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Aug. 14-27, 2026

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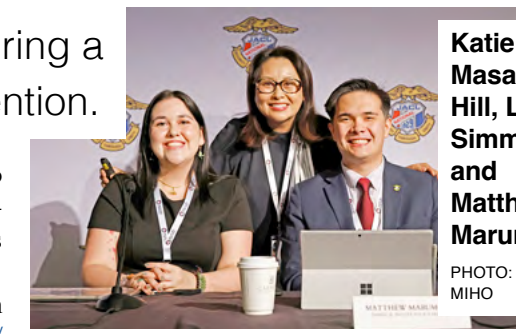
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SIMMERING PRESENTS PRIORITIES

JACL's ED lays out a lofty game plan during a breakfast meeting at the National Convention.



Katie Masano Hill, Lilly Simmering and Matthew Marumoto

PHOTO: DARRELL MIHO

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

Although it was promoted as "Breakfast With JACL's Lilly Simmering," the JACL's new executive director had to go hungry until after her 7 a.m. address on July 31 was completed.

Unlike those in the audience, for Simmering, breakfast had to temporarily stay on the back burner until she first addressed from her perspective all the problems, challenges and issues facing the Japanese American Citizens League that she had been studying over her 66 days on the job.

Simmering began by establishing her bona fides prior to taking on JACL's ED role, noting that she had "spent most of my career in government," which included working in Washington, D.C., at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where she learned among other things about negotiating contracts, which was followed by a move to Washington state, where she worked first for Boeing Capital Corp., then for King County and next, for about nine years, the County of Orange (deputy county executive officer) after relocating to Southern California.

Simmering segued into her assessment of the challenges facing JACL, first noting, "I have always been that person that fixes things," followed by her observation that the "programming side of the house rarely understands the administrative side of the house," perhaps an allusion to the constant clash between trying to put a return on investment on spending for programs that don't necessarily translate to easily quantifiable results. "Trying to bridge that gap has always been my specialty," she said.

Before addressing what was in her slide deck (*see tinyurl.com/zkrkrehf*), Simmering foreshadowed the latter part of the morning's presentation by announcing what Katie Masano Hill (JACL Norman Y. Mineta fellow) and Matthew Marumoto (JACL Daniel K. Inouye fellow) would be focusing on over the next several months.

Although Simmering prefaced her statement by saying that it was no surprise or secret "that the two fellowship programs will be sunsetting in December," it may have been the first public acknowledgement to JACLers that the Inouye and Mineta fellowships would be paused.

Accompanied by a PowerPoint slide deck, Simmering addressed her first slide and observed, "We are a small nonprofit that is still behaving like they are a large nonprofit from back in our '80s. And what does that mean? That means that we are spending money on exorbitant services that we no longer need. Right? We are making decisions like we have an endless pot of money."

She noted that going forward, for example, travel spending would need to be "essential." She also cited JACL's lack of a capital improvement plan, in reference to its San Francisco headquarters building. Also related to her first slide, she said, "I need to update the policies and procedures. That's going to be the role of the vp of gen ops. I need to implement a biweekly strategic plan review. That is my responsibility, and that is the responsibility of the vp of planning and development because those programs are what we're going to go out and fundraise for."

In the next slide, which addressed JACL staff, Simmering acknowledged low staff morale, lack of staff training or investment in staff development ("There's been no investment in my staff for development."), key positions that are vacant ("Back in the old days, you guys had a Washington rep. … I don't have that now."), exempt vs. nonexempt employee classification issues and a "fundamental misunderstanding of the relationship between staff, National Board and members that causes tension between staff and National Board." The slide also expressed the need to redefine staff and board roles and responsibilities.

Simmering's recommendations were to implement a formal staff development program for training, hire staff to fill vacant key positions and reinforce the idea that the "board represents the members. As staff, we're the bottom of the totem pole."

Simmering's other slides addressed JACL programs, including membership, education, policy, *Pacific Citizen*, scholarships and Kakehashi. Other priorities included having staff undergo sexual harassment and cybersecurity training, as well as a change in philosophy regarding customer service, saying: "We're changing our values. We're going to change our customer hospitality approach."

Regarding the future JACL staff hire whose area is managing membership, which was officially vacated Aug. 12, Simmering said that person will be supervised by the director of business development when that hire is made. She also stated a goal of increasing JACL membership by 5 percent-7 percent year-over-year growth.

"You have chapters that are declining in membership so severely. Where's National? I should be there with you right now, asking, 'Well, what do you need?'" Relatedly and rhetorically, Simmering also asked, "Do you guys know what the No. 1 question I get when I go out and talk to people about JACL is? My No. 1 question is: 'How is JACL still relevant?'"

Answering her own question, she said, "There are so many people that become so curious about Asian American culture, Japanese culture, Japanese American culture. Why are we not capitalizing on these opportunities?" and "My recommendations are: You guys created an education curriculum. We need to dust that sucker off, update it."

Before passing the baton to the policy team — Hill and Marumoto — Simmering asked, with regard to overcoming the challenges JACL is facing, "Why can't we do it again? . . . We shouldn't be able to sit here and struggle and say we don't know

» See SIMMERING on page 8

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Editor Emeritus Harry Honda as drawn by Pete Hironaka

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JACL DOES NOT NEED TO CHANGE BECAUSE IT IS THE CHANGE

By Lilly Simmering, JACL Executive Director

Throughout the executive director recruitment process, I often spoke about the research I conducted on JACL. The most common refrain I heard was simple: "JACL needs to change." Yet, whenever I asked what that change should look like, the answers were rarely specific.

In my first 60 days as executive director, I continued asking that question of members, partners and community leaders across the country. It was not until the 2026 National Convention in Las Vegas that I found my answer.

The theme of this year's Convention was "Reigniting Our Purpose and Mission." Looking back, the answer was there all along. You do not reignite a purpose through a machine or an institution. You reignite it through people.

Purpose is renewed when individuals choose to act. Mission is fulfilled when communities choose to serve. Change does not begin with an organization; it begins with people who possess the courage and conviction to move that organization forward.

After six days of meeting members from across the nation, hearing their stories, learning about their communities and witnessing their unwavering commitment, I came to a simple but profound conclusion.

JACL has never been defined by its building, its bylaws or even its history. JACL has always been defined by the people who choose, generation after generation, to serve something greater than themselves.

That is why JACL does not need to change. Its people are and always have been the change.

Being the change requires more than good intentions. It requires deliberate action. That is why we are investing in our members, strengthening our advocacy, expanding our service to the community and preparing the next generation to lead.

We begin with our members. We are transforming the member experience from a model centered on membership services to a culture of membership hospitality. Hospitality means every interaction reflects our five core values: Welcome every member, demonstrate genuine Care, deliver Excellent customer service, Personalize every experience and Connect people to one another to strengthen our community. Membership is not simply a transaction, it is the beginning of a lifelong relationship rooted in belonging, trust and shared purpose.

We are also strengthening our advocacy through JACL's inaugural Policy Platform. Guided by our mission and values, our work will focus on Civil Rights Preservation and Advancement, Historic Preservation and Public History, Immigration and Refugee Affairs, Voting Rights and Community Development. These priorities honor our history while preparing us to meet the challenges of the future.

Our commitment to service also extends beyond advocacy. We are investing in our San Francisco headquarters to become the JACL Good Neighbor Center, a place where history meets service and where individuals and families can find resources, support and community in one welcoming location. More than a building, the Good Neighbor Center will be a living expression of JACL's commitment to compassion, dignity and service.

Finally, we will continue to invest in the next generation, not only Japanese American youth, but also all young people who choose to serve the American public. Whether they become educators, advocates, public servants, members of our Armed Forces, business owners or leaders in their communities, they deserve to know that their investment in themselves, their leadership and their commitment to others matters. The future of our nation depends on people who believe service is a calling, and JACL will proudly stand beside them.

As JACL approaches its second century, our responsibility is not to become someone else. Our responsibility is to continue choosing, every day, to be the change our communities need. That is how we honor our history. That is how we fulfill our mission. And that is how we shape our future.

For more than a century, JACL has answered the call whenever justice required a voice. That legacy was never built by an institution alone. It was built by ordinary people choosing to do extraordinary things in service of others.

We have reignited our purpose and mission. We know who we are. We know why we serve.

Now, together, we move forward not because we have changed, but because we have always been the change.

Lilly Simmering is executive director of the JACL. She is based in the organization's Los Angeles office.

PAST TENSE: ODA'S HISTORIC PRESIDENCIES

After his second four-year stint, a steadying hand leaves JACL with a stage set for revival.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

(Editor's Note: The Q & A portion of this article was edited for clarity and conciseness.)

For Larry Oda, his second consecutive-biennial term as the JACL's National Board president ended Aug. 1, 2026, where it began in 2022: the gambler's mecca known as Las Vegas.

Four years earlier, oddsmakers looking at JACL's status might have thought Oda's last-minute bid to lead the organization — something he had done as national president from 2006-08 and again from 2008-10 — was a sucker's bet. After all, not only was there no one running for JACL's presidency, there was no one running for *any* elective office, definitely not promising probabilities for the health and status of the nation's oldest Asian American civil rights organization.

Undaunted, Oda ran from the floor unopposed, won and soon began appointing a cabinet to keep JACL viable. He would spend the next two years dealing with structural and financial problems that he had no inkling existed before his late-stage bid in the summer of 2022.

Despite challenges that included a still-shrinking membership base and declining revenue, Oda ran again for JACL's national presidency — unopposed — at the 2024 National Convention in Philadelphia and became the first JACL member to be elected to serve a total of eight years in office (*see Aug. 9, 2024, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/3h6w787c*).

It would take much of the four-year period of 2022-26 for Oda to, as he once put it, to "get us back to zero." One of those problems that would keep him, members of his cabinet and JACL staff occupied for much of his administration was the lack of attention to California's Nonprofit Integrity Act of 2004, which requires nonprofit corporations with gross revenues exceeding $2 million to conduct annual independent audits.

Oda was knowledgeable about the Nonprofit Integrity Act, since it was in effect during his 2006-10 stint as JACL president. He was dismayed to learn that after the departures of former National JACL business managers Clyde Izumi and Matthew Walters, JACL had failed to perform its annual due diligence for several years.

His assessment at the end of this term in 2024: "We're basically caught up now." That would lead to JACL having to face some serious realities in Oda's last second term — a further decline in membership to, for a time, fewer than 7,000 and a projected budget shortfall that had at one point been tagged at about $1 million.

During his 2024-26 term, to stave off running out of budgeted funds, some difficult actions occurred: layoffs of two longtime staffers — one at JACL headquarters, one at the *P.C.*, in spring 2025 — followed by



Larry Oda at the 2026 JACL National Convention in Las Vegas

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

the parting of the ways with JACL's former executive director, whose shoes were filled initially on a temporary basis by NCWNP Regional Director Patty Wada and CFO Tom Fernandez until the hiring of Saki Mori as interim ED (*see "JACL, David Inoue Part Ways," July 4, 2025, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/2sn2reed and "JACL Selects Interim Executive Director," Sept. 19, 2025, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/3fxntzsa*).

Then in early 2026 came the terminations of three more JACL staffers, one in its Washington, D.C., office and two — including Wada — at JACL headquarters in San Francisco. That was followed by the resignation of CFO Fernandez at the end of May, just as Lilly Simmering was hired as JACL's executive director.

Just before Oda's term ended, JACL's membership manager announced prior to the convention that she also had tendered her resignation. Add to that the end of Simmering's training-wheel's transition period as Mori's stint as interim executive director wound down.

Despite the tumult that occurred in his final two years as national president, Oda nevertheless cleared the stage for JACL's new leadership to attempt a comeback as JACL approaches a pair of milestones: the 40th anniversary in 2028 of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, aka redress, of which JACL was the primary engine of its improbable success, and, of course, JACL's centennial in 2029.

Prior to JACL's 2026 National Convention, the *Pacific Citizen* spoke with Oda to get his take on his years as the organization's national president and his thoughts on JACL's future.

THE PACIFIC CITIZEN: **What do you think you were able to accomplish, and what were you unable to accomplish that you wished you had been able to, maybe had the circumstances that you inherited not been there?**

LARRY ODA: My thinking was derailed because of this financial, um —

P.C.: **Disarray?**

ODA: Yeah, that we ran into. We had no business manager. Price (Cobbs) came in, and he was actually able to get a couple of audits done, so that that stuff was back on track, but there were still anomalies that needed to be sorted out. When we got Tom in, [we] kind of got things on an even keel going forward.

» See PRESIDENCIES on page 10

'JACL IS CHANGE'

The time is now for JACL to decide who it really wants to be.

By Allison Haramoto, P.C. Executive Editor

In a town known for taking chances and rolling the dice, Las Vegas turned out to be the ideal setting for JACL as the organization took its biggest gamble yet during its annual National Convention: betting on itself.

JACLers convened at the Paris Hotel & Casino from July 29-Aug. 2 to discuss how to get the 97-year-old organization back to its roots, decide who it really wants to be and then be the change to see it through the many challenges that lie ahead for the organization as it sets its sights on its 100th anniversary in 2029.

NATIONAL BOARD MEETING

In Larry Oda's final meeting with his National Board on July 29, he reflected on a rocky four years as president, having navigated JACL through uncompleted financial audits and gross overspending, the absence of a clear strategic plan, dwindling membership numbers and having to let go of five JACL staffers in a year's time. Nevertheless, following a comprehensive assessment of the organization by new Executive Director Lilly Simmering, Oda acknowledged that JACL is finally on the right path forward.

"This is what Lilly is dealing with now. We have a legacy to uphold, and we don't have any resources to do it," he said. "We're trying to balance things out. I think it's incumbent on the board, not only the board but the districts, chapters, to generate members. Membership is our largest source of unrestricted revenue. So, that's something I'm leaving you with. A thought: a business development person, getting corporate grants, diversifying our funding stream. . . . I'm very happy that Lilly is here to help guide us."

Addressing the board, Simmering said resolutely, "We're going to have to really question ourselves. . . . How are we going to change this narrative? . . . You have been in a place that was really tough, but . . . we're going to move forward, as we have more opportunities to be really great again."

Prior to the start of the meeting, Pacific Southwest District Gov. Nancy Takayama introduced Gary Yamauchi, who presented JACL with the gavel his father, George Yamauchi, used as the first president of Gardena Valley JACL when it was formed in 1930.

"Thank you all for doing what you do," said Gary Yamauchi, a former writer for the *Pacific Citizen* under Editor Harry Honda in 1959. "I know you volunteer a lot of your time for free, and it takes away from family and loved ones, but you do it because you want to help other people, and that's a great way to live your life."

NATIONAL COUNCIL

Following an introduction by Oda in which he gave full confidence in her ability to turn things around for JACL, Simmering addressed the National Council on July 30 and spoke candidly about the road ahead.

"I've come to accept that challenges are opportunities. . . . I go 110 percent on things that I believe I can be successful in, and when I go, I go," Simmering said.

She also acknowledged the work of her immediate predecessor, Saki Mori, who would be exiting her time as director of operations on Aug. 14.

Regarding business matters, Northern California-Western Nevada Pacific District Gov. Mariko Fujimoto made a motion for JACL to host a 2029 convention to commemorate the org's centennial, which was then seconded by Pacific Northwest District Gov. Sheldon Arakaki. (Due to budgetary constraints, there will be no National Convention in 2027, and '28 will be virtual.)

The motion was seconded and carried with a unanimous National Council vote as announced by VP of General Operations Ryan Yoshikawa.

The National Council also approved three resolutions overwhelmingly:

- R-1: A resolution of the National Council of the JACL in support of immigrant communities targeted by ICE.
- R-2: A resolution of the National Council of the JACL relating to the implementation of a strategic plan for the 2029-2030 biennium.
- ER-1: A resolution of the National Council of the JACL relating to the closure of the National Archives Centers in San Bruno, CA, and Chicago, IL.

During the meeting's budget discussion, Secretary/Treasurer Jonathan Okamoto introduced fractional CFO Piero Broccardo, who is now working alongside Carly Scheuer to sort through JACL's financial records, rebuilding the first half of 2026 directly from bank statements and forecasting out the remainder of the year.

Broccardo brought some positivity to JACL's overall outlook compared to months previous where talk of nearly a $1 million deficit loomed large over the organization. "When we get to the end of 2026 as a business, we are just about $100,000 negative. . . . We feel pretty comfortable that it is where we're going to hit at as a slight deficit compared to what we have had in the past. . . . We will go through a full rebuild of your financials . . . and we're currently starting your 2025 audit."

Following lengthy discussions and separate meetings during convention, the JACL National Council passed the next biennium budget, which passed by a vote of 64 yes votes and 1 abstention.

In remarks to the *Pacific Citizen*, Okamoto said, "The recently approved 2027/2028 biennium budget represents a continuation of JACL's pivotal shift into our second 100 years. It continues to build upon a fiscally prudent mindset where revenue and expenses MUST align.

"Our 2027/2028 budget was designed to give our new Executive Director Lilly Simmering the financial latitude to deliver results in both the revenue and policy facets of our organization," he continued. "Lilly was actively involved throughout the final stages of the budgeting process and participation from all the key members of JACL helped us deliver this budget where all appeared happy with a near-unanimous approval vote."

And in its final order of business, the National Council elected a new National Board, which was announced formally at the organization's Sayonara Banquet.

Arakaki received 61 votes, far more than the 31.5 votes required to win. Also elected was Carol Kawase, who will serve as JACL's vp for public affairs. She received 51.5 votes, with 33.5 needed to win.

Seia Watanabe, who had served as vp of public affairs, received 55 votes with 11.5 abstentions to be elected vp of membership. Dominique Mashburn, who had served as vp of membership, ran uncontested for the office of general operations but received 28.5 votes, falling short of the required minimum vote total of 33.5 votes, with 38 abstentions. According to the Nominations Committee, the position remains vacant.

Alex Tokita was elected National Youth/Student Council chair, and Simon Kutz was elected NY/SC rep., with each receiving seven votes.

Arakaki was also awarded a Ruby Pin for 20 years consecutive service to JACL, in addition to Deborah Ikeda of the Fresno JACL chapter and Mark Kobayashi of the Silicon Valley JACL chapter. Gary Nakamura, vp for planning and development, was awarded the JACL's Sapphire Pin for a minimum of 10 years consecutive service to JACL.

And during its July 31 awards luncheon, JACLer of the Biennium honors went to Calvin Kobayashi, president of the New Mexico chapter, and the George Inagaki Chapter Citizenship Award was given to the Washington, D.C., chapter. *(More Awards Luncheon coverage will be featured in the next P.C.)*

Convention sponsors included State Farm, Comcast, AARP, Verizon, US Bank, Caesars Entertainment and National JACL Credit Union. ■



JACL's Legal Counsel Ken Massey, Executive Director Lilly Simmering, National President Larry Oda and Secretary/Treasurer Jonathan Okamoto interact with delegates during the National Council session on July 30. PHOTOS: DARRELL MIHO



Secretary/Treasurer Jonathan Okamoto explains the new biennium budget.



Larry Oda with Gary Yamauchi, who gifted JACL the gavel belonging to his father, George Yamauchi, who served as the first president of Gardena Valley JACL in the 1930s.

The JACL National Council votes on the 2027-28 biennium budget. PHOTO: ALLISON HARAMOTO



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SAYONARA TO SAYONARA GALA?

With no '27 JACL convention planned and '28 likely virtual, this confab staple is the last for the time being.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

Every in-person National JACL Convention over the decades has had a version of a Sayonara Gala on the event's last night.

The 2026 version, held in a mercifully air-conditioned ballroom at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino on the evening of Aug. 1 was no different: a chance to have a last supper with far-flung JACL friends before returning to Fresno, Seattle, Milwaukee, Philadelphia or Albuquerque, bask in the aftermath of passed resolutions, enjoy some live entertainment, present awards to deserving individuals and, this being an election year, relax after voting for new National Board officers and witness them being sworn in.

But with the organization's financial dire straits still extant, the next in-person Sayonara Gala portion of the annual JACL National Convention, which have been money-losers for several years running, won't happen in 2027 (no convention planned) or 2028 (it will be virtual) and won't likely happen until 2029.

Performing the national anthem was vocalist Lauren Hanako Kinkade. Lively singing and dancing was by Sazan Yosakoi. Providing a projected video greeting was Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), which was followed by a goodbye message from outgoing National President Larry Oda, who said, "The conversations we had this week reaffirm our mission remains as important today as ever," before introducing a welcome greeting by Minister Kyoichiro Kawakami of the Embassy of Japan in Washington, D.C. Perry Yung of the Slant Performance Group followed with a solo performance on *shakuhachi*.

One of the evening's more moving moments came after a video commemorated JACLers, friends and community members who died in recent months, a poignant roll call that included Tadashi Tanaka, Tom Okubo, Lilly Yuriko Kato, Akiko Keene, Michael Faden, Alice Takemoto, Jean Matsumoto, Atami Ueno, Paul Ase, Linda Iwasaki, John Nakada, Richard Nishimoto, Todd Isao Endo, Yulie Kiyasu Nosé, Agnes Mizuho Uchida, Kyoko Nancy Oda, Douglas Urata, Somao Ochi, Caryl Suzuki and David Lin.

It was the last name in the list that brought a hush to the conventiongoers. "While David's influence reached far beyond this organization, JACL was one of the communities closest to his heart. He devoted countless hours, years of dedicated service and extraordinary care to strengthen this organization. His leadership helped to shape our direction. His judgment guided our decisions, and his friendship touched the lives of so many," said Oda.

Lin, who served as JACL national president in two consecutive biennial terms (2012-14 and 2014-16), and his wife, Jean, were victims of a double-homicide in September 2025 (*see Nov. 14, 2025, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/2w9a7w6k*).

Oda then reprised the recognitions given earlier that day during the National Council session and called up Deborah Ikeda, Sheldon Arakaki and Mark Kobayashi, all of whom were awarded JACL Ruby Pins. "To qualify, one must be a current active JACLER who has maintained a minimum of 20 years of consecutive service, at least 10 years at the district and/or national levels, and has achieved an outstanding lifetime of service that has made a significant and positive impact on the lives of Japanese Americans and/or the Asian American community, as well as the JACL," he said.

Next, Tamlyn Tomita, who served as master of ceremonies, called up JACL Awards Committee Chair David Kawamoto to present the first of the evening's two 2024-26 Japanese American of the Biennium Awards to Dr. Debra Kawahara and Ryan Kawamoto. Kawahara's award, in the field of medicine and science, was for her "contributions to the study of psychology that have enhanced the quality of life in our society." Kawamoto's award, in the field of arts, literature and communications, was for the filmmaker's contributions in "sharing, recording and preserving the history of the Japanese American community of Hawaii."

"Tonight, I think of the generations of Japanese Americans who face discrimination, incarceration and injustice, yet moved forward with dignity, strength and hope. Their sacrifices opened up doors and created opportunities for all of us to move forward," Kawahara said in her acceptance remarks. "Thank you for this honor. I will treasure it always, and I will continue to do my best to honor the legacy of those who paved the way and the generation who will follow."

Outgoing VP of General Operations Ryan Yoshikawa called up the evening's other awardee, Ryan Kawamoto, who said, "I am humbled to accept this honor, deeply, deeply humbled, and a special thank you to previous recipient, Carole Hayashino, whom many of you know for her continued encouragement and support on many of these projects."

"These films that I produced — 'The Untold Story,' 'Voices Behind Barbed Wire' and 'Removed by Force' — were created to preserve the voices of those who endured injustice and to capture that courage, their sacrifices, and to let them know that their resilience is never forgotten. This award belongs to them as much as it belongs to me," he said.

Tomita welcomed back to the stage NY/SC Rep. Claire Inouye and NY/SC Chair Remy Kageyama to then announce the winner of the NY/SE's 50/50 raffle: Rick Pauly, who won $2,862.50.

Tomita then welcomed Nevada Assemblymember Duy Nguyen, who praised the actor for using her "platform for decades to confront anti-Asian stereotypes, speak out against injustices in Hollywood and fight for civil rights across our nation."

He then presented a state of Nevada proclamation that was accepted by Oda. "It is my absolute privilege to present this official state of Nevada proclamation to the Japanese American Citizens League," said Nguyen. "We officially recognize the 2026 JACL National Convention. Thank you for nearly a century of steadfast service to civil rights, and we express our deepest gratitude for leading the way so generations to come can follow."

Nguyen followed that by swearing in the new JACL National Board for 2026-28 and introducing newly elected National President Sheldon Arakaki to speak. "Over the past few days, we celebrated our history, learned from one another, welcomed new voices and had meaningful conversations about where JACL is headed," he said. "This convention has reminded us that our greatest strength has always been our people, our members, you, our chapters, our volunteers, our partners who believe in the importance of justice, community and preserving our shared history. … I look forward to the work we will accomplish together."

Tomita next called on Executive Director Lilly Simmering to speak. "I want to kind of go back to where I started with JACL when I took the position," she said. "Everybody's telling me like, 'JACL needs to change,' and every time I ask people, 'Change into what?' Nobody can tell me what. They just knew that it needed to change. This afternoon, you know what I realized? I realized that JACL does not need to change. JACL is change." ■



Members of Sazan Yosakoi perform at the 2026 JACL National Convention's Sayonara Gala.

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

The 2026-28 JACL National Board is all smiles after being sworn in by Nevada Assemblymember Duy Nguyen. Pictured *(from left)* are Brian Tsukimura, Nancy Takayama, Paul Uyehara, Mariko Fujimoto, Ken Massey, Gary Nakamura, Alex Tokita, Sheldon Arakaki, Simon Kutz, Gil Asakawa, Seia Watanabe, Carol Kawase and Jonathan Okamoto.

PHOTOS: DARRELL MIHO



Larry Oda and Nevada Assemblymember Duy Nguyen display the proclamation the state presented to JACL at the Sayonara Gala on Aug. 1.



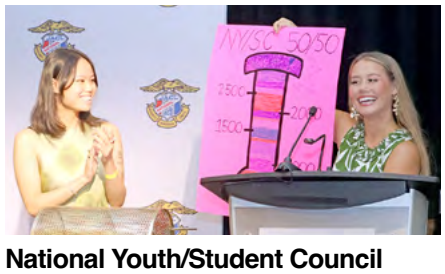
Larry Oda, Lilly Simmering and Ryan Yoshikawa flank 2026 Japanese American of the Biennium co-awardee Ryan Kawamoto.



2026 Ruby Pin awardees Mark Kobayashi, Deborah Ikeda and Sheldon Arakaki with Larry Oda



Larry Oda, Lilly Simmering and David Kawamoto flank 2026 Japanese American of the Biennium co-awardee Debra Kawahara.



National Youth/Student Council Chair Remy Kageyama applauds as National Youth Representative Claire Inouye shows off the evening's raffle tally.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

VIVA JACL!

The famous words "Viva Las Vegas!" could easily instead say "Viva JACL!" as the 97-year-old civil rights organization's members embodied new excitement and energy as they convened for one common cause: to reignite JACL during its National Convention at the Paris Hotel & Casino from July 29-Aug. 2.

Themed "Reigniting Our Purpose and Mission," JACLers began work immediately to breathe fresh life into the organization, which has been beset with dwindling membership numbers and financial difficulties. And work they did. A new National Board. New resolutions. New meaningful panels and workshops. New in-depth conversations on the future of JACL. Reignited indeed.

During the opening night reception, JACL Executive Director Lilly Simmering kick-started conversations with a stirring welcome, attesting to the organization's rich and storied history by acknowledging JACL's commitment to defending civil rights and preserving Japanese culture, but then recognizing the need to fulfil them even better.

"Our work is not yet finished. . . . Real progress requires disruption. If no one challenges the system, nothing changes. And if nothing changes, nothing grows," she said. "My point is that Japanese Americans have always been system disrupters. . . . So, I have just one request for each of you this week. How will we disrupt the system again? This is the challenge before us."

For JACLers, challenge accepted.

— Allison Haramoto, P.C. Executive Editor



David Kawamoto and Steve Okamoto



Delegates hold up their voting cards



Larry and Anne Oda



JACL convention swag



NCWNP District Council



JACL National Board with Lilly Simmering



Ron Kuramoto Checks Out the *P.C.'s* JA Interactive Map

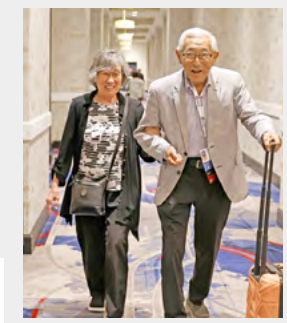


Eileen Yamada Lamphere and Aylen Hasegawa



Alex Tokita, Simon Kutz and Lauren Iwamiya

Floyd and Irene Mori







Eric Langowski, Paul Uyehara and Ariel Imamoto

San Jose JACL T-shirts





P.C. Editorial Board Co-Chairs Daigo Fujiwara-Smith and Gil Asakawa



JACLers and NY/SC

PHOTOS: DARRELL MIHO, GIL ASAKAWA, GEORGE JOHNSTON, SUSAN YOKOYAMA, CINDY SIU AND ALLISON HARAMOTO

Candid Photos



Kai Uno and Chip Larouche



JACL Las Vegas President Delwayne Arakaki



Larry Oda, Embassy of Japan's Kyoichiro Kawakami and Gary Nakamura



JACL NB Presidents *(from left)* Floyd Shimomura, Floyd Mori, Sheldon Arakaki, Ken Inouye, David Kawamoto and Larry Oda



JACLers celebrate opening night.



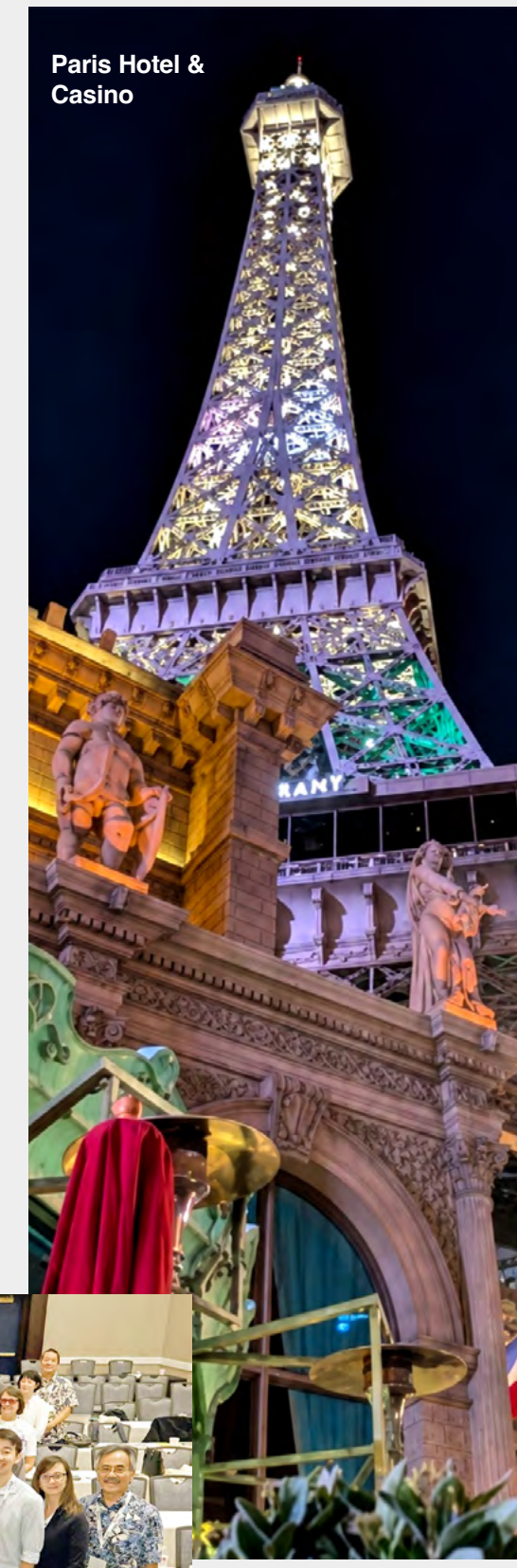
Steven Mitori, Mariko Fujimoto and Eric Langowski



SLANT Performance Group



Tamlyn Tomita *(second from left)* with MDC members





JACL staff *(from left)* Matthew Weisbly, Ariel Imamoto, Saki Mori, Susan Yokoyama, Lilly Simmering, Katie Masano Hill and Matthew Marumoto



JACLers united at the Paris Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.



PHOTOS: DARRELL MIHO, GIL ASAKAWA, GEORGE JOHNSTON, SUSAN YOKOYAMA, CINDY SIU AND ALLISON HARAMOTO

ARAKAKI ACTS AS JACL'S NEW LEADER

After election win, new biennium president makes key appointments.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

Sheldon Arakaki wasted no time attending to JACL National Board business during his first meeting in Las Vegas on Aug. 2 as the newly elected JACL National Board president for the next biennium, making it the first time in four years a National Board meeting was not presided over by Larry Oda.

Joining Arakaki as newly elected officers were Public Affairs VP Carol Kawase, Membership Services VP Seia Watanabe and Alex Tokita and Simon Kutz as National Youth Student Council chair and representative, respectively.

In a meeting room at the Paris Las Vegas, Arakaki began by making appointments to vacant offices.

Approved reappointments included Ken Massey, legal counsel; Jonathan Okamoto, secretary-treasurer; Steve Okamoto, National JACL Legacy Giving officer; and David Kawamoto, Scholarship Committee chair. Also approved was the appointment of Carol Kawamoto as vp of planning and development. The vp of general operations position remains vacant.

"This is just the first round of appointments," Arakaki said. "Obviously, there's going to be another round coming up in September." Also approved was having Arakaki being added as a signatory for all JACL bank accounts. Simmering also announced that dates for formal board orientation training would be forthcoming.

The other business decided upon that morning was a vote — it was affirmative — brought forth by Kawase whether to reinstate for the new biennium the Social Justice Action Committee, formed at the 2025 JACL National Convention in Albuquerque, N.M. It is comprised of Naoko Fujii (who will continue as chair), Dan Mayeda, Natsu Taylor Saito and Peggy Nagae, with Kawase continuing as the liaison for the committee to the National Board.



The 2026-28 JACL National Board and Executive Director Lilly Simmering. Pictured *(seated, from left)* are Carol Kawase, Sheldon Arakaki, Lilly Simmering and *(standing, from left)* are Chip Larouche, Rob Sonoda, Mariko Fujimoto, Ken Massey, Paul Uyehara, Simon Kutz, Alex Tokita, Brian Tsukimura, Gil Asakawa, Seia Watanabe, Nancy Takayama and Gary Nakamura. (Not pictured: Jonathan Okamoto) PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

"This is an incredible team of attorneys, and at a drop of a hat, one of them will volunteer their time to review a lawsuit or amicus brief to allow us to whether or not we should participate and sign on," Kawase said.

Those in attendance at the Aug. 2 JACL National Board meeting included Sheldon Arakaki; Gil Asakawa (*Pacific Citizen* Editorial Board co-chair); Mariko Fujimoto (Northern California-Western Nevada Pacific District governor); Ken Inouye; Carol and David Kawamoto (former JACL National president); Carol Kawase; Simon Kutz; Arly La Mica and Pam Dally-La Mica (president and secretary-treasurer, respectively, Monterey Peninsula JACL chapter); Chip Larouche (Pacific Northwest District governor); Ken Massey; Irene and Floyd Mori; Saki Mori (National Operations director); Gary Nakamura (Midwest District governor); Larry Oda; Jonathan Okamoto; Steve Okamoto; Miko Sawamura (Northern California-Western Nevada Pacific District board member); Floyd Shimomura (past JACL national president); Lilly Simmering; Rob Sonoda (Intermountain District governor); Nancy Takayama (Pacific Southwest District governor); Alex Tokita; Brian Tsukimura (Central California District governor); Matthew Weisbly (JACL Education Programs manager); Paul Uyehara (Eastern District governor); and Seia Watanabe. ■

SIMMERING » continued from page 2

how to do this. We absolutely know how to do this."

Simmering then explained the portfolios each fellow focused on, noting that the area of civil rights was "everybody, whatever it takes." She said Hill's portfolio focus was historic preservation, public history and community development, and Marumoto's portfolio focus was immigration and refugee affairs, as well as voting rights.

Hill began by reading the portfolio the duo shared: civil rights preservation and advancement. "The children's issues include civil rights enforcement, constitutional rights and civil liberties protections," she said. "Equal protection and equal opportunity, protecting the right to free speech, protecting birthright citizenship, which I am very proud to say that we are protected now."

(Editor's note: To read the entire list of items in Hill and Marumoto's respective portfolios, visit: tinyurl.com/42aw8hd2.)



"The blood that has soaked the sands of a beach is all of one color. America stands unique in the world; the only country not founded on race, but on a way and an ideal." **- 1945 Ronald Reagan**

The United States is a nation built by immigrants who were guided by hope. For generations, people crossed oceans in search of opportunity, leaving behind everything familiar to pursue a better life. That journey has never been easy—our Issei ancestors knew this well. Arriving nearly a century after America's founding, they came with faith in the American Dream and the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Despite relentless efforts to exclude, disenfranchise, and push them out, the Issei held fast to their belief in America and inspired the Nisei to do the same.

The JACL was created by the Nisei to demonstrate that Americans come from every ethnicity, belief, and culture. Although the 14th Amendment guaranteed their citizenship, our community knows too well that rights on paper are not always rights in practice. Racism, economic greed, and political failure led to the forced removal and incarceration of over 125,000 people of Japanese ancestry, stripping them of the very rights that were supposed to protect them.

Even as America grows more diverse, the threat of racial injustice and bigotry persists. Today, many communities face renewed or newly emboldened attacks, echoing the same rhetoric and fears that once targeted Japanese Americans. During WWII, JACL accepted the unjust conditions imposed on our community when Japanese Americans had their citizenship revoked. In the 84 years since, we have continued to reckon with that history while standing firmly for the protection of birthright citizenship. We refuse to allow anyone in this country to be denied their constitutional rights again. This commitment is why JACL invests in policy fellows who educate national partners, monitor harmful proposals, and advocate for legislation that upholds justice and equality for all.

Over the last 250 years, America has transformed in countless ways. What keeps the American Dream alive is our Constitution and the enduring human drive for a better life. As our nation continues to evolve—and as JACL approaches its centennial—we are committed to evolving with it. We strive to preserve America's history, uplift its ideals, and ensure that the mistakes of the past are never repeated.

Help us protect the American Dream and defend the rights of all who call this country home. Please consider making a donation today and help us reach our summer fundraising goal of $30,000.

Sincerely,
Ariel Imamoto
JACL Membership Manager

*Campaign ends September 7, 2026

Please send checks to
Attn: JACL Summer Appeal
PO Box 45397
San Francisco, CA 94115-0397

KEEPING TRUMAN'S PROMISE ALIVE

JAVA's Seventh Annual Day of Affirmation ceremony honors the former president's historic review of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

By Robert H. Vokac

The Japanese American Veterans Assn. gathered at the National World War II Memorial on July 18 to commemorate one of the defining moments in American military history.

JAVA's Seventh Annual Day of Affirmation honored the 80th anniversary of President Truman's historic review of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team following its parade down Constitution Avenue to the White House Ellipse. The ceremony celebrated the extraordinary service and sacrifice of the soldiers of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd RCT while reaffirming the enduring values of loyalty, courage and citizenship that continue to inspire Americans today.

On July 15, 1946, President Truman awarded the 442nd RCT its seventh Presidential Unit Citation and delivered words that have echoed through generations: *"You fought the enemy abroad and prejudice at home, and you won."* In doing so, he recognized not only the battlefield heroism of the Nisei soldiers but also the injustice and sacrifices endured by Japanese Americans during WWII.

The ceremony opened with a stirring performance by the Mark H. Rooney Taiko Ensemble. Howard High, a U.S. Army veteran and president of JAVA, served as master of ceremonies. He welcomed the audience and presented a moving historical reflection based upon the recollections of Terry Shima, one of the last surviving veterans who stood in formation for President Truman's 1946 review. Although Shima was unable to attend, his eyewitness memories connected those gathered with the events that unfolded on the White House Ellipse 80 years ago.

President Truman's eldest grandson, Clifton Truman Daniel, delivered the keynote address. Blending warmth, humor and historical insight, he reflected on the values that guided his grandfather throughout his life — humility, fairness, kindness and the recognition of courage wherever it is found. Through personal stories, he illustrated President Truman's unwavering commitment to justice before re-enacting the closing portion of the historic July 15, 1946, address. His words resonated deeply with the audience: *"You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice, and you have won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win."*



President Harry S. Truman's grandson, Clifton Truman Daniel, delivers the keynote address at the JAVA Seventh Annual Day of Affirmation.

PHOTO: BRUCE HOLLYWOOD

Brig. Gen. Tomika M. Seaberry, military deputy in the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve, G-3/5/7, delivered the distinguished military address. She praised the soldiers of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd RCT for answering the nation's call despite facing discrimination at home.

LTC Joseph Ensminger, commander of the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, delivered the Legacy Address. Emphasizing the responsibility entrusted to each new generation, he observed that the Day of Affirmation "was not just a ceremony. It was a turning point for American civil rights, military history and the national conscience." His remarks underscored that the legacy of the 100th Battalion and the 442nd RCT is not simply remembered — it continues to be lived every day by the soldiers of the battalion.

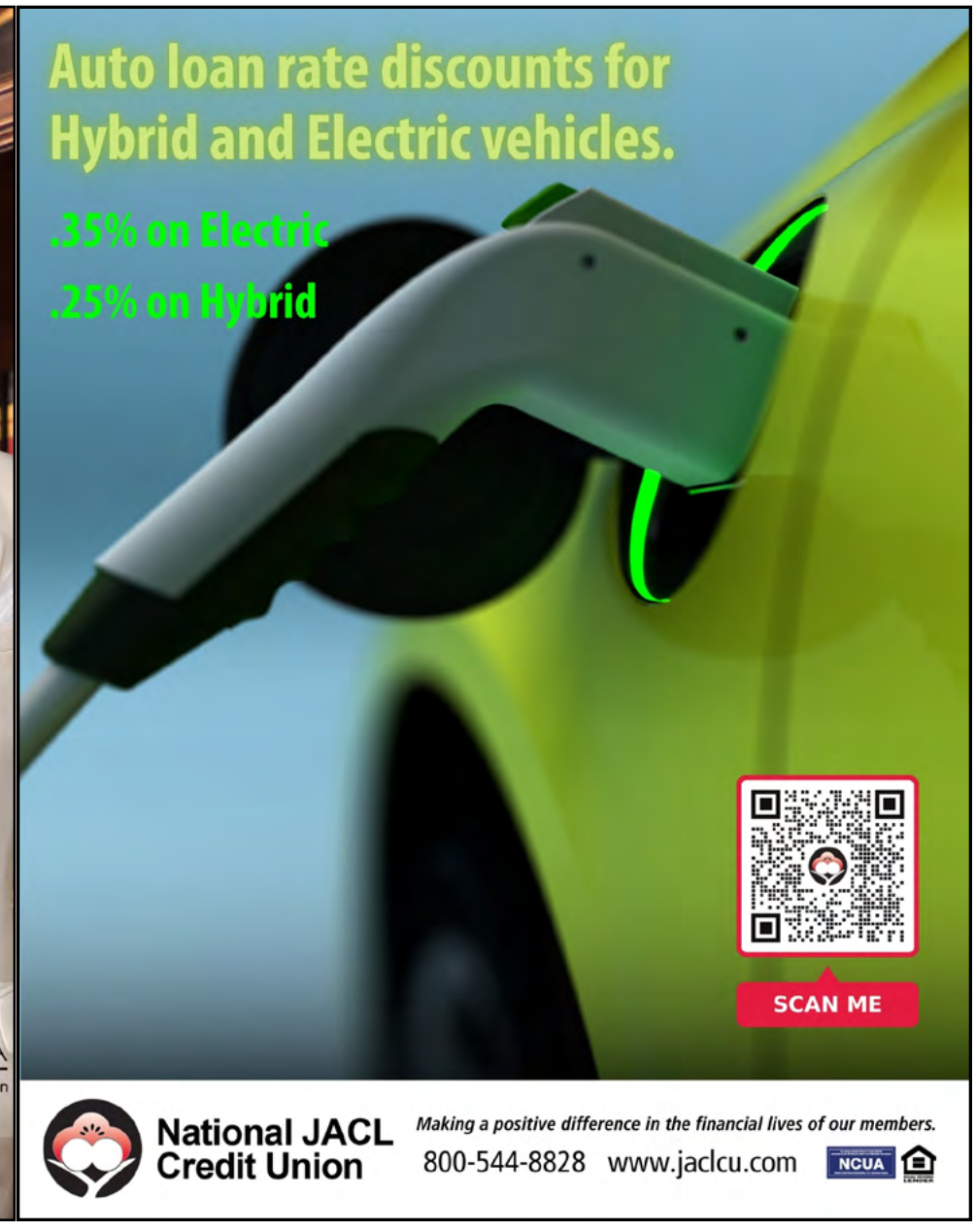
Distinguished guests included Minister Kyoichiro Kawakami, chief of chancellery, Embassy of Japan; Eric Saul, renowned historian and museum director; Anna Fierst, great-granddaughter of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; Col. Noe Noel Uchida, Army attaché, Embassy of France; Gerald Yamada, founder of JAVA's Day of Affirmation and former president of JAVA; and LTC (Ret.) Al Goshi, former president of JAVA.

The United States Army Band, "Pershing's Own," provided patriotic music throughout the ceremony, including stirring renditions of the 442nd RCT song, "Go For Broke," and "The Army Song." A Color Guard from the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, presented and retired the colors.

Following the ceremony, attendees gathered at the National Museum of the United States Navy for a luncheon, during which Yamada reflected on the 2020 origins of the Day of Affirmation and the vision that inspired its creation.

Robert H. Vokac is a retired U.S. Army officer, executive council member of the Japanese American Veterans Assn. and a grandson of Col. Virgil R. Miller, the second commander of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.





NOW AVAILABLE ON THE *PACIFIC CITIZEN* WEBSITE!

Japanese American U.S. Population Interactive Map

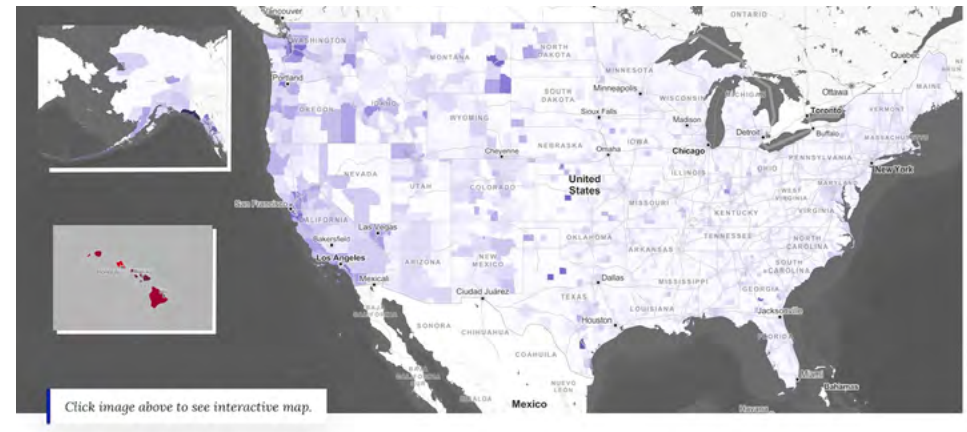
By Daigo Fujiwara-Smith,
P.C. Editorial Board Co-Chair

Where do Japanese Americans call home today? From historic communities on the West Coast to growing populations across the Midwest, South and East Coast, the Japanese American narrative continues to grow.

To answer this question, the *Pacific Citizen* turned to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, 2020-24 five-year estimates, the most-detailed population data available down to the neighborhood level. Its findings offer a fascinating look at where Japanese Americans live across the country, revealing new connections and the evolving footprint of this proud and vibrant community.

According to the data, there are 1,680,520 Japanese Americans, about 0.5 percent of the U.S. population. When the P.C. references "Japanese American," it counts as anyone who identifies as Japanese, alone or in combination with one or more other racial or ethnic groups, on the ACS. It includes people of full and mixed Japanese descent.

The ACS is an ongoing Census Bureau survey, separate from the once-a-decade census headcount. It samples about 3.5 million households a year to estimate figures for the full population. Five-year estimates pool five years of responses (2020-24), which make reliable data possible for smaller populations and smaller geographies, such as a census tract, relatively permanent statistical area, typically home to about 4,000 people, shown here when you zoom into the map.



Whether you're curious about your own hometown or interested in discovering where Japanese American communities are thriving, this interactive map, exclusive to the *Pacific Citizen,* offers a new perspective on the nation's ever-changing landscape.

Enjoy exploring the map. Tell us what you think!

Visit: https://pacificcitizen.org/interactives/japanese-american-population/.

PRESIDENCIES » continued from page 3

P.C.: **With your term wrapping up — and, of course, this is purely your opinion here — but what are the big issues that your successor may want to focus on from your perspective?**

ODA: The main thing that I think that we should be focused on is membership. Membership is our largest unrestricted source of revenue. Corporate sponsorships carry some requirements that we do certain things, whereas membership dollars don't. We can spend it on whatever we want. We can hire whomever we want, whereas if we get a sponsorship from somebody, there's usually strings attached. They want us to do something or we get the money because we're going to do something. So, what's the answer here? Well, the answer is: Increase membership, so we can do what we want and not be tied to a promise to do something else.

P.C.: **Going back to your tenure, Larry, I know one of the things with Michael Kanazawa and his participation in the plenary at the 2023 JACL National Convention in Los Angeles was on visioning, some of which was very far-flung into the future, not so much how do we make it through the next several months, if not the next year** ***(see "One Small Step For JACL — And A Giant Leap For Its Future?, Aug. 11, 2023, tinyurl.com/4aryfxdh).*** **Getting back to that, and I would put that under one of your accomplishments, you kind of planted a flag, as it were, to the future, but you were dealing with these other real-world serious issues.**

ODA: Yeah, we're not going to remodel our house when it's on fire. We are going to have this discussion at this convention about strategic planning. What I was talking about [with] this visioning project was strategic planning, looking into the future, not day-to-day stuff.

We had a Strategic Planning Committee that was disbanded in 2019. That committee used to be named Program for Action. They changed the name to Strategic Planning because it sounded better.

The purpose of that committee was to outline what our priorities would be for the next biennium. We would not get a report until convention. How would you plan for the next biennium or prioritize the next biennium when the budget's already been set?

The Strategic Plan has always been for the next biennium, not for the next year or two. You know, five years, 10 years, 20 years, 50 years.

P.C.: **With that, what, from your perspective, is the future of JACL?**

ODA: It can go one of two ways. We can keep on the road we are — you know, declining members. We're down to 7,000 members now. In 2010, our membership revenues were $1 million. Now, we're down to $500,000, $400,000, something like that. I'll be frank. We let it die, or we kick some ass.

I mentioned membership revenue is our largest source of unrestricted revenue. We need unrestricted revenue. We need revenue, period. I was looking at, I think it was the 2000 convention minutes or you know transcripts, and the promise was we need to diversify our funding stream, meaning we need more sponsorships, grants, and so 25 years ago, we were talking about diversifying our funding stream. So, I look at my graphs again. How's that worked out for us? It hasn't.

You know, I fall back on some of you know these quotes that I remember. One of them is, you know, (Albert) Einstein's quote of doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results as the definition of insanity. Well, let's look in the mirror. We need to change. We need to think differently here, OK?

P.C.: **You've just done two two-year terms, a total of eight years as national president. I think that qualifies as above and beyond the call of duty. You're a person of a certain age, and you're entitled to say, well, I'm done here with anything JACL-related. That said, what might your future involvement with the organization be?**

ODA: I want to be helpful if there's a need. I'm very willing to step in, just as I stepped in for this current presidency. When the Kakehashi Program was stumbling along, or when it first started, I volunteered to help and you know arrange for chaperones and oversee the applications. Even though I'm old, I can still contribute. If I can help, I'm here.

P.C.: **What do you see as the role of *Pacific Citizen* in the future of JACL?**

ODA: You know, the *Pacific Citizen,* it's at least as old as JACL. The *P.C.* is our — it should be — our crown jewel. We're the only organization that has a newspaper, a bona fide newspaper, not a newsletter. I know that Floyd Mori wanted to do away with the *P.C.* because he thought he could use that money, you know, for whatever he wanted to do. It's the wrong reason and contrary to what the membership wanted. Maybe I'm old-fashioned or stuck in the past, but the *P.C.* is JACL. ■

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2026 TOUR SCHEDULE.

CHRISTMAS MARKET CANADA HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Dec 1-7
Vancouver City Tour, Grouse Mountain Skyride, Shipyards Christmas Market, Ferry to Victoria Island, Butchart Gardens, High Tea at Fairmont Empress Hotel, Victoria Christmas Market & Fair, Van Dusen Festival of Lights.

2027 TOUR SCHEDULE (Preview)

FANTASTIC FLORIDA & KEYS HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Mar 11-18
Miami, Ft Lauderdale, Everglades National Park, Homestead, Key West, Marathon Key, Hemingway Home.
JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Apr 4-15
Tokyo, Niigata, Sado Island, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Kyoto.
JAPAN HOLIDAY CRUISE . . . . **Rescheduled to 2028** . . . . . Apr 8–25
Tokyo, Yokohama, Amaezaki, Osaka, Kochi, Fukuoka, Sokcho(S.Korea), Kanazawa, Sakata, Aomori, Otaru, Hakodate, Yokohama. Holland America Cruise.
NATIONAL PARKS & CANYONS HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Apr 25-30
Las Vegas, Hoover Dam, Mob Museum, Grand Canyon West & Skywalk, Mesquite, Bryce Canyon, St. George, Zion National Park.
TULIP FESTIVAL & GREAT LAKES HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . May 6-14
Chicago, Grand Rapids, Holland Tulip Festival, Mackinac Island, Green Bay, Milwaukee.
KOREA HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . May 11-24
Seoul, Bullet Train to Busan, Jeju Island, Jeonju, Nami Island, DMZ, few K-Drama sites.
GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Jun 20-30
Tokyo, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experience.
HOKKAIDO SUMMER HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . July 11-23
Furano Asahikawa, Wakkanai, Rishiri Island, Sapporo, Noboribetsu, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.
DANUBE RIVER CRUISE (Carol Hida). . . . . Aug 22-Sep 4
Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Weissenkirchen, Linz, Passau, Vilshofen, Prague. AmaWaterways Cruise Line.
JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE TOUR TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Oct 14-27
Kyushu, Shikoku.
OKINAWA HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Nov 12-22
Okinawa, Ishigaki Island, Iriomote Island, Taketomi Island.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

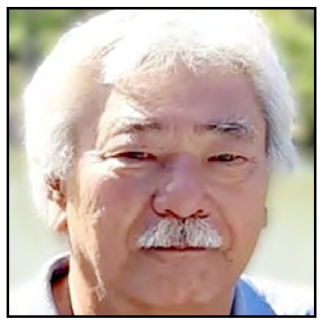
AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL
312 E. 1st Street, Suite 240 * Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213)625-2232 * Email: americanholiday@att.net
Ernest or Carol Hida

In MEMORIAM

(Note: Boldfaced names in the PDF version of this are active hyperlinks.)

Abe, Clyde, 82, Honolulu, HI, March 6.

Aizawa, Brent, 76, Athol, ID, Feb. 8.



Arakaki, Craig, 68, Honolulu, HI, Feb. 18.

Doi, Dorothy, 96, Honolulu, HI, April 13.



Drury, Hisako, 87, Pascoag, RI, July 1.



Hayakawa, Gregory, 73, Davis, CA, April 8.

Hottle, Kaylee, 18, Kyle, TX, July 21.

Kasama, Anna, 90, Los Angeles, CA.

Kase, Terue 'Terrie,' 99, Santa Maria, CA, May 14.

Katagiri, Tomoe, 94, Minneapolis, MN, May 30.

Kaya, Violet Yoshie, 83, Whittier, CA, May 7.

Kitano, Yoshiko, 97, Gardena, CA, June 14.

Kitasoe, Lorraine 'Lorrie' Hisako, 72, Sunnyvale, CA, May 26.

Kubota, John Stuart, 74, Las Vegas, NV, April 26.



Manabe, Eugene Yasuo, 92, Calabasas, CA, July 9.



Nakahira, Hisako, 89, Arleta, CA, June 27.

Nakamura, Alice (Smulligan), 78, Ann Arbor, MI, April 2.

Nakamura, Barbara Jean, 85, Bowling Green, KY, April 15.



Nakamura, Mildred, 97, Waipahu, HI, Feb. 14.

Ogata, Priscilla Anne, 80, Staunton, IL, Jan. 29.

Ozawa, David, 67, Hood River, OR, April 22.

Patten, Hisako, 91, La Jolla, CA, May 20.

Saito Michiko, 89, Tacoma, WA, Jan. 6.



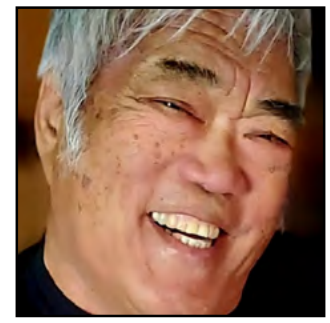
Shohara, Hisako, 97, Los Angeles, CA, June 27.



Takahashi, Frank, 102, Uintah, UT, June 31.



Takahashi, Kikue, 96, Uintah, UT, Jan. 24.



Tanaka, Carl, 78, Chubbuck, ID, May 8.

Tanaka, Gerald Jerry, 76, Los Angeles, CA, May 15.



Torio, Wesley George Yoshio, 74, Austin, TX, May 23.

Yagi, Akiko, 101, Los Angeles, CA, July 19. ■

News Briefs

Hot Fun in the Summertime Returns to Little Tokyo With 84th Nisei Week

The annual Japanese cultural festival was set to begin Saturday, Aug. 15 with the yet-to-be revealed coronation of the Nisei Week queen and her court. Vying for the 2026 top tiara are Kara Kimiko Chu, Emily Kaori Gruhn, Ai Grace Kusayanagi, Jacqueline Fujiko Naito, Meagan Sueko Pham, Kailah Julianne Tokushige and Deena Maiko Umeda. Other Nisei Week events include Aug. 19's Pioneer Spirit Awards Luncheon, at which Joyce Wakano Chinn, Dan Fukushima, Miyoko Hataye, Kenji Irie, Yuriko Shikai and Nancy Uyemura will each be recognized for long-standing service to Southern California's Japanese American community. The President's Award honoree is Alan Miyatake. The recipients of the Frances K. Hashimoto Community Service Award are Erich Nakano, Mutual Trading Co. Inc., Debra Nakatomi and So-Phis. The festival ends Sunday, Aug. 23. For updates, visit niseiweek.org/.

DoJ: 'Operation Hard Ball' Nabs 24 Allegedly Tied to India-Based Gangs

The U.S. Dept. of Justice announced that a coordinated effort among law enforcement in the U.S., Canada and Europe resulted in the arrests of 24 defendants alleged to be connected to three "India-based transnational organized crime groups" involved in several criminal activities, including the June 2023 assassination in Canada of a Sikh religious figure in British Columbia. Eleven of those arrested were in California. Seven fugitives are still being sought. Dubbed "Operation Hard Ball," the operation was a "years-long federal investigation into Indian crime syndicates that engage in racketeering, targeted killings, shootings, extortion, the trafficking of bulk quantities of narcotics across international borders, and other crimes around the world." ¶ The DoJ also announced that Guramrit Sidhu, 63, of Brampton, Ontario, Canada, was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison for trafficking $17 million in methamphetamine and cocaine from the U.S. into Canada. ¶ The FBI announced the arrest of South Korean national Kim Myung-jin, 31, who is accused of commiting a pair of murders in the U.S. in 2016 and 2018. ¶ The AP reported that video footage of two masked ICE agents tackling Australian citizen Phu Nguyen, 57, at Terminal 3 at Harry Reid International Airport sparked "public outrage and criticism from elected officicals." According to the report, the ICE agents walked away when they realized they were being recorded, leaving Nguyen with "a handcuff attached to one arm." When Las Vegas Metropolitan Police found no outstanding warrants for him, they removed his handcuffs and notified ICE. In a statement, Sen. Jacky Rosen (D–Nev.) said, "ICE is continuing to act with impunity — instilling fear in our communities and scaring tourists, which hurts our tourism economy." According to ICE, Nguyen had overstayed his visa and was arrested at Los Angeles International Airport the next day. ¶ Philippine national Ceasar Tubay Gelacio Jr., 43, an able-bodied seaman on the oil tanker *Aquatravesia*, pleaded guilty to one count of knowingly bringing nearly 200 kilograms of cocaine on a vessel arriving in El Segundo, Calif., according to the Dept. of Justice.

Duly Noted: JANM Selects 3 New Members for Its Board of Governors

The Japanese American National Museum said that Lori Fogarty, Masaki Ozaki and Ron Tanemura have joined its board of governors. ¶ Journalist Henry Chu was named curator of Harvard's Nieman Foundation for Journalism, the university announced. ¶ Calif. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed AB 2455, introduced by Assemblymember Matt Haney (D–San Francisco), officially designating May 17 as Bruce Lee Day in the state, beginning next year. Lee, who died in 1973 on the cusp of gaining international superstardom in martial arts movies, was born in San Francisco in 1940.

— P.C. Staff

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 $25/column inch.

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