

People

CINDY CANTRELL



Michael Baron, owner and chief instructor at Woburn Aikikai, practices iaido, the art of Japanese swordsmanship.

FOOD DRIVE AND AIKIDO:

Michael Baron of Arlington was a longtime martial arts practitioner when he saw a friend practicing aikido, a noncompetitive Japanese martial art that teaches people to neutralize and redirect an attack through their natural body motion and strength. Now owner and chief instructor at Woburn Aikikai, Baron is sponsoring a day-long seminar and food drive Saturday to raise awareness of aikido and of hunger in the community.

Baron, who founded Woburn Aikikai nearly a year ago, is also an adjunct English professor at Bay State College in Boston and a sword maker who learned the art from his former aikido teacher, who died three years ago.

"He was a craftsman, while the word amateur really fits in my case," said Baron, who has made one full-length sword, five smaller swords, and several hand guards. "It's a fun hobby that I wish I had more time for."

While Baron's swords won't be on display, the public is invited to participate in the \$25 aikido seminar between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. or to just drop off nonperishable items to be donated to the Council of Social Concern food pantry in Woburn. Food donations will be accepted through Sunday at Woburn Aikikai, 6 Cedar St. For more information, visit WoburnAikikai.org.

library.

The Reading Public Library has hosted book and movie discussions, humor programs, and lectures about legal, medical, and other issues, including caring for aging parents. Dickinson said she hopes to explore volunteer self-employment opportunities, as well as part-time work after retirement.

"We came home overloaded with ideas and information, but also excited about the wealth of possibilities for older adults" she reported about the conference.

COLLEGE FOR KIDS: Like most 12-year-olds, **Chelsea Marrero** of Lawrence isn't certain about what she wants to be when she grows up. But her participation in the recent two-week College for Kids program on the Haverhill campus of Northern Essex Community College has given her some ideas.

Chelsea is one of nine Lawrence middle school students who attended College for Kids through a \$4,500 grant from the Essex County Community Foundation's Greater Lawrence Summer Fund. The other students are **Jadira Alvarez, Kasandra Ayala, Nashaley Cruz, Andrew DeJesus, Jose Molina, Jazmin Molina, Winnifer Montero, and Jose Tapia.**

With a regular cost of \$325 for each one-week session, College for Kids is open to campers 10 to 13 years old. Children ages 6 to 9 may