



# PACIFIC CITIZEN

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## JA LEGACY LIVES ON

The Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., Opens Its Yearlong Exhibit.

### RIGHTING A WRONG: JAPANESE AMERICANS AND WORLD WAR II

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the United States entered a war in Europe and the Pacific, the nation was overcome by shock, anger, and fear—a fear exaggerated by long-standing anti-Asian prejudice. Ten weeks later President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, under which nearly 75,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry

were taken into custody. Another 45,000 Japanese nationals living in the United States (but long denied citizenship because of their race) were also incarcerated. Some forty years later, members of the Japanese American community led the nation to confront the wrong it had done—and to make it right.

Visitors to the Smithsonian's new "Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II" exhibition will see a copy of the lithograph "American Guardian" by Roger Shimomura, 2007. The image itself depicts a Japanese American incarceration camp from the vantage point of one of the guard towers that surrounded the camp. The sentry closely observes a child riding a tricycle, making reference to Shimomura himself, when he was 4 years old. (Courtesy of Lawrence Lithography Workshop Kansas City)

"These people were treated as aliens. The color of their skin, the size of their eyes, their language, their religion... conspired against them."



#### JAPANESE IMMIGRATION

Japanese immigrants arrived first on the Hawaiian Islands in the 1860s, to work in the sugarcane fields. Many moved to the U.S. mainland and settled in California, Oregon, and Washington, where they worked primarily as farmers and fishermen. Faced with restrictions in the country's legal or political systems, including citizenship, Japanese immigrants developed their own communities, creating education and business opportunities for themselves.



Japanese women working in Hawaii, 1916. Courtesy of Bill Hoopes

#### RACISM

All Asian immigrants faced prejudice, economic hardship, and social indignity. Those who came to the United States to work in mines, farms, and railroads accepted lower wages, which drove the ire of white residents. Asians became victims of riots and attacks. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the 1907 Asian Exclusion Act barred additional immigration and declared Asians ineligible for citizenship. Without citizenship, they could not own land.

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JACL's National President Reflects on the 75th Anniversary of E.O. 9066.

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Smithsonian DOR Honors the Relevance of the JA Incarceration.



PHOTO: PATTI HIRAHARA

# WE REMEMBER MANZANAR, MINIDOKA, HEART MOUNTAIN . . .

PHOTO: MANZANAR COMMITTEE



As we pause to remember the significance of the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, we recall the personal injustice and personal hardship it imposed on the 120,000 men, women and children who were affected by the government's implementation of that executive order. It caused personal damage, dislocation, physical and mental trauma, and it offended our Constitution.

Manzanar, Minidoka, Heart Mountain, Poston, Tule Lake, Gila River, Granada, Topaz, Jerome, Rohwer — these were America's concentration camps.

Today, it is important to heed the lessons from the incarceration experience about acting out of fear and bigotry by targeting vulnerable groups in defiance of America's values.

As reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), the growth in hate groups is on the rise accompanied by an increase in crimes directed at Muslims.

SPLC documented 867 bias-related incidents in the first 10 days following the election, with more than 300 targeting Muslims and immigrants.

There is the troubling specter of banning immigration based on religion and the aggressive and broad-based use of deportation that results in uprooting and tearing families apart.

There is the failure to accurately acknowledge

history in the genocide of the Jewish population during World War II.

America is a place that welcomes immigrants by providing sanctuary and opportunity. It is a place that values diversity by allowing people to be who they are. It is a place that has the capacity to admit wrongdoing because we are a country ruled by law and because sometimes we owe it to our own sense of honor as a nation. ■

## PACIFIC CITIZEN RECEIVES DONATION TO KICK-START 2017 SPRING CAMPAIGN

PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA

The *Pacific Citizen's* 2017 Spring Campaign got off to a roaring start in February thanks to a significant donation made by longtime supporter and reader Tsutomu "Tom" Ige.

Ige, along with his daughter, Natalie, and her husband met with *P.C.'s* staff, Editorial Board Chair Gil Asakawa, JACL National President Gary Mayeda and JACL Planned Giving's Steve Okamoto on Feb. 3 in Los Angeles to discuss his donation and the ways in which the *P.C.* can best utilize his gift.

"To me, the *Pacific Citizen* is the 'eyes and ears' of the Nikkei community and other readers. It gives our community what it needs



Tom Ige (left) is pictured with JACL Planned Giving's Steve Okamoto during a meeting in Los Angeles on Feb. 3.

in terms of informing us what is important in our daily lives and also the many contributors that express interesting personal opinions and experiences that have a bearing in the lives of us all," said Ige. "I implore you to consider supporting the Japanese American Citizens League and the *Pacific Citizen* as part of your legacy."

The *P.C.* relies heavily on donations from its Spring Campaign to supplement operational expenses, staffing needs and assistance with printing and mailing costs.

"The *Pacific Citizen* is facing greater challenges with future publications and transitioning to the digital format. It needs support. . . . But I also realize that not everyone has access to digital, which is why the printed issues are still important," said Ige.

The *P.C.* gratefully acknowledges Mr. Ige and all Spring Campaign supporters. Thank you! ■

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## PACIFIC CITIZEN

The *P.C.'s* mission is to "educate on the past Japanese American experience and preserve, promote and help the current and future AAPI communities."

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More than ever, your tax-deductible funds will help preserve the legacy of the *Pacific Citizen*. Donations of \$150 or more will be entered in a monthly drawing for a box of "Fugetsu-Do" Japanese manju delivered to the winner's door.



## NIKKEI VOICE

# IT'S TIME FOR THE P.C.'S SPRING CAMPAIGN

By Gil Asakawa

I'm proud to be on my second stint as the *Pacific Citizen's* Editorial Board Chair — I served in the position for two terms in the last decade. I love the *P.C.* I'm proud of the *P.C.*, and I am happy to be an advocate for it.

That's why I'm pleased to announce the 2017 *P.C.* Spring Campaign. During my last term as *P.C.* Editorial Board chair, the Spring Campaign was started as a way to raise funds to offset National JACL's budget woes. With your direct support, the *P.C.* staff was able to purchase much-needed equipment like new computers and professional-quality cameras. The Spring Campaign eventually allowed the *P.C.* to hire a reporter when the national budget cut the position.

The Spring Campaign funds have become an important part of keeping the *Pacific Citizen* going. And now, with the added mission of raising the funds to keep printing the paper version of the *P.C.*, the campaign will add to the amount that will be designated from those of you who opt to pay the extra \$17 for your membership. That surcharge was approved at the JACL National Convention last summer in Las Vegas, and new memberships and renewals starting January have

included the choice to pay the surcharge — and we thank all of you who've made that choice!

I want to first publicly thank Tsutomu "Tom" Ige, who contacted the *Pacific Citizen* and has committed to give the *P.C.* an extremely generous gift — he's asked us not to reveal the amount — that gives us a serious head start on the Spring Campaign this year. Tom was a longtime JACL member when he lived in the San Jose area; he now lives in Southern California and has been a nonmember *P.C.* subscriber. He contacted Steve Okamoto, who coordinates large gifts to JACL, to facilitate his donation.

Tom has given to the *P.C.* for the Spring Campaign ever since it began. The *P.C.* staff may use his gift now to underwrite articles and other content. You'll see his name whenever we thank him for his contribution.

I would love it if you, dear reader, follow Tom Ige's example and commit to a gift for the *Pacific Citizen* to help our hard-working staff (which has been working with one editor short since last summer). Make it \$20, \$100, \$200, \$1,000 or more. It will not be wasted. It will go toward maintaining the quality coverage of JACL and Asian American issues that have helped you keep up with news that isn't covered in mainstream media. It's the kind of journalism that led Tom Ige to get the *P.C.* as a nonmember subscriber (don't worry,

he's a lifetime member now), and led Tom to donate to the Spring Campaign every year.

If the *Pacific Citizen* is as valuable to you as it has been to people like Tom, please consider donating to keep the *P.C.* healthy for the future. This biennium will be a critical test for the newspaper — the \$17 membership renewal surcharge is only approved for two years. By the end of the biennium, we'll need to have a real, doable plan in place to go as far into the digital realm as possible and cut back on the print editions or find other ways to reduce the cost of the *P.C.* and still deliver the journalism you've come to rely on.

So, we're building for the future with the gifts you provide for this year's Spring Campaign. The funds you donate will 100 percent go toward keeping the quality of the *P.C.* up, but also prepare the *P.C.* for the next phase of its future.

Please follow Tom's lead. We thank you. Really.

To donate to the Spring Campaign, fill out the coupon included in this newspaper or give directly on the *P.C.*'s website at [www.pacificcitizen.org](http://www.pacificcitizen.org).

*Gil Asakawa is the chair of the Editorial Board of the Pacific Citizen and the author of "Being Japanese American" (second edition Stone Bridge Press, 2015). He blogs at [www.nikkeiview.com](http://www.nikkeiview.com).*



## LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

# HOW SHOULD I HOLD TITLE TO MY REAL PROPERTY?

By Staci Yamashita-Iida, Esq.

For the past few months, my fiancé and I have spent our weekends house hunting. When we got particularly close to buying a home a couple of weeks ago, our escrow officer asked us, "Have you two thought about how you'd like to take title to the property?"

In our careers as a CPA and an attorney, my fiancé and I have become familiar with the basics of real property law. As we discussed the escrow officer's question, I realized that, if not for our professions, we would be clueless on the subject.

In the overall context of purchasing a home, the manner in which you take title seems like such a minor, trivial detail. Yet, the truth is that it can significantly affect your rights as an owner during your lifetime and upon your death.

The best way to hold title in your real property depends on your situation. This article provides an overview of the five most common ways to take title and discusses the pros and cons of each.

### Sole Ownership

Sole ownership usually presents itself in one of two ways. First, it occurs for single, divorced or widowed individuals. So, if Ben Bachelor wants to purchase an apartment, he would take title as "Ben Bachelor, a single man."

Second, sole ownership applies for married individuals or domestic partners who want to take title in his or her own name alone. For example, if Wanda Wife inherits her mother's home and it was her mother's wish that the property remain in the family, then Wanda would take title as "Wanda Wife, a married woman as her sole and separate property." Wanda's husband would likely sign paperwork to disclaim

his right, title and interest to the property, thus confirming that both spouses intended the property to be Wanda's alone.

### Tenants in Common

When two or more people take title to a property — especially if they are not married to each other — they often become tenants in common. This typically occurs when siblings, friends or real estate investors purchase property together.

The main advantage to being a tenant in common is that the co-owners do not have to own equal shares of the property. For example, Sister Yamamoto can own 65 percent and Brother Yamamoto can own 35 percent. Since Brother Yamamoto owns an undivided share, he has the flexibility to sell or transfer his interest to whomever he wants.

The ability to freely assign one's interest, however, can also be a disadvantage. In the scenario above, let's say Brother Yamamoto gets very sick and decides to transfer his 35 percent interest in the property to his girlfriend, Crazy Carla, before he dies. As a result, Sister Yamamoto winds up co-owning the property with Crazy Carla, a virtual stranger whom she never really got along with.

Another drawback to tenancy in common is that there is no "right of survivorship," a concept I'll discuss below. In short, if a tenant in common dies, then his or her interest will be subject to probate.

### Joint Tenancy

Joint tenancy occurs when two or more people (spouses, family members, friends, etc.) want to own an equal share of the property — e.g., Sister Yamamoto and Brother Yamamoto each own 50 percent.

The No. 1 benefit to joint tenancy is that it offers right of survivorship. This means that upon Sister Yamamoto's death, Brother Yamamoto automatically absorbs her share, thus owning 100 percent of the property. The right of survivorship is extremely beneficial because it allows property to be conveyed to the other joint tenant(s) without having to go through probate — a lengthy, expensive legal process.

A restriction to joint tenancy, however, is that all joint tenants must acquire title at the same time. So, let's say Sister Yamamoto and Brother Yamamoto bought a property as joint tenants in 2012. Five years later, Sister Yamamoto decides to transfer her 50 percent interest to her daughter. Since her daughter and Brother Yamamoto did not acquire the title at the same time (Brother Yamamoto acquired title in 2012; daughter acquired title in 2017), joint tenancy is broken. If a joint tenant decides to transfer his or her share, then title automatically reverts to tenants in common.

For married couples, joint tenancy bears an additional disadvantage. Valuable tax benefits are missed out on by choosing joint tenancy over community property with right of survivorship, a concept discussed below.

### Community Property With Right of Survivorship

In community property states (such as California), married couples and domestic partners have the opportunity to take title as community property with right of survivorship (CPWROS). CPWROS shares many of the characteristics of joint tenancy (equal ownership and right of survivorship) — the added bonus is that there may be several tax benefits that only CPWROS offers.

>> See PROPERTY on page 9

# JACL NATIONAL BOARD CONVENES TO DISCUSS 2017 PROGRESS

The JACL National Board convened in San Francisco on Feb. 11 to discuss its current state of affairs, as well as recognize the contributions of Interim Executive Director/Midwest Regional Director Bill Yoshino, who will be retiring in March after more than 30 years with JACL.

In his report, National President Gary Mayeda summarized that JACL has been involved in numerous activities since July's National Convention. Foremost among them is the 75th anniversary of E.O. 9066 and JACL's sponsorship of the new Smithsonian Museum of American History exhibition.

Mayeda also officially welcomed new NCWNP District Governor Carol Kawase and PSW District Governor Marissa Kitazawa.

Meeting highlights included JACL's successful implementation of the new "Youth Legacy Project," funded by the National Park Service, which sends two groups of 20 students each year to Manzanar and Los Angeles' Little Tokyo to learn about the incarceration experience. This year's trips are set for July and August.

P.C. Editorial Board Chair Gil Asakawa reported that actual P.C. revenue for the year ending 2016 totaled \$322,606. The Holiday Issue generated \$64,740, up \$2,000 over 2015.

More than \$18,000 in commissions was earned by JACL chapters.

Discussions also centered around ongoing efforts between JACL National Secretary/Treasurer Alan Nishi, P.C. Business Manager Susan Yokoyama and JACL Business Manager Matthew Walters to collectively unify reporting practices by the P.C. and National JACL.

Asakawa also announced the P.C.'s intention to hire a new digital content editor in the coming weeks to shore up its staffing vacancy.

Nishi reported that the JACL's reserve fund is \$298,000, and his primary concerns for 2017 are accurate budget revenue projections for P.C. revenue, investment income and fundraising.

VP Membership Colleen Morimoto summarized that membership was down 2.2 percent in 2016; however, compared to previous years of more than 5 percent, that figure remains hopeful.

And VP Planning and Development Matthew Farrells announced that a new fundraising campaign to generate \$1 million within the next three years will launch at July's National Convention in Washington, D.C.

National Staff then recognized Yoshino's invaluable contributions.



PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA

<< JACL National President Gary Mayeda (left) and Interim Executive Director and Midwest Regional Director Bill Yoshino



PHOTO: SUSAN YOKOYAMA



PHOTO: GARY MAYEDA

NCWNP District Governor Carol Kawase reads an official proclamation from her district to Bill Yoshino in recognition of his more than 30 years of dedicated service to JACL.



PHOTO: JACL

"I remember that during the course of the redress effort . . . I couldn't think of anything that was more important to be involved in, and it remains the single highlight of many," said Yoshino. "It's been a social justice mission, and it has never disappointed me in trying to achieve that. So thank you."

The JACL National Board convened at JACL headquarters in San Francisco on Feb. 11. Pictured (front row, from left) are Gary Mayeda, Matthew Farrells, Roberta Barton, Alan Nishi, Jeffrey Moy and (standing, from left) Janet Komoto, Michelle Amano, Michelle Yoshida, Sheldon Arakaki, Betsy Sato, Carol Kawase, Colleen Morimoto, Marissa Kitazawa and Gil Asakawa.



By Ron Mori

The old course of life where your "retirement" years meant slowing down until you stopped altogether — those days are gone. Good riddance! Today's "retirees" don't want to be limited, labeled or defined by what they *can't* do. The want to grow, learn and discover what they *can* do.

At AARP, we were a little surprised but very happy to discover through our research that the desire of our elders these days to be involved and contribute their time to our communities is as strong, or maybe even stronger, than that of prior generations. But — and this is a big "but" — they have time constraints and other commitments that many of *their* elders never had.

To ensure that we would retain the capability to recruit even greater numbers of 50-plus volunteers for AARP and for many other causes, we launched "Create The Good," an initiative that makes opportunities to volunteer even more flexible and accessible. Our mantra is, "Whether you have 5 minutes, 5 hours or 5 days," there are many ways you can make a difference.

The name "Create The Good" was inspired by a quote from our founder, Dr. Andrus, who said:

"The challenge is to live up to our better selves, to

experiment, to explore, to change and to grow, and by doing so, to help *create the good.*"

AARP launched the website [www.createthegood.org](http://www.createthegood.org) to offer people a wide range of tools and resources for serving their communities. In addition to opportunities for volunteering with AARP, you can search for a host of volunteer opportunities with other organizations in your zip code.

"Create The Good" also is broadening horizons in volunteering by creating, for example, opportunities for people to connect through online groups and social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

Volunteering has many positive benefits.

There is mounting scientific evidence that volunteering can even lead to better health and happiness. That's right. A *Journal of Gerontology* study, for example, found that older adults who volunteer report higher levels of well-being. And this positive effect was reported across the lines of race, gender and levels of income.

A Vanderbilt University study also found that volunteer work enhances our well-being in a variety of ways, including happiness, self-esteem, our sense of control over life, physical health and relief from depression. Volunteering clearly helps people maintain their independence, dignity and purpose.

AARP itself offers a broad range of volunteer opportunities. Each volunteer is free to choose how much time he or she would like to give. Most individuals volunteer from two

to four hours a week. Volunteers usually work out a regular schedule of availability, but some prefer to be available to fill in as needed.

And AARP volunteers receive specialized training to develop the skills they'll need to work with AARP members and the community at large. Many volunteers tell us that they also learn a lot from working with other dedicated professionals and volunteers. For some, volunteering at AARP has even lead to a new career.

Some of our most successful volunteer activities and programs have included:

- AARP's Advocacy and education campaigns around critical state and federal legislation
- Our Tax-Aide program, which provides free tax preparation and filing
- The Driver Safety Program, which focuses on helping older adults refresh their driving skills
- Our Senior Community Service Employment Program, which helps older adults find jobs
- AARP's educator community activities, which help children throughout the country

So, at AARP, your experience really *does* matter. Please check out [www.createthegood.org](http://www.createthegood.org).

*Ron Mori is co-president of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.*

## REIMAGINE EVERYTHING

### LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER?

# 'RIGHTING A WRONG' IS IMPORTANT TO SEE FOR MANY REASONS

By Gary Mayeda,  
JACL National President



An exclusive event at the Smithsonian Museum of American History on Feb. 16 in Washington, D.C., JACLers were treated to experience the pre-opening of the new exhibit "Righting a

Mark Terasaki from the Terasaki Foundation; Congresswoman Doris Matsui; Congresswoman Mazie Hirono; Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae and myself, representing JACL.

Each speaker had a powerful message of strength and courage that was exhibited by all Japanese Americans that were forcibly removed from their homes, and each thanked the Smithsonian for taking the time to assemble the powerful and incredibly moving exhibit. Each revealed about the coincidental timing of the exhibit and its relation to current events — society needs this educational exhibit now more than ever. The theme "Never Again" is repeatedly echoed.

Attendees were treated to displays of artifacts that were donated by families that were incarcerated. We saw sports items such as golf clubs and baseball mitts. Suitcases made of woven natural fibers were delicately on display. These items are so real — one wants to touch them and make a physical connection to someone's past, but they are all properly protected under glass.

The actual exhibit expands to several rooms and is filled with photos and messages that we, as a community, have long desired the world to know about. It tells the story of how 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent were uprooted from their homes and livelihoods and the four-year journey that forever defined

Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II," which officially opened on the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066.

The evening opened with a taiko performance that captivated attendees' attention to the stage, setting the tone of the event with the familiar sounds that every Japanese American connects with. JACL was one of many organizations that sponsored this exhibit over the course of the past two years, in addition to the Terasaki Foundation, AARP and the Japanese Embassy.

Ceremony speakers included David Skorton, first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; John Gray, director of the National Museum of American History;



those lives because of E.O. 9066 and World War II.

At the center of the exhibit is a large three-panel display, well lit in a glass cube, with typewritten words and a signature at the end. This was THE Executive Order 9066.

E.O. 9066 put my father, grandmother, uncles and aunt in America's concentration camps. One can't help but stare and wonder the power of how these three pieces of paper created such a stain on America's history.

The exhibit continues to show where the camps were and what camp life was like. One can read each fascinating panel and see names and photos — I'm sure there are several, if not more, that are recognizable!

It shows how our community developed its resilience and, 40 years later, used this resilience to support H.R. 442. At the end is a large

photo of President Ronald Reagan signing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

This exhibit is filled with emotions directly relatable to both those incarcerated and the generations of descendants that followed. Exactly 30 years ago, the Smithsonian celebrated our nation's bicentennial and showcased our constitution in an exhibition called "A More Perfect Union."

The Japanese American internment was the example of when eight of the 10 Bill of Rights was blatantly ignored. "Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II" is an emotional and educational experience that everyone should experience.

This exhibit will be a showcase for everyone that attends this summer's JACL National Convention, which is set for July 6-8 in Washington, D.C. ■

## DAY OF RECOMMITMENT

By Gerald Yamada,  
Contributor

Feb. 19, 2017, is the 75th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066, which authorized the military to evacuate persons of Japanese ancestry from the western states during World War II. Although Feb. 19 is generally referred to as a "Day of Remembrance," I believe that this year's anniversary should be broadened by commemorating it as a "Day of Recommitment" for the purpose of motivating a new generation to preserve the legacy created by those who suffered under the prejudice and hysteria sanctioned by E.O. 9066.

I suggest three steps for us to follow to recommit toward preserving the legacy left by those whose lives were altered by E.O. 9066.

**1. Share the Family's Story** — When discussing how we or our families were affected by E.O. 9066, it is more meaningful if we are able to relate to our family's story, both the bad and the good. My parents suffered a tragic, personal loss. When my parents arrived at the Jerome War Relocation Authority Center, my mother was pregnant. Shortly after my parents arrived, their first child, Katsumi, was stillborn.

We need also to credit good deeds. My maternal grandparents' farm in Florin, Calif., was one of three farms that was protected by Mr. Bob Fletcher while the three families — Tsukamoto, Okamoto and Nitta — were evacuated and imprisoned in America's



The funeral of Katsumi Yamada, taken in 1943 at Jerome WRA Authority, Ark. Katsumi's father, Ted Yamada, is pictured (fourth from the right) in the front row. Grandfather and Grandmother Nitta are next to him, along with other internees who were evacuated from Florin, Calif. Missing from the photo is Katsumi's mother, who was still recovering from child birth. Today, Katsumi and his parents rest together in Lodi, Calif.

concentration camps.

For his act of kindness, Mr. Fletcher incurred the racial resentment of his neighbors and had to give up the security of his state job. When my grandparents returned to Florin, they were able to retake possession of their farm without any problems.

To our family, Mr. Fletcher represented the basic decency that should have been shown by Americans who were otherwise so blindly driven by their prejudice, hatred and political ambition.

**2. Articulate the Lessons Learned** — When discussing E.O. 9066 and its impacts, I have pointed to three lessons that we should always remember. First, E.O. 9066 is an example of racial profiling — a governmental policy based solely on ethnicity to deprive a group of its constitutional rights.

E.O. 9066 taught us to guard against such discriminatory governmental policies and actions aimed at denying basic rights and freedoms.

The second lesson is that we must remem-

ber and honor those who kept their faith in America, even in the most difficult times. E.O. 9066 tried to deny Japanese Americans their rights as citizens by labeling them as "nonaliens," taking their property without just compensation and imprisoning them in America's concentration camps without due process.

Yet, no person of Japanese ancestry, residing within the U.S., was ever convicted of espionage or sabotage against the U.S. during World War II.

Most of those who suffered under E.O. 9066 refused to relinquish their faith in America or their belief that America could offer a better life. They persevered in believing that their rights and freedoms would be restored.

Some answered the call to serve while their family and friends were still imprisoned behind barbed wire, guarded by armed U.S. soldiers. The Nisei soldiers served with valor and distinction in defending America.

The third lesson is the greatness of America in its willingness to admit its wrongs and make amends for E.O. 9066. E.O. 9066 was a product of failed political leadership. This record was set straight by two governmental actions.

E.O. 9066 was revoked by President Gerald Ford on Feb. 19, 1976. Congress passed, then President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (aka Redress) that apologized for the unjust imprisonment of persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II and awarded redress payments.

>> See DAY on page 12

# 'RIGHTING A WRONG'

The Smithsonian Honors the Legacy of Japanese Americans at Its National Museum of American History on the 75th Anniversary of E.O. 9066



PHOTOS: PATTI HIRAHARA

The Japanese American incarceration has a bigger impact through the many artifacts that were donated to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. On display are Junwo "Jimmy" Yamashita's coat, which he wore while serving as a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Distinguished Service Cross belonging to Pvt. 1st Class Joe M. Nishimoto, who was killed in action in 1944 near La Houssiere, France. Nishimoto volunteered to serve with the 442nd R.C.T. after first being held at the Jerome camp in Arkansas. His award was upgraded to a Medal of Honor in 2000 after a review to identify service members who had been underrecognized because of prejudice.

By Patti Hirahara,  
Contributor

Prior to the establishment of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles in 1992, the most famous history museum in the United States, the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., honored the history of Japanese Americans in its exhibition "A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution," which remained open for more than 16 years from Oct. 1, 1987-Jan. 11, 2004.

This original exhibit, created as part of the celebration of the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution in 1987, was the first time that the National Museum of American History had ever done an exhibition about Japanese Americans.

Now, 12 years later, the National Museum of American History has opened "Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II," a yearlong exhibition about Executive Order 9066, the document signed in 1942 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that shaped the lives of Japanese Americans during the war and beyond.

This unique exhibition, which opened officially on Feb. 17 in the Albert H. Small Documents Gallery, combines original artifacts, photographs and historical information from one of the darkest periods in American his-

tory. It will remain open until Feb. 19, 2018.

Feb. 19 marked the 75th anniversary of E.O. 9066, which Roosevelt signed just two months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. The order resulted in the imprisonment of 75,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry and 45,000 Japanese immigrants who were prohibited by law from becoming naturalized American citizens. Abruptly stripped of their homes, livelihoods and belongings, more than 120,000 individuals were housed in 10 large, barbed-wire-enclosed incarceration camps and dozens of other installations scattered throughout desolate landscapes in the U.S. from March 1942-March 1946.

More than 40 years later, the U.S. Congress formally recognized that the rights of the Japanese American community had been violated, resulting in the signing of H.R. 442 by President Ronald Reagan. H.R. 442, known as the "Civil Liberties Act of 1988," provided an apology and restitution of \$20,000 to those living Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II.

Work in opening the "Righting a Wrong" exhibit began in 2015. The museum's Japanese American history specialist, Noriko Sanefuji, began the process of searching for artifacts and documents from across the country under the leadership of Project Director Jennifer Locke Jones. Jones had worked on the original "A More Perfect Union" exhibition, as well as the Smithson-

ian's American Library Association's traveling exhibition from 1995-99 and served as exhibit curator of its "A More Perfect Union" online site, which debuted in 2001.

"Having worked on 'A More Perfect Union' exhibit in 1987 and now having curated this new exhibition 'Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II,' I have found that collecting new objects for this exhibit has allowed us to tell more personal stories in the broader context of the history of the in-

JACL Donor Participation in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History's 'Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II' Exhibition — 75th Anniversary of E.O. 9066

## JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

JACL Washington D.C. Chapter

JACL Chicago Chapter

JACL Northern California  
Western Nevada Pacific District Council

JACL Sacramento Chapter

JACL Pacific Northwest District Council

JACL Seattle Chapter

JACL Portland Chapter

JACL Snake River Chapter

JACL Berkeley Chapter

JACL Intermountain District Chapter

JACL Midwest District Council

carceration experience," Jones said. "A baby bracelet helps us show the stories of the cycle of life inside the camps, and more personal family photographs give the visitor a more intimate way to connect with this history.

Continued Jones: "When families donate materials such as the Medal of Honor awarded posthumously to Joe Nishimoto, who volunteered to serve with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team after being incarcerated in the camp at Jerome in Arkansas, to the national collections, we are able to preserve these for future generations of scholars and historians and make these collections accessible on the web through digitization.

"As the National Museum of American History, we hope that visitors to the museum, including the younger generations, learn about the past and make connections to the stories of people who were often the same age as they are, and to engage in the dialogue about what it would be like if this happened to them. Connecting with youth through objects and stories of individuals who were youth when they were incarcerated gives them something to relate to and helps them understand the history of the Japanese American community during World War II," Jones added.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



Present at the museum's opening reception were (from left) John Gray, director of the National Museum of American History; Nobuko Sasae and the Hon. Kenichiro Sasae, ambassador of Japan to the United States; Sen. Mazie Hirono; Dr. Keith Terasaki, chairman of the Terasaki Family Foundation; Congresswoman Doris Matsui; Dr. David Skorton, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; and Gary Mayeda, national president of the JACL.

PHOTOS: PATTI HIRAHARA



**Marlene Shigekawa's baby identification bracelet from Poston**



"I would hope it would inspire them to dig deeper into these stories and to ask questions about our past — so that as Americans we can reflect upon this time in American history and how it shapes us as Americans. It's only through our collections that we can tell a more complete story," Jones concluded.

Noted Sanefuji: "Several years ago, our team noted the upcoming 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, and we were pleased to hear from Priscilla Ouchida, in her capacity as the executive director of the JACL, that there was interest and support from the community to mark this anniversary. This would allow us to connect with additional collecting opportunities, across the country, to expand upon the stories that we can tell here at the museum. It has been a fascinating journey to meet people from all over the nation, with each one of them having a unique story to tell. I wanted to make sure we offered these different perspectives under a prism of shared experience through powerful objects. I do believe the objects speak for themselves."

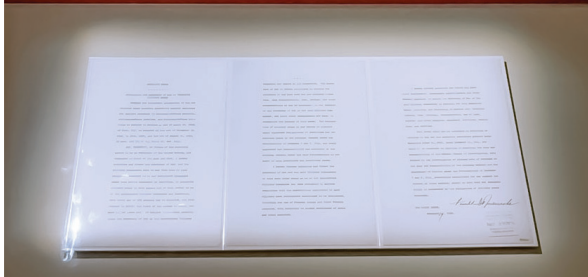
Leslie Soule, a representative from the Puyallup Valley Chapter of JACL, was present at the opening and gave her own perspective on the exhibition.

"Thank you to all the donors and the Smithsonian for making this exhibit possible," she said. "As I walked through the exhibit and listened to school children react, it became clear that the stories told through artifacts from camp were not merely individuals' stories. Nor were they solely part of the Japanese American story, but they were America's stories. By remembering the past, however painful, you have given future generations lessons in how to 'form a more perfect union.'"

A key highlight of the new exhibition is the viewing of the original Executive Order 9066 document, which is on loan from the National Archives and Records Administration.

Currently, the museum is displaying the first page of Roosevelt's original executive order — during the run of the exhibition, all three pages of the original document will be on display. The museum clearly depicts how

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the United States entered a war in Europe and the Pacific, the nation was overcome by shock, anger, and fear—a fear exaggerated by long-standing anti-Asian prejudice. Ten weeks later President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, under which nearly 75,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry were taken into custody. Another 45,000 Japanese nationals living in the United States (but long denied citizenship because of their race) were also incarcerated. Some forty years later, members of the Japanese American community successfully led the nation to confront the wrong it had done—and to make it right.



**Executive Order 9066 is on display courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.**

this document shaped the lives of Japanese Americans during World War II and how it continues to resonate throughout the country today.

"It is through the personal artifacts and photographs on view that our visitors will be able to understand the individual stories and experiences of Japanese Americans during this time period," said National Museum of American History Director John Gray. "We are grateful to the former detainees and their descendants for sharing these objects with the nation to illuminate this complex history."

Through the National Museum of American History's Japanese American History Initiative, it hopes to ensure that the stories and objects of Japanese Americans are preserved for future generations. The museum receives more than 3 million visitors per year and millions more online.

The Smithsonian is open daily from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., except Dec. 25. Visitors may check the website for updates and special holiday or summer hours (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/visit/hours>).

"Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II" has been made possible through a donation by the Terasaki Family Foundation, as well as the Japanese American Citizens League and AARP.

*For additional information about the Japanese American camps and the museum's collection, the public may visit <http://s.si.edu/JapaneseCampsWWII> and <http://amhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/experience/index.html>.*

<< In this photo, taken in 2015, Noriko Sanefuji admires a Sakahara Family heirloom that was worn by David Perley's mother, Lois, in Heart Mountain. Perley's grandfather, Dan Sakahara, was president of the Puyallup Valley JACL in 1937 and '38, and the Sakahara family spent time in Tule Lake and Heart Mountain during WWII. The pink crocheted dress has become part of the permanent collections of Japanese American history at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and is on display in the exhibition.



**Artifacts that showed life in the incarceration camps. The Smithsonian exhibition will run through Feb. 19, 2018.**

## AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

### 2017 TOUR SCHEDULE

- Japan Spring Countryside Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Apr 14-24  
Tokyo, Nagano, Sado Island, Niigata, Sakata/Shonai, Yamagata, Aizu Wakamatsu, Ashikaga.
- Ireland Holiday Tour (Elaine Ishida). . . . . May 1-10  
Dublin, Waterford, Blarney Stone, Killarney, Limerick, Galway, Kingscourt.
- China-Yangtze River-Hong Kong Holiday Tour (Carol Hida). . . . . May 14-29  
Beijing, Yangtze River Cruise, Xian, Shanghai, Hong Kong.
- Grandparent-Grandchildren Japan Tour (Ernest Hida) WAITLIST Jun 26-Jul 5  
Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto.
- Yellowstone-Tetons National Parks Tour (Elaine Ishida). . . . . Jul 7-14  
Salt Lake City, Jackson Hole, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Park City.
- Hokkaido Summer Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Jul 17-30  
Lake Akan, Furano, Asahikawa, Wakkanai, Sapporo, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.
- So. Dakota-Mt. Rushmore Tour (Elaine Ishida). . . . . Aug 25-31  
Rapid City, Mt. Rushmore, Custer State Park, Black Hills, Badlands.
- Eastern Canada Holiday Tour (Carol Hida) . . . . . Sep 6-14  
Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara Falls.
- Classical Japan Autumn Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida). . . . . Oct 5-16  
Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Yamanashi, Shizuoka, Nagoya, Gifu, Hiroshima, Kyoto.
- Japan Autumn Countryside Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida). . . . . Oct 19-29  
Tokyo, Sado Island, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Matsue, Tamatsukuri Onsen, Hiroshima.
- New Orleans & Deep South Holiday Tour (Elaine Ishida) . . . . . Nov 5-12  
New Orleans, Natchez, Lafayette.
- So. America Patagonia-Easter Island Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Nov 7-22  
Buenos Aires, Ushuaia, Calafate(Perito Moreno Glacier), Paine National Park(Grey Glacier), Punta Arenas, Santiago, Easter Island.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

#### AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

312 E. 1st Street, Suite 330 \* Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Tel: (213)625-2232 \* Email: [americanholiday@att.net](mailto:americanholiday@att.net)  
(CST #200326-10) Ernest or Carol Hida  
Elaine Ishida (Tel: 714-269-4534)

# THE TIES THAT BIND

The 2017 Smithsonian Day of Remembrance bridges experiences of incarcerated and youth as well as highlights the relevance of the World War II Japanese American experience

By *Helen Yoshida*,  
Contributor

“As Americans today, we need to keep telling these stories to make our country better,” said Reed Leventis, a junior at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Md., on the World War II Japanese American incarceration experience. Leventis was one of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) digital storytelling students that spoke alongside Heart Mountain and Topaz incarcerated about the importance of this history at the Day of Remembrance program on Feb. 19, held at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

On the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066 — which forcibly removed nearly 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast into 10 camps across seven states — five NJAMF student films on Amache, Heart Mountain, Manzanar, Poston and Topaz debuted on the museum’s national stage.

Leventis, Carolyn Hoover, Halle Sousa and Connor Yu then joined Takashi Hoshizaki, Sam Mihara, Mary Murakami and Shig Yabu for a panel discussion with Karen Ishizuka, author, filmmaker and former senior staff member at the Japanese American National Museum.

More than 420 people listened to the incarcerated as they shared their recollections of the attack on Pearl Harbor and life behind barbed wire.



(From left) Mary Murakami, Carolyn Hoover, Takashi Hoshizaki, Connor Yu, Sam Mihara, Reed Leventis, Shig Yabu, Halle Sousa and Karen Ishizuka during the Smithsonian Day of Remembrance at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

“I was at a movie theater three blocks away from my house [in San Francisco], and when I came out, the newspaper headlines said, ‘Japanese Bombed Pearl Harbor,’” recalled Mihara when asked how he found out about the infamous attack on American soil.

“I knew that whatever happened to us, I wanted to further my education,” said Murakami, who felt it was challenging to attend high school in Topaz. In 1945, she was part of a group of 50 Japanese Americans who attended the University of California, Berkeley, thus paving the way for others to enroll in the UC system, too.

Yabu regaled everyone with humorous and positive memories of Heart Mountain, including how he won his first fist fight when he arrived at camp and how he adopted an abandoned baby Magpie. Named Maggie, the bird was a fixture in the community, often mimicking sounds and words heard in the camp.

“Her favorite was the wolf call,” he said, to much laughter.

Hoshizaki brought a different perspective to the conversation. At 17 years old, he was one of 63 Heart Mountain resisters who refused to fight in the U.S. military until his civil rights were restored. When he answered,

“No. When my citizenship rights are restored and land-owning rights must be cleared” to Question 27 on the War Relocation Authority’s “Statement of United States Citizen of Japanese Ancestry” questionnaire — which asked if he was willing to fight in the U.S. Armed Forces — and “Yes” to Question 28 — which asked if he swore “unqualified allegiance” to the U.S. and “fore swear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese Emperor, or any other foreign government, power or organization” — Hoshizaki took a stand for what he believed in.

Although the resisters tried to right a grave wrong from within, they were all tried at the Cheyenne federal courthouse in June 1944 and sentenced to three years in prison. It still remains the largest mass trial in Wyoming history.

“You captured this story very well,” Hoshizaki said to Yu, who featured the resister in his digital story on Heart Mountain.

NJAMF, who partnered with the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation on this project, sponsored five students to participate in a Digital Storytelling Workshop led by Emmy Award-winning producer Jeff MacIntyre and teaching assistants Hana Maruyama and Vanessa Saito Yuille at the 2016 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. Their stories, which were aired at the Pilgrimage banquet dinner, not only strengthen the connection between visitors to the D.C. Memorial and the camps but also connect the camps to the nation’s capital and inspire people to experience the original sites themselves.

“The hardest part [of the project] was trying to maintain the honesty and accuracy of the experience,” said Hoover on her digital story about Topaz. A 2016 graduate of Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Md., she is now a freshman at Duke University. “Preserving, maintaining and honoring what my grandparents left behind — that’s what’s important to me.” She interviewed Murakami, her grandmother, as part of her story on Topaz.

Sousa, a senior at Notre Dame High School in San Jose, Calif., explained what drew her to creating a digital story and how she wove her archeology internship experience with the University of Denver at the Amache confine-

ment site into her project.

“When I found out about this project, it was something that I knew I had to take part in. Looking at footage and photographs after my internship and incorporating them into this story was one of the most rewarding things I’ve done in my life,” Sousa said.

Yu, now a junior at Georgetown Day School in Washington, D.C., reflected on the importance of this part of American history on current events.

“Before, I was always kind of confused. I thought, ‘Why spend an hour talking about history? How does this affect us now?’ Now, I’ve seen that we have to fight to make sure a mistake like that shouldn’t happen again,” Yu said.

NJAMF anticipates recruiting five more high school students to tell the stories of the remaining camps — Gila River, Jerome, Minidoka, Rohwer and Tule Lake — this year. Upon completion of all 10 stories, the foundation will then upload them to a mobile application that will be used by visitors to the Memorial. The stories will also become the heart of an interactive companion website that will tie back to each of the confinement sites’ websites; space will be created for those sites that do not have a website. NJAMF’s efforts today will help preserve the stories of incarcerated such as Hoshizaki, Mihara, Murakami and Yabu for future generations.

The Smithsonian DOR event was held in conjunction with the opening of the new yearlong exhibit “Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II” at the National Museum of American History, which features Executive Order 9066 along with various camp artifacts. Given today’s political climate, the exhibit, the students’ digital stories and the first-hand experiences from incarcerated resonated with everyone.

“No one will remember history if people don’t want to tell it,” said Sousa, whose grandparents were incarcerated at Amache.

Her words ring true.

Seventy-five years later, the aftermath of E.O. 9066 still matters today. With initiatives like the digital storytelling project, which binds this important history to today, it is hoped that this never happens again. ■



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SHIRLEY ANN HIGUCHI

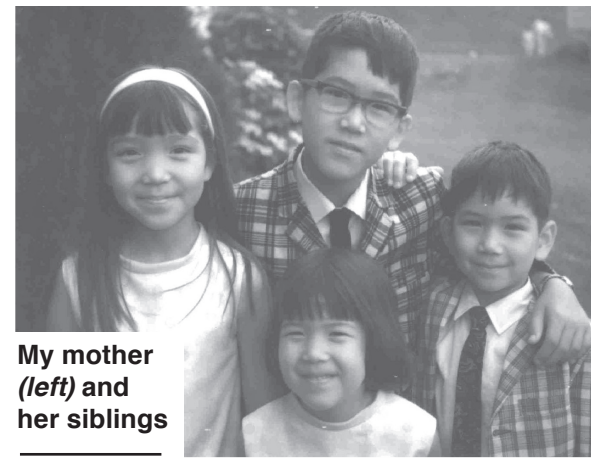
(From left) Shig Yabu, Halle Sousa, Connor Yu, Takashi Hoshizaki, Shirley Ann Higuchi, Reed Leventis, Carolyn Hoover and Beth Kelley during the Smithsonian Day of Remembrance at the National Museum of American History



My Hibaachan shortly before she moved to the U.S.



My great-grandfather with his sons and grandsons



My mother (left) and her siblings

# THE MIXED-RACE EXPERIENCE TWO GENERATIONS ON

By Rob Buscher, Contributor

Growing up in a suburban/rural town of 18,000 in Southwest Connecticut, our family was both the only Japanese American and interracial family in our community.

When my mother moved there in the mid-1980s, she recalls walking into a diner and everyone in the restaurant stopped talking and stared at her, as if she was the first Asian American they had ever seen.

Perhaps for many present that day, she was. Like many JAs, our family is mostly located out West in California, Utah and other states in the Pacific Northwest region. After growing up in Denver and attending college at the University of Colorado Boulder, she came to the East Coast for a job in New York City and began commuting from the Connecticut suburbs.

Being half-Japanese in an era when interracial marriages were still fairly uncommon, my mother has a kind of quiet resilience about her. She has certainly experienced her share of discrimination, living most of her life in white majority communities, but that hasn't stopped her from engaging in aspects of our culture that keep her firmly rooted within her JA identity.

Her Issei grandmother lived until 2006 to the ripe old age of 96. While her siblings often teased my mother about being the "white child" because of her lighter complexion and brunette hair, Grandma (or Hibaachan as I knew her) never questioned her Japanese-

ness. In fact, it was perhaps because of her mixed ancestry that led to such a close bond between them — my mother endeavoring to prove her Japaneseness and Hibaachan happy to have an eager listener.

My Obaachan was almost 6 years old when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Like most Issei immigrants, her parents were scared of what a detention period in U.S. custody might mean for their five young children's futures.

It was my great-grandfather whose foresight led our family to flee inland to Utah, beyond Military Zone 1 and thus avoid the incarceration. Life was tough for them during the war years, having to abandon their farm and property in California, spending the winter of 1942 in a single-room canvas tent on a frozen farm field. The following year, they were able to move into a storage shed owned by the Thorogood family, whose farm they sharecropped for many years.

Although he passed away before I was born, my great-grandfather left an indelible impact on our family's identity as a Judo Sensei and founding member of the Judo Association of Utah.

Two of his dojos still exist today in the Salt Lake City suburb of Ogden. In certain ways, he was a very progressive man, wanting to instill a sense of pride in young JAs by preserving elements of their traditional culture at a time when being Japanese was synonymous with being the enemy.

However, it was this traditionalism that my Obaachan rebelled against when she began dating and later married my white grandfather. At the time, Hibaachan hid all of the

kitchen knives and other sharp implements out of fear that her husband would commit seppuku.

My grandparents had their own ordeal ahead of them, having to drive through three states before they could find a priest willing to marry them, building a new life in the unfamiliar state of Washington.

Old grudges were quickly mended by the successive births of four grandchildren, and our mixed-race family became the new normal. As a Nisei who grew up speaking Japanese at home, my Obaachan chose not to pass her language onto my mother or her siblings. For one thing, it would have been an issue with my grandfather, who did not want a foreign language he could not understand

spoken by his children.

More importantly, however, by marrying my grandfather, Obaachan had realized her own American dream of finding conditional acceptance in a society that had been openly hostile for most of her life. Why risk spoiling it by teaching her biracial children things that would demarcate them as even more different than they were already perceived?

Despite her lack of language abilities, my Sansei mother is about as JA as they come. My sister and I grew up eating *ochazuke*, *inari zushi* and *yokan*. Our favorite treats were mochi ice cream, Pocky sticks and Botan Rice candy. We had a big pot of Koda Farms rice with every meal.

>> See GENERATIONS on page 12

## PROPERTY >> continued from page 3

### Trustee of a Trust

One of the fundamental reasons to create a living trust is to prevent your assets from being probated. To obtain maximum benefit, confirm that your real property is owned by the trust (and managed by the trustee). For example, title would be held as "Pete Purchaser, as Trustee of The Pete Purchaser Revocable Living Trust."

Holding title in the name of the trust encompasses many of the advantages already discussed: probate avoidance, freedom to transfer to any person or party upon death and increased tax benefits. All that's required is the establishment of a living trust and its proper funding.

How you hold title can have lasting effects

on you, your family and the co-owners of the property. To fully understand and plan for all of the ramifications associated with your particular situation — property tax reassessment, capital gains tax minimization, avoidance of probate and estate taxes — consult with a qualified California attorney.

*Staci Yamashita-Iida, Esq., is an Estate Planning attorney at Elder Law Services of California. She can be contacted at (310) 348-2995. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or JACL. The information presented does not constitute legal advice and should not be treated as such.*

## TIPS FOR THE WISE CAR BUYER

1. Before you leave home, visit our Auto Center at [jaclcu.com](http://jaclcu.com) to find the best deal.
2. Make your way to the dealer and purchase your new car.
3. Next call or head over to National JACL Credit Union.



Get a better rate and up to \$500 cash back.

Tell them you want to finance at JACL CU.

Call us to get pre-approved.



Use this innovative auto buying resource that connects you with comprehensive research and comparison tools. Make a smart buying decision with competitive credit union financing. *Know Before You Go!*

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NCUA LENDER PROMO CODE: PCAUTO2016

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

# CALENDAR

## NCWNP

**CAAMFest 2017**  
**San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland, CA**  
**March 9-19; various locations and times**  
**Venues throughout the S.F. Bay Area**

CAAMFest is the nation's largest showcase for new Asian American and Asian films, annually presenting approximately 130 works in San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland, Calif. Since 1982, the festival has been an important launching point for Asian American filmmakers as well as a vital source for new Asian cinema.

**Info: Visit [www.caamedia.org](http://www.caamedia.org).**

**Paul Kitagaki Jr. Photo Exhibit Independence, CA**  
**Opens early April thru mid-May**  
**Manzanar National Historic Site**  
**5001 Hwy 395**

Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Paul Kitagaki Jr. will display his Japanese American incarceration photo series at the MNHS. For more than a decade, Kitagaki has searched for those photographed by War Relocation Authority photographers — including Dorothea Lange, Clem Albers, Tom Parker and Francis Stewart — in 1942. He has located and rephotographed dozens of people, often in their historic poses.

**Info: Visit [www.nps.gov/manz/](http://www.nps.gov/manz/).**

**Letters From the Camps: Voices of Dissent**  
**San Francisco, CA**  
**April 27; 6 p.m.**  
**Presidio Officer's Club**  
**Moraga Hall**  
**50 Moraga Ave.**

In partnership with the Presidio Trust and Friends of Topaz, the California Historical Society presents this live reading of letters from the CHS collection, including those written by Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi and Eiko Fujii. This program also coincides with the opening of the Presidio Trust's E.O. 9066 exhibition.

**Info: Visit [www.my.californiahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.my.californiahistoricalsociety.org).**

**Confined, But Not Silent: The Legacy of Topaz Artists and Poets**  
**San Francisco, CA**  
**May 6; 11 a.m.-3 p.m.**  
**Buchanan YMCA**  
**1530 Buchanan St.**

This event will celebrate and support the opening of the Topaz Museum.  
**Info: Contact Berkeley JACL for more information.**

## PSW

**'Under the Blood Red Sun'**  
**Pacoima, CA**  
**March 12; 2 p.m.**  
**San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center**  
**12953 Branford St.**  
**Price: Tickets: \$10; bento \$10 (must be ordered by March 7)**

This screening tells the story of a 13-year-old Japanese American boy who faces monumental adversity in Hawaii when the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. Cast member Chris Tashima will participate in Q & A following the screening.

**Info: Call Nancy Gohata at (818) 371-8013 or email [nancygohata@gmail.com](mailto:nancygohata@gmail.com).**

**The First Karaoke: Enka!**  
**Los Angeles, CA**  
**Thru April 2; Tues.-Fri., Noon-5 p.m.; Sat./Sun., 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed Mondays and holidays**  
**Japanese American Cultural and Community Center**  
**George J. Doizaki Gallery**  
**244 S. San Pedro St.**

This multichannel media installation by Bruce Yonemoto refreshes the original political content of enka songs with contemporary lyrics to popular enka melodies.  
**Info: Call (213) 628-2725 or visit [www.jacc.org](http://www.jacc.org).**

**Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument Dedication**  
**Los Angeles, CA**  
**April 27; 10-11:30 a.m.**  
**The N.W. corner of Venice and Lincoln Boulevards**

An event commemorating the dedication of the monument at the site where the forced removal of local Japanese American residents took place prior to the incarceration at the Manzanar WRA Center during WWII. The event's keynote speaker will be Warren Furutani, followed by a bento fundraiser at Hama Sushi Restaurant.

**Info: Call Phyllis Hayashibara at (310) 390-1576 or email [phyllishayashibara@gmail.com](mailto:phyllishayashibara@gmail.com) to preorder \$20 bento before April 24; for corporate orders, call Esther Chaing at (310) 308-6347 or email [hchaing@yahoo.com](mailto:hchaing@yahoo.com) or visit [www.venicejamm.org](http://www.venicejamm.org).**

**The Journey of Japanese Lacquer Tools**  
**San Diego, CA**  
**Thru April 30**  
**Balboa Park**  
**Plaza de Panama**  
**1439 E. Prado**

The tools of Japanese lacquer makers are implements of prolonged use and objects of remarkable beauty. Come see this beautiful exhibit first-hand to appreciate the tools, that were used to create these works of art.

**Info: Visit [www.mingei.org/mim-exhibition/layers-of-brilliance/](http://www.mingei.org/mim-exhibition/layers-of-brilliance/).**

## MDC

**Chicago JACL Inaugural 2017**  
**Lincolnwood, IL**  
**March 18; 6:30-9 p.m.**  
**Amron Hall**  
**6421 Hamlin Ave.**

**Price: Tickets: \$30 (includes two drink tickets); \$20 for students with ID; prepurchase available**  
 Come on out for an evening featuring dinner, drinks, dancing and the inauguration of JACL board members, as well as a special "thank you" to retiring MDC Regional Director Bill Yoshino.  
**Info: RSVP to Mari Yamagiwa at (872) 222-9383 or email [staff@jaclchicago.org](mailto:staff@jaclchicago.org).**

**'Roger Shimomura: Mistaken Identity' Exhibit**  
**St. Paul, MN**  
**Thru March 10; Mon.-Fri.: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thursdays: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sat. and Sun.: Noon-4 p.m.**  
**Macalester College, Law Warschaw Gallery**  
**130 Macalester St.**

Macalester College's Law Warschaw Gallery, together with the Twin Cities JACL, present this exhibition from prolific American artist Roger Shimomura, which includes a range of works on paper from the past 25 years. Included are works that draw upon Shimomura and his family's experiences while incarcerated at the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho. This exhibition is presented to recognize the 75th anniversary of E.O. 9066.

**Info: Visit [Macalester.edu/gallery](http://Macalester.edu/gallery) or email [gallery@macalester.edu](mailto:gallery@macalester.edu).**

## PNW

**Nichiren Buddhist Temple**  
**25th Annual Spring Bazaar**  
**Portland, OR**

**March 19; 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.**  
**2025 S.E. Yamhill**

Come on out and support Nichiren Buddhist Temple's annual bazaar. Available for preorder only is the special Nichiren tonkatsu bento. Also available will be chicken donburi, chow mein, vegetable chow mein and tofu donburi. Baked goods, crafts and much more will be available.

**Info: Contact (510) 235-8292.**

**Year of Remembrance**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**Thru Feb. 11, 2018**  
**Wing Luke Museum**  
**719 S. King St.**

Inspired by "Glimpses of Forever Foreigner," a book of poems by Lawrence Matsuda and artwork by Roger Shimomura, this yearlong exhibit commemorates Executive Order 9066 and features poems by Matsuda and artwork by Shimomura, as well as explores historic and contemporary issues of racism, discrimination and human rights.

**Info: Visit [www.wingluke.org](http://www.wingluke.org).**

## CCDC

**Friends of the Madden Library**  
**Talk: Karen Korematsu**  
**Fresno, CA**  
**April 7**  
**Fresno State University**  
**Henry Madden Library**  
**5200 N. Barton Ave.**  
**Price: Free**

Karen Korematsu, the daughter of Fred Korematsu — a key figure in a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case that challenged the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066 — is holding a special speaking engagement, sponsored by the Friends of the Madden Library.

**Info: For more information or assistance with physical accommodations, contact Sharon Ramirez at (559) 278-5790 or email [sramirez@csufresno.edu](mailto:sramirez@csufresno.edu).**

**Art of Survival: Enduring the Turmoil of Tule Lake**  
**Fresno, CA**  
**Thru April 30**  
**Fresno State University**  
**Henry Madden Library**  
**5200 N. Barton Ave.**

This traveling exhibition probes the complexity of the Japanese American

confinement site in Newell, Calif. It was the only officially designated segregation center during WWII and was ruled under martial law. Through haunting images of artifacts by fine art photographer Hiroshi Watanabe, viewers will get a glimpse into the lives of those who were held at Tule Lake.

**Info: Visit [library.fresno.state.edu](http://library.fresno.state.edu).**

## EDC

**Japanese Impressions: Color Woodblock Prints From the Rodbell Family Collection**  
**Williamstown, MA**  
**Thru April 2**

**The Clark Art Institute**  
**225 South St.**

This is the museum's first exhibition that focuses on its permanent collection of Japanese prints, which span more than a century. These Japanese color woodblock prints represent three generations of artists who produced prints from the 1830s-1970s.

**Info: For more information, visit <http://www.clarkart.edu/Mini-Sites/Japanese-Prints/Exhibition>.**

**Turtle Power! Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Samurai Heroes**  
**Springfield, MA**  
**Thru May 14**  
**G.W.V. Smith Art Museum**  
**21 Edwards St.**  
**Price: \$18 adults, \$12 seniors and students, \$9.50 youth 3-17**

This unique and imaginative exhibit brings together original graphic novel art and the museum's own collection of Japanese art, arms and armor. The museum is also offering special Turtle Power Saturdays during the exhibition, in addition to family activities.

**Info: For more information, visit <http://springfieldmuseums.org/exhibitions/turtle-power/>.**

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 (213) 620-1767

# IN MEMORIAM



**Aoyagi-Bernhard, Jody, 38**, Albany, CA, Dec. 6; she was predeceased by her father, David; she is survived by her husband, Kyle; children, Olivia and Miles; mother, Dianne; and sister, Tiffany (Joe).

**Chavez, Yukiko Martha, 76**, Lakewood, CO, Feb. 9; she was predeceased by her daughter, Anita; she is survived by her husband, Jose; and children, Annette, Marc and Ron.



**Clerici, Miyoko, 85**, Vista, CA, Jan. 25; she was predeceased by her husband, Arthur; son, Thomas; and ggc Anthony; she is survived by her children, Marie (Dave) Simpson, Kathleen (James) McCann and Michael; sisters, Teruko Kawasaki, Kimiko Wada and Yaeko Tanaka; gc: 10; ggc: 4.

**Furuya, Mitsuye 'Mitzi,' 93**, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 4; she is survived by her sisters, Kiyoko Fujita and Masumi Mary Masuda; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Hirashima, Hajime, 96**, Oxnard, CA, Jan. 22; she is survived by her children, Shigeko Janice and Takeshi Thomas (Linda) Hirashima; siblings, Tadashi Uyeda and Rose Nakadaira; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 3.

**Higuchi, Brian, 54**, Rosemead, CA, Jan. 24; he is survived by his children, Nicole Higuchi and Daniel Higuchi; mother, Mitsuko Higuchi; siblings, Judy (Brady) Saito, Alan (Tammy) Higuchi, Patty (Gary Yamanaka) Higuchi, Joyce (Carl) Wynkoop; former wife, Veronica; he is also survived by several nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Hirota, Shigeko 'Sally,' 88**, Los Angeles, Feb. 3; she is survived by her children, Jan Hirota, David and John (Marinel); 10 siblings; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and friends; gc: 4.

**Hoshiko, Michael Starrson Masanori, 95**, Longmont, CO, Dec. 26; he was predeceased by his wife, Rose; he is survived by his children, Cecily "Mitsie" (Dave) Sample, Sumi Hoshiko and Lance (Rebecca) Hoshiko; sisters, Eileen Hoshiko and Yuri Goto; gc: 5.

**Ichikawa, Christie, 88**, Torrance, CA, Nov. 20; she was predeceased by her husband, Robert S. Ichikawa; she is survived by her children, Robert D. (Sally), Ross A. (Lori) and Laura A. Ichikawa; siblings, Doris Sakamoto (Sidney) and Bill Ozawa (Elaine); gc: 3.

**Ido, Shizuka Ishikawa, 93**, Los Angeles, Jan. 2; she was predeceased by her husband, Joseph Fujio; she is survived by her daughter, Kristine (Vern) Chinen; gc: 1.



**Iseda, Howard Kho, 89**, Santa Monica, CA, Jan. 10; he is survived by his wife, Minako "Minnie" Iseda; son, Gerald; siblings, Elizabeth Chieko (Mits) Sato and Yasushi Iseda; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Ishii, Kimi, 93**, Los Angeles, Jan. 16; she was predeceased by her husband, Shig Ishii; she is survived by her children, Gary (Lisabeth) and Ron; brother-in-law, Haramitsu "Harney" Ishii; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Iwata, Sammy, 84**, Beaverton, OR, Feb. 9; she was predeceased by her husband, Richard; she is survived by her step-children, John (Cindy) Iwata, Irene Iwata and Janet Conrad; sister, Annye Lou Collum; sisters-in-law, Hisa Iwata, Yoko Iwata and Bernice Yasuda; and three nieces.



**Kato, Kenneth Naoshi, 82**, Fountain Valley, CA, Jan. 11; he is survived by his wife, Yumi; children, Gene (Kimberly) and Sandra

Kato; sister-in-law, June (Douglas) Kato; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 2.



**Kawahara, George, 52**, San Jose, CA, Feb. 14; he is survived by his parents; sister, Susan (Tom); 1 niece and 1 nephew.

**Kitamura, Miyo 'Alice,' 93**, Grimes, CA, Feb. 1; during WWII, she and her family were incarcerated at the Amache War Relocation Authority Center in Colo. She was predeceased by her husband, William "Bill" Tsutae Kitamura; she is survived by her children, William David (Diann), Jon (Sally), Donald and Kendall; gc: 4; step-gc: 4 and step-ggc: 2.

**Kobayashi, Nori, 94**, Seattle, Feb. 7; she is survived by her sister, Emi Mayeda; 1 nephew and two grandnephews.

**Koshi, Patricia H., 77**, Los Angeles, Feb. 5; she is survived by her husband, Paul; and her three children; gc: 4.

**Kunishi, Hanayo, 97**, Honolulu, Jan. 13; she was predeceased by her husband, Arthur Yoshito; she is survived by her daughters, Marilyn, Sharon (Myron) Oie and Carole (Paul) Fujishige; she is also survived by several nieces and nephews; gc: 2.

**Kuriyama, Hideko, 84**, Gardena, CA, Jan. 22; during WWII, as a child, she and her family were incarcerated at the War Relocation Authority Center in Rohwer, Ark. She is survived by her children, Bob (Lori), Cliff (Anne), Terry (Lori) and Sandy; gc: 6; ggc: 3.

**Kusumoto, Jane, 84**, El Monte, CA, Feb. 2; she is survived by her husband, Hiro; children, Karen Kataoka, Warren (Judi), Alvin (Julie Lee), Kenneth and Janice Kusumoto; siblings, Yoshie Fujinaka, Mildred Kawano, George Hayase and Hazel Kamada (Kenneth); gc: 7; ggc: 1.

**Lam, Irene, 13**, San Francisco, Feb. 8; she was predeceased by her father, Robert Ichinose.

**Madsen, Kazuko, 81**, San Francisco, Jan. 30; she was predeceased by her husband, Carl; she is survived by her sons, Mark (Ineke), Richard and Steven; sister, Tayoko Minetoma; gc: 4; step-gc: 3; ggc: 1.

**Maeyama, Kaoru, 89**, San Francisco, Jan. 28; as a child, she and her family were incarcerated during WWII; she is survived by her hus-

band, Jun; children, Mark (Melissa) and Lynn Maeyama; gc: 5.

**Miyashiro, Hisako, 90**, Los Angeles, Jan. 8; she is survived by her children, Sally, Edward and Ernest Miyashiro; sister, Teruko Sakumoto; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Nagahori, Henry Masayoshi, 91**, Torrance, CA, Jan. 5; he is survived by his wife, Ami Emiko; children, Hoke, Lisa (Terry Ikemoto), Craig (Sylvia Gomez) and Kurt (Louise Lew) Nagahori; siblings, Fred and Harry Nagahori and Elsie Watanabe; gc: 5.

**Nakatsuka, Itsu, 96**, Westlake, OH, Feb. 4, she was predeceased by her husband, Keiji; children, Patricia and Janis; gc: 6; ggc: 1.

**Nakazawa, Yuri Lily, 97**, West Palm Beach, FL, Feb. 14; she is survived by her sons, Paul and John; gc: 4; ggc: 1.

**Nishita, Yuriko, 90**, Pleasanton, CA, Nov. 29; during WWII, she and her family were incarcerated at the Topaz WRA Center in Utah; she was predeceased by her husband, Satoru Nishita ("Sat"); she is survived by her daughters, Diana (Jeffrey), Jane (Louis), Ann (Jon), Nancy (Mark) and Patricia; gc: 6; ggc: 2.

**Oka, Nobuko, 97**, Spokane, WA, Dec. 31; during WWII, she was incarcerated at the Minidoka WRA Center; she was predeceased by her husband, Keith Oka; she is survived by her children, Gareth, Gwain (Darcy) and Lynn (Tom) Dwyer; brother, Masao Koba; sister-in-law, Chiyako Oka; she is also survived by several nieces and nephews; gc: 8.

**Okai, Miyoko 'Millie,' 98**, Los Angeles, CA; she was predeceased by her husband, Henry Okai; son, Terrance Okai; she is survived by her daughters, Carole (Harvey) Omata and Donna (Ken) Inouye; sister, Betty Masuda; gc: 2; ggc: 4.

**Okamoto, Kazue T., 93**, Torrance, CA, Jan. 13; she is survived by her children, Joyce (Harvey) Yoshino, Joanne (Wilfred) Nakata and Jim (Lorna Akemi); siblings, William (Asayo) Takigawa and Susan (Frank) Morimoto; sister-in-law, Kachan Maruyama; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 6; ggc: 3.

**Okine, Sayeko, 89**, Gardena, CA,

Jan. 31; she was predeceased by her husband, Makoto; she is survived by her children, Bruce (Julie) and Cynthia (Mike) Runyan; brother, Hiroshi Yasuda; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 2.

**Peterson, Mieko Marilyn, 77**, San Jose, CA, Jan. 12; as a child, she and her family were incarcerated during WWII at the War Relocation Authority facility at Heart Mountain, WY; she is survived by her sons, James (Tammy) and Robert; sisters, Janice, Charlene and Karen Yoritsune; gc: 2.

**Somen, Tamiji, 92**, Santa Ana, CA, Jan. 26; he is survived by his wife, Rosa Hiroko; children, Alan, Bryan and Catherine; in-laws Michiyo, Asako and Miguel Sameshima; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Takao, M. George, 77**, Torrance, CA, Jan. 4; he is survived by his son, Brent; siblings, Nancy and Leroy; a niece; a nephew; gc: 2.

**Tomita, Wayne, 83**, San Jose, CA, Jan. 24; he is survived by his siblings, Larry (Michie), Hideko Nakasaki (George), Terrie (Fred) and Phyllis Tomita; he is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

**Tanada, Yoshinori 'Joe,' 98**, Oakland, CA, May 24, 2016; born in Puuloa, Oahu, he became professor emeritus of entomology, University of California, Berkeley; author of the 1993 textbook "Insect Pathology"; he was instrumental in the development of insect pathology in Japan.

**Watanabe, Kinichi Ken, 82**, Torrance, CA, Dec. 29; he is survived by his wife, Tamiko; children, Dianne (Rod) Shiozaki, Curtis (Debbie) and Larry (Anna); stepson, Paul Hiraoka; brothers, Kinjiro (Ruby) and Bill Yosh (Ruth) Watanabe; gc: 7.

## PLACE A TRIBUTE

'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis.

Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$20/column inch.

Contact: [busmgr@pacificcitizen.org](mailto:busmgr@pacificcitizen.org) or call (213) 620-1767

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## DAY &gt;&gt; continued from page 5

## 3. Get Involved

— The easiest way to get involved is by writing a check. Having held leadership positions in several Japanese American nonprofit organizations, I know that there is one common need: Organizations need money to fund their programs. We can show our support by donating to organizations that are keeping this legacy alive.

Another way to get involved is to

look for speaking opportunities where we can share our family story and discuss the lessons that we believe must be learned from E.O. 9066 and its application to persons of Japanese ancestry. We can organize a speakers bureau that would be available to schools, civic organizations and social groups.



**Despite facing resentment by his neighbors, Bob Fletcher followed his principles to protect the Tsukamoto, Okamoto and Nitta farms when these families were evacuated and imprisoned under the authority of E.O. 9066. Mr. Fletcher died in 2013 at the age of 101 in Florin, Calif.**

We can get more deeply involved by creating a legacy project for a local community and apply for a grant from the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, administered by the National Park Service. To ensure continued funding for this program, the NPS needs to receive qualified grant proposals every year.

E.O. 9066 is part of our history. If we are not willing to

help preserve the legacy of those who suffered under E.O. 9066, their sacrifices will be forgotten, and the injustices imposed by E.O. 9066 may be repeated.

Let us use Feb. 19 not only as a time to remember what happened in the past but also as a time to recommit ourselves and the next generation to telling our story. ■

## VOLUNTEERS INVITED TO JOIN PUBLIC ARCHEOLOGY PROJECTS AT MANZANAR



PHOTO: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Wartime Citizenship, Civil Disobedience, and Historical Memory,” and the award-winning California State University San Bernardino History and Anthropology Clubs will participate in the project from March 25-27, marking their fifth year returning as a group.

Art Williams, who lived in the administration area as a teenager and wrote the book “Reflecting on WWII, Manzanar, and the WRA,” will also present a program.

Volunteer positions are available to anyone age 15 and over who is physically able to work outdoors participating in moderately strenuous activities.

Participants will be digging with shovels and small hand tools, cutting and loading brush, using wheelbarrows, collecting rocks to reconstruct landscape features, painting rock alignments and screening sediments to retrieve artifacts.

The work will be conducted outdoors, regardless of weather. Volunteers may work any number of days or hours, but a full day or multiple days are preferred. Bring water, lunch, work gloves and wear sunscreen, a hat and sturdy boots.

Advance sign-up is required since the project is limited to 25 participants per day.

**To sign up, contact Manzanar Volunteer Ambassador Katie Busch at (760) 878-2194, ext. 3312, or email [katherine\\_busch@partner.nps.gov](mailto:katherine_busch@partner.nps.gov). For project questions, contact Cultural Resources Manager Jeff Burton at (760) 878-2194, ext. 3305, or email [jeff\\_burton@nps.gov](mailto:jeff_burton@nps.gov).**

In commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066 and the 25th anniversary of the Manzanar National Historic Site, Manzanar is hosting two public archeology projects from March 24-29 and May 26-30.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to assist the National Park Service in uncovering and stabilizing Manzanar’s historic administration and staff housing area. Participants will also learn about the common and contrasting experiences of camp staff and incarcerated, as well as the differences between Japanese landscaping aesthetics and “western” military-style landscaping.

Cherstin Lyon, author of the book “Prisons and Patriots: Japanese American

## GENERATIONS &gt;&gt; continued from page 9

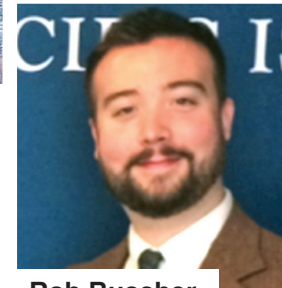
PHOTOS: ROB BUSCHER



<< My sister and I with our Hibaachan



My mother and me in 1987, the year I was born



Rob Buscher

Many of my values and my sense of moral obligation comes from the JA culture passed on through my mother, though I did not realize that until I was much older. Other cultural aspects like my mother’s annual classroom visits to share Japanese folk songs and teach origami were more obvious — and embarrassing to a young boy desperately seeking approval from his monocultural peers.

Although most people who live in areas heavily populated by Asian Americans would identify my mother as mixed, she looks Asian enough that no one questioned her Japanese-ness in our community.

Things were a bit more complicated for me, born with blonde hair and green eyes. Children don’t perceive social constructs such as race or gender until someone else points them out. In my case, I did not know that it was unusual to have family from mixed racial and ethnic origins, or not look like the people you were related to until it became a subject of derision from my peers.

I learned my first word from my Hibaachan. I have fond memories of watching chanbara samurai dramas with her, learning how to bake apple turnovers and can jars of preserves with peaches picked from her small orchard in Ogden.

I think most families go through some kind of identity crisis when they lose the head of their family, but for our myriad mixed-race clan, the loss of our matriarch also severed our direct connection to Japan. With Hibaachan gone, did that mean we were somehow less Japanese? No, but for a time it certainly felt like it, and although we never spoke about it, I could tell that many of my fully ethnically JA cousins felt the same.

It was this sense of loss that inspired me to begin my own journey of cultural reclamation, starting with learning the language of my ancestors. Shortly after, I decided to move to Japan, and for the past decade, much of my life has been dedicated to the study of Japan and the Nikkei Diaspora.

Up until that point, I had always considered myself to be Japanese as opposed to Japanese American. Growing up outside of the JA communities of the West Coast, my concept of identity came from the traditional aspects of Japanese culture Hibaachan imparted by way of my mother.

It was by living in Japan that I came to understand that JA culture is as far removed from Japan as German American is from Germany. As much as we attempt to preserve our immigrant cultures, communities living in diaspora suffer the burden of time between

today and when their ancestors emigrated.

The culture of origin continues to progress and after a few generations is virtually unrecognizable to their overseas sons and daughters. That was certainly the case for Hibaachan when she visited Japan for the first time in 50 years during the mid-1980s.

Yet, JAs and other Asian Americans are constantly singled out for their foreign otherness by Americans of European ancestry who nevertheless celebrate bastardized versions of St. Patrick’s Day or Oktoberfest.

The problem is that for most of our history as the JA community, the dominant Eurocentric culture has attached a negative stigma to being Japanese. From white nativist farmers in California demanding our incarceration to Detroit autoworkers killing a man because they thought he was Japanese — our community was under the gun for most of the 20th century.

This was particularly difficult to navigate as a biracial JA child in an overwhelmingly white community with less than 5 percent people of color and not a single other JA beyond my mother or sister.

Although I had the privilege of passing for white, I grew up fighting kids on the schoolyard who called my mom a Jap, or me the son of a Saigon whore. I wasn’t allowed to play with certain kids whose grandfathers fought in WWII when they found out who my mother was. Because of these negative social pressures, there was a time in my life when I was ashamed to be Japanese, and even did my best to hide it.

Today, I am not only proud of being JA, but I actively celebrate it in the work I do both personally and professionally in advancing the Asian American and Pacific Islander Movement through the arts. By moving to Japan and learning to speak Japanese, I reclaimed aspects of our culture that were erased both deliberately through governmental intervention and by the passage of time. I also came to understand my own place within the JA community.

Despite blood quantum or physical appearance, I am Japanese American. I am grateful to my elders at the JACL who accepted me as one of their own and continue to mentor me through this journey of self-discovery and quest for social justice.

**Rob Buscher is a member of the JACL Philadelphia Board of Directors.**