zimmerman, and each played a set of three drums with precisely choreographed movements created by Ikuyo. With the Okedo's driving rhythm played by Ikuyo, "Kuniumi" was played for three hours, and recorded from every imaginable angle. The song was played at least 25 times during the three hours of recording.

The commercial, in its final version, will include a swordsman and the beautiful background of Hakone Garden in Saratoga. Our taiko music will be played throughout the commercial. Needless to say, this was a very exciting venture for the participating drummers and for Watsonville Taiko. A copy of the April 26th recording was given to Watsonville Taiko by the production company and can be viewed on Watsonville Taiko's website at [www.watsonvilletaike.org](http://www.watsonvilletaike.org).

## Santa Cruz Ballet

and



Watsonville Taiko had a wonderful opportunity to have collaborative performances with Santa Cruz Ballet. It is a rather odd combination – Ballet and Taiko. The image of ballet is very light and elegant. On the contrary, the image of Taiko is down to the earth and powerful. The performances reflected the metaphor of Heaven and Earth.

We played three Taiko pieces. Shiosai is the song of ocean waves, Futabashira is a song with vocals and Taiko, and Jordan Zimmerman's very first Taiko composition, "Hajimete no Kokoromi – the first attempt." Robert Kelly is a wonderful choreographer. He somehow magically arranged the dancers around the large sound of the taiko drums. Members of SC Ballet danced with elegance and punctuation as if they knew how to control the terrestrial energy that engulfed them.

Please check out the Santa Cruz Ballet website at [www.scbt.org](http://www.scbt.org) to see the beautiful images of the event.

## A TESTIMONIAL TO WVT:

"Hi Taiko Drummers! This is Gail, one of the beginning drummers (the short one on the left ☺). My 8 1/2 year old granddaughter and I came to the Morgan Hill event and were able to see and hear quite a number of groups perform. As you recall, it was quite a windy day but we stayed until the end in order to hear the Watsonville Taiko drummers perform. Now that I have had the opportunity to learn about drumming and getting to know you, I really appreciated your performance. They saved the best for last! The choices of the pieces provided a variety of styles. I liked the contrast from the dynamic pieces to the softer more lyrical pieces. Great composition and choreography within each piece utilizing interesting movements combined with the rhythmic structure of the drumming. I really appreciate the helpfulness of the experienced members for us beginners. Thank you, Ikuyo, for teaching, performing and sharing Taiko drumming with the community. You're awesome...as well as the Watsonville Taiko group. With Appreciation, Gail"



Natto Commercial: Taeko D'Andrea and Jordan Zimmerman



Cherry Blossom Festival: From Left: Sandy Allen, Pam Ordway, Ikuyo Conant, Shastina Avina, Bonnie Chihara, Taeko D'Andrea



Photo by Michael Barry

In April 2007, Watsonville Taiko performed at Del Mar Elementary School's Annual Garden Festival. As the sun beat down on us, we beat our drums to the music of "Takinobori", "Zui", "Hiraita Hiraita" and one of my personal favorites, "Yashiro no Uta". The audience crowded around while we entertained them with our music and then they too had the opportunity to join in by grabbing some bachi's and drumming with Taeko D'Andrea's instruction.

## Watsonville Taiko – New Directions

By: Ikuyo Conant

This year brings WVT an active 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary in drumming. Looking back at our past, we find ourselves in the midst of the historical development of North American Taiko and the ethnic art movement in this country.

Recently, I had opportunities to visit museums in the Bay area. Looking at the arts of what they call "primitive societies", I sensed freshness in their art. They were so modern! This early tribal art looks like contemporary art. Are we looking for something that we've lost along the development in modern society? Living in the present, we look for the future, but at the same time we long for something in the past.

Right at this moment, we are amazed that Watsonville Taiko has lasted for 16 years with the sound of "Dons". Many social and cultural adaptations encourage us to look at the art of taiko with a magnifying glass. We can then reshape the original meanings and keep them alive to pass to the next generation. We need to look for elements uniquely Japanese. Yet, that is not enough. We must go beyond them in order to find universal elements to support Taiko as North American Japanese music as well as universal rhythmic art.

Watsonville Taiko has a community-drumming group and a youth performing group, Shinsei Daiko. We are looking for energetic people who are interested in learning the art of drumming. For more information about Watsonville Taiko programs, please visit [www.watsonvilletaike.org](http://www.watsonvilletaike.org)

## Taiko Joe Bowes

Article and Photos by: Rebecca Tavish

Joe Bowes, also known as Taiko Joe, has been the cornerstone in the building of drums and stands for Watsonville Taiko for 14 years. Joe developed his own techniques for building drums using wine barrels. His 50 years experience in wood working is evident in the beautiful drums, and the Odiako and Shime stands seen on the stage of every performance.

Joe has lead workshops on drum making and I was lucky enough to participate in one of his workshops last year. It was evident that he thoroughly enjoyed teaching. He has always been generous with his knowledge such as giving free advice on everything from choice of barrels to which stain and finish to use.

Joe also processes his own hides for the drums, a talent that he began perfecting at the ripe old age of 8 years old. He has many contacts where he has access to cow, elk, goat and others.

Joe considers his most significant drums to be one made for Tsukino Phillips and another made for Charley Harrison: made in memory of two Taiko players.



In addition to building and repairing our drums, Joe has made ongoing contributions to the upkeep of the dojo, hauling equipment, tables, tents, set-up and take down of many of the Watsonville Taiko performances, festivals and events throughout the years

Unfortunately for us, Joe is planning to retire from his Taiko drum "hobby" (his word not mine) on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> of 2008. We hope Joe has many great plans for travel, fun, and relaxation and that he will continue to enjoy his woodworking and other hobbies. When you see Joe around don't hesitate to ask questions and give gratitude for his many talents and gifts to Watsonville Taiko.

# Japanese Cultural Fair



What can we say about the Japanese Cultural Fair – Wow. It was a perfect day. The sun was out, the people were happy, the food was great, the vendors had so many amazing things for sale it was hard to know what to buy first, and the performances were spectacular. I especially liked the rice pounding ceremony in which the men pounded the rice into mochi dough and invited the audience to participate. The Watsonville Taiko performers started off the event with a fantastic performance that

inspired the audience and San Francisco Taiko Dojo ended the event with a bang.

Our Sensei Ikuyo Conant not only performed in the Watsonville Taiko performance, but we found her dressed in a beautiful Kimono later in the afternoon taking part in the Tea Ceremony. From the view of a spectator, the entire event was flawless.

Our Watsonville Taiko booth was a smash hit and the line to taste our sushi combo plates, chicken curry bowls, and Bonnie Chihara's famous Fried Mochi was so long we were rushing to keep up with the crowds. 120 servings of sushi combo plates were sold out before 2 o'clock and over 100 bowls of chicken curry were gone by 4.

Bonnie was dubbed the "Queen of Mochi" by the Watsonville Taiko members who were at the event. Kudos to Bonnie, Pam and Hiroshi for standing over pans of hot oil all day trying to keep up with all the orders of the delicious fried Mochi. If we hadn't run out of the batter at the end of the day, people would probably still be in line trying to get some!

Thank you to ALL the Watsonville Taiko members who helped out at the booth and to Michael Barry for taking all the wonderful pictures of the event throughout the day for our album. A special thank you to Karen for making the Mugi-Cha and letting us use her house for all the food, to Yoriko for making and donating 25 rolls of Futomaki and 100 pieces of Inarisushi , to Taeko for making the Kappa Makki, the sesame sauce for the tofu and the chicken curry. And again, we must thank Bonnie for all the time she spent in the hot sun frying up that mochi.



It was an incredibly busy, fun-filled day and we really needed everyone to get

through it.



# Beginner's Beat

## Who are we and why are we here?

*It's never easy starting something new, especially when it involves learning music, movement, discipline, strength, and finding your energy and directing it to the right place at the just the right time...sounds exhausting? How about exhilarating? The Watsonville Taiko beginners are a group of amazing people with great energy and wonderful spirit. Taiko drumming is more than just "Doko or Don" to these beginners. Here is what a few of our beginners shared with us.*

Everyone starts out a beginner at some point in time. Everyone has their awkward moments and confusing days after starting something new. But the reality is that every day is a beginning and with it brings new challenges and new opportunities. We are all beginners every day and that is how we grow. If we stop beginning, we simply end.

Eight months ago during a very difficult time in my life, I happened to be at a friend's house in Capitola watching the Santa Cruz Wharf to Wharf race . Before the race began my daughter and I walked down the street and saw the Watsonville Taiko drummers setting up. I picked up one of the flyers they had stacked on the ground and said "I am definitely going to do this. I am going to start something new".

As I walked into Kizuka Hall in Watsonville for that first Friday night class, the sound of the drums sent a wave of energy through my body that was undeniably powerful. It is still the same every time I hear that sound, and Friday night class can never come too soon.

Watsonville Taiko has given me a new beginning and has inspired me to live life far better than I could imagine. The music is energizing, the people are inspiring and Sensai Ikuyo has taught me far more than just how to hit a drum and play a piece of music.

I am a beginner today, I will be a beginner tomorrow and I hope to be a beginner forever.

### **-Karri Barry – Age 39**

My friend Lori called me one evening last January and asked me if I had ever heard of Taiko drumming. I told her, oh yes, that I'd taken my son to check it out when he was about 6 years old (he's 22 now) and that we loved it. My husband worked with a woman named Mary that was one of the drummers at that time and she had encouraged us to come hear them. We were all so impressed and thought we'd love to try it, but time flies and it just hadn't happen.

Well, Lori had just heard Watsonville Taiko for the first time that weekend and was all wound up and said she wanted to do it. Actually she said that she WAS going to do it and asked if I wanted to do it with her? Every part of my body said no..I can't add another thing to my life, there just isn't enough time. But there was a clear voice speaking to me from some other place that said say "yes". I thought, "here is a good friend asking me to do something I've been interested in since my children were small. My children are grown and gone, if not now, when?" I took a deep breath and forced myself to say yes, and I'm so glad I did.

Everyone at the dojo was so warm and welcoming. We had a blast even though we didn't have a clue what we were doing. We were overwhelmed the following week, and by the third week, after we bowed and were leaving, we were asking each other "what the heck just went on in there!!!! I don't know what I'm doing and I don't understand a thing. Maybe I'm not cut out for this. I feel like

an absolute idiot!" On our way home I spotted the Foster's Freeze out of the corner of my eye and blurted out "do you want a frosty?" Lori was already making a wild left hand turn while expressing a long and breathy "YES"!

Now we go there every Friday! It's our reward for sticking it out! Our good friend Lynda heard we had joined Watsonville Taiko and said she'd always wanted to try it, so of course, we said, "come on, it's a blast, we hope you like frosties!"

We're all having a wonderful time. It's good for the brain. It's great exercise. It's spiritually fulfilling. It's song and dance and community all wrapped up in a beautiful drum.

And then of course, there's the frosties!!!

### **-Robin Forest – Age 55**

For those of you who haven't noticed, my name is Mike Barry and I attend Watsonville Taiko classes every Friday night as an onlooker and supporter of my wife Karri. Karri and I started Taiko together back in late October, but due to an upcoming surgery to my shoulder, I had to quit. But I still continue to come to class and support my wife and the other members of Watsonville Taiko from the sidelines.

What keeps me coming every Friday is the atmosphere. I love listening to the drums and watching the group, as a whole, grow in their abilities every week. I feel very privileged to be able to be a part of the group, not to mention being able to enjoy the live music every Friday night.

Although I can't participate in the drumming, Taiko has inspired my creative side and has led me to use wood working to start making drums.

I would like to thank Watsonville Taiko and every one who participates for giving Karri and I the amazing opportunity of putting together the Bachi Beat.

I'm sure you'll be seeing me around, taking photos of everyone and I look forward to seeing all you smiling faces!



### **Mike Barry- Age 53**



Left: Sensei Ikuyo Conant Right: Beginner's Taiko Class



Watsonville Taiko  
P.O. Box 1673  
Watsonville, CA 95077-1673

## **Watsonville Taiko and Shinsei Daiko 2007 Upcoming Events and Performances**

June 30	JACL Picnic	Aptos Park
July 22	Wharf to Wharf	Santa Cruz
July 22	Watsonville Obon	Watsonville
July 29	Natsu Matsuri	La Selva
Aug 5	Peace Day	La Selva
Aug 5	Cabrillo Music Festival	Santa Cruz
Aug 9-12	Taiko Conference	Seattle, WA
Aug 10	Wedding Reception	Santa Cruz
Aug 18	Music by Campfire	New Brighton
Beach Sept 15	Wedding Reception	Watsonville
Sept 29	Alzheimer's Assoc - Memory Walk	LaSelva

### **TAIKO CLASSES**

For Children and Adults

Next 10 week session: August 17 – October 19, 2007

Location: Kizuka Hall, 150 Blackburn Street, Watsonville

Beginning Children (8+ years): Friday 5-6pm

Beginning Adults: Friday 7-8pm: \$55 per month

For more information: Call (831) 458-5054

[info@watsonville.org](mailto:info@watsonville.org) or [www.watsonvilletaiko.org](http://www.watsonvilletaiko.org)

### **Your Support Keeps us Going!**

We rely on your donations to support our program. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, mail it to us at: P.O. Box 1673, Watsonville, CA 95077-1673 and for donations over \$25.00 we'll send you our CD, "FUTABASHIRA" as a thank you gift.

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