



**Northern Virginia Ki Aikido (NVKA) / Virginia Ki Society (VKS)
Newsletter for March, 2021**
www.novakiakido.org

This Week's Topics

- I. Dojo calendar (incl. upcoming events)
 - II. Tributes to Jerry Billingsley
 - III. EKF Weekly Zoom Trainings
 - IV. Weekly Shokushu: Two readings in honor of Jerry
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Dojo Calendar

Current Classes (Adult)

- Wednesday, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm
- Saturday, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

We hope to add a Monday night adult class if enough people return to the dojo for in-person practice. There are no children's classes at this time.

Upcoming Events

- EKF Zoom Training: Saturday, March 6 (8:00 am - 9:00 am EST)
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Tributes to Jerry Billingsley



***In memory of our beloved teacher and friend, Jerry Billingsley
(April 29, 1947 - January 24, 2021)***

At the dojo, Jerry and I taught adults, and were teaching children for many years. We also were teachers by profession, so we often had good talks. It made me quite sad to learn of Jerry's death. When I relayed the news of his passing to our dojo community, it was very clear that others felt the same way. I received many emails from people who had trained with Jerry, were in his adult class, or who had children that Jerry taught. They expressed what a good person he was, what a special teacher he was, how much they would miss him, and what a loss it would be for the dojo. Jerry taught aikido techniques, but his favorite parts of aikido were the ki aspects, and how they could be used in daily life. Whenever I think of Jerry, two such lessons that he gifted the children with, are foremost in my mind.

The first lesson had the children working in pairs and sitting seiza (on their knees). One child would test the other by pushing on their chest. The children would learn how to be stable in that position, even when pushed. Then the child who was testing (pushing on the chest of the other child), would play the part of a bully by saying a typical bully insult ("You're stupid," "You're a jerk", etc). The child who before was quite stable would now fall over, losing their center. This was repeated again, but now the child being tested, when insulted, would say, "I like myself." Then the child would once again pass the test. I liked this lesson so much, that I taught it in classes at my school. I remember seeing a girl, Brianna, use this lesson once. I don't remember the insult spoken to her, but with all the attitude that the situation demanded, she said, "I like myself." She then turned her head away and walked off, relaxed and content.

The other lesson was used in a very dramatic circumstance, with amazing results. Jerry and I both taught ki exercises, but I only began teaching ki breathing to children when they were working on their green belt test, which included ki breathing. Jerry taught it to the whole class, even the beginners. This proved extremely valuable when we had a sweet little boy named Santi. He was six years old and came into class for the first time, eager to do aikido. He told me that he could participate in everything that we worked on, but he asked me to tell the other children to be careful with the spot on his chest where he had a tube that was delivering his cancer medication. I let the class know, and Santi went on in that class and all the others, very excited about all that we did, whether it was weapons, techniques, games, etc. From time to time, Santi would have to be away from aikido to travel to New York for testing and treatment for his cancer. Then he would return to our dojo and once again show his eagerness for our art. Whenever Santi was in New York, there was a certain test (or maybe it was a treatment) that he needed to undergo that was very painful. The doctor would instruct Santi's dad to hold him down. Santi would scream in pain, while his father was also in agony. After this was repeated visit after visit, the doctor once again told Santi's dad to hold him down. His dad said, "No, we're not going to do that, Santi. This time, do your ki breathing." Then, in Santi's words, "The pain went whoosh out the door." I can't think of having anything more valuable as part of your legacy than what Jerry did for Santi and his father.

Marion Lebensbaum

In memory of sensei Jerry Billingsley,

I did join Ki Aikido, Merrifield dojo in 2012 at age of 6. Tuesday meetings for children were conducted by sensei Jerry with focus on Ki principals. Sensei Jerry with strong voice and deep compassion was truly dedicated to bring this beautiful art to all of us. Now, I am with adult class dojo carrying in memory my dear sensei Jerry.

Damian Jerszuk with parents

My immediate reaction:

I can tell you I had many sessions with Jerry for a year or two when I started attending at NVKS. Back then his wife was still alive and there was a vacation rental in North Carolina for them and the kids, possibly grandkids. It seemed he was recently retired as a teacher (high school history or social studies?) and he had an uncanny knack for knowing what Simcox Sensei would say in a given situation, Ki training, or life.

He was one of those teachers with enough aptitude and reverence for the past that he would say what was taught to him. Perhaps that's a type of humility or a way to be anchored in how something is expressed as part of a lifelong effort to better understand it.

It seems there was a sort of vision, a sort of attitude (e.g., dojo will be open over the holiday in case someone needs aikido), pre-Federation, inspired by George. Jerry excelled in articulating this.

Perhaps he represents an expression of a bygone era. Many will miss him and draw guidance from their memories of him.

My tribute wall note:

I had many sessions with Jerry at the aikido dojo. Jerry was always positive in outlook, a man who understood and appreciated the lessons of the past. He was generous and knowledgeable in sharing these lessons. Jerry was a man I admired not only for his knowledge, but for his sense of responsibility to the teachers of the past, to his family and community, and to his students at the dojo. Cheerful effort, confidence and gentleness - all that after a long ride in from Remington.

Charlie Bondi

Shokushu Readings

Jerry inhabited and modeled the following readings as the teacher and kind, giving soul that he was. He will be with us whenever we practice these teachings:

15. KI BREATHING

Breathe out so that your breath travels infinitely to the ends of the Universe; breathe in so that your breath reaches your one point and continues infinitely there.

Ki breathing is an important way of unifying mind and body.

At night, when all is quiet and calm, do this alone, and you will feel that you are the Universe and that the Universe is you. It will lead you to the supreme ecstasy of being one with the Universe. At this moment the life power that is rightfully yours is fully activated.

21. SETSUDO (Teaching the Way of the Universe)

Selfish people have never understood and traveled the way of the Universe in the past. Therefore when we realize the principles and way of the Universe, the Universe gives us the responsibility to spread them to the world.

Do not think that you cannot help another person. What you learn today, you can teach another the next day. The world is full of people who have lost the way of the Universe and suffer from mental illness. Let us do our best to explain the correct principles of the Universe to them.

EKF Zoom Training

Email from Rich Fryling Sensei, Head Instructor, NYKA:

In full coordination with Shaner Sensei, I am pleased to announce our first scheduled online EKF Aikido class that will take place on **Saturday, March 6th @ 8:00am et.** This first, 1-hour class will be led by EKF instructor **Matthew Attarian Sensei** who is currently studying in Tokyo, Japan.

Below is the Zoom link for the class.

This class marks the kickoff of a training focus that Soshu, Koichi Tohei Sensei calls “**Ki no Shurenho**”. This means ways to practice, drill, repeat activities in order to make a habit of unifying mind and body in the dojo as well as ways to practice outside the dojo by repeating again and again unified movements in daily life.

In preparing for this training, I want to thank everybody who participated in the survey of selecting the most convenient time for scheduling this class. The results were almost evenly split between the two class times. While it's unfortunate that the results weren't more one-sided, we chose the Saturday time so that we could more conveniently take advantage of Attarian Sensei's ability to teach from Japan.

This training is appropriate for all levels, especially beginners and those preparing for kyu examinations. To that end, please feel free to share the below Zoom link with your EKF students. And similar to our previous online classes, we ask that you do not share the link information outside of EKF or on social media. This is primarily for security reasons.

As we return to the dojo setting, we will conduct our classes in alignment with the Zoom classes offered in Japan. As a reminder for those planning to participate next Saturday, I've attached the **online training protocols**. Please take the time to review these as well as pass them on to your students.

I hope you share my excitement in kicking off this next level of EKF training.

Wishing you plus ki,

Rich