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A LEGACY INTERSECTS WITH PRESENT, FUTURE

Rose Ochi Square is dedicated in Little Tokyo at San Pedro, E. First streets.

By P.C. Staff

With the start of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month still fresh, a civil rights fighter for all was remembered on May 4 in Little Tokyo when Rose Ochi Square — the intersection of San Pedro and E. First streets — was dedicated.

The ceremony had been in the works since a Jan. 13 announcement by Los Angeles City Councilman Kevin de Leon following the Dec. 13, 2020, death of Rose Ochi, at 81. (See Pacific Citizen, Jan. 22-Feb. 4, 2021, issue.)

Born Takayo Matsui in 1938, she spent her early years not far from Rose Ochi Square on the other side of the Los Angeles River in the East Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights.

Her first name “Rose,” however, was acquired during World War II by a teacher after her Japanese American family and she were uprooted and incarcerated at the Rohwer War Relocation Center in Arkansas. “Ochi” was added after her marriage to Thomas Ochi, who was present at the dedication.

“Her legacy is embedded in the history of our city, as well as our state and our nation,” said Councilman de Leon, who said Ochi’s early experiences, including having her mouth washed out with soap for speaking Japanese in school, molded her into becoming a fighter and activist.

As an adult, she would use higher education and a law degree to participate in the political system and undertake a host of tasks, serving at the municipal, state and national levels and pushing to make the site of California’s Manzanar WRA Center into the Manzanar National Historic Site “so that no American would ever forget what happened,” de Leon said.

“I believe that the position that I now hold at the JACL will allow me to pursue what I hope will be a lifelong career committed to social justice,” Ozaki, who is currently training Keaveney in her new duties, reflected: “We are delighted to hire Bridget, who has already hit the ground running as our membership guru. In just one month, she has done an excellent job refreshing our membership materials and connecting with chapter leadership. Bridget’s background brings new perspectives to our organization’s San Francisco headquarters. Keaveney will be responsible for all membership duties including rosters, NMC meetings, managing the mbr@jacl.org inbox, renewals, credentials and membership campaigns. In addition, she will serve as the staff person on the National Convention Credentials committee and the liaison to the National Youth/Student Council.”

JACL WELCOMES NEW MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR TO NATIONAL STAFF

Bridget Keaveney succeeds Phillip Ozaki, who has been promoted to JACL’s development director.

JACL National is excited to introduce Bridget Keaveney as its membership coordinator; she succeeds Phillip Ozaki, who has been promoted to development director. Keaveney, who began her duties on March 29, is based in the organization’s San Francisco headquarters.

Keaveney will be responsible for improving, P.C.!’s mission is to educate on the past Japanese American experience and preserve, promote and help the current and future AAPI communities.”

“I’m glad to see the Pacific Citizen growing and evolving with its website, and especially LOVE the much easier-to-navigate digital archives. It’s a treasure trove for JAs to learn about our community’s history, and for scholars and journalists looking to connect the past with the present. Thanks for the improvements,” P.C.!”

— Gil Asakawa

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WE CAN’T ALL BE ‘CRAZY RICH ASIANS,’ BUT WE DO BELONG

By David Inoue, JACL Executive Director

This August will be three years since the movie “Crazy Rich Asians” debuted bearing the hopes of the Asian American community. The sense was that success could open the door to Asian American representation in the movies, but failure could mean another 25 years until another majority-Asian cast movie would be made by a major studio, as it had already been many years since the “Joy Luck Club.” Fortunately, “Crazy Rich Asians” would go on to draw nearly $175 million domestically and $239 million worldwide. It seems, there would be a future for Asian representation in cinema.

This seemingly has been fulfilled with the recent Oscar awards. For 2019, though Korean, not Asian American, the film “Parasite” won best picture, director, original screenplay and, of course, international film. And the 2020 best director and picture awards went to Chloé Zhao and “Nomadland,” while Yuh-Jung Youn won best supporting actress for “Minari” amidst multiple nominations for both pictures. Animation films such as “Raya and the Last Dragon” and “Abominable” also have featured the voices of numerous Asian American actors. The Marvel universe will bring us the “Eternals,” directed by Zhao and starring of Kumail Nanjiani, Gemma Chan and Don Lee, and Imran Vellani will be appearing as the Pakistani superhero Ms. Marvel in her own Disney+ series, as well as a leading role in the upcoming film “The Marvels.”

On the smaller screen, while ABC’s “Fresh Off the Boat” has sunsetted, a bouquet of other new shows have since joined it in presenting Asian leads, including “Never Have I Ever” (Netflix), “To All the Boys” (Netflix), “Nora From Queents” (Comedy Central) and, most recently, a refresh of the beloved “Kung Fu” (The CW), featuring a majority-Asian cast to atone for the ridiculousness of David Carradine as the lead in the original version.

This contrast of the original “Kung Fu” series and the new one makes me realize how different the characters the children are exposed to compared to what I experienced at the same age.

In literature, they have so many options for diverse stories and characters. The “Hardy Boys” books that I grew up reading are antiquated in multiple ways. My daughter is able to read the books from the Shibutani Siblings (Maia and Alex) and see a character who shares her first name. My son enjoys “Superman” comics just as much as I did, except he is able to read about Superman protecting a Chinese American family in “Superman Smashes the Klan” by Gene Luen Yang.

As we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, it is more apparent that Asians are increasingly and better represented in all facets of media, and, more importantly, Asian actors are being recognized for their contributions artistically.

In combating anti-Asian attitudes and violence, in the long term, our focus is on changing the norm of Asian Americans as foreign. JACL focuses on this by highlighting the dangers of unbridled xenophobia and racism against the Japanese American community during World War II, resulting in one of the worst losses of constitutional rights by Americans in this country’s history.

But, we also do this by emphasizing and celebrating our representation in our pop culture. Our presence in popular TV shows or movies helps to normalize our presence and break the stereotypes that feed prejudice.

The story of Asian immigration may still be shown in the movie “Minari,” or it could be the less “Asian” portrayal of Grace Park’s character in ABC’s “A Million Little Things.” The greater the number of roles occupied by Asian and Asian American actors, the more others will be exposed to the diversity of who we are and what we represent.

We don’t always have to be the hero; in fact, it’s good to see Asian faces as the villain, too — so long as these characters help to break down stereotypes and expand the diversity of who we are. After all, we’re not all “Crazy Rich Asians” either.

David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization’s Washington, D.C., office.
W
ith the May 11 release of Daniel James Brown’s book “Facing the Mountain: The True Story of Japanese American Heroes in World War II,” as its subtitle states, it’s possible that the Japanese American experience on battlefields (and in courtrooms) of that era is finally about to be illuminated in a big, big way.

That’s because the bestselling author — whose 2013 book “The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics” was a career-making smash hit that turned the Seattle-based Brown into a brand-name superstar — has already generated news that “Facing the Mountains” might become a multipart series, with Hawaiian-bred Japanese American director Destin Daniel Cretton, helmer of the upcoming Marvel Cinematic Universe installment “Shang-Chi” and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” attached to direct.

But a series is in the future, and the future, as the world had to learn with the continuing, unforeseen global pandemic that began in 2020, doesn’t always go according to plan.

The book “Facing the Mountain” is here, now and new, and in the coming weeks and months, Brown and Denso Executive Director Tom Ikeda will be in the spotlight to discuss Brown’s 540-page book (ISBN 9780525557401), published by Viking with a suggested retail price of $30, that began when the two met in 2015 in Seattle, when Brown’s recollections dovetailed with Ikeda’s.

“The deeper I went, the more intrigued I became,” Brown said. “I started talking with Tom, and he and I spent about a year going back and forth talking about different scenarios and different possibilities for how this might be developed into a book.

“The challenge that we had, as we talked back and forth,” Brown continued, “was what would the story be because we’re talking something finite in terms of the book. You can’t tell the whole story of the Japanese American experience.

Still, it was progress. Brown’s publisher, meantime, was chomping at the bit for a follow to “The Boys in the Boat.” But were they really interested in a book that focused on the experiences of some Japanese Americans during WWII? Did it have the crossover appeal it needed to approach the success of “The Boys in the Boat”?

“They didn’t seem to blink. I was wondering how that would go itself, for some sort of obvious reasons. Frankly, I think they were just glad to get a manuscript in hand,” Brown chuckled. “It had been many, many years that I had not been handing out a manuscript. But that was ‘Facing the Mountain’

For Brown, it was a necessity. “I was reading about all these stories both on the MIS as well as the 442 as well as the earlier 100th.”

Brown also noted that working on the book overlapped with the Trump administration.

“I was reading about all these families trying to make their way in America at the same time the ‘Muslim ban’ thing was going on and then doing a deep dive into the concentration camps at the same time the administration was breaking families up and incarcerating families,” he said. “My book is not overtly political, but it certainly was fueled by all that stuff that was going on.

“The process of researching the book deepened and sharpened my awareness in a way that surprised me because I thought I had known the story pretty well, which I suspect is true of a lot of non-Japanese Americans,” Brown continued. “I think that they feel that they know the story better than they really do.”

Related to that, Brown said he was “kind of stunned” when he was talking with some of the people associated with the book’s publisher at “how little they knew about the story.”

“I think it’s partly an East Coast/West Coast thing,” Brown said. “I was absolutely flabbergasted, actually, at how little they knew about what had happened. I think most of them had some vague idea that Japanese Americans were incarcerated during the war, but boy, that was as far as their understanding went. I don’t know why it hasn’t penetrated more. I don’t really know the answer.

“My book isn’t going to change the world here, but one of the reasons I wanted to write this book was my previous book was very successful, so I know I’d have a big platform for this book. ... When I started digging into these stories and meeting these family members, I really...
Prologue

Following is the Prologue, written by Densho Executive Director Tom Ikeda, for Daniel James Brown’s “Facing the Mountain.” It has been reprinted with permission courtesy of its publisher, Viking, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House. Copyright © 2021 by Daniel James Brown.

“We made the sacrifices. It was a sense of “Hey, I earned this. It’s not that you owe me. It’s this—that we have earned this.”’

— Fred Shiosaki

By Tom Ikeda, Densho Executive Director

One of the many pleasures of writing a book like this is meeting the extraordinary people who have lived the story you are telling. Usually, you meet them only virtually, through the letters or diaries or video recordings they have left behind. Occasionally, if you are lucky, you get to meet them in person.

Such was the case on a typically splendid Hawaiian afternoon in 2018 when my friend Mariko Miho ushered me into the Maple Garden Restaurant in Honolulu’s McCully-Mo’ili’ili neighborhood. The place was loud with the clattering of dishes and lush with warm aromas arising from a buffet arrayed along one wall. Most of the people lined up at the buffet were there for the midweek, midday senior discount. We were there for the story. As Mariko introduced me to the back of the restaurant where half a dozen white-haired gentlemen, all in their nineties, were sitting at two large round tables, surrounded by their wives and sons and daughters. Mariko introduced me. Everyone smiled and waved a bit shily and then resumed their conversations. Mariko seated me next to two of the gentlemen and introduced them to me as Roy Fuji and Flint Yonashiro. They were veterans of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT). During World War II, the regiment had fought the fascist powers in Europe so valiantly that they had emerged from the war as one of the most decorated units in American history. Roy and Flint had known and cared for each other for at least seventy-five years. They had fought together, lost friends together, bled together, been through hell together.

Soon, they were both regaling me with stories, and I was flinging questions at them. Roy patiently explained how to adjust the elevation settings on a 105-millimeter howitzer. They both talked about the terrifying sound of incoming artillery shells, about handing out candy bars to starving children in Italy, about swimming in the Mediterranean, and about picking their way through deadly minefields in Germany. I pulled out some maps, and soon both men were hunched over them, eagerly comparing notes, pointing out features of some terrain in France—mountains they had climbed, river crossings where friends had died. We talked for an hour or more, and through it all they were both so bright-eyed and clearheaded and vibrantly alive that you might have thought them twentysomethings rather than ninetysomethings. It was easy to see the eager, audacious, good-hearted young men they had once been.

When lunch was over and the veterans began to push their chairs away from the tables, family members scrambled for walkers and canes. Daughters who were themselves in their sixties or seventies rushed for walkers and canes. Daughters who had once been bright-eyed and clearheaded and vibrantly alive moved in a gesture everything I have learned about not only those half a dozen men but thousands more just like them. For three-quarters of a century, all across the country, they have been coming together—at luncheons and dinners and hā‘ai, in homes and restaurants and veterans’ halls—needing to be in one another’s presence again, needing to show again how much they love one another, needing to take care of each other, as brothers do. As they left the restaurant that afternoon, strangers made way for them, and a hushed reverence washed over the room. All of us knew that they would not be as bright-eyed and clearheaded and vibrantly alive as we had thought. And that is why I have set out here—with a great deal of help from some of them, and from their sons and daughters and friends and compatriots—to tell you their remarkable story as best I can.

Some came from small towns, some from big cities. Some hailed from family farms in the American West, some from vast pineapple and sugarcane plantations in Hawai‘i. By and large, they had grown up like other American boys, playing baseball and football and going to Sunday afternoon church services. They performed in marching bands on the Fourth of July, went to county fairs, ate burgers and fries, messed around under the hoods of cars, and listened to swing tunes on the radio. They made plans to go to college or work in the family business or run the farm someday. They eyed pretty girls walking down school corridors clutching books to their chests, making their way to class. They studied American history and English literature, took PE and shop classes, looked forward to their weekends. And as the holiday season approached in 1941, it seemed as if the whole world lay before them.

But within hours of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, all that changed. Within days, the FBI was pounding on their doors, searching their homes, hauling their fathers away as ‘enemy aliens.’ In short order, they were interned. Within weeks, many of them would watch as their immigrant parents were forced to sell their homes for pennies on the dollar and shutter businesses that they had spent decades building. Within months, tens of thousands of them or their family members would be living in barracks behind barbed wire or have family members with them.

For all their essential Americanness, the traumatic events of that December brought back into focus something they had always known: their place in American society remained tenuous. Millions of their countrymen— those who had been barred from certain homes and restaurants and neighborhoods, from the mouths of politicians. Local ordinances regulated where they could and could not live. Labor unions routinely barred them from employment in many industries. Proprietors of businesses could, at will, ban them from entering their premises. Public facilities were sometimes closed to them. State laws prohibited their parents from owning real estate. In many states it was illegal for anyone of color to ride in the front seat of a car, but never forget that their national government prohibited their parents from becoming citizens. And they knew this, too: their lives, their very identities, were inevitably bound to their roots. The values that their parents had bestowed on them—the manner in which they approached others, the standards by which they measured success, the obligations they felt, the respect they owed to their elders, the traditions they celebrated, and a multitude of other facets of their individual and collective identities—were not things they could or would willingly cast aside. They were, in fact, things they cherished.

The other men who have prominent roles in “Facing the Mountain” are Kats Miho, who was born in Hawaii on the island of Maui, and from the mainland like Shiosaki, Rudy Tokiwa and Gordon Hirabayashi, who wasn’t a soldier but someone who fought using the legal system against the injustice visited upon Japanese Americans by the federal government.

For Ikeda and Denso, working with Brown is just the latest part of the journey that began 25 years ago.

“Our mission is to preserve and share the stories of the World War II Japanese American incarceration to promote justice and equity today,” said Ikeda. “So, to have someone like Dan interested in the stories and consider writing a book really was, I think, in terms of what we were thinking, a way to share the story.”

Over the years, Ikeda said he has met many authors and filmmakers who were interested in the Densho repository. But there was something about Brown that stood out — how closely he listened.

“It didn’t seem like he was coming in with an agenda,” Ikeda said. “He was very curious. The thing that I noticed and appreciated was he listened to some thoughts and then he did the work. He actually went to our archive and learned how to use it.”

Before long, thanks to the research Brown had done, he soon learned and knew “things that I didn’t know,” Ikeda said. “It was, actually, at some point, a really interesting relationship in terms of sharing information.”

That relationship no doubt will continue to evolve in the coming weeks with the rollout of publicity for “Facing the Mountain.”

Brown, having completed the book and still in a post-completion refractory period, he did allow that he may try writing fiction for a book No. 5.

Professionally, Brown is, at nearly 70, in a good place, with writing books for a living his third career; his first career was teaching art history; his second career was teaching books for a living his third career; his first career was teaching English at the college level, which was followed by working as a technical writer and editor.

“Twenty years ago now, I just sort of on the side started writing a book about a piece of my family history.”

That was the basis for “Under a Flaming Sky: The Great Hinckley Firestorm of 1894,” about a deadly forest fire in Minnesota that killed 350 people, one of whom was his great-grandfather.


And, of course, there is Hollywood, what with “Facing the Mountain” on its way to becoming adapted for the screen.
and “The Boys in the Boat” looking ready to be directed by George Clooney.

But, as noted, that is all in the future. The book is now and Brown is hopeful that he achieved the book’s purpose — or as he put it: “I think contextualizing and putting this whole thing into human terms, terms that anybody can identify with, what it’s like to suddenly have your home taken away from you, and your business and your livelihood.

“That’s what I’m trying to do with the book — get people to open their hearts and look through a different set of eyes than they may have in the past and consider what it’s like to have these series of traumas inflicted on you and reflect on what that means with where we are today.”

Because many of them had relatives living in Japan, they had seen the storm clouds growing over the Pacific long before most other Americans had. And they knew immediately on that first Sunday in December 1941 that straddling two worlds now suddenly at war would challenge them in ways that would shake the foundations of their lives.

For those young men there was no obvious path forward, no simple right way or wrong way to proceed with their lives. Some of them would launch campaigns of conscientious resistance to the deprivation of their constitutional rights. Others — thousands of them — would serve, and some would die, on the battlefields of Europe, striving to prove their loyalty to their country. Scores of their mothers would dissolve into tears as they saw grim-faced officers coming in past barbed-wire fencing bearing shattering news. But by the end of their lives almost all of them — whether they fought in courtrooms or in foxholes — would be counted American heroes.

At its heart, this is the story of those young men — some of the bravest Americans who have ever lived, the Nisei warriors of World War II, and how they, through their actions, laid bare for all the world to see what exactly it means to be an American. But it’s also the story of their immigrant parents, the Issei, who like other immigrants before them — whether they came from Ireland or Italy, from North Africa or Latin America — faced suspicion and prejudice from the moment they arrived in America. It’s the story of how they set out to win their place in American society, working at menial jobs from dawn to dusk, quietly enduring discrimination and racial epithets, struggling to learn the language, building businesses, growing crops, knitting together families, nurturing their children, creating homes. It’s the story of wives and mothers and sisters who kept families together under extreme conditions. It’s the story of the first Americans since the Cherokee in 1838 to face wholesale forced removal from their homes, deprivation of their livelihoods, and mass incarceration.

But in the end it’s not a story of victims. Rather, it’s a story of victors, of people striving, resisting, rising up, standing on principle, laying down their lives, enduring, and prevailing. It celebrates some young Americans who decided they had no choice but to do what their sense of honor and loyalty told them was right, to cultivate their best selves, to embrace the demands of conscience, to leave their homes and families and sally forth into the fray, to confront and to conquer the mountain of troubles that lay suddenly in their paths.

The Senate Champion of Redress

“...The man who should take nearly all of the credit for Senate passage of the redress bill is Sen. Sparky Matsunaga. He is the one who sponsored the bill and organized the vote on that in the Senate. If Sen. Matsunaga’s efforts were to be weighted at 10, mine would be one.”

--Senator Daniel Inouye

A Commemoration Of Sparky’s Legacy

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SAFETY IN THE TIME OF HATE AND THE CORONAVIRUS

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

One life imprisoned can cause a ripple effect that spans generations. What happens when it is 120,000 people targeted by the government for imprisonment? It causes collective, intergenerational trauma.

The World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans is a touchstone of pain and identity for a community that during that time in U.S. history was identified as such a threat to national security, its members needed to be surveilled, detained and imprisoned.

One shared experience refracted across generations can produce a variety of perceptions, especially in the debate about policing, imprisonment and public safety. Because of their shared WWII experience, some Japanese Americans argue that it is time to re-examine policing and America’s criminal justice system.

“I know the intergenerational harms that arresting people and incarcerating them causes,” said Carl Takei, a senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union. “And if we can build something different that’s more compassionate, then we should.”

In Arcadia, Calif., a suburb of Los Angeles, the city’s first Japanese American police chief raps on his desk of experience in law enforcement, military. WWII segregated JA units in the U.S. prison camps and the heroism of the desolate War Relocation Authority men in the head with aspirations.

“We have been very lucky,” said Nakamura, a Nisei from Hawaii, always told his son, “Don’t live by the color of your skin. Let your work speak for you. Shut your mouth. Grind it out and do the best you can.”

During WWII while living on the island of Oahu, Douglas Nakamura watched other JAs get rounded up and incarcerated after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. His family was spared, but he thought it was important to teach his children about the desolate War Relocation Authority prison camps and the heroism of the WWII segregated JA units in the U.S. military.

Today, with almost three decades of experience in law enforcement, Nakamura’s office at the Arcadia Police Department is across the street of the jail.

For Japanese Americans, there is a shared history with different viewpoints on policing and safety. Law enforcement and community leaders all seek to answer the question, ‘What should community safety look like?’ amid rising anti-Asian racism and violence.

The controversy about the future of law enforcement is rife with pain and emotion. With the April 20 Derek Chauvin murder conviction fresh in memory, police officers across the U.S. fatally shot six people just 24 hours after jurors in Minneapolis handed in a guilty verdict, according to the Associated Press. The circumstances of the deaths vary widely. Some say they reflect an urgent need for radical changes to American policing.

In the Japanese American community, the debate takes on an added layer of tension between a community’s shared history and a collective desire for safety amid a surge in anti-Asian racism.

Both sides of the debate seek to answer a fundamental question: What should community safety look like?

The Police Chief: Change Is Necessary

To talk about the future of policing, one needs to examine what exists and what came before.

“I believe that we should always study history so that we never repeat our mistakes,” said Nakamura, 56.

The Sansei police chief is talking about cancel culture, the modern-day form of ostracism and erasure, which police departments are facing in varying degrees. A March USA Today/IPSOS poll revealed an increase in trust (69 percent, up from 56 percent last summer) in local police and law enforcement to promote justice and equal treatment for people of all races.

“What if you erase everything from the past? What if you don’t take into consideration the mistakes? I mean, is there a possibility that we won’t be able to recall the mistakes that we’ve made as a community, as a society?” said Nakamura, who was appointed chief in January.

He was born in Tokyo and grew up in Guam before moving to Southern California to pursue education. Watching police TV shows drew Nakamura to a career in law enforcement. Something about the portrayal of police officers solving crime cases filled his head with aspirations.

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Today, with almost three decades of experience in law enforcement, Nakamura’s office at the Arcadia Police Department serves and protects a city of more than 57,000 residents, 60 percent of whom identify as Asian American.

(Left) Roy Nakamura, a 28-year veteran, is Arcadia’s first Japanese American police chief. He was appointed in October 2020.

(Bottom) Chief Roy Nakamura takes a moment to chat with community members at the April 28 event.

IN DEPTH

PHOTOS: ALEC OZAWA

Members and allies of Chicago-based Nikkei Uprising (from left) Cori Nakamura Lin, JJ Ueunten and Chris Aldana rallied in front of Cook County Jail on April 11 to call for the abolition of the jail.

The sound of taiko reverberated in front of Cook County Jail where Emily Harada played the yoko uchi.
Volunteer Japantown Prepared employees from the Hilton hotel.

A volunteer community foot patrol is helping to protect San Jose Japantown seniors. Volunteers are intergenerational, racially diverse and come from all over the Bay Area.

In the first quarter of 2021, anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 154 percent, according to a new report from the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino.

So, what does safety look like in the time of hate and coronavirus?

“My vision for a safe city is one that takes into consideration the perspective of the community,” said Nakamura. “If the community does not feel safe, then I think that there’s a disconnect.”

On April 22, the Senate overwhelmingly passed an anti-hate crime bill aimed at addressing the surge in anti-Asian racism and attacks. The bill, sponsored by Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Grace Meng (D-N.Y.), seeks to establish online reporting of hate crimes and create a new Justice Department position to review hate crimes during the pandemic. The bill now goes to the House.

Even as lawmakers seek to pass legislation, anti-Asian hate continues to spew on the streets.

In Monterey Park, Calif., Nadine Sachiko Hsu, 41, said a man recently shouted anti-Asian slurs at her friend’s mom. “I luckily have not been a victim,” said Hsu, owner of Sachiko Studio, a professional family photography studio in Arcadia. “We’re concerned, upset, mad and in disbelief.”

In a pandemic, running a small business is a struggle. Coupled with the threat of racism, it can be untenable, Hsu, who identifies as Japanese American and Caucasian, has a great-uncle who was incarcerated at Santa Anita and Manzanar. She supports stricter punishments for hate crimes and thinks policing is important to community safety. “I haven’t heard anyone in the local police department come out and tell me they’re doing more to keep us safe or raising any awareness, which makes me feel uneasy,” said Hsu.

In San Jose’s Japantown, the economic effects of the pandemic on local businesses are visible. Some businesses either remain closed or can only operate limited hours. The historic area is home to many senior housing facilities, and senior visitors, who frequent Japantown’s grocery store or senior center.

Japantown seniors feel unsafe because of the increase in elderly attacks, which are unrelated to anti-Asian hate, said Pam Yoshida, co-president of the Japantown Community Congress of San Jose and a member of the West Valley JACL.

“We have had a few situations with seniors being knocked down on the sidewalk by someone who was mentally ill and do not believe these were motivated by anti-Asian hate,” said Yoshida, a Sansei.

In response to the attacks, retired San Jose Police officer Rich Saito started a volunteer community foot patrol, Japantown Prepared, to help protect the area and its seniors. The volunteers, who live in the area’s three housing facilities, and senior visitors, who frequent Japantown’s grocery store or senior center.

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AARP 2021 Tech Trends Report Key Findings:

- Annual tech spending by the 50+ exponentially increased – from $394 to $1,144. The top three tech purchases were smartphones, smart TVs and earbuds/Bluetooth headsets.
- Using technology to connect with others across multiple forms of communication has increased since the onset of the pandemic. Many say they are using video chats (45 percent), texting (37 percent), emailing (26 percent) and phone (29 percent) more now than before the pandemic. As of 2019, about half had never used video chat, but by 2020, 70 percent have, with 1 in 3 using video chat weekly.
- Tech use among the 50+ increased dramatically. For instance, use for ordering groceries grew from 6 percent to 24 percent; use for personal health increased from 28 percent to 40 percent for activities such as telehealth visits, ordering prescriptions or making appointments; use for health and fitness information increased 25 percent to 44 percent; and use for financial transactions increased from 37 percent to 53 percent.
- Half of the 50+ want to learn more about using tech (54 percent).
- Cost (38 percent), awareness/lack of knowledge (37 percent) and privacy concerns (34 percent) are the top self-reported barriers holding the 50+ back from adopting new technology.
- Privacy concerns continue to be a factor when it comes to tech, with 83 percent lacking confidence that what they do online remains private.
- Weekly use of streaming increased to 58 percent from 44 percent, a significant shift in how the 50+ consume entertainment.
- AARP has a long history of providing personal technology resources including digital literacy initiatives, practical guidebooks and advocacy on technology issues for the 50+.

During Pandemic, Technology has Become More Important for Older Adults

"Technology enabled older adults to better weather the isolation of the pandemic — from ordering groceries to telehealth visits to connecting with loved ones,” said Alison Bryant, senior vp of research at AARP. “But it also exacerbated the divide. So much more is done online, and the 38 million disconnected older adults are being further left out.”

By Ron Mori

In a year with a global pandemic significantly limiting social interaction, technology became more important than ever, especially for older adults.

New research from AARP found that more older adults (44 percent) view tech more positively as a way to stay connected than they did before Covid-19. In addition, 4 out of 5 adults age 50+ rely on technology to stay connected and in touch with family and friends.

Yet, the report also found that the greater adoption and reliance on technology is uneven, as 15 percent of adults 50+ do not have access to any type of internet, and 60 percent say the cost of high-speed internet is a problem.
DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PLEASE CHECK REGARDING THE STATUS OF EVENTS LISTED IN THIS ISSUE’S CALENDAR SECTION.

NCWNP

11th Annual Matsuri! Japanese Arts Festival
Sonoma County Matsuri Festival
Santa Rosa, CA
May 15; 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Enjoy the VIRTUAL showcase of traditional Japanese dance, music and cultural presentations as the Sonoma County Matsuri Festival presents this event for all to join. Featured artists include Shikuchiku Grand Master Riley Lee from Australia, Sonoma County Taiko, Enozia Miyoshi, Bay Area Miyake, TenTen Taiko, the DeLeor Judo Club, and others. The event will be held virtually by Zoom. Registration is free.
Info: To register, visit www.sonomamatsuri.org.

‘The Betrayed’ Benefit Screening and Discussion
Watsonville, CA
May 22; 1-3 p.m.
Virtual Event Benefit Screening for Watsonville Japanese Temple
Price: $25 Per Person or $50 Per Household (Includes Play Screening and Discussion)
“Betrayed,” a two-act play by Hiroshi Kashiwagi about a young Nisei couple who meet at Tule Lake and fall in love, only to be torn apart by two controversial “loyalty” questions during World War II, will feature Helen Ota and Michael Palma. Following the play, a discussion will be held featuring Satsuki Imai, Soji Kashiwagi and cast members Ota and Palma.
Info: Tickets are available at Eventbrite.com. Search “The Betrayed.” For additional information, email Buddhist@wtemple.org.
2021 Berkeley JACL Scholarship, Pioneer and Youth Leadership Awards
Berkeley, CA
May 23; 11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Zoom Virtual Event
Join Berkeley JACL at its annual event recognizing the chapter’s scholarship recipients, Pioneer Award winners Mark Fujikawa and Leroy Morishita and Youth Leadership Award honoree Elizabeth Uno.
Info: RSVP with your name and email by May 19 to Ryan Matsuura (ryan.matsuura@outlook.com) and Ron Tanaka (ron_tanaka@yahoo.com) or call (925) 932-7947 to receive the Zoom link to the event.

PSW

Bystander Intervention Training
Los Angeles, CA
May 18; 1-2 p.m.; PDT; May 26, 3-4 p.m.
Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Virtual Webinar
Price: Free
This one-hour interactive training will teach you Hollback’s 5Ds of by- stander intervention methodology. The discussion will start by talking about the types of disrespect that Asian and Asian Americans are experiencing right now. You’ll then learn what to look for and the positive impact that bystander intervention has on individuals and the community. You’ll also learn five strategies for intervention and how to prioritize your own safety while intervening.
Info: Visit advancingjustice-la.org to register and for more information. Each webinar is limited to 500 attendees.
More sessions will be added in the coming weeks.

Welcome Back to JANM!
Los Angeles, CA
Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
11 a.m.-5 p.m. PDT Friday, Saturday and Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.
Price: Timed, advanced tickets are required. No walk-in visitors. Admission is accepted up to 30 minutes after ticket time. No ticket refunds. Please contact JANM to rebook a new time.
JANM has reopened! Reserve admission tickets to visit the museum once again. Current exhibits include “Under a Mushroom Cloud,” which commemorates the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; “Common Ground: The Heart of Community,” which chronicles 130 years of Japanese American history.

PNW

‘Where Beauty Lies’ Exhibit
Seattle, WA
Thru Sept 19
Wing Luke Asian Museum
719 S. King St.
Price: Museum Admission Fees
Info: stream through the JAMPilgrimages YouTube channel. Please tell your friends and family, as more information about the event will be shared soon.

MDC

Chicago Japanese Film Collective Festival
Chicago, IL
May 25-31
Virtual screenings
Price: $15 all access; student prices and discounts available
The first-ever Japanese film festival to be held in the Mid-West, this virtual event will showcase nine films (seven narrative features and two documentaries), two of which are North American premieres. Tickets purchased May 16-31 will be $15 for all access or $10 for one film. Student discount codes and promotional discount codes are available.
Info: Email info@cfjc.us or visit https://www.cfjc.us/.

EDC

Bringing Asian Cuisine to the American Table
Boston, MA
May 19; 3 p.m.
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Boston University’s Megan Elias will explore the diverse history of Asian and Asian Pacific Food in the U.S. She’ll track how traditional ingredients have made their way into the American diet and detail the journeys of Asian American cookbooks that made their mark.
Info: Visit https://www.bu.edu/alumni/ for more information.

Building AAPI Power
Boston, MA
May 24; 2 p.m.
Virtual Event
Price: Free
The Asian Community Fund and the Boston Foundation offer a data presentation assessing the needs of the AAPI community. Afterward, community leaders Carolyn Chou (Asian American Resource Workshop) and Souvanna Pouv (Cambodian Mutual Assistance Group of Greater Lowell) will talk about how those needs can be met to create lasting change.
Info: Visit https://events.tbf.org/event/home/buildingapapipower.
Hiraie, Isamu Sammy, 98, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 19; during WWII, his family and he were forcibly relocated to and incarcerated at the Manzanar WRA Center in CA; he was predeceased by his wife, Reiko; he is survived by his daughters, Eileen Hiraie and Dr. Kathleen (Dr. Kenneth) Sakamoto; sister, Asako Doi; sister-in-law, Kimiko Kochi; he is also survived by nieces and nephews.

Hirashima, Margie, 98, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 27, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Frank; she is survived by her son, Jeff (Eileen) Hirashima; gc: 2; gc: 6.

Hongo-Namba, Lily Sadako, 95, Portland, OR, March 23; during WWII, she was incarcerated at the Minidoka WRA Center in ID, where she graduated from Hunt High School; she was predeceased by her first husband, Shigeru Hongo; she is survived by her son, Ted Miyamura; sister-in-law, Hiroko (Bruce); sister, Kimi Iwamoto and Jean Takashima; gc: 5; ggc: 1.

Inouye, Mac Mansaku., 97, Kawaguchi, Mitsue Ogura Matsuo, 82, CA, Jan. 22; she is survived by her husband, Mark; her first husband, Shigeru Hongo; she is survived by her son, Glenn Kawaguchi; daughter-in-law, Dana Kawaguchi; gc: 1; gc: 4.

Ishimura, Vernon, 83, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 25; he is survived by his wife, Carol Mikami Matsuura; children, Julie (Mary) Arino Matsuura and Jason Matsuura (Edel); brothers, Mel Matsuura (Haru) and Gene Matsuura (Jean); brother-in-law, Richard Mikami (Ann); sisters-in-law, Meiko Inaba; Lynn Mikami and Shirley Mikami; gc: 2.

Ishimoto, David, 72, St. Augustine, FL, Nov. 19, 2020; he is survived by his mother, Chieko Miyamura; brother, Ted Miyamura; sister-in-law, Hilda Miyamura; lifelong partner, Bette Marcoux; “inherited” stepchildren, Eric Marcoux, Nicole Wickens and Christopher Marcoux; gc: 3.

Ishimoto, Naoko Iwamiya, Grace Watanabe, 77, Los Angeles, CA, April 1; she is survived by her husband, George Nakashima (the famed woodworker and founder of the Winchendon School of Art and Technology); children, Ted Miyamura; sister-in-law, Hilda Miyamura; familial stepchildren, Lisa Yamaguchi; gc: 2.

Ishimoto, Sai, 86, NV, March 21; during WWII, he was incarcerated at the Rohwer WRA Center in AR; he is survived by his wife, Grace Nobuko (Okuno); children, Aric, Kristen (Tom Kratky) and Curtis (Marga Yamada); gc: 4.

Kawaguchi, Eitetsu, 85, Los Angeles, CA, April 11; he is survived by his wife, Grace Nobuko (Okuno); daughters, Kelly Yamaguchi-Scanlon (Paul), Amy Uccello (Sebastian) and Lisa Yamaguchi; gc: 2.

Kawaguchi, Mariko, 96, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 12; he is survived by his siblings, Sally Tagawa and Dennis Izuimigawa; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews, grand nieces, grand nephews and other relatives.

Kawaguchi, Mae, 94, Sunnyvale, CA, Dec. 13, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Makoto; son, Glenn Kawaguchi; she is survived by her sons, Scott (Sharon) and Richard (Karina); daughter-in-law, Dana Kawaguchi; sister, Alice Neishi; gc: 7.

Kawaguchi, Mitsue Ogura Matsuo, 97, Coarsegold, CA, Dec. 3, 2020; during WWII, she was incarcerated at the WRA Center in Poston, AZ; she was predeceased by her husband, Hiromitsu Matsuoka; she is survived by her sons, Ray (Marge) Matsuoka, Stanley Matsuoka, Gilbert (Nancy) Matsuoka and Dennis (Jean) Matsuoka; gc: 11 gcg: 6.

Koh, Ray (Marge), 97, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 13, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Ray (Marge) Koh; she is survived by her sons, Ray Alhambra, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 16; Air Force veteran; he was predeceased by his wife, Alice; and stepdaughter, Lonna Price; he is survived by his sister, Kayo Tsuruda,stepson, Darrel (Sofia) Krebs; step-gc: 4.

Koh, Yuki, 93, Alhambra, Los Angeles, CA, April 1; she is survived by her stepdaughter, Lisa Yamaguchi; gc: 2.

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12 May 7-20, 2021
IN-DEPTH/NATIONAL/COMMUNITY PACIFIC CITIZEN

LEGACY » continued from page 2

Ochi was also active in the nonprofit space, serving, among many other organizations, on the board of trustees of the L.A. County Bar Assn., being a founding member of the Japanese American Bar Association, and participating in JACL at the national level, including an unsuccessful bid to become JACL’s first woman president in 1986, an election that was decided by two votes.

Two years later, her efforts to help make Japanese American redress a reality came to fruition when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Reagan famously included Rose Ochi in his remarks before enacting the bill.

“Rose, Rosa, Ochi led a remarkable life, a life of distinction, of honor and grace, of dignity and of elegance. Our nation is better for her sacrifices and her contributions and the City of Angels is proud to call her a cherished daughter,” de Leon said, who then introduced another speaker, Darlene Kuba, who was one of the many younger people mentored over the years by Ochi.

“Today, we honor the accomplishments and contributions of a remarkable woman. Rose’s entire life was dedicated to ensuring equity and justice for all,” Kuba said. “She was a true example of how one person can make a difference.”

The trio of de Leon, Kuba and Tommy Ochi then proceeded to remove the cloth that covered the new Rose Ochi Square sign, the first of four that will adorn each corner of the intersection.

Afterward, asked by the Pacific Citizen what his late wife would have said were she alive to receive such an honor, Tommy Ochi laughingly replied, “She probably said, ‘You’ve got to be kidding!’” He reiterated how she didn’t like to talk about herself. “She liked to just do stuff.”

Before saying a few words for the occasion, lobbyist Darlene Kuba thanks L.A. City Councilman Kevin de Leon for helping to have the intersection of San Pedro and E. First streets named Rose Ochi Square.

PHOTOS: PACIFIC CITIZEN

SAFETY » continued from page 8

The Seattle Police department could increase patrol in the Chinatown International District, said a law enforcement official.

Seattle JACL President Stanley Shikuma, who attended the meeting, wondered how increased police presence in one concentrated area would protect Asian Americans who live throughout the Seattle area.

“It doesn’t,” said Shikuma, a Sansei. “It gives the impression that you’re doing something, but it doesn’t really solve the problem.”

The answer, Shikuma said, can be found by addressing the root causes of the issues like homelessness, mental health issues and food insecurity.

Shikuma, 67, is part of a growing number of Asian Americans who are approaching the call for increased community safety through an abolitionist lens.

Abolition is a political vision of a restructured society where community safety comes by fulfilling people’s foundational needs. If a person steals, then the question arises: Is it because they are experiencing food or housing insecurity? Then abolitionists say we should direct resources and funds to meet those needs, not criminalize them.

On May 1, the Nikkei Abolition Study Group held its first virtual session to explore the ideas of community safety. The study group is the collaborative effort of three Japanese American organizations: Tsuru For Solidarity, the New York Day of Remembrance Committee and Nikkei Uprising in Chicago.

It is the first of six free monthly sessions focusing on community safety through an abolitionist framework. About 125 people from across the U.S. attended, said Linda Morris, who co-facilitated the first session.

Suggested reading included Mariame Kaba’s article, “So You’re Thinking About Becoming an Abolitionist,” but being an abolitionist is not required to be a part of the study group. Facilitators asked that participants identify as Nikkei, in part, to provide a space for a community with a shared history of overpolicing, surveilance and mass incarceration to talk openly about safety.

“Why do we equate safety with incarceration? Is it fear of the unknown or fear of the unknown people?” Kaba asked. “What is safety to you?”

“By doing that, we get to the root of the problem,” said Donna Lott, a participant. “The police are there to protect our community or to protect the community from us. They're not protecting us.”

Many attendees said that they were there to learn more about the issues of incarceration, but a few attendees had more personal experiences to share.

“IT'S A SYSTEM THAT WE INHERITED, SO WE JUST GO ALONG WITH IT,” said Shikuma, who is a study group participant. “Some people get caught up in retribution and punishment. And that becomes the driving force: If someone does something wrong, we’ve got to make sure that they pay a price in the false belief that if they make the price high enough, they won’t do it. That logic doesn’t really work.”

“Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become,” said Clear in his book.

Over time, the bad habits left unexamined can slowly wear us down like a coastal erosion.

The question is now, which way should we go?

Join the Next Nikkei Abolition Study Group

The conversation will focus on incarceration and the prison industrial complex.

DATE: June 12
TIME: 1-2:30 p.m. ET/10-11:30 a.m. PT
INFORMATION: Registration required.

PHOTO: MICHIELE CHEN

The World War II shared experience of mass incarceration informs Japanese Americans’ ideas of community safety. Linda Morris’ grandparents, Paul Takeo Ishimoto and May Teruko Asakura, pictured during the annual cherry blossom festival after camp, were married while incarcerated at Jerome.

New York Day of Remembrance Committee members are working to demand justice for Black lives, close all U.S. concentration camps and free all from incarceration. Pictured (from left) are Emily Akpan, Lauren Sumida, Becca Asaki and Linda Morris.

PHOTO: MICHIELE CHEN

“With my promotion to development director and Bridget’s hire, we have more capacity to find critical funding for our youth, education and social justice programs. We have already applied for grants for our education program, expanded our Convention sponsorship efforts and launched our 2020 Annual Report, which can be found on our website (www.jacl.org).”

Keaveney was recommended to JACL from the Japanese American Museum of Oregon, where she was a cultural assistant, catalog and lead volunteer for several years. She is a December 2019 graduate of Portland State University with a bachelor of arts in letters, social sciences and liberal studies and a certificate in global studies. She also has a content creation background as a co-publisher and illustrator for the children’s book “Dreams of Little Miss Ava.”

“My biggest goal at the moment is to cultivate as many strong relationships with chapters as possible, so that I may work with their coordinators to strengthen and build outreach programs that encourage and support membership participation. I wish to explore and implement as many strategies as possible,” Keaveney said. “My hope is to also encourage members to utilize social media as a means to entice and recruit new members. When used strategically, I believe that social media can be a catalyst to helping chapters engage with their members, share their content and network with others.”

Welcome, Bridget, to JACL!”

Bridget Keaveney can be reached at bkeaveney@jacl.org.