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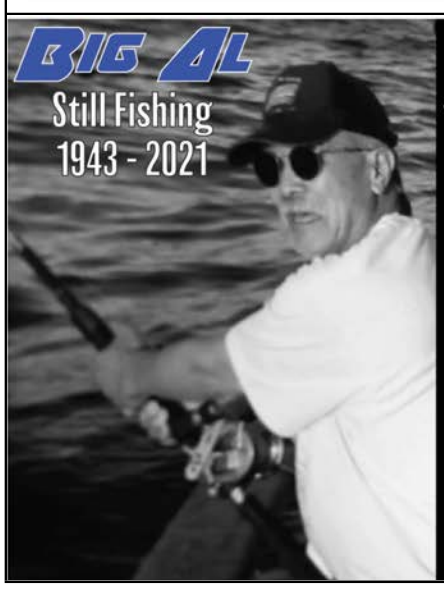
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Founded in 1929, JACL is the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization with a 10,000 membership base. JACL has 112 chapters nationwide and a Washington, D.C., office and a national headquarters in San Francisco. JACL's mission is to secure and uphold the human and civil rights of Japanese Americans and all Americans while preserving our cultural heritage and values.

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Letter From the Editor



COVER: MARIE SAMONTE AND JAIMEE ITAGAKI

What a year it has been. As we have begun to navigate through a post-Covid-pandemic landscape while dealing with such turbulence and uncertainty going on in the world these days, there's nothing more reassuring than a comforting hug, a friendly wave and even a simple "hello" to lift our spirits. Making even the smallest of connections is how we find strength, support and understanding in others.

Whether with family, friends or forging new ties, it's these "connections" that we celebrate as we prepare to say goodbye to 2023 and welcome in 2024.

The *Pacific Citizen* has also worked to keep you connected by continuing to cover the stories that resonate within our community, providing a bridge between our readers and the news you need to know. Through the lens of this nearly 95-year-old newspaper, our vision is to continue to ensure that our collective experiences are told with authenticity and brought to the forefront to guarantee that these moments are acknowledged, celebrated and, most importantly, remembered.

In this issue, you'll meet couples who met and married one another after first making a connection through the JACL. A college chancellor who uses values inspired by his Japanese heritage. A Yonsei who is committed to preserving the Japanese American experience. Family recipes handed down through generations by the *P.C.'s* Editorial Board. A documentary film about Hawaii's JA redress fight. These features and many more celebrate the power of connections . . .

In the spirit of togetherness, let's continue to weave a tapestry of diversity. Let's continue to strengthen the bonds that make us resilient. Let's continue to be committed to promoting understanding and fostering unity in our connected journey. "Celebrating Connections" is all about working together to preserve our history and lighting our path forward to a brighter future for our community one step at a time.

— Allison Haramoto,
Executive Editor

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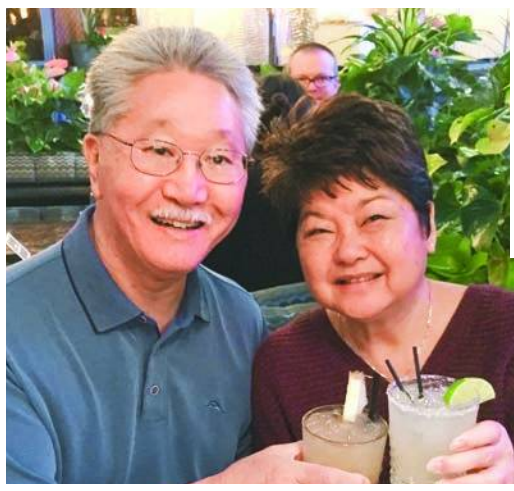
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Making *Lifelong* Connections

COUPLES WHO MET VIA JACL

By Emily Murase, Contributor

A three-hour wait on a first date, winnings from a riverboat casino, a Central California scholarship dinner, a JACL collegiate leadership program and other JACL activities have been life-changing for eight couples who have met through the JACL. Together, they are celebrating one of life's greatest connections. Following are their stories.



Kathy and Larry Ishimoto celebrating New Year's 2017

PHOTO: COURTESY OF KATHY AND LARRY ISHIMOTO

Kathy and Larry Ishimoto, Visalia Chapter

Kathy and Larry Ishimoto of the Visalia Chapter recently celebrated their 30th anniversary. They first met in the fall of 1989 in Fresno at an annual JACL banquet. Kathy an administrative staffer for a private medical practice, and Larry was an insurance agent for Met Life. While there was mutual interest when they first met, Kathy had attended the banquet with a boyfriend but, by the end of the year, she was single and ready to see where things might go with Larry.

They agreed to meet at a restaurant in Selma. Kathy arrived at the appointed time and waited. And waited. And waited. Remember, this was way before widespread cell phone use. Larry, who was tied up with insurance clients, finally called the restaurant and a waitress found Kathy to relay the message that he would be late, very late — three hours late! According to Kathy, she thought Larry was testing her. "I've been waiting for Larry ever since, for 30 years," she remarked.

Her patience on that first date paid off. Kathy and Larry were married in 1993. She brought to the family two sons from a previous marriage, and he had two daughters from a previous marriage. "We were just like the Brady Bunch!" they said. They now enjoy six grandchildren in Ohio and California.

Both Kathy and Larry have devoted much of their free time to JACL involvement. Active in the Central California District Council, Larry chaired two tri-district conferences, and Kathy served as district secretary. JACL also became a family affair: Kathy's older son, Kerry Kaneichi, is an active JACLer and served as Pacific Southwest District governor; Larry continues to actively serve JACL as president of the Tulare chapter, for which he jokingly referred to the work as a "lifetime job," and Kathy is the longtime chapter secretary



Kai and Sheri Uno on lava beds in Hawaii

PHOTO: COURTESY OF KAI AND SHERI UNO

Sheri and Kai Uno, Omaha Chapter

It was Lady Luck that brought Sheri and Kai Uno together. They met at the 2002 JACL National Convention in Las Vegas. Sheri shared her first impressions of Kai: "He's not your typical JA guy. He was very outspoken and really charismatic." Kai was a convention delegate from Salt Lake City who had met Sheri's sister, Kristy, at the previous year's JACL-OCA Leadership Conference. Sheri, who lived in Omaha and was not a JACL member at the time, confessed: "I just went to Las Vegas to hang out with my sister, Kristy, who came in from Atlanta."

After Kai met Sheri, he was immediately smitten and took her to meet all of the JACLers from the Omaha chapter at the convention, who welcomed her warmly. Throughout the convention, Kai kept finding ways to cross paths with Sheri.

According to Sheri, she was flattered by Kai's determination to get to know her better, but given a 12-year age difference, she recalled thinking to herself, "Don't you think you're kinda OLD for me?!"

On the last day of convention, Kai went way out of his way to take Sheri to the airport for her flight back to Omaha. Sheri recalled: "When Kai dropped me off at the airport, he promised he would see me again. I thought to myself, 'No chance.' He lived in Salt Lake City. I lived in Omaha. It just wasn't realistic." They parted with a kiss.

Six months later, Kai showed up at Sheri's father's home in Idaho, ready to drive her home to Omaha. Since the convention, Kai and Sheri would speak by phone weekly. "I wanted to know why this very attractive and accomplished woman was still single," said Kai. "My only hope to get to know her better was the long drive from her father's home in Idaho back to Omaha."

But he played it cool. Once they arrived in Omaha, Kai planned to take a flight back to Salt Lake City on standby and promptly checked his luggage. However, due to the year-end holiday, he had trouble getting on a flight. With time to kill, someone suggested he head to the nearby riverboat casino, and Lady Luck smiled on him again. Having hit a $1,500 jackpot, he tried to get in touch with Sheri to ask her out to dinner. He tried her number but no answer. He then called Kristy in Atlanta for Sheri's work number. Kristy warned Sheri that Kai was waiting outside her workplace to take her to dinner. Sheri finally relented, recalling that her father said to her, "You know that boy came out all this way, you should probably be nice to him."

Two years after that, they were married. They will celebrate their 20th anniversary in 2024. Kai now enjoys parenting three children with Sheri, and together, they continue to contribute their volunteer time to the Omaha chapter, where Kai serves as president, and Sheri has served in various capacities as treasurer and scholarship chair. They have both represented the chapter as National Convention delegates.



Dale and Debbie Ikeda are pictured in this engagement photo.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DALE AND DEBBIE IKEDA

Debbie & Dale Ikeda, Clovis Chapter

JACLer of the Biennium Dale Ikeda shared, "I saw [future wife] Debbie before she saw me. She was Fresno JACL president, serving as emcee for the 75th anniversary of the Fresno chapter. She was very professional and articulate. But we didn't really meet at that event. We met for the first time at the Central California District Council meeting to review scholarship applicants. I sat next to Debbie, and we discussed the students. I noticed that while I scored applications based strictly on points, Debbie's evaluation was focused on students in need."

Debbie explained, "I had moved from Chicago, where I was assistant dean of Chicago City College, to take a position as associate dean of students at Fresno City College. When Dale mentioned that his Clovis chapter was revising the scholarship program, I offered to share my college's financial aid forms. I was interested to see where things might go."

However, a few days later, when Debbie offered to drop the forms off to Dale personally, Dale declined to meet up because he was on his way to his weekly backgammon tournament. Debbie assumed Dale was not interested in moving forward.

A few months later, Rick Berman, who succeeded Debbie as Fresno chapter president, invited Dale to a political fundraiser and mentioned that Debbie Shikami would be there. Dale thought this would be his chance to get to know Debbie better. He asked her if she would like to have dinner together, and she agreed. At a Fresno Chinese restaurant, the two discussed their careers, politics and how many children they would each like to have. After the successful dinner date, they went out four times in five nights.

Dale recalls a conversation with his law partner that he may have met "the one." His friend, knowing that Dale was an avid fisherman, advised, "Don't come on too strong. If you bring in the fish too quickly, the line can break." And yet, they were formally engaged six weeks after their first date. They were married in May 1985 and started a family right away, welcoming two baby daughters.

Together, Debbie and Dale have devoted themselves to JACL. Debbie, former Fresno chapter president, is currently CCDC secretary. She chaired the Program for Action Committee, which eventually became the Strategic Planning Committee. A previous board member of the Pacific Citizen, Debbie hosted one of the JACL 2023 California Teacher Training Workshops at the Clovis Community College Herndon Campus. She was also a member of the Credentials Committee for this year's National Convention in Los Angeles.

A longtime president of the Clovis chapter, Dale has served as CCDC vice governor and later governor, as well as National Legal Counsel. At the National Conventions, he served as parliamentarian, chair of the Resolutions Committee and chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Most recently, from 2021-23, Dale served as chair of the Legacy Fund Review Committee from 2021-23. For his many accomplishments in service to the JACL, he has received the ruby and sapphire pins and was named Japanese American of the Biennium for Law.

BJ Watanabe and Ron Osajima, SELANOCO Chapter

According to former SELANOCO Chapter President BJ Watanabe, "There is no way we would have met without the JACL. Ron didn't go to the Manhattan discos on the weekend. Ron lived in the New Jersey suburbs."

Originally from Seattle, BJ first came out to New York City for an undergraduate internship with Mademoiselle magazine. After graduation, she returned to New York. "I had no job, no housing. Eventually, I started working. I hung out with a group of other young people in their 20s from the West Coast," she recalled.

Meanwhile, Ron was a successful corporate executive at the forefront of the affirmative action movement. An active member of the JACL New York chapter, he was assigned to recruit young people for a program committee to plan a weekend chapter conference in update New York.

The year was 1978. Not fully understanding the disco-going culture of young professionals, Ron scheduled the program committee meeting for 9 a.m. on a Sunday. During the meeting, Ron noticed a young person nodding off and concluded that she must not be very interested in the program. Later, at the conference itself, Ron found himself alone with the young person who was, of course, BJ. She confessed that she had been dancing until 3 a.m. and was barely functioning.

Despite that problematic first impression, BJ and Ron hit it off and stayed up conversing long into the night. Several weeks later, the two met for dinner and, despite Ron's initial reluctance due to an age difference, they began dating because there was "instant chemistry."

Two years later, in 1980, BJ and Ron were married. Eventually, BJ became president of the New York chapter. In 1986, they relocated to Orange County, Calif., and joined the SELANOCO chapter.

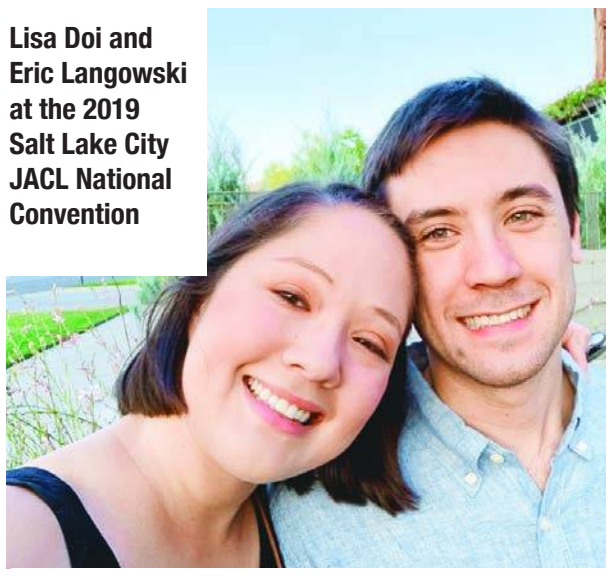
BJ started a JA summer camp in Orange County and Ron helped lead the effort to defeat Prop 209, the anti-affirmative action ballot measure. He served on the Pacific Southwest District Board as vice governor.



Ron Osajima and BJ Watanabe enjoying a cruise in October 2022

PHOTO: COURTESY OF RON OSAJIMA AND BJ WATANABE

After stepping away from the chapter for a few years, BJ joined the chapter's Program Committee with the goal of engaging new younger members who joined after being inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement. BJ is planning the chapter installation event in January that will include veteran Los Angeles Times journalist Teresa Watanabe, her sister.



Lisa Doi and Eric Langowski at the 2019 Salt Lake City JACL National Convention

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ERIC LANGOWSKI AND LISA DOI

Lisa Doi and Eric Langowski, Chicago Chapter

Married in 2022, Chicago Chapter President Lisa Doi and Midwest District Governor Eric Langowski met through the Kansha Project. A signature initiative of the Chicago chapter, the Kansha Project sends self-identified Japanese Americans, ages 18-25, from the Midwest region on a study tour of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles and the Manzanar National Historic Site. Lisa was a participant in 2012, Eric in 2017, and they met at the 2017 reflection session by that year's participants.

Lisa grew up in Chicago and participated in JACL events as a kid, then as a college student. Eric grew up in the Indiana/Hoosier chapter, where his father, Peter, served as chapter president. Eric participated in many JACL programs, from chapter picnics as a kid to the Kakehashi Project as a young adult.

After that first meeting, they saw each other again at the 2017 National Convention, started dating and Eric moved to Chicago in 2018 to pursue a graduate degree. They have attended every convention together since 2017.

In the early days of the Kansha Project, legendary Midwest District Director Bill Yoshino and Assistant Program Director Christin Munteanu led the Kansha Project. Then, leadership was passed on to program alumni and, for several years now, Lisa has facilitated the trip that changed the lives of not only her and Eric, but also all of its past participants.

Dorothy Hollingshead and Brandon Mita, Washington, D.C., Chapter

Former National Legal Counsel Brandon Mita met his future partner's mother first. Just after graduating from a Chicago college in 2006, Brandon Mita joined the Midwest District Office and worked with District Director Bill Yoshino and John Tateishi.

Upon moving to Washington, D.C., to attend Howard Law School, Brandon was instantly recruited to serve on the Washington, D.C., chapter, where he met Donna Hollingshead and immediately took a liking to her. Brandon then met Donna's daughter, Dorothy, at the 2008 JACL summer picnic.

Brandon and Dorothy happened to be among the youngest people there, by a large margin. "I got to chatting and learned that Dorothy was student teaching music at a local Maryland school. We hit it off, and I became interested in dating her."

Dorothy and Brandon's relationship solidified after Brandon graduated from law school, passed the bar and took a position with a Chicago law firm. Dorothy moved out to Chicago to join him in the fall of 2010. They were married in 2011 and had their first son. In 2014, the family moved back to Maryland, and their second son was born. Busy parents Dorothy and Brandon continue to be active in the D.C. chapter, helping out with the signature mochitsuki and Keiro-kai events.

Brandon concluded, "Our paths would not have crossed if it weren't for the JACL. I really loved Dorothy's family, loved the connection to Japanese American identity. I really get along with Dorothy's Nisei grandfather, who was just 13 years old when he was sent to Manzanar. I'm the only Japanese American son-in-law, and I always have lots to discuss with Dorothy's grandfather."



Brandon Mita and Dorothy Hollingshead together at a friend's wedding

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BRANDON MITA AND DOROTHY HOLLINGSHEAD



Jeff Moy and Monica Thammarath at the Women's March in January 2017

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MONICA THAMMARATH AND JEFF MOY

Monica Thammarath and Jeff Moy, San Francisco Chapter

Former JACL National President Jeff Moy started his career with JACL in Washington, D.C., in 2010. "Where I grew up in Maryland, there were few APIAs. I didn't become a part of JACL until after I graduated from USC and moved back to Washington. I needed to find a community to be a part of, and the D.C. chapter was really solid."

"You know the story. You show up to a chapter board meeting, and the next thing you know, you are being sworn in as a board member," he quipped. By the end of the year, Jeffrey found himself the Eastern District Council youth representative with Kaz Uyehara. It was also in 2010 when he first met Monica Thammarath at the JACL collegiate leadership summit, modeled after the JACL-OCA Leadership Conference.

"We were among the young professionals invited to a mixer with the college students," said Jeff. "I was working for Merrill Lynch as a financial adviser, in the process of switching over to nonprofit work. Monica was working on staff at the Southeast Asian Resources Action Center."

Two years later, Jeff was serving as JACL National Youth/Student Council chair and had transitioned to working at the Organization of Chinese Americans. That summer, he moderated a panel for summer interns organized by the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership that featured Monica as a speaker. Later, Jeff joined Monica canvassing for the presidential election together.

"We would not have met outside of the APIA community," stated Jeff. Despite Monica's initial reservations about Jeff as a "private sector guy," he had given up his career at Merrill Lynch and found meaningful work advocating for the APIA community. The two were married in 2018, and each had at least one nonprofit executive director in their respective wedding party members. Monica and Jeff now call San Francisco home and welcomed their first child a year ago.

See CONNECTIONS ON PAGE 30

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Best Wishes for 2024

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Charles Muranaka, President

Celebrating Connections

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

Our holiday and annual giving theme always looks for a positive, celebratory and fun theme to bring our JACL community together and perhaps encourage your support both immediately financially and in the coming year through your engagement and participation in JACL activities and events.

This coming year will be especially important with the presidential election and the numerous down ballot races that share equal importance in setting the course of our nation and the communities in which we live.

Yet, as we think about the connections we share through JACL, we must also put it in the context of the surgeon general's report earlier this year — the first of its kind — on the epidemic of loneliness. In Dr. Vivek Murthy's opening letter, he states:

> ***People began to tell me they felt isolated, invisible and insignificant. Even when they couldn't put their finger on the word "lonely," time and time again, people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds, from every corner of the country, would tell me, "I have to shoulder all of life's burdens by myself" or, "If I disappear tomorrow, no one will even notice."***

One would think that we are more connected than ever with modern technology. Social media tells me I have over 1,000 friends on Facebook and similar connections on LinkedIn.

We have so many ways of keeping in touch with one another, especially through the cell phones we all carry around, which carry the social media apps, text messaging, video calling and, of course, the basic phone-calling capability.

The cost of keeping connected has dropped incredibly compared to 20 or 30 years ago, when a single text message might cost 10 cents and long-distance calling outside weekend unlimited plans might cost 20 or 30 cents per minute.

As Dr. Murthy notes, it wasn't the Covid pandemic that caused this widespread feeling of loneliness, but it did highlight it — and exacerbated it. What Covid did was remove the physical interaction that helped to foster stronger connection.

After a few months, many of us were seeking out ways to re-engage with one another, doing more outdoor activities like going for walks or, in my family, group cycling trips. Firepits became necessary backyard accessories to bring people together outside during chilly nights.

While many of us joked that the better term for what we were doing during Covid was physical distancing, rather than social distancing, in reality, we were distancing ourselves more socially than physically.

Fortunately, as Covid has evolved, we are now able to return to more normal interactions, but we need to focus more on the quality of our interactions with one another and how we genuinely spend time WITH one another.

Perhaps the most telling part of the quote above from the surgeon general's report is the sense of hopelessness that some people feel, and with all that has been happening in the world lately, that sense of isolation, of insignificance and not being heard is all the more acute.

For some, I suspect that there is a strong affinity to when JACL makes public statements on current issues. And this is an important function of JACL: to be a megaphone for our members when we do issue public statements.

But sometimes, there is more to the role of connections that JACL has with our members, with policymakers or with our organizational partners that supercedes and is more important than that role of making public pronouncements.

It is the relationships that we have with one another that will endure regardless of statements made or not made that truly define how we engage with one another in a truly connected way.

If one expects JACL to always put out statements that are in agreement with their point of view, it is an easy relationship but perhaps not a deep one. The true test is when the personal values of our members are not perfectly aligned with the organization, there is a genuine effort made to understand the differing perspectives of other members and constituencies, that we are truly working together to navigate the very real challenges we face in a very complicated world.

While we may not always be a place to amplify your personal perspective through our public pronouncements, I hope that we will be a place where your perspective will be considered carefully given respect and that you will feel valued by other individuals in the organization and by the organization as a whole.

I believe it is through that mutual respect that we can grow and work together, and it is through those connections that we can celebrate one another in the coming year and beyond.



David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization's Washington, D.C., office.

Asian Hall of Fame Holds 19th Ceremony in Los Angeles

Asian Americans, Asians are honored for their achievements and contributions to society.

By P.C. Staff

In its second iteration since moving to Los Angeles from Seattle, the Asian Hall of Fame had its 19th gala dinner/awards ceremony in downtown Los Angeles earlier this year to welcome its Class of 2023 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel.

It was also an evening of musical performances, including some by AHOF CEO Maki Hsieh, who sang several times during the proceedings. Doors guitarist Robby Krieger, who is listed on the group's website *(asianhalloffame.org/)* as an artist ambassador, also performed.

The new honorees, some of whom accepted in absentia or via prerecorded video, were inducted on Oct. 21 and spanned politics and government, science and medicine, the military, business entertainment, journalism and more. They were:

- Adele Lim (screenwriter/movie director, known for "Crazy Rich Asians" [screenplay] and "Joy Ride" [director])
- Annie Young-Scrivner (CEO, Wella Co.)
- Ben Fong-Torres (journalist, broadcaster)
- Charlie Ling Zhang (philanthropy)
- Doug Baldwin Jr. (professional athlete, founder/CEO Vault89)
- Dr. Lisa T. Su (chair and CEO, AMD)
- Dr. Peter Lee (Immuno-Oncology chair, City of Hope)
- Far East Movement (recording artists)
- Jennifer Lee (record producer Tokimonsta)
- Kiet Nguyen (Navy Cross recipient)
- Kim Thayil (recording artist, Soundgarden)
- Lalisa Manoban (recording artist, Blackpink)
- Pin Ni (founder/president, Wanxiang America)
- Rep. Marilyn Strickland (member, House of Representatives)
- Sam Cho (president, Port of Seattle Commission)

Inducted posthumously were Queen lead singer Freddie Mercury, restaurateur Rocky Aoki (Benihana founder), musician Ryuichi Sakamoto and San Manuel Band of Mission Indians tribal elder Santos Manuel. The corporate inductee was Nintendo, and the artist ambassador was recording artist Johnny Cash.

The Asian Hall of Fame was founded in Seattle in 2004 by the Robert Chinn Foundation. The family recently marked 160 years of contributing to the U.S. For most of its existence, it was a local affair until it moved to Los Angeles a few years ago. According to the organization's website, its purpose is to strengthen society by advancing Asian and Indigenous leadership, achievements and service to the U.S. and globally.

For a list of past inductees, visit asianhalloffame.org/inductees.



Asian Hall of Fame's Maki Hsieh

PHOTOS: GEORGE T. JOHNSTON



Echo Aoki *(center),* flanked by brothers Kevin Aoki *(left)* and Kyle Aoki, addresses the audience at the Asian Hall of Fame gala.



Actress Ren Hanami, who received Asian Hall of Fame honors in 2021, attends the 2023 Asian Hall of Fame gala.



KTLA Channel 5 telejournalist Frank Buckley performs his master of ceremonies duties on Oct. 21.



Soundgarden founding member and 2022 AHOF inductee Hiro Yamamoto



Far East Movement members James "Prohgress" Roh, Virman "DJ Virman" Coquia and Kevin "Kev Nish" Nishimura display their Asian Hall of Fame trophies Oct. 21 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

PHOTO: PHILIP SAKANASHI



"Crazy Rich Asians" screenwriter and "Joy Ride" director Adele Lim addresses the audience as she accepts her Asian Hall of Fame trophy.

A LEGEND ON MANY FRONTS

Benihana founder's son, Kevin Aoki, on his father's Asian Hall of Fame legacy

By Gil Asakawa, Contributor

(Editor's Note: The following is an edited-for-clarity interview of Kevin Aoki, eldest son of the late Rocky Aoki, who helped popularize and introduce Japanese cuisine to Americans via his restaurant chain, Benihana. Kevin Aoki, along with siblings Kyle Aoki and Echo Aoki, attended the Asian Hall of Fame gala to posthumously accept the recognition bestowed upon their father. Gil Asakawa interviewed Kevin Aoki via Zoom for the Pacific Citizen.)

Hiroaki "Rocky" Aoki's recent induction into the Asian Hall of Fame enshrined his reputation as a giant in the history of AANHPIs, but that legacy had long been established over his substantial and colorful career. Rocky Aoki was a legend on many fronts.

His main claim to fame was as the founder of Benihana, the restaurant chain that began with one location in midtown Manhattan in 1964. But before Aoki turned restaurateur, he had already been a champion wrestler, starting in Japan and, after moving to the U.S. for college, became the U.S. flyweight wrestling champion. He never lost his competitive spirit — Aoki had a passion for thrill-seeking accomplishments throughout his life, including being the first man to fly across the Pacific in a hot-air balloon (the flight ended with a crash in Northern California); auto and speedboat racing (he almost died in a speedboat crash); and oh yes, a not-so-dangerous hobby, winning a world title in backgammon and hosting tournaments.

Rocky Aoki was born in 1938 in Tokyo, where his father ran a coffeeshop after World War II. His parents named the business Benihana after a red safflower that his mother found growing amidst the firebombed rubble of the city. Benihana expanded into a restaurant in the Ginza district and began serving dishes cooked on a teppanyaki, or tabletop steel griddle, that was commonly used for making okonomiyaki.

When Aoki came to the U.S. to earn his associate's degree in business administration, he realized that Americans knew little about Japanese food, and he could introduce them to the cuisine. But not too much of it. He decided to use the teppanyaki grills, which many people to this day incorrectly call a "hibachi," which is a different type of grill that cooks over charcoal.

He also famously decided that he wouldn't force anything too slimy or fishy, and he served only beef, chicken and shrimp at the start. No sushi, no raw fish. He even avoided serving miso soup, opting instead for clear soup that's best known today as Benihana Onion Soup.

And perhaps most notably, he turned the meals at Benihana (his father was a partner in the venture) into a type of entertainment, which chefs trained to slice and dice the ingredients right on the teppanyaki top, making samurai-like sounds with the knives and spatulas, flipping eggs into their chef's hats or cooked shrimp into the mouths of diners agog with the dexterity. The chefs even sliced up onions and stacked them into a cone and turned them into a volcano by pouring oil and lighting the "mountain" on fire. Dinner at Benihana was a family-friendly affair and a destination for special occasions.

After college, Aoki saved enough money from operating an ice cream truck in Harlem to open his first Benihana. The restaurant struggled until a rave review from a New York newspaper was published. After that, a host of celebrities, including the likes of Muhammad Ali and the Beatles, flocked to the restaurant, and Aoki's empire grew from there.

Aoki deserves his entree into the Asian Hall of Fame because of Benihana's undeniable cultural importance: the chain grew from his original Manhattan location to more than 100 locations around the world. Benihana made Japanese food — or, at least, an Americanized version of it familiar to Middle America. Without Benihana, it's hard to imagine the ubiquitous popularity of Japanese food today, with sushi (even bad sushi) available at supermarkets across America.

Aoki died in 2008 of pneumonia, but along with his driven business instincts and restless daredevil antics, he was a quixotic family man. He had seven children by three partners, and several of his offspring have made names for themselves in different fields.



The inscription on the Asian Hall of Fame trophy that was awarded to the family of Benihana founder Rocky Aoki

PHOTOS: GEORGE T. JOHNSTON

Daughter Devon became a superstar model and actor, and son Steve is a renowned DJ who has helped make electronic dance music a worldwide phenomenon. (Steve Aoki was inducted into the Asian Hall of Fame in 2021.)

Rocky Aoki's trophy was accepted by his oldest son, Kevin Aoki, who has followed in his father's footsteps and runs the Aoki Group of 12 restaurants in Miami, Honolulu and Las Vegas. Yes, they include Aoki Teppanyaki, which carries on his father's tradition.



Kevin Aoki shows off the trophy his siblings and he accepted for their father, Hiroaki "Rocky" Aoki.

Gil Asakawa for the ***Pacific Citizen*** spoke with Kevin Aoki about his father's eclectic legacy.

Gil Asakawa: How do you feel about your dad being in the Asian Hall of Fame?

Kevin Aoki: I feel proud as a son, knowing that my dad has achieved so much and been recognized for his achievements. I think that the Asian Hall of Fame is special because he immigrated from Japan to America. To me, my dad is kind of like the poster child of the American dream. He's an immigrant who came to this country with a dream, with no money in his pocket, and decided to make his life here.

Asakawa: How was it for you to be there to accept his award? You usually shy away from the spotlight and work behind the scenes on your businesses.

Aoki: I'm his oldest son. My younger brother (Steve), of course, he's the most-recognized figure of my family right now. We wanted him to go there, but [he couldn't], and you know, I would do anything for my dad or my brother.

So yeah, I felt very proud to accept this award for my dad. I brought it to my brother's house because a lot more people come to his house and put it on the shelf over there. And Steve is very proud too that my dad received this award.

Asakawa: How do you feel about the role of Benihana in the history of Japanese food in America?

Aoki: Yeah, it's funny you say that because my dad's mission when he opened his restaurant was to change the way Americans think about Japanese food. At that time in the early '60s, it was so foreign to them. Eating Japanese food wasn't that appetizing. And he just took American favorites — steaks, chicken and shrimp — put some soy sauce on there, you know, and just made it work.

I mean, it's the craziest thing; after 60 years, teppanyaki is still a popular dish. I have a restaurant called Aoki Teppanyaki here in Hawaii and one in Miami. I have 12 restaurants, and those two restaurants are the best restaurants. It's like, it doesn't end. The concept is still relevant. People, families love it.

Asakawa: For you growing up in that environment, did you ever think you wanted to be in the restaurant business?

Aoki: I looked at my dad almost like a god figure growing up. And I, you know, when my dad started the restaurant back in 1964, I was born in 1967. We were still living in Harlem. He was just surviving, trying to make Benihana successful.

I wanted to do everything to make him proud of me. So, in high school, I was a wrestler. And even in high school, I told my father, "I wanna work in the restaurant." And then after college, my dad's like, "If you wanna work in one of my restaurants, you're welcome to." I worked for him for 15 years.

After he passed away, I decided I had to open my own restaurant and survive on my own. So, my dad's never even seen any of my restaurants. I hope he's looking down at what I've done and is proud of it.

Asakawa: Do you eat at Benihana?

Aoki: I have my own teppanyaki restaurant, so I rarely eat at Benihana's. If I'm with Steve, my mom, my sisters, the other siblings, we're all together, we'll try to book a reservation at Benihana just to commemorate my dad, just to go there and, you know, be with my dad. We do that for like Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Asakawa: Your dad was like an adrenaline junkie?

Aoki: Yes, he was. I don't think he really liked the restaurant business. I think that's a byproduct of his business ambition, doing crazy things like flying across the ocean in a balloon and boat racing and car racing and doing everything to the limit.

Asakawa: Do you play backgammon?

Aoki: I love the game. In fact, I started a backgammon club in Hawaii about five years ago, and I just put it in my restaurants. So, all the top backgammon players of Hawaii come to our tournament once every two weeks. And we play backgammon. I mean, it's something that is near and dear to me because growing up with my dad, he was so busy. He didn't have time for any of his kids, except if you're playing backgammon with him. And you had to play for money. It could be for a dollar or a percentage of the points. But he would not play with you unless there was a wager on the game. Sometimes, I'd get good rolls and beat the old man. Most of the time, my dad beat me.

Asakawa: How would you describe your dad's legacy?

Aoki: I think his legacy is in his kids. I mean, he's given all of us an opportunity to be who we want to be. I think of my dad as an American dream and myself, too, because after my dad passed away, I just went off on my own. I started with one restaurant in Hawaii. And I take that passion that my father had and do what he did. ■

Ventura County

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Keith and Sharon Harada

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in memory of
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Merry Christmas!
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Joanie Miyashiro-Brennan
1958 - 2015
We miss our loving sister, aunt, wife and great aunt!
Mark and Anne Chilcott & Family
Aloha 'Oe Until We Meet Again



Aiko Ogata King
1927 - 2022
- Beloved friend
- Ventura County chapter member
- Co-founder of Stamp Our Story Campaign
- Passionate recycler

Ventura County

Upcoming Program & Events

New Years Oshogatsu Celebration (01/14/24)
Installation of Officers @ Ronald Reagan Library (01/28/24)
Japanese Cemetery Re-Dedication Ceremony (03/16/24)
Scholarship Awaardees Reception (05/00/24)
Asian American Film Festival (05/00/24)
Book Club Monthly Zoom Meeting

For More Information: Contact Us
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VCJACL Bus Trip (07/08/23)
Royal Theater (National Historical Site)
Guadalupe, California

VENTURA COUNTY JACL

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Kirin Akimi Nakagawa
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Happy Holiday

The Ventura County JACL would like to thank our Chapter Supporters and Holiday Issues Advertisers. Your generous support helps fund our scholarship awards and sustain our cultural and community events

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San Diego

Holiday Greetings!

from the San Diego JACL

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Love, Peace and Joy in 2024!

Twin Cities

Holiday Greetings from the Twin Cities JACL



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Making *New Connections* in ORANGE COUNTY

Dr. Whitney Yamamura, chancellor of the Coast Community College District, uses values instilled by his Japanese heritage.



Chancellor Dr. Whitney Yamamura discusses the Orange Coast College international student program with OCC President Dr. Angelica Suarez at her office on campus.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

By Patti Hirahara, Contributor

When I was asked to attend a Japanese American Community reception for the new Coast Community College District's Chancellor Dr. Whitney Yamamura on June 15, I didn't know what to expect, but I decided it would be interesting to meet a new Japanese American leader in Orange County.

To my surprise, I was greeted by a very compassionate and energetic individual who lit up the room with his infectious smile — I knew immediately that I wanted to know more about him.

Yamamura is the Coast Community College District's second Asian American and Pacific Islander leader and first Japanese American in its 76-year history. He is also a proud fourth-generation Japanese American, who grew up in middle-class America and whose father was a schoolteacher for more than 30 years and instilled in him the values of exceeding the expectations of the Asian American Pacific Islander community and breaking stereotypes associated with being a minority in education. He is also a member of the Sacramento chapter of the JACL.

Prior to coming to Orange County, Yamamura was named Folsom Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year in 2020 and was co-recipient of the national Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education Annual Award in 2018.

I had an opportunity to ask Yamamura a series of questions regarding his role as chancellor and his Japanese American heritage.

Patti Hirahara for the Pacific Citizen: What inspired you to have a career in education?

Dr. Whitney Yamamura: I saw a flier at Sacramento State while in the master's program, inviting master's graduates to become teaching interns at the local community college district. I got the internship and was in front of a class of students, and I realized at that moment what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

Students are the main reason I have chosen a career in education. While seeing the "light bulb" go off in my students, this was very satisfying for me to know I was getting through to them. To be able to share knowledge, help others learn and grow as individuals — this is a precious role to play in life, and it has been a privilege that I have been able to spend a career facilitating learning.

It is so satisfying to know that I am a person who helps students to understand key concepts that are useful in class and in life. From then on, I knew I wanted a career in the community college system. Two examples I am proud to share are:

One student told me of her story as the daughter of immigrants. She faced obstacles from so many people, including some family members, who seemed to discourage her from going to college. She told me she was determined, no matter what, to complete her studies. I got to meet her dad during scholarship night, and he didn't speak a word of English, but in his eyes, I could see the pride he had in his daughter, and she transferred to UCLA.

Just the other day, I met a student, I am guessing a Yonsei, who is pursuing a degree in art. I was thinking what both my grandfathers might have thought since a degree in art might seem impractical, but one never knows if she may be the next Isamu Noguchi or develop an innovative career in graphic design or find her own niche by applying her talents in a way we could never imagine. The possibilities are endless if we just believe; that is the beauty of helping students earn a degree — we don't know where or how they might develop.

Hirahara: In your bio, you include information that you are a fourth-generation Japanese American and Californian. Why is this important for you to have this mentioned?

Yamamura: I want to acknowledge and honor my great-grandparents, grandparents and parents and the struggles they faced, coming to a foreign land and not speaking the language to seek a better life. We embody the hopes and dreams of our ancestors. Acknowledging that I stand on their shoulders is important for me to share whenever I can. Californians are trailblazers and trendsetters and have been a beacon of light, even within the U.S., for people seeking to better their lives. In this sense, I identify myself as a proud Californian.

Hirahara: Your parents were incarcerated at Tule Lake and at Jerome and then Rohwer in Arkansas. How old were they?

Yamamura: My dad Sam was incarcerated from ages 9-12. He and his family were sent to Tule Lake. My mom June was in camp from ages 4-7. Her family was originally sent to Jerome, and then all the families were forced to move to Rohwer in Desha County in Arkansas.

Hirahara: With your parents being sent to two totally different camps, how did that change your perspective on their experiences, and how did their lives affect yours?

Yamamura: My parents were children while incarcerated. My mom, June, has little or no memory of camp. My dad Sam's memories are mostly of playing with other kids his age. Most of the stories about camp I heard were from my maternal grandparents and their siblings. But they didn't often talk about it. Both sets of grandparents returned to Sacramento after WWII, but farming was not as viable. As kids, both my parents helped their respective parents farm. Both were the first generations in their families to go to college. My dad was a K-12 teacher for his career, earning a master's degree. Because of him, I had the good fortune to grow up in a middle-class family in suburbia.

Hirahara: In 1981, as a student at Sacramento High School, you testified on behalf of State Constitutional Amendment 13, which stipulated that the legislature would increase the number of bills and the number that finally became law if it met a specific number of days each year, instead of the unlimited number now permitted by state law. How did that make you feel in making your career decisions?

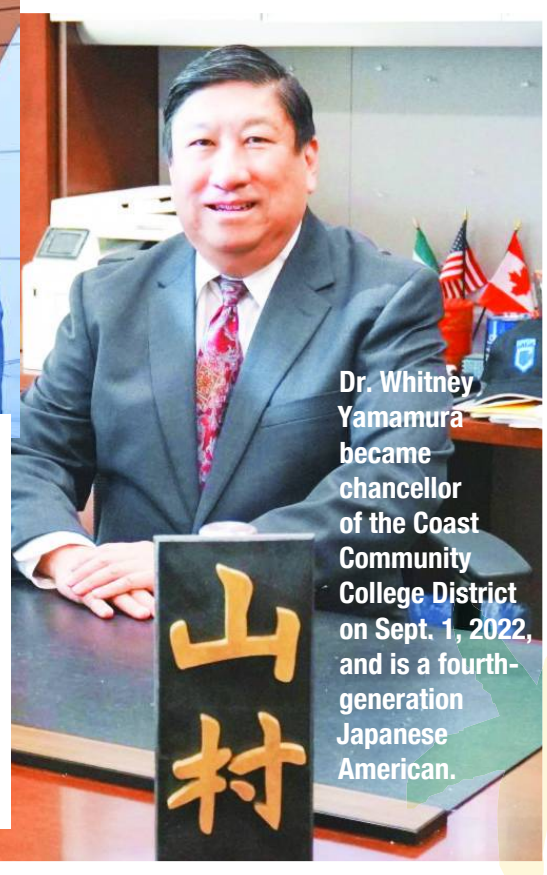
Yamamura: Wow, you did some research! Because of the election situation at the time, the state senator I interned with was the lowest of the 40 in seniority. One other high school student and I were essentially his entire research staff. We dove into the state library to do our research and showed the increasing number of bills proposed. We didn't need an avalanche of new laws, and the ones with major impact were not given enough time to consider seriously because of the volume of bills. In hindsight, there was no way the legislature was going to constrain itself by passing a constitutional amendment. However, it was a great experience. I learned a lot about personal politics and the importance of relationships, even over political ideology. Every business or job is a "people business." Relationships and respect for others (deemed a cultural trait) determine how successful you are. It also led to a job while I was in college tracking bills in the days before the internet.

Hirahara: You have had a very illustrious career prior to becoming chancellor of the Coast Community College District in Orange County. How did you enjoy your first year here?



Pictured *(from left)* are Orange Coast College President Dr. Angelica Suarez, students Nao Mizukoshi, Hana Ito and Leo Ogawa and Coast Community College District Chancellor Dr. Whitney Yamamura. Mizukoshi is a freshman from Yokohama, Japan, who is one of four quarterbacks on the Orange Coast College Pirates football team. Ogawa, also from Yokohama, is a sophomore and a kicker on the Orange Coast College Pirates. Ogawa scored 27 points for the team during the 2023 season. Ito is from Nagoya City in Aichi Prefecture, and she hopes to pursue a career as an international diplomat.

PHOTOS: PATTI HIRAHARA

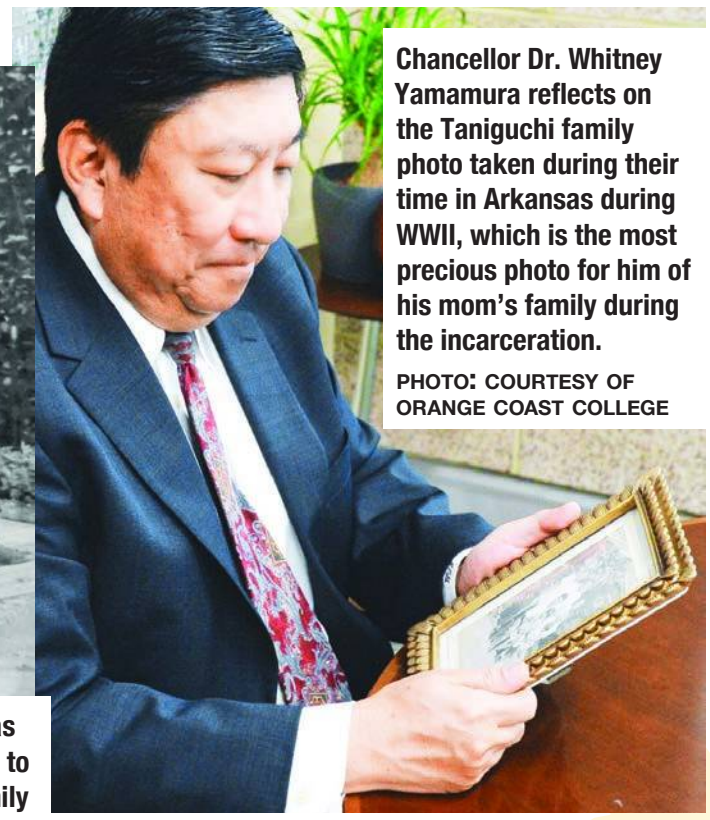


Dr. Whitney Yamamura became chancellor of the Coast Community College District on Sept. 1, 2022, and is a fourth-generation Japanese American.



The Taniguchi family from Sacramento, Calif., was first incarcerated in Jerome and then transferred to Rohwer. This photo of Yamamura's mother's family in camp is most precious to him. It was taken in Jerome on Aug. 7, 1943. Pictured *(top row, from left)* are Great Uncles Sumio Fred Taniguchi and Mitsuo John Taniguchi and Great-Grandmother Koto Taniguchi. Seated *(from left)* are Grandfather Masao Taniguchi with daughter June (Yamamura's mother) and Grandmother Sumiko Taniguchi with Uncle Tomio Eugene Taniguchi.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DR. WHITNEY YAMAMURA



Chancellor Dr. Whitney Yamamura reflects on the Taniguchi family photo taken during their time in Arkansas during WWII, which is the most precious photo for him of his mom's family during the incarceration.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ORANGE COAST COLLEGE

Yamamura: Thank you. Having been born and raised in Sacramento, Orange County is all new to me. I have enjoyed the variety of Japanese stores here so I can get all my supplies: tonkatsu sauce, ponzu sauce, sencha and arare. The weather is mild year around, and I don't miss the 100-degree days in Sacramento. Being near the ocean is nice, too. The Orange County community: college, civic leadership and JA community have all been very welcoming and kind to me.

At the Coast Community College District, I report directly to the board of trustees and have the ultimate responsibility and honor to be the chief executive of the entire district. The opportunity to work directly with a governing board and set the agenda of an entire community college district, within the parameters of the job, was something I couldn't pass up.

Hirahara: What do you hope to achieve here at Coast Community College District, and what do you feel your colleges excel in?

Yamamura: Coast Community College District is one of the 72 community college districts in California. We serve the coastal areas of Orange County, from Newport Beach to the Los Angeles County line and inland to the cities of Costa Mesa, Westminster and Garden Grove. The district encompasses the legacy of the Orange County Japanese American historic settlements, including Crystal Cove and Wintersburg's original site in Huntington Beach.

The Coast Community College District and its three community colleges, which include Orange Coast, Golden West and Coastline, have a strong reputation for innovation and excellence for CCCD graduates. All three colleges are designated as Asian Serving Institutions by the federal government. To be an Asian Serving Institution, 10 percent (or more) of the students must self-identify themselves as Asian, Filipino or Pacific Islander. This designation allows our colleges to apply for federal grants, which serve the Asian student population.

All three campuses have international student programs, and this allows our international students to provide global diversity to the campus. International students and domestic students learn from each other, which leads to greater understanding and appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Here is one example of what Orange Coast College is doing to recruit students from Japan. Orange Coast College has a long history of successful engagement and partnership that has led to the continuing enrollment of international students from Japan. Ten years ago, OCC had already enrolled over 100 students from Japan, and that number grew to 300 by 2019. After the pandemic, enrollment of students from Japan has grown again. For fall 2023, we have more students from Japan than any other country.

The students, who come from Japan, value the many programs we offer with our high transfer rate to UC schools, our beautiful location, the exceptional campus life programs and our intensive English program, IEC@OCC, where they can focus on learning English before starting one of our degree or transfer programs. Orange Coast College will continue to maintain and grow our relationships in Japan so that more Japanese students will continue to enrich our community with their culture and historical diversity while they learn.

In addition, our over 300 OCC Japanese American students continue to excel. Last year, four Japanese American students were awarded scholarships totaling $13,450, with two being active in student organizations and student government.

I am here to support, highlight and encourage innovation and excellence in a manner that will allow the colleges to live up to and exceed our goals. This requires a fiscally sound institution that places attention on closing any gaps of access or success that our students might be facing. If I can achieve success in these two areas, I feel my time as chancellor will be well-spent.

Hirahara: You also serve as the vp of the California Community College Asian American Pacific Islander Trustees and Administrators Caucus. Will you be adding any programs at the Coast Community College District that will relate to Asian American or Japanese American studies on campus?

Yamamura: One project that we are proud to support is the disaggregation of data. As we know, the society at large treats Asians as one large group, the model minority that people feel does not need any support. We know that while most Japanese Americans have a middle-class profile, the Yonsei and Gosei generations have parents who have gone to college. We also know our brothers and sisters in the Pacific Islands and in parts of Southeast Asia struggle to succeed in college. By getting the state and other agencies to disaggregate data, we can show with facts that Hmong and Samoans, among other groups, need just as much support as an inner-city youth who are Latino/a or Black/African American.

I hope to bring speakers to campus that will inspire students to want to research more on the Japanese American and Asian American experience, such as Janice Munemitsu, the author of "The Kindness of Color."

Hirahara: Of the photos that you submitted for this article, can you tell me more about your family photo?

Yamamura: I cherish the connection of my family who came before me. I realize not many families, especially immigrant families, had the means to have their photos taken. And it is especially important because I know what my grandparents' grandparents look like. Similarly, I know that I am privileged to have pictures of my mom's family, the Taniguchi's, in camp. I have no pictures of my dad and his family from 1942-45 in Tule Lake.

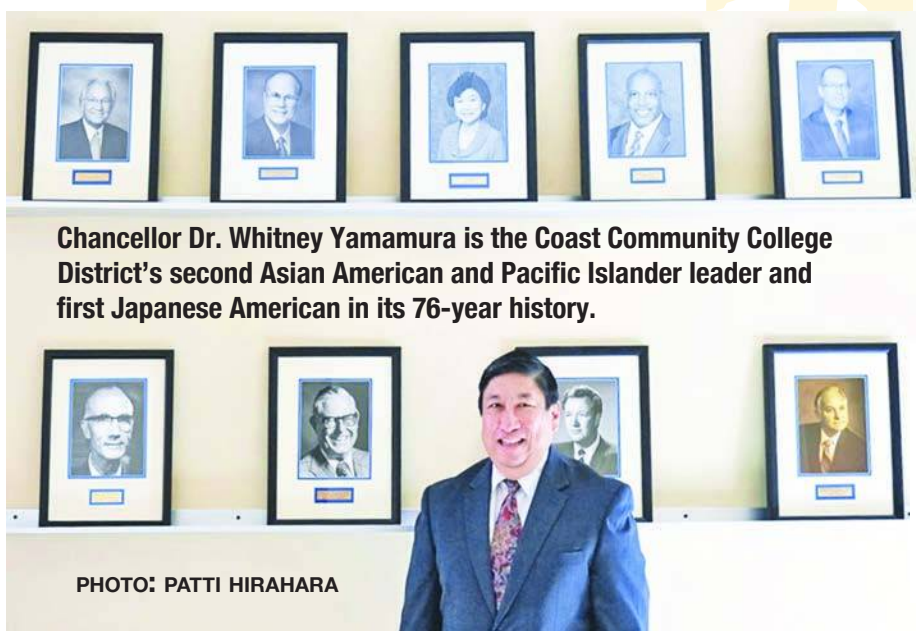
The one I value the most is my mom, June; her brother, Eugene; parents Masao and Sumiko; paternal grandmother Koto; and her father's brothers, Mitsuo "John" and Sumio "Fred." It shows their quiet dignity and determination to make do in the midst of being uprooted with only what they could carry, trying to make a life in swampy conditions with barbed wire, guard towers with machine guns and not knowing what their future will be in the land that you call home. That is true for all our families incarcerated during WWII, including my dad's family. This one picture is a powerful visual reminder of what should never happen again.

Hirahara: If you could create a wish list for the rest of your life, what would you hope to do?

Yamamura: As much as I enjoy working and the satisfaction of meeting the challenges of leading a large organization like the Coast Community College District, I do have the travel bug. Traveling for longer periods is not easy when leading a college district. I am a museum geek and have not been to all the Smithsonian museums and only spent one day at the Louvre. I confess that I have not been to Japan. When I go, I want to stay awhile to make up for the long flight and time-zone changes. When I retire, I want to travel both within the U.S. and the world.

Hirahara: Is there anything else you would like to share?

Yamamura: Since 2020, we have had over a million deaths in the U.S. and nearly 7 million globally from Covid, and still others remain with long-term ill effects. With the disappearance of civil discourse and increases in violence and threats of violence, I hope we can all take a deep breath and take ownership of our own actions. It is now the time to reflect on the impermanence of life, treat each other equally and promote more random acts of kindness to everyone. ■



Chancellor Dr. Whitney Yamamura is the Coast Community College District's second Asian American and Pacific Islander leader and first Japanese American in its 76-year history.

PHOTO: PATTI HIRAHARA



Coast Community College District Chancellor Dr. Whitney Yamamura meets guest Janice Munemitsu at the district's first Japanese American Community Reception at the CCCD Administration Building on June 15.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Arizona

Peace,
Love,
Unity

JACL Arizona Chapter

PSWDC

Wishing you all a safe and healthy holiday!
From the PSWD Board

Ryan Yoshikawa- Governor Nancy Takayama- Vice Governor

Lana Kobayashi- Youth Representative

Andrew Gruhn- Secretary Alayne Yonemoto- Treasurer

Lily Anne Welty Tamai- Member-at-Large

JACL Pacific Southwest District

Riverside

William Takano and family
Mark Takano
Douglas and Helen Takano and Mia
Derrick and Judy Takano
Riley and Julia Takano, Aria and Cadence
Nick and Paula Takano
Gerry and Angela Takano, Erin

Happy Holidays

Gordon & Rei Okabayashi

Happy Holidays!
Judy Lee,
Lee & Koga Family

Happy Holidays
Best Wishes to everyone in the New Year
Kenny & Gina Kamoto

Social Justice through Unity **2024**

CLYDE and KATHERINE WILSON

Merry Christmas

Al, Jennifer, and Kimberly Betancourt



Here comes Santa-paws!

Dolly & Irene Ogata

Merry Christmas

Michiko Yoshimura,
James and Yoshie Butler

Happy Holidays from the Riverside Chapter!

Home of the Harada House
"A powerful civil rights landmark."

Harada House Foundation
National Historic Landmark

haradahousefoundation.org

Seasons Greetings
Beverly Inaba

Happy Holidays !
Doug Urata and
Alice Roe
djurata@aol.com

Happy Holidays
Akio and Helen
Yoshikawa



Peace and Joy

Richard and Anne Mikami, Meiko Inaba, Doug and Resa Inaba, Gary and Laurie Oshiro

Happy Holiday Wishes

Aki Caszatt



Season's Greetings

FROM CONGRESSMAN MARK TAKANO

Thank you for all that you do. Let's make 2024 a great year!

PAID FOR BY MARK TAKANO FOR CONGRESS

SELANOCO

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From Tomo No Kai 友の会

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year wishes

from Betty and Ken Yamashiro

Remembering Clarence

HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM

THE INOUYE FAMILY

Kenneth and May
Nicole, Eric, Amelia and Grace
Erin, Steve, Langston and Paxton
Shannon and David

Huntington Beach, CA

Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year!

Frank & Joan Kawase

Brea, CA

Happy Holidays
from
Todd Hasegawa
and
Family

Happy Holiday

Tao Family
Alan, Alice & Kenny

Holiday Greetings from the

Matsubara Family

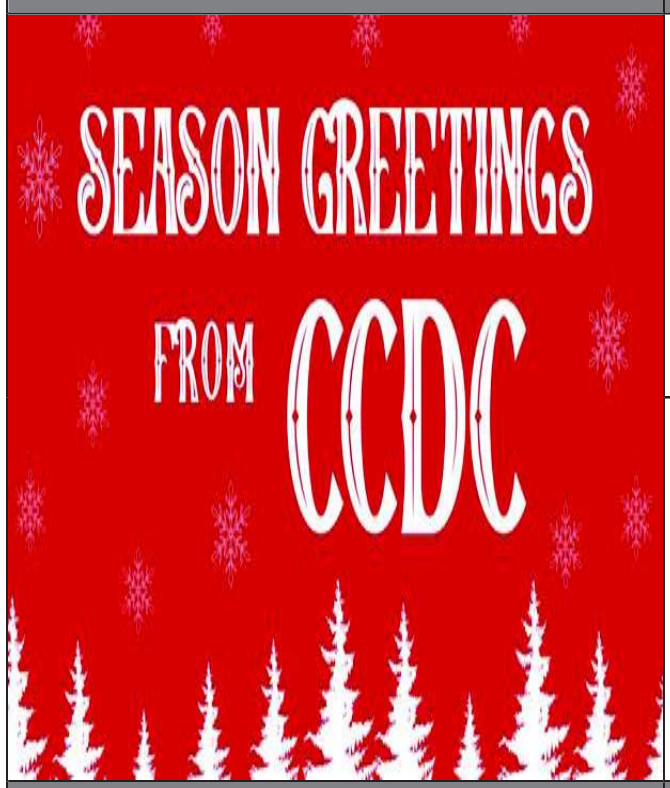
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CCDC



Omaha

Season's Greetings
from

OMAHA Japanese American Citizens League

JACL
Japanese American Citizens League - Omaha Chapter

Wishing All Our Friends and Relatives a Joyous Holiday Season

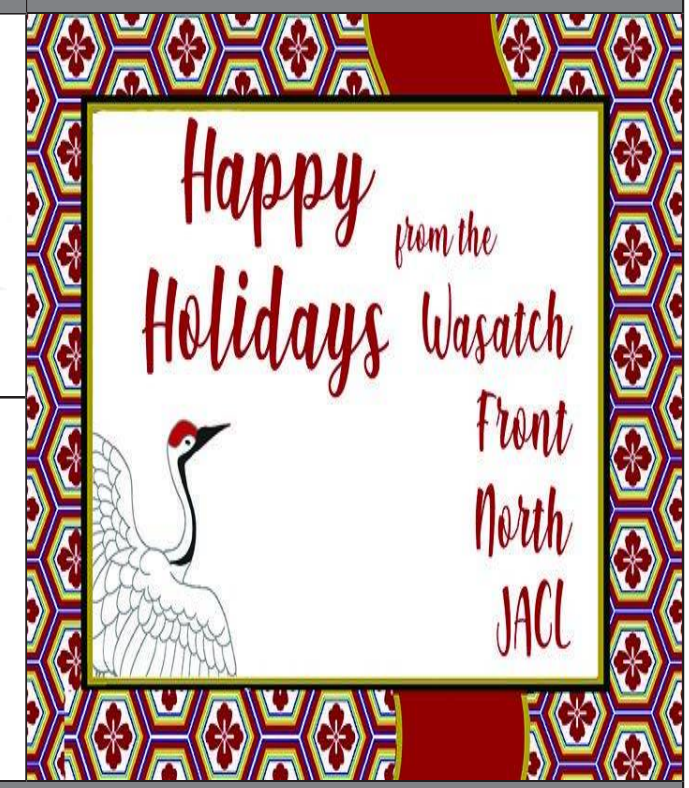
BILLY AND SHARON ISHII JORDAN AND FAMILY

Omaha, NE

Holiday Greetings to all our friends and family!

Carol Mudra

Wasatch



Alaska

Peace and Good Will to All

Japanese American Citizens League
Alaska Chapter

Marysville

Best Wishes for JACL's 95th Year!

Marysville JACL



Wisconsin

BILL SUYAMA ESSAY CONTEST

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, in response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This order resulted in over 120,000 Japanese Americans - 77,000 of whom were American-born citizens - being forcibly removed from their homes and incarcerated in concentration camps because they were perceived as a threat. Many Japanese Americans lost their homes, belongings, careers, and were excluded from schools. Societal racism contributed to the fate of Japanese Americans before and after the war. Similar feelings of "us" versus "them" continue today. How can you apply these lessons to a current issue of infringement based on (but not limited to) ethnicity, disability rights, gender identity, religion, sexuality or national origin?

DESCRIPTION
Minimum of 1000 words, not to exceed 1200 words

ELIGIBILITY
Any Wisconsin high school student enrolled during the 2023 school year

PRIZES
Awards of $1000 will be given to 2 winning students
An additional $250 will be given to their supporting teacher

SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE
December 31, 2023 at midnight Central Standard Time
Winners will be notified by February 1, 2024

TO SUBMIT YOUR ESSAY
https://bit.ly/46Y6ZzR

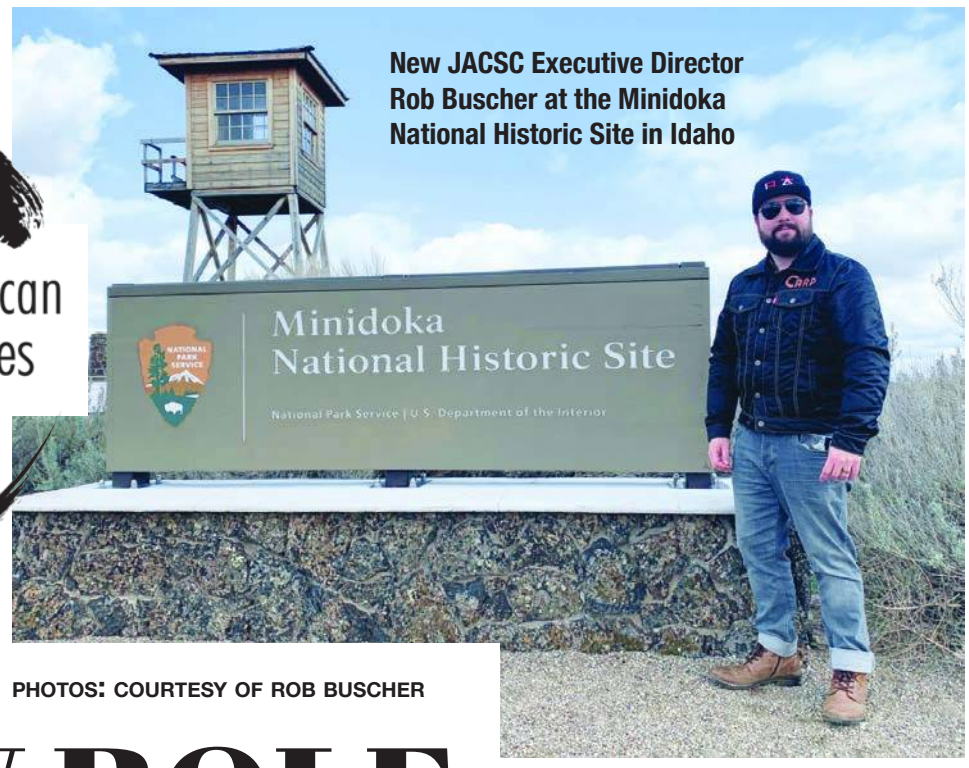
QUESTIONS?
Essay information can also be found at www.wisconsinjacl.org
Send questions to: wijaclessaycontest@gmail.com

SPONSORS
This contest is sponsored by the Wisconsin chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. Support has been provided by a Japanese American Citizens League Legacy Fund Grant



Photo credits, from left: Dorothea Lange, Dorothea Lange, Clem Albers, Dorothea Lange. Backround: Kevin Miyazaki

Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium



New JACSC Executive Director Rob Buscher at the Minidoka National Historic Site in Idaho

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ROB BUSCHER

A NEW ROLE in the Community

Helping member organizations and educating the community at large preserve the JA experience remains at the forefront for the new executive director of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium.

By Rob Buscher, Contributor

I began my new role as executive director of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium on Nov. 6. In the short time since taking on this position, I have been gratified to spend my working days in community with many of the individuals and organizations that I have gotten to know over the past decade through my work with JACL.

Anyone who knows me personally knows what a big deal this is for me, as someone who grew up isolated from the Japanese American community in rural/suburban Connecticut. Being a mixed-race Yonsei, it has been hard at times to find belonging among other East Coast Asian American communities, who tend to be first and second generation.

By comparison, my mixed identity shaped by the intergenerational trauma persisting from the past three generations of racialized existence in the United States was somewhat of an anomaly to these newer immigrant communities.

Even as a kid, I remember the few other Asian Americans I went to school with having a hard time understanding why my mom didn't speak Japanese. Since leaving my parents' home at age 17 to attend university in the United Kingdom, and later Japan, I have been searching for community.

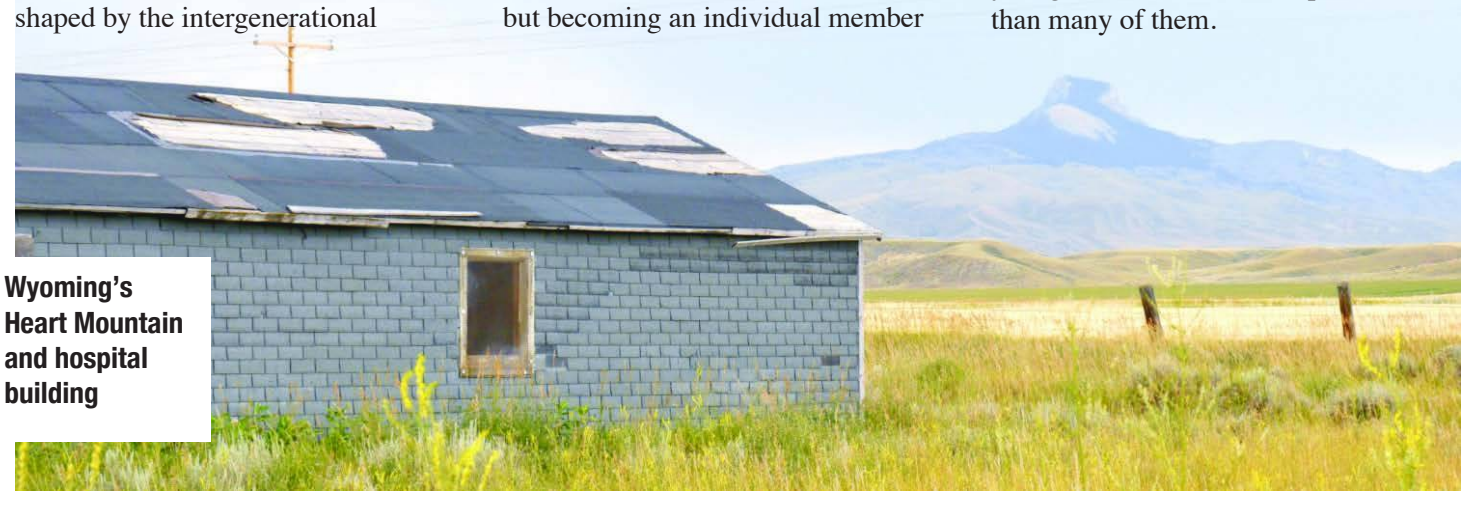
After moving to Philadelphia in December 2010, I became a member of the JACL, figuring that might be a good place to start building a community connection. My obaachan, Yukari Mikesell, served as president of the Dayton Ohio chapter of JACL during the Redress Movement, and my mother would take us to JACL New York events on occasion during my early childhood. I had some awareness of this organization and its history, but becoming an individual member allowed me to feel truly connected to this community for the first time.

I remember the first JACL event I attended in Philadelphia as a new member, the 2011 board installation luncheon. I was nervous if the other members would accept me. Those anxieties melted away when I walked into a room of people who reminded me of my extended family in their mannerisms and ways of interacting with one another.

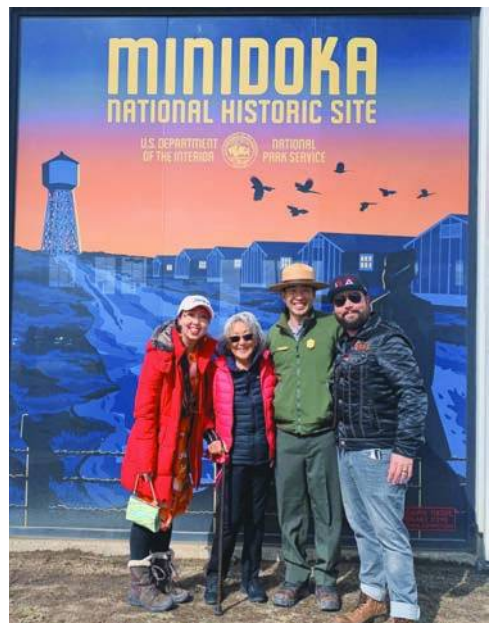
Knowing no one, I remember the kindness of the late Ed Kobayashi and his wife, Mary Burke, who invited me to sit next to them. At the same table were two of the Philadelphia chapter's last surviving founding members, Herb and Miiko Horikawa, both of whom are also now gone. Spending the afternoon chatting with these warm and welcoming elders set the tone for my future interactions with the chapter, JACL National and perhaps the broader Japanese American community. In a single afternoon, I finally found the community I had been looking for throughout the first two decades of my life.

Over the past decade, I have been tremendously privileged to have enjoyed the friendship and mentorship of so many incredible community elders who helped me grow both personally and professionally. My ability to take on this role with JACSC was enabled because of the care and guidance shown to me by too many to name within the National JACL membership and broader JA community spaces.

I can say without hesitation that every one of the board members of the JACL Philadelphia chapter has helped mentor me in some way. I am humbled beyond words at the mere fact that they supported me in serving as the chapter president for these past six years, despite being several decades younger and far less accomplished than many of them.



Wyoming's Heart Mountain and hospital building



Rob Buscher with *(from left)* his sister April, Obaachan and brother-in-law Kurt Ikeda

I have come to understand the power of my own family's narrative within the context of community activism and coalition building as a result of knowing these individuals, who either spent their early childhood years in camp or those who were born in the immediate postwar era. In both cases, these community activists led by example, devoting much of their personal lives advocating on behalf of other marginalized communities. It was, and is, truly inspiring to be in their company.

They also taught me the importance of paying it forward to the next generations. One of the best pieces of advice that anyone has ever given me came from Hiro Nishikawa, who once told me, "When you climb a ladder, use one hand to pull yourself up and the other hand to help the person behind you." I try to carry that wisdom into everything that I do, and I find myself returning to the ladder metaphor as I look at the work ahead with JACSC.

At its core, JACSC exists to build and strengthen the network of organizations working to preserve sites and artifacts related to the Japanese American incarceration experience during WWII and those dedicated to interpreting this history for the benefit of public education.

Each of the sites and organizations doing this work are in a different phase of their organizational development lifespan. No matter how big or small, each organization has unique attributes that allows them to do this work in a specific way that is unique to their location, expertise and lived experiences of the persons involved.

As one of my top priorities coming into this role, I hope to help each of our member organizations determine what only they can contribute to this nationwide movement to preserve the former confinement sites and educate about the broader experiences of Japanese Americans during and after the war. In order to do this, we will need to build consensus around a shared vision for the future of this work.

What are the long-term goals and aspirations for the community of descendants and also other Japanese Americans whose families were not impacted by the wartime incarceration? As time passes, how do we ensure that our stories remain relevant to the American public at-large, and what do we want them to learn from our



NPS Ranger Kurt Ikeda gives a tour of Minidoka to friends and family.



Pilgrims visiting Minidoka



JACLers Setsy and Chip Larouche at Topaz in Utah

experiences? How can we continue to tell these stories in the absence of wartime incarceration survivors, the last of whom we are likely to lose by the end of the next decade?

While I have my own ideas related to each of these topics, I pose these as questions for the time being, since ultimately it will be up to the organizations and individuals doing this work at sites across the country to answer them together.

I see my role as facilitating that process, and I take this responsibility with great respect for my predecessor, former JACSC Manager Mia Russell, as well as JACSC Administrative Council Chair Ann Burroughs and many others who have helped grow JACSC to the point where we could hire an executive director. At this point, I would like to share a few ideas that are guiding my initial inquiries as I onboard into this role.

The Nisei and Sansei have laid the groundwork for the pilgrimage movement and built the infrastructure for the historical preservation of former confinement sites, but for this movement to survive into the future, we must empower younger generations to become involved in this work in meaningful ways.

As a Yonsei who is almost pushing 40, I am constantly thinking about how the Gosei and Rokusei can be brought into this movement in a way that honors the memories of the incarceration survivors and their many tribulations, while avoiding unnecessarily retraumatizing these youth.

Over the past decade, the concept of intergenerational trauma has become well-known in community spaces.

This is one of the reasons why I consider the pilgrimage movement to be so important because it has the potential to open the door to healing by facing the historic trauma, reflecting on and speaking openly about how it has impacted our own lives.

Gaman was a survival necessity for many decades surrounding the war, but at this point in the Japanese American story, I believe we must open ourselves to feeling the anger, sadness and pain of what happened to us and our ancestors in order to fully move past this.

We must continue to heal ourselves from the trauma and memorialize these historic events while also ensuring that younger generations are able to embrace their history and heritage as proud members of the Nikkei diaspora.

I also see great potential for the Shin-Nikkei communities to join this movement. While most do not have direct ties to the wartime incarceration, it is fair to say that their experiences in the United States from whatever era they or their families immigrated to current day have been inextricably linked to the history of Japanese Americans in WWII. Having grown up during the U.S.-Japan Trade War, I can personally attest to the extent that anti-Japanese sentiments persist in this country.

Further education about the reality of the wartime incarceration could significantly mitigate racism and xenophobia among future generations of non-Japanese Americans. Particularly in rural parts of the country where many of the former confinement sites are located, place-based history curriculum could have a major impact on the next generations' understanding of our communities.

As someone whose recent work involved U.S.-Japan relations, I see great potential in bringing our communities together in this movement. From there we can build toward a more comprehensive Nikkei future that incorporates the stories and perspectives of all generations within the Nikkei diaspora.

Localizing the historical curriculum to make the wartime incarceration more relatable to specific regional audiences is one component that many of the larger organizations in this consortium are already doing well. However, I believe that JACSC can work with our members of all organizational sizes to further develop best practices and toolkits for doing this work nationwide. I also see media literacy education as something that should be integrated in all curriculum related to the Japanese American experience.

These injustices happened to our community because the general public lacked the wherewithal to assess and reject the propaganda narratives that were told about Japanese immigrants before and during the wartime era. Subsequent euphemistic language used in the postwar era to educate American school children about this period of history has led to the erasure of our community's lived experiences. Outside of the West Coast and other areas with large Japanese American communities, I would argue that knowledge of the wartime incarceration is still relatively unknown among the general public.

The spike in anti-Asian violence amid the pandemic has shown us all the power that media has in driving the national conversation. As individuals and organizations working to build a better America, we must empower ourselves to make use of the tools that have previously been used against us.

As social interactions, education and entertainment become increasingly intertwined with digital communications technology and social media, we must further develop media literacy to effectively question the absence of certain narratives.

These issues I describe span far beyond the purview of JACSC. However, I see them intrinsically linked to the bigger picture of this work. As a community of organizations and individuals, I think we all want to see something positive come from the generations of strife that our community has endured to get where we are today.

Remembering and sharing the stories of our families, community elders and movement ancestors with future generations inside and outside of the Japanese American community can help us give lasting meaning to the struggles of those who came before us.

To achieve such a goal will require immense community labor, financial resources and time. We will need to find new ways to tell these stories using contemporary media and emerging technology to reach younger audiences. In addition to the educators, historical preservationists and community activists, I hope to expand this work in greater collaboration with artists, filmmakers and other creative storytellers. By better understanding how all of our individual strengths can contribute to this larger movement, we will do this work in a more holistic way, carrying the Japanese American story to areas of the country where it has yet to be told or at least to those who have not yet listened to it.

In all of this work, I believe that our JACL membership must play an important role. As community advocates who are already deeply committed to the preservation and education related to the history of Japanese Americans, JACL members are uniquely positioned in leadership roles throughout many areas of the country that could benefit the most from such efforts. I am grateful to be a member of this organization, and look forward to continuing our work together in the years to come.

Thank you to my many friends, mentors and colleagues across the national membership of the JACL. This organization has given me so much, and if I can pay back even a fraction of the kindness that has been shown to me in my position with JACSC to future generations of activists and community leaders, I believe that I will be successful in this role. To my JACL family, know that you will be with me every step of the way as I take the lessons I've learned and friendships I've made into this next chapter of my story. *Okage Sama De*. ■



The baseball diamond at Minidoka

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JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Prosperous and Joyful New Year

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Sonoma County Chapter

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Eric, Laura, Kira, Trey and Jordan
Inouye

Holiday Best Wishes
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Wishing you a peaceful 2024
Robbin Kawabata & Carl S. Gutekunst and family

Best wishes for a Healthy and Happy 2024!
Kathy and Bill Asai

Happy Holidays From Eden Township JACL! Stay Safe and Healthy!

Happy Holidays
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On behalf of the Seabrook JACL, we extend our sincere best wishes & holiday greetings to the Pacific Citizen and fellow JACL members.

Seabrook JACL

May 2024 be a year filled with peace and prosperity
Happy New Year

San Jose

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Special thanks to our generous supporters and community.

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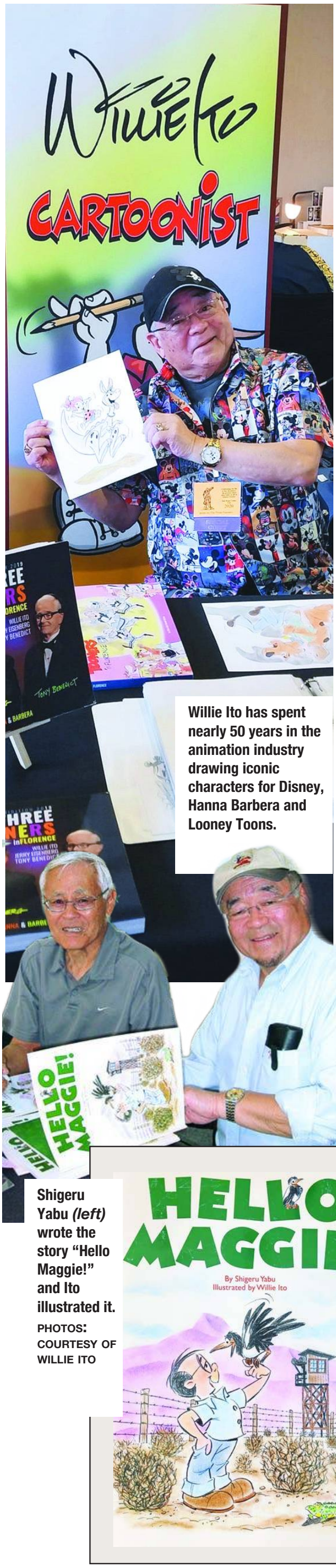




Happy Holidays
from the board and
members of the

Lodi Chapter JACL

P.O. Box 2454
Lodi, CA 95241



Willie Ito has spent nearly 50 years in the animation industry drawing iconic characters for Disney, Hanna Barbera and Looney Toons.

Shigeru Yabu *(left)* wrote the story "Hello Maggie!" and Ito illustrated it.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WILLIE ITO

Telling Your Stories Create the Strongest Ties

Some stories I've covered have lingered in my thoughts. We know how it started. Now how is it going?

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

I have been your stalker for years.

It started in the early 2000s when I was first hired as the assistant editor of this newspaper. I would lurk in the perimeters of meeting rooms and community events to observe you. I always held a notebook and a pen (only the Uni-ball vision fine tip kind because any other is inferior) to write observations and facts.

The role of a journalist is to stand apart from their subjects to ensure impartiality, but you kept drawing me into the center. Once, at a JACL national board meeting in San Francisco, a woman ordered me out of the "peanut gallery" — the back corner of the room — to a more central location where she fed me homemade peanut brittle.

Another time, while I was settling into my room to cover a National Youth/Student Council event in Utah, the hotel room phone rang.

"We are all hanging out in the lobby," said an NY/SC youth member I interviewed once. "Do you want to meet us?"

No, I stammered, citing my reason to maintain space. You are the story. I am the storyteller. Impartiality meant drawing an impenetrable wall.

"OK," she said. "We are outside your door now."

I tried to resist, but the connections to certain people and their stories found their way through my porous barrier. Fredrich Nietzsche once said, "Invisible threads are the strongest ties."

As I continue telling your stories, some stay with me long after the words are translated into print.

I reached out to three of these people to follow up. In their own words, they share their happenings. Being a storyteller means only some interactions need to be transactional.

Sometimes, I need to open the door.

WILLIE ITO

After attending a production meeting on bringing the book "Hello, Maggie!" from print to screen in 2001, the legendary cartoonist walked me out of his home and promised to keep me updated on his projects. Platitudes like these are familiar but rarely acted on. Occasionally, Ito pings my phone with a list of his latest achievements, always written in his signature wry tone.

When we first met, you were genuinely interested in my work and projects. I wanted to keep you updated with my exploits.

We are about 25 percent complete [with the animated version of "Hello, Maggie!"] at this stage, but I will be lighting a fire under my creative crew at the first of the year. The Heart Mountain Foundation awarded me two grants. They are now the benefactor of "Hello, Maggie!" as I am the producer. The film is well into production and expected to premiere at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage in July 2024.

To make the film commercially viable, we extended it to a 22-minute project.

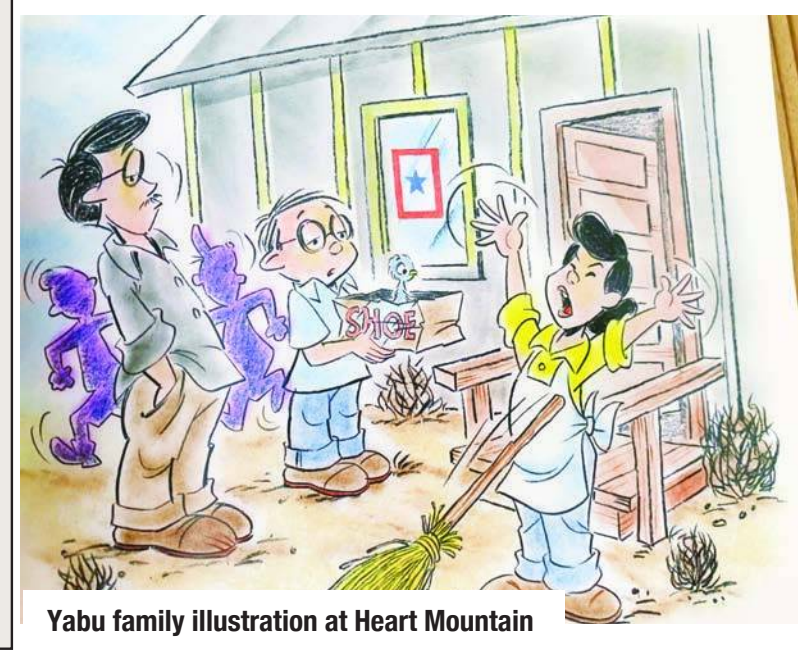
The 2-minute trailer screened last July at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage. It brought a very emotional response.

The revised print edition of "Hello, Maggie!" is now published. I added pages about the 442nd RCT and the MIS.

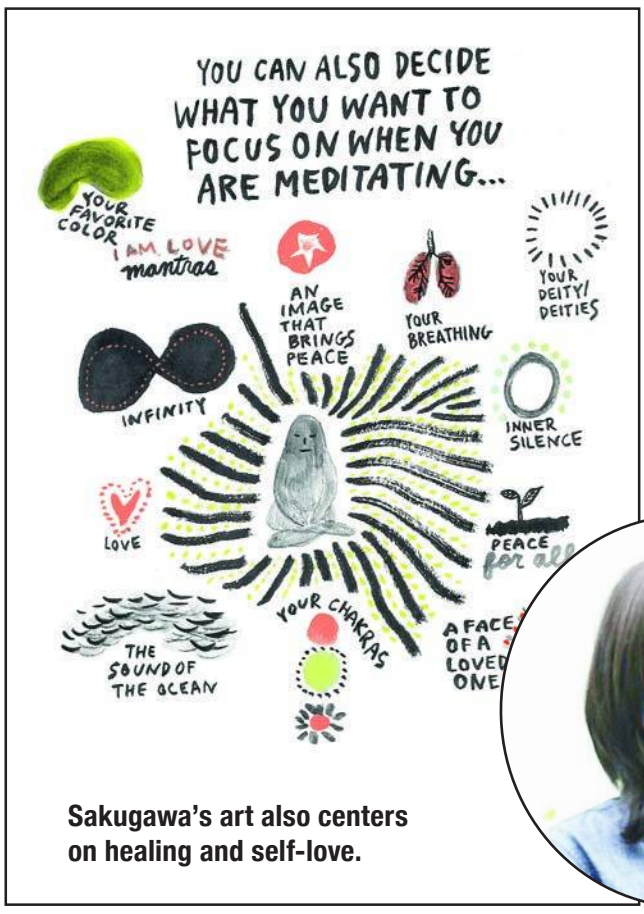
It keeps me hopping every day with fundraising duties, producing the film, fulfilling commissions and planning future merchandise for "Maggie."

I am beginning my sequel book, "Kimiko," at the same time. If it comes out like I'm hoping, we will discuss making another animated film.

(The original story, "A Cartoonist, a Bird and a Passion Project," first appeared in the Pacific Citizen's June 4-17, 2021, issue.)



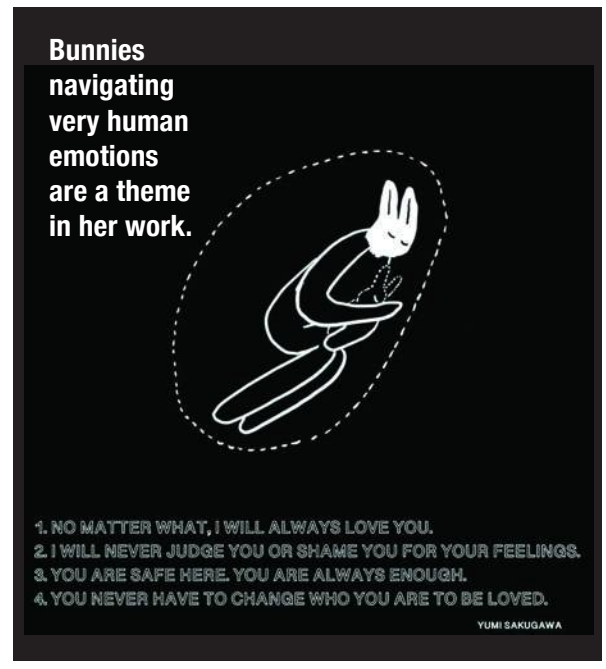
Yabu family illustration at Heart Mountain



Sakugawa's art also centers on healing and self-love.



Sakugawa volunteers and performs for the Tuesday Night Café, a free arts and performance series in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.



Bunnies navigating very human emotions are a theme in her work.



"I am a Japanese American woman. I am second generation. I am a daughter of immigrants," said Sakugawa.

PHOTO: DAKOTA LEE STROUD

YUMI SAKUGAWA

Sometimes, journalism can feel like a black hole. I write the story and rarely hear any feedback. When I asked Sakugawa, a former Pacific Citizen intern, if she heard anything about the 2021 article about her journey from intern to bona fide artist and author, the answer was predictable: no. Here is what she's been up to since the story.

I am in the midst of finishing an illustrated affirmation deck that is scheduled to come out next year.

I have been thinking a lot about my Okinawan roots. I am Okinawan on my father's side. I last visited Okinawa this past fall for the seven-year anniversary of my grandmother's passing. It was my first time visiting in 18 years, and it was a really life-changing experience for me. I imagine the next cycle of artwork I will be creating will reflect that.

Learning about the Battle of Okinawa and the Okinawan family members I have never met who were killed during World War II made me inevitably think about the Gazans who are being violently killed by Israeli military forces right now. The collective punishment of Gazans also, of course, makes me think of the collective punishment Japanese Americans faced during WWII. They were herded like cattle into concentration camps surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers, which then makes me think of the barbed wire and guard towers keeping Gazans in an open-air prison where their only choices are to resist or die.

Speaking up in solidarity with Palestinians has given me a lot of negative pushback on the internet, as well as new connections with people who feel aligned with what I am standing for and are appreciative that I, as an Asian American artist, have been vocal on this issue. I have been more reflective than usual the last 60 days about my role as an artist, and it has crystallized for me how important it is now more than ever to speak truth, know my values, stand in solidarity with the most oppressed and marginalized and be more intentional about liberation work being a part of my creative practice.

I am still running my virtual classes that focus on mindfulness and creativity. I'm enjoying it, and it gives me a stable income stream that allows for me to live a financially sustainable life as an artist. It's cool to connect to a pretty global audience, and the people who sign up are usually very kind, open-hearted, compassionate people. Making art can be so solitary sometimes, so it is nice to have this additional practice that connects me to so many people.

My relationship with the Japanese American community, like all relationships, evolves over time. I still make regular appearances at Tuesday Night Café in Little Tokyo, the longest-running Asian American performance art series in Los Angeles that has been around for 25 years now.

Despite this, I absolutely bed rot. And couch rot. It's a practice. The more you do it, the less resistance you have to honoring your body's need for rest.

(The original story, "Community's Child: Comic Artist on Racism, Identity and Art," first appeared in the Pacific Citizen's April 9-22, 2021, issue.)

JUDGE JOHNNY GOGO

At first, the call to action sounded like a joke: A Santa Clara County Superior Court judge with a rockstar name was touring the country to gather camp survivors' signatures on 48-star flags. Can you write a story to help the effort? Then I talked to the rockstar judge, whose enthusiasm for the project punctuated every word. It became clear that this was a passion project. Since we last spoke, most of the signed flags have found homes. Families have also donated their treasured flags to Gogo, who accomplished his goal of visiting all the former WWII camps. Isn't that your goal, too? Here is his update.

Through this project, I met and have become friends with George Wada, who has made a wonderful short film about the 48-star flag signing project entitled, "Honor, Recognition and Respect."

I hope the project has also given the camp survivors and their descendants a chance to heal.

I am planning to have one of the flags donated to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center and one donated to the Amache Preservation Society.

During the 2023 Minidoka pilgrimage, I met Ramona Tamiyasu, a Hood River, Ore., resident, who donated the 48-star flag from her uncle's casket. Shoji Tamiyasu worked as a translator during the war. Ramona says her father's side of the family (Tamiyasu) was incarcerated at Heart Mountain and Tule Lake. Her mother's side (Kiyomura) was incarcerated at Minidoka.

Another 48-star flag was donated by Christine Umeda, of Sacramento, Calif., who found the flag among her aunt's belongings and wrote, "We don't know too much about how she came to have the flag." Mary Umeda Kawanishi died in 2022 of pancreatic cancer. She was a Nisei born of immigrant parents from Wakayama, Japan. She and her husband, Terry Kawanishi, met at the Fresno Assembly Center, then got engaged and married at Jerome. During WWII, Christine was incarcerated at Arboga, Tule Lake and Topaz. Her husband, Stan, was incarcerated at Fresno, Jerome and Gila River. I have taken the flags from Ramona and Christine around the country for survivors and descendants to sign.

Also, Carole Okamoto of Seattle, Wash., donated a 48-star flag to Rohwer, where former incarcerees and descendents can sign the flag.

My connection with the Japanese American community started in high school. My high school sweetheart was Japanese American, but it was through this 48-star flag signing project that I gained a deeper understanding of the hardship and trauma the families went through during WWII.

(The original story, "Sign Here to Record the History of Incarceration," first appeared in the Pacific Citizen's Nov. 19-Dec. 16, 2021, issue.)



The Gogo family *(from left)* Jesse Gogo (brother), Remedios Cepeda Gogo (mom), Jody Gogo (brother), Judge Johnny Gogo, Jessica Cross (sister) and Gene Limtiaco (sister)

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JOHNNY GOGO



Organizers and former incarcerees hold the signed flags in Gardena, Calif.

Portland

Akemashite Omedeto
Chip Larouche &
Setsy Sadamoto
Larouche
Happy Valley, Oregon





Kiyo and Shig Nagae

We miss you both and are thinking of you this holiday season.

Love, Linda, Jerry, Jim and Peggy

2024 お正月

Happy Holidays

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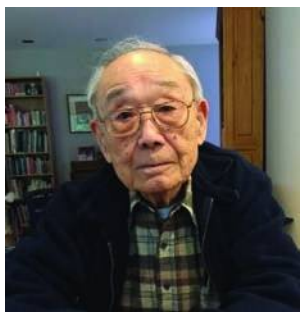
Winn and Traci Kiyama
Jenna Yokoyama



Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year

Chris & Amanda

Portland JACL Co-Presidents



Homer Yasui
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Husband, father, physician, lover of history, community leader and the last of his generation of the Yasui Family of Hood River.



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Happy New Year
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Best wishes for the Holidays
and
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Thank you for your acts of kindness and caring
Gokurosama

The Masuoka family

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Peace on Earth
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Silicon Valley

Happy Holidays!

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Silicon Valley JACL
bridging generations

Fresno

2024
May the New Year
Ring in
Hope, Health
and
Happiness to all!

FRESNO CHAPTER, JACL

Happy Holidays
Charlene Kiyuna
FRESNO JACL

HAPPY New Year!
Joy J. Goto

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HAPPY Holidays
Randy Aoki

Pocatello-Blackfoot

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
POCATELLO-BLACKFOOT

San Francisco

Holiday Greetings from the San Francisco JACL!

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San Francisco Chapter

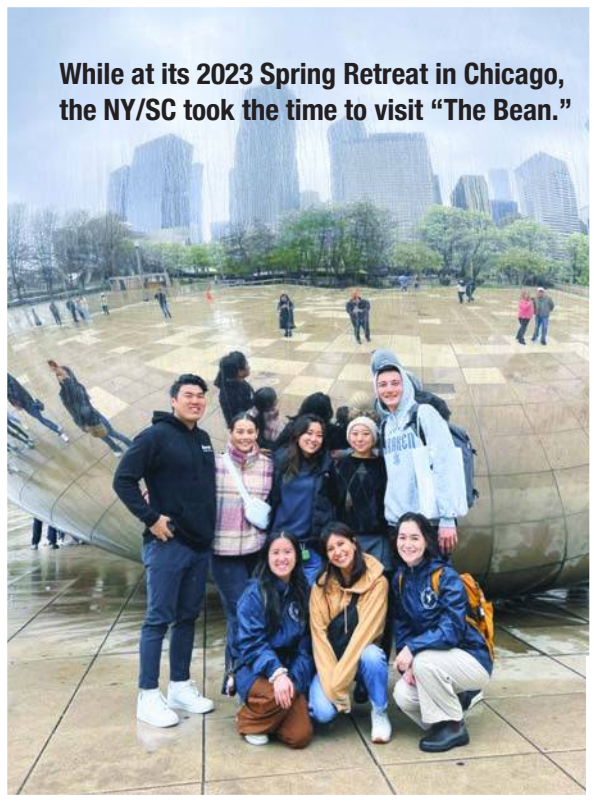
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Members of the NY/SC at the 2023 JACL National Convention in Los Angeles. Pictured *(top row, from left)* are Kyle Yasui, Mika Chan and Cameron Sueoka, *(middle row, from left)* Lyra Paez, Ayako Tischler, Lana Kobayashi and Remy Kageyama and *(front row, from left)* KC Mukai, Sheera Yoshimi and Claire Inouye.



While at its 2023 Spring Retreat in Chicago, the NY/SC took the time to visit "The Bean."



The NY/SC at the Youth Mixer it hosted at July's National Convention



The NY/SC in San Francisco at its most recent retreat, which focused on supporting the JA community, specifically small businesses. JACL members from around the Bay Area were then invited to join the NY/SC in supporting the Japantenna pop-up shop.

NY/SC: Connecting Across the Country

PROMPT: WHAT HAVE YOU WORKED ON AND ACCOMPLISHED IN 2023?

Mika Chan (She/Her), ***National Youth Chair, and*** **Claire Inouye (She/Her),** ***National Youth Representative***

As we close out 2023, we want to recognize the collective work that the NY/SC board has accomplished alongside carrying out initiatives in their respective districts.

During winter 2023, we commemorated Day of Remembrance through a social media campaign highlighting Japanese American places, businesses and community enclaves across the seven districts within the JACL.

In the spring, we held our spring retreat in Chicago and engaged in several workshops, conducted an MDC summit and connected with Midwest JACLers.

With the National Convention being our main focus during the summer, we successfully led two workshops and conducted a youth orientation, youth mixer and youth luncheon.

For fall quarter, we met for our fall retreat in San Francisco, which consisted of three workshops, an NCWNP summit and connecting with local JACL leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area.

We feel an immense amount of pride in working alongside this board and am continuously reminded of the importance of fostering leadership among our generation within our community.

With that said, none of our work would be possible without the generous support from our sponsors, JACL leaders, staff and members. Thank you to all who have shown us love and encouragement throughout the year! We wish you good luck and health as we enter 2024 and look forward to what's to come!

Remy Kageyama (They/Them), ***EDC Youth Representative***

This past year, I helped organize and served as a panelist for the NY/SC's National Convention workshop in collaboration with Okaeri L.A., titled, "Queer Mental Health, Allyship and Activism." I also hosted a virtual youth summit in collaboration with Grassroots Gardens of Western New York on agriculture, immigration and food justice in June, and more recently held a three-day district youth retreat to the 2023 Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival.

I would like to give a huge thank you to the Eastern District Council, Philadelphia chapter and Washington, D.C., chapter for funding the youth retreat, where EDC youth from across the East Coast were able to visit Shofuso, meet students from UPenn ASAM's Undergraduate Advisory Board, tour Philadelphia and attend an exclusive prescreening dinner hosted by JACL's Philadelphia chapter with the festival's closing film director Jennifer Takaki and executive producer and longstanding JACL-N.Y. member George Hirose!

Lana Kobayashi (She/Her), ***PSW Youth Representative***

Last summer, I had the opportunity to co-host my first convention workshop alongside Ayako, Lyra and traci ishigo from Vigilant Love. Together, we led a workshop titled "Balancing Wellness and Sustainable Advocacy," which attracted a great turnout and empowered participants to navigate self-care without compromising their commitment to advocacy.

The experience was heartwarming, as I witnessed our community come together to bring this workshop to life. traci, a former youth representative at my local chapter, played a crucial role, and our connections within the JACL helped make this workshop a reality. With the support of our community and the lessons learned, I am excited to finish my term strong in 2024!

Lyra Paez (She/Her), ***CCDC Youth Representative***

This past year, I've been able to increase JACL presence within the community and the opportunities they present. I was able to visit and connect with young students within my district through the CCDC spring youth summit and the Back-to-School Campaign! It's been a lot of fun getting to work alongside these incredibly encouraging people, and I'm looking forward to the year to come!

Halle Sousa (She/Her), ***NCWNP Youth Representative (Sousa was recently appointed to her role, held previously by KC Mukai)***

While I have only been in my position for a very short period of time, I was able to hold my fall youth summit in San Francisco Japantown as part of the Japanese American Youth Alliance, a coalition of Nikkei youth organizations and clubs in Northern California. As the vice chair of the NCWNP District Youth Board, I have also helped recruit and onboard our new cohort for 2023-24. I look forward to facilitating more events in the coming year.



Halle Sousa

Cameron Sueoka (He/Him), ***IDC Youth Representative***

1. Presented our Back-to-School campaign for the Young Buddhists Assn. at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, a family of four joined JACL and the eldest son is going on the January Kakehashi trip
2. Salt Lake City 80th anniversary of the Murder of James Wakasa, Banquet Committee, helped organize the Salt Lake events, which included a banquet, art project and Topaz-inspired art exhibit
3. Pickleball, Pizza and panel discussion on Topaz for my spring summit with Jane Beckwith from the Topaz Museum; Sherrie Hayashi, U of U director of OEO/AA, former SLC JACL president and Topaz descendant; and Kenzi Hirai, Friends of Topaz Museum Salt Lake, program coordinator at the Food Justice Coalition and Topaz descendant
4. Stamping my great-grandparents name in the Ireicho Book 2023 at the JACL National Convention
5. Working with my amazing cohort of young JA movers and shakers.

Ayako Tischler (She/Her), ***MDC Youth Representative***

In the spring, I was able to welcome the NY/SC to the Midwest for our Chicago retreat! With great support from Midwest Youth Chair Simon Kutz and the Chicago JACL chapter, I hosted a hybrid panel highlighting Asian American elected officials across the Midwest. It was a great opportunity to center the wins and challenges unique to the Midwest and connect Asian American students to the leaders in our region. We also had a strong turnout at Convention, and I'm looking forward to the upcoming year!

Kyle Yasui (He/Him), ***PNW Youth Representative***

My term started just in time for me to join the NY/SC for the spring retreat in Chicago, where I received a fantastic crash course on all things JACL.

Since then, I took part in the NY/SC and Okaeri L.A.-led National Convention workshop, "Queer Mental Health, Allyship and Activism," where I had the honor of serving as a panel speaker. I look forward to serving the rest of my term for the PNW!

Editor's Note: **At July's JACL National Convention, KC Mukai and Sheera Yoshimi were still part of the NY/SC board. Since then, Claire Inouye has assumed Sheera's position, and Halle Sousa, new NCWNP youth rep, has taken over for KC.**

MANHATTAN BEACH Now Has Two Official Flowers

The city designates the camellia as it recognizes the role horticultural pioneer Francis M. Uyematsu played in cultivating the flower.

By Jeanne Fratello

Following a discussion that was half-serious, half "I can't believe we're spending time on this," the Manhattan Beach City Council on Oct. 3 approved the camellia as the city's second official flower.

The camellia now joins the beach primrose in a place of honor in the city's official records.

Specifically, the council voted to keep the beach primrose as the "official native wildflower," while the camellia would be designated the "official historic flower and shrub" of Manhattan Beach.

The motion was approved on a 4-0-1 vote, with Mayor Richard Montgomery abstaining in part over frustration with the dialogue and the amount of time spent on the issue.

Camellia History in Manhattan Beach

The move to give the camellia official city status took shape in the wake of new awareness about the history of the camellia in Manhattan Beach.

Camellia grower and horticultural pioneer Francis M. Uyematsu was a successful Japanese businessman and nursery owner who grew prized camellias and cherry trees on a 120-acre property in Manhattan Beach. During World War II, the Uyematsu family was forced to relocate to the Manzanar detention center, and Uyematsu had to sell off most of his land to sustain his business. After the war, with his business far below prewar levels, Uyematsu sold the last 40 acres of his Manhattan Beach property to the Redondo Union High School District (which at the time also included Manhattan Beach) for what became Mira Costa High School.

Mira Costa has since recognized the history of the land with a plaque dedicated to Uyematsu and his family.

Throughout the years in Manhattan Beach, the camellia has long been a popular flower and shrub. In fact, the camellia had actually been the official flower of Manhattan Beach from 1959 until 2011. But in 2011, at the urging of the Manhattan Beach Botanical Garden, the city changed its official flower to the beach primrose because it is a native flower known for its drought tolerance and uniqueness to the beach.

A dozen years later, in light of the new recognition of the history of the camellia in Manhattan Beach, the Manhattan Beach Botanical Garden recommended the dual designation (keeping the beach primrose as the "official native wildflower" and designating the camellia as the "official historic flower and shrub" of Manhattan Beach).



The camellia joins the beach primrose as the official flower of the city of Manhattan Beach, Calif.

PHOTO: MARY UYEMATSU KAO

A Meaningful Symbol?

Councilmember Amy Howorth, who introduced the resolution, said that the motion would be a way to recognize the importance of the camellia to the history of Manhattan Beach and Uyematsu's contributions to the field of horticulture.

"I think that the importance of this is maybe not what happened to the Uyematsu family [in World War II], but the fact that Mr. Uyematsu was a pioneer, an innovator and a successful horticulturist who we should be proud of," said Howorth. Having two official city flowers, she said, would be a way for the city to say, "We honor the past and look forward to the future."

The new naming would have no budgetary implications, she added.

The proposal had drawn both support and opposition. Jacquelyne May, a lifelong Manhattan Beach resident who had first brought the idea to Howorth, said that the designation would be especially meaningful considering the longtime significance of the camellia in the city. "It was such a huge part of this community growing up," she said.

But local historian Gary McAuley downplayed the significance of the camellia. The Uyematsus lived in Montebello, not Manhattan Beach, and had three large farms in Southern California, he said. The camellia was the "flower of the moment" in the 1950s, added McAuley, and many cities — and even the state of Alabama — designated the camellia as their official flower at that time.

Councilmember Steve Napolitano weighed in to say that he was "agnostic" on the flower-naming issue in the sense of, "What is the purpose, what is the meaning? Why are we doing this?"

"Is this the best way to recognize what we're trying to recognize?" asked Napolitano. "We can check this box, but have we achieved anything? Activity doesn't always equal achievement. Were there other residents of Manhattan Beach that suffered the same fate [as the Uyematsus] and is there a better way to recognize it? There are things that are more significant than naming a flower to me. I just don't find it that meaningful."

Yet, Councilmember David Lesser called the naming "a teaching opportunity" in recognition of the significant role that camellias had played in the city's history.

Similarly, Mayor Pro Tem Joe Franklin said, "I think the camellia can coexist with the beach primrose, and we're all the better for it. It's not subtracting, it's adding."

Montgomery expressed his frustration with the tenor of the debate and some of the comments received from the public. He pointed out that there had been more time spent on the flower discussion than on the city budget. "I'm out," he said, abstaining from the vote.

*(Editor's Note: **The following article was originally published on the MB News website, thembnews.com, on Oct. 4, 2023, and is reprinted with permission.**)*

HEART MOUNTAIN'S MINETA-SIMPSON INSTITUTE NEARS COMPLETION

By Ray Locker, Contributor

Construction on the Mineta-Simpson Institute, the new addition to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, is nearing completion, and the facility will be ready for its grand opening next July.

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation raised more than $8 million for the new project, which includes a conference center, audio/visual production facility, expanded archival storage and an exhibit dedicated to the lives and careers of Norman Mineta and Alan Simpson.

Mineta and Simpson first met in 1943 as Boy Scouts behind the barbed wire at the Heart Mountain concentration camp for Japanese Americans during World War II. They later revived their friendship while serving in Congress, starting in the 1970s.

While they had obvious personal and political differences — Mineta a liberal Japanese American Democrat from California and Simpson a conservative White Republican from Wyoming — they built careers in public service marked by their bipartisan cooperation.

The Mineta-Simpson exhibit hall. This hallway will hold the exhibit dedicated to the careers in public service of Norman Mineta and Alan Simpson.

"I believe the lives of Norm and Al serve as a backdrop of what America can be: Even rising from the ashes of racial tragedy, authentic relationships and common ground can be achieved," said Shirley Ann Higuchi, chair of the HMWF. "This can be a great lesson for our country and future generations to come."

The foundation plans to use the new facility gradually after its completion while gearing up for the grand opening during the annual Heart Mountain Pilgrimage on July 25-27.

Simpson, his wife, Ann, and Deni Mineta, Norm's widow, were among those who broke ground on the MSI during the July 2022 pilgrimage.

Construction started in earnest in the spring of 2023, and the team from Sletten Construction of Montana made major progress throughout the year.

The main conference center is designed to resemble a mess hall at the former Heart Mountain camp because the mess halls were the center for many community gatherings and events during the camp's operation between Aug. 12, 1942, and Nov. 10, 1945.

The new wing for archives and artifacts was designed to look like a former camp barrack and is named for LaDonna Zall, the museum's first curator. A longtime educator, Zall watched the final train leave Heart Mountain as a child on Nov. 10, 1945. She died in 2021.

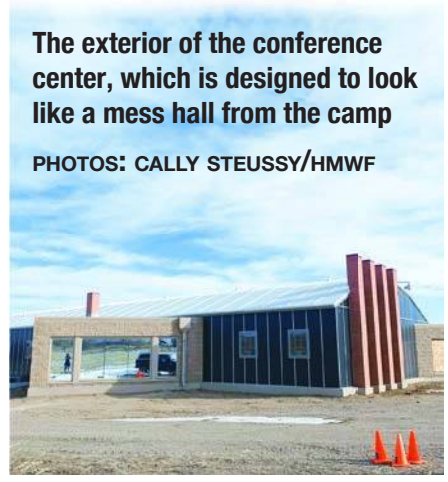
A major part of the new MSI will be an exhibit devoted to Mineta and Simpson that is being led by Rebecca McKinley, the foundation's deputy director. Split Rock Studios of Minnesota, which designed the museum's permanent exhibit, is working on the new project.

A grant from the National Parks Service's Japanese American Confinement Sites program is supporting the exhibit's development.

One of the first events to take place in the new facility will be workshops for educators sponsored by the Landmarks of American History and Culture program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. A total of 72 teachers from around the country will attend the workshops during the last two weeks of June.

It will be the fourth-straight year that Heart Mountain has conducted these workshops, but the first year in which they will take place in the new MSI.

For more information on the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, visit www.heartmountain.org.



The exterior of the conference center, which is designed to look like a mess hall from the camp

PHOTOS: CALLY STEUSSY/HMWF

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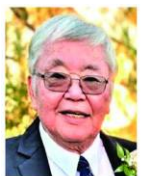
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Celebrating a Medical Pioneer

Dr. Paula Fujiwara becomes the first Japanese American to receive the prestigious anti-TB Chichibu Award in Paris.



The ceremony to honor Dr. Paula Fujiwara took place in Paris on Nov. 18.

Dr. Seiya Kato, director of the Research Institute of Tuberculosis, Japan Anti-Tubuculosis Assn., presents Fujiwara with her award.

By Nancy Ukai, Contributor

Dr. Paula Fujiwara, a medical specialist in tuberculosis prevention for more than 30 years, became the first Japanese American to be awarded the prestigious Princess Chichibu Memorial Global Tuberculosis Award on Nov. 18 in Paris.

The prize, which comes with an award of $10,000, was established in 1998 by the Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Assn. to honor the late Princess Chichibu, who became its patroness in 1938 and increased her involvement after her husband, Prince Chichibu, died of the disease in 1953.

"The Princess Chichibu Award means so much to me because my ancestral family in Japan experienced deaths from TB in the 1930s, before there was effective treatment," said Fujiwara, a Sansei based in San Francisco. Her father told her that three relatives died of TB in Japan when she was young, piquing her interest in medicine.

"Since I began working with Japan in the 1990s on its TB challenges, it has largely been eliminated there. As a Japanese American, I am honored to be recognized for my contributions to end TB globally," she said.

TB is the world's second-leading cause of death from a single infectious agent, after Covid-19, killing 1.36 million people in 2022, according to a recent World Health Organization report.

Fujiwara was assigned by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to New York City from 1992-2000, during which time the incidence of TB declined by more than two-thirds.

She has provided technical assistance to TB programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America and has served on multiple technical advisory committees of the World Health Organization and the Global Fund to End AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. She is fluent in Spanish, French and Portuguese.

"I love learning about the specificities of the TB situation in each country and meeting dedicated colleagues who toil in programs in low-income settings," she said.

Currently in the U.S., 73 percent of people diagnosed with TB are from countries where the disease is not yet controlled.

Fujiwara graduated with a degree in genetics at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1976 and earned her medical degree from the University of California, Davis. She explored careers in neonatology and adult medicine before working at the San Francisco TB clinic and finding that she "loved dealing with a disease that brought me into contact with people from many countries." She became interested in public health, which "deals with communities," and completed a master's degree in public health at the U.C. Berkeley.

TB was prevalent in the U.S. before and during World War II. When Japanese Americans were rounded up and forcibly incarcerated in American concentration camps, the War Relocation Authority established a segregated TB sanitarium at Gila River, Ariz., and moved incarcerees from other camps there, following the then common belief that the dry desert air would support their recuperation, Fujiwara said.

Other incarcerees were assigned to TB sanitariums run by the WRA, such as the Hillcrest Sanitarium in La Crescenta, Calif., which was guarded by government soldiers.

Fujiwara, a Sacramento native, is a member of the Florin JACL chapter, the Tule Lake Pilgrimage Committee, the Wakasa Memorial Committee and Tsuru for Solidarity. Her family was sent to the Tule Lake concentration camp from Sacramento. In her Paris acceptance speech, Fujiwara dedicated the award to her parents, Kiyoshi and Eiko (Katsumata) Fujiwara.

Nancy Ukai is a member of the P.C. Editorial Board and a director of the Berkeley chapter (NCWNP district).

CONNECTIONS | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Carol and David Kawamoto, San Diego Chapter



Carol and David Kawamoto at a traditional inn in Japan

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CAROL AND DAVID KAWAMOTO

Married for over 47 years, current JACL National VP for Public Affairs Carol Kawamoto and former National President David Kawamoto first met at a San Diego chapter picnic in 1966, when they were just teenagers. David was 15, and his family were members of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Carol was 14, and her family were members of the San Diego Holiness (later Christian) Church.

David recalled, "The Christian Church was known for having the cutest girls." And while David and Carol met at that picnic, they didn't date until many years later. In fact, David introduced Carol to a buddy from the Buddhist Temple. David was already dating a high school friend of Carol's. They came from different worlds: Carol grew up in a predominantly white, wealthier section of town: "My school had very few APIAs and just five JA students," explained Carol. Meanwhile, David came from southeast San Diego, known to be a rough neighborhood: "The really bad kids never came to school, so it was OK," stated David. It was through the JACL that they could enjoy JA dances, picnics and other social activities together despite having different social circles.

Both attended San Diego State University. Carol shared, "I was amazed at the numbers of JA, Chinese and other Asian American students on campus. We would meet together at breaks in our schedule. A brand-new Asian American Student Alliance formed. Chicano power was on the rise. Thanks to Affirmative Action programs, I got to register early and had an assigned counselor thanks to Affirmative Action. In fact, I learned about the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans for the first time from a new class on JA history."

"To support myself through college, I was working full-time as a County Probation Assistant and going to school part-time," stated David. "Carol and I continued our friendship since we were teenagers.

I would call Carol for dating advice." They commiserated about unsatisfactory dating experiences and then decided to hang out together.

While in college, they both joined the chapter board. Carol volunteered to organize the games featured at the annual picnic; David helped with the intergenerational basketball program. They began to spend a lot of time together. Not long after graduation, in 1976, the two were married.

Carol pursued a career in child development and education. David worked at the San Diego JACL Federal Credit Union while going to law school. With the arrival of their two sons, Carol and David alternated serving in chapter leadership positions.

Carol has served as chapter president, Pacific Southwest District governor, National JACL vp for planning and development and chair of the *Pacific Citizen* Editorial Board. For her work designing the JACL teacher training curriculum, she was named JACLer of the Biennium in 2002. In 2006, David was named JACLer of the Biennium and, in 2008, elected National JACL vp for planning and development, followed by a tenure as national president from 2010-12.

Words of Advice From the Happy Couples

When asked what advice the couples have for JACL-involved folks who may be seeking a life partner, Kathy Ishimoto offered that "things just happen," especially for those who wait. And wait. Kai Uno expressed gratitude that JACL brought him and Sheri together, adding that "it's great to find someone who shares your passion for civil rights."

Debbie Ikeda encourages young people to become active in JACL. She explained, "Those who support civil rights will find other people with similar values. And JACL events are a lot of fun.Through JACL, you get to do a lot of things, meet interesting people."

Dale agreed that JACL involvement offers many rich opportunities.

Lisa Doi shared that it is a really good time to be actively involved in JACL. Eric Langowski stated that the opportunity to make connections with people of strong backgrounds arises for JACLers at different ages, as a college student and as an adult.

Brandon Mita exclaimed, "Convention is fun! It's not that common to have time to discuss key issues. You have a chance to get to know people on a personal level. It's an opportunity to meet people from across the country."

BJ Watanabe emphasized the importance of showing up: "Just show up and take advantage of opportunities as they open up." Ron Osajima added, "It's good to show up but also do something."

Carol Kawamoto advised, "In the JACL, you can meet someone who has like interests. People in the JACL have so many things in common, especially wanting to do things to help the community. Not only did David and I meet through the JACL, we have lifelong friends with very meaningful friendships."

Emily Murase, a member of the San Francisco C\ chapter board, first met her spouse, Neal Taniguchi, at the 1994 National Convention in Salt Lake City. Parents of two adult daughters, they have been married for 27 years.

Detroit

SEASONS GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR

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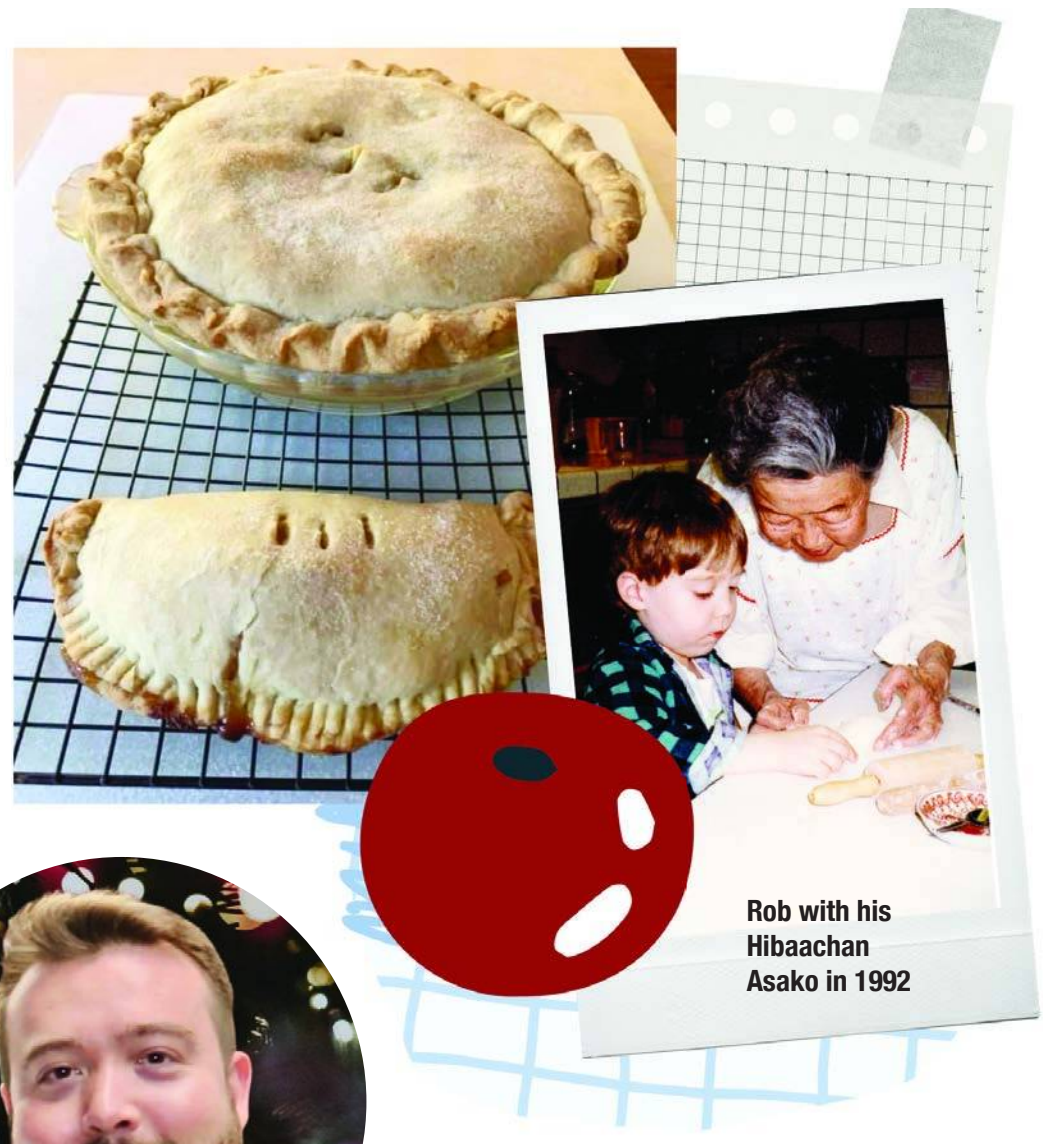
Merry Christmas
HAPPY NEW YEAR

From Our Kitchens to Yours

One of life's greatest connection is food. Here's to spreading the joy this holiday season!

By Pacific Citizen Editorial Board

There's nothing more special about the holiday season than bringing out good ol' tried-and-true recipes to fill one's tab with delicious food that signifies tradition, dear memories and that deep connection to family and community that tru warms the heart and belly. In the spirit of "Celebrating Connections," the *Pacific Citizen's* Editorial Board has shared the following special recipes from their kitchens to yours. *Bon appetit!*



Rob with his Hibaachan Asako in 1992

GRANDMA'S HAND-HELD APPLE PIES — *Asako Okuda Marumoto*

By Rob Buscher, EDC



Among my earliest food memories are my Hibaachan's apple hand pies. I can still recall the sensation of biting through the crisp crust to reveal the warm apple filling, just sweet enough for my toddler palate, but healthy enough to warrant seconds. I remember visiting her at the old farmhouse my great-grandfather built in Layton, Utah, the house that my Obaachan and her siblings grew up in after being forcibly removed from their home in current-day Gardena/Torrance, Calif. I remember the distinct aroma of Hibaachan's kitchen — a lingering mixture of sweet mirin, shoyu and garlic punctuated by the pungent scent of incense wafting in from the butsudan each morning when she paid her respects to her late husband. It took me years to figure out what that smell was, and only when I began cooking my own versions of her Japanese recipes. Saving a small portion of which I would leave as an offering at my own makeshift butsudan in her honor, the familiar scent of Hibaachan's kitchen allows me to feel her presence nearly 20 years after her passing. As a kid after returning from one visit to Utah, I was excited to see that McDonald's sold hand pies. The excitement turned to disappointment when they did not live up to the flavors and textures that Hibaachan created. I still haven't found another I like as much as hers.

Apple Pie Filling

Precook on stovetop to get the right consistency. Then use for a full pie, hand-held pies or put up in quart jars for use at a later time (midwinter).

Ingredients:

9 small Granny Smith apples (Golden Delicious preferred, if available)
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1 1/4 cup sugar (adjust sugar based on sweetness/tartness of apples)
1 small 8 oz. can crushed pineapple along with the juice
3 tbsp cornstarch mixed with 1/4 cup cold water

1. Peel apples, slice into quarters and cut out stem from each quarter. Then, cut quarters into thin slices. Place in a pan and sprinkle with juice of 1/2 lemon. Turn apples to mix the lemon juice with all of the apples.
2. Add 1 1/4 cup sugar gradually, stirring to coat apples. Add 1 small can of crushed pineapple, including the juice (8 oz can).
3. Start cooking on low heat, gradually increasing to medium heat to start cooking the apples. Cover pan but continue to turn the apples often so they cook evenly. "Turn" the apple slices rather than "stir" to retain their shape.
4. Stir 3 tbsp cornstarch into 1/4 cup of cold water. Add this to apple mixture, then stir to evenly distribute. This will help the filling thicken.
5. When pan is warm enough that apples are steaming, lower heat and continue cooking until apples turn soft enough to pierce easily with a fork, but still retain their shape.
6. When liquid has thickened to a syrupy consistency, remove from heat.

Crust

Make your own crust or use an uncooked store-bought crust. (Aunt Seiko recommends Ina Garten's pie crust recipe as shown online.)

Ingredients for Grandma's Homemade Crust

Look up instructions for making a pie crust from scratch. It requires a "pastry cutter" to cut the shortening into the flour or adding the shortening in small pieces and pressing it into the flour with a fork until the dough is uniform. The process is best learned from another baker or a YouTube video because of the judgement required to achieve the correct consistency of dough.

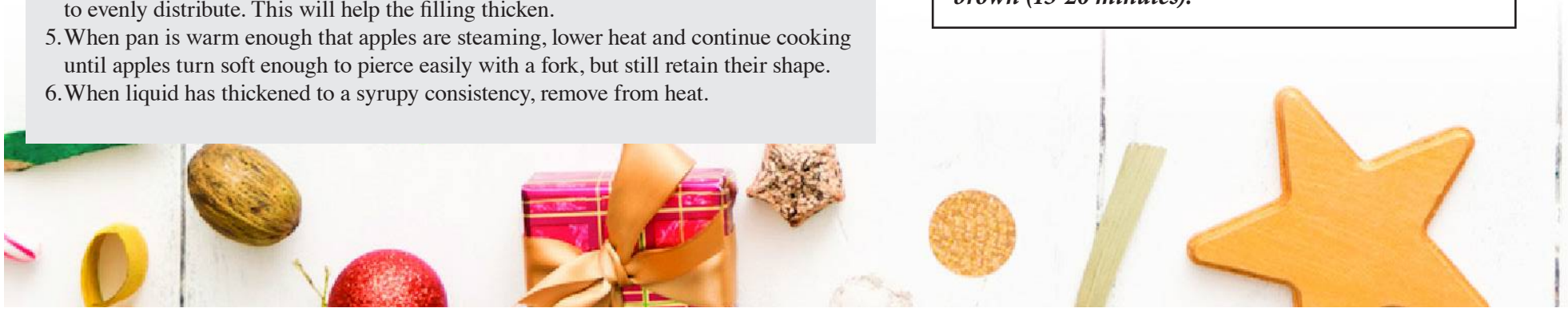
3 cups of flour
3 tsp baking powder
3/4 tsp salt
About 1 cup shortening (Crisco)
Ice water

Use a pastry board or smooth clean surface to roll out the dough if you make your own crust. Start with a 2-inch diameter ball of dough and use a rolling pin to roll it into a 5-inch circle. Keep the dough cool before rolling it. Put a light coating of flour on your rolling pin and the surface to keep the dough from sticking as you roll it out. You can also sprinkle a little flour on the top of the dough when it gets sticky. Reapply flour as needed to keep the dough from sticking.
If you are using a premade pie crust already rolled out into a sheet, you can cut out 4- or 5-inch circles/ovals.

Assembly

Add a heaping tablespoon of apple filling to the center of each circle/oval. Bring the far edge over to the bottom edge, making a semicircle to cover the filling, then pinch the dough together for the length of the edges to make a fluted border to seal the filling inside. Place the folded and sealed pies on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Use a small knife to make 3 slits in the top crust.

Bake in a preheated 375-degree oven until golden brown (15-20 minutes).

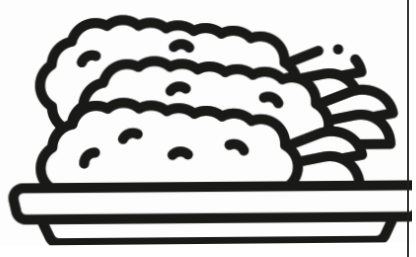


Ba-Chan's Easy Shrimp Tempura and Udon

By Sarah "Remy" Kageyama, Youth Rep.



For as long as I can remember, every time I've gone to my Ba-Chan's house, she always had a hot pot of udon ready for me when I arrived, along with a heaping plate of my favorite shrimp tempura. When I was very young, my Gi-Chan would drag me around the house in a laundry basket. I liked to pretend I was a train conductor, and I had smaller laundry baskets attached to mine, carrying my hoard of stuffed animal passengers. And every time we passed the kitchen, my Ba-Chan would make sure we stopped to eat. Gi-Chan would always eat the tails on the tempura — he never wasted anything. Even now, the tails are my favorite part. Gi-Chan passed away in 2015. I was always closer with Gi growing up — Ba spoke broken English at best, and I never learned Japanese. We communicated through food, but it never felt reciprocal. She would always make me food, and all I could do was show her how much I enjoyed it. I wished that I could do more to communicate back, to feel more connected to her and to my heritage. I didn't really start cooking until I l cooperative living house on campus last year. Not only did I learn how to cook, but I started to connect more witl culture and my family, too. I taught myself how to make dishes from my childhood, like somen and egg drop sou and now my mom and I regularly share recipes, and I call to ask for cooking tips. It meant the world to be able to make my Ba-Chan's udon recipe for the first time for this article. I felt more connected to my Ba-Chan than I hav in a long time. I hope that these recipes can evoke similar memories of family and community for anyone who tri them — and make sure to eat the tails on the shrimp!



Easy Shrimp Tempura

1 cup flour + cornstarch (or prepared tempura packet from Marukai)
1 egg (optional)
Cold water with some ice cubes — maybe 1 cup
Shrimp cleaned and deveined (leave the tail on!)

Mix tempura batter. Make sure shrimp is dry. Heat small pan with neutral oil until a wooden chopstick placed in the oil has small bubbles around it. Dip shrimp into batter and fry for about 2 minutes or until cooked. Serve with a bit of soy sauce to dip.

Note: Sometimes the tempura was crispy and sometimes not. But it was always good. And you always fought for those tails!

Easy Udon

Approximately 2-3 cups of homemade (or not) chicken stock, pork stock or dashi broth
2-3 tbsp "tsuyu" concentrated soup base (looks like shoyu — but has some added flavors)
1-2 tbsp mirin (optional)
Dash of instant dried dashi granules from Asian market (best type is the katsuobushi, made from bonito fish)
Udon noodles (either cooked from dried or thawed, if frozen)
Thin pork slices (optional) — with salt/pepper
Sliced kamaboko fish cake (optional) — nice decoration
Chopped green onions (optional)

Heat up broth and add tsuyu, mirin and dashi granules. If you don't have anything in kitchen, canned chicken broth with added soy sauce to taste works fine. Cook noodles according to package directions and place in bowl. Pour hot broth over. Add toppings.

Blueberry Mochi

By Lisa Olsen, IDC

Blueberry mochi cake is my go-to recipe for JACL potlucks and dinners. It's a beautiful cake, gluten free, and a crowd pleaser. I received this recipe from Walt Sato when I first joined the Idaho Falls chapter and was looking for unique mochi recipes. I am a Sansei whose father fought in World War II, and my grandmother passed away before I was born. My mother did not know how to cook traditional Japanese food, so I did not learn to cook them until later in life. As an adult, I have chosen to learn more about Japanese food and customs. I am thankful for my local chapter because they have helped me learn these skills, shared recipes and become my JACL family.

Blueberry Mochi

1 pound mochiko (16 oz. box)
1 cup melted butter
2 cups sugar
1 can evaporated milk (12 oz.)
4 beaten eggs
2 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. vanilla
1 can blueberry pie filling

In a small bowl, mix baking powder and mochiko flour together well. In a larger bowl, stir sugar into the melted butter. Add milk to the butter and sugar mixture. Mix well. Add eggs and vanilla. Continue mixing. Carefully stir in the flour and baking powder mixture, then mix well with the hand mixer. Grease an 11x13 jelly roll pan. Pour the mochiko batter into the pan. Add drops of the blueberry pie filling on top of the mochiko batter. I use a large spoon and drop the filling in a pattern of three across and four down the jelly roll. Use a chopstick or butter knife to create a marbling effect by dragging it in a U shape vertically and then horizontally. This creates the pretty pattern when the cake bakes.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45-60 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cut with a plastic knife, or it will stick. A metal pan works better than a glass one.



Gomoku Meshi — Five Ingredient Rice

By Nancy Ukai, NCWNP



My mother contributed this recipe in the late 1980s to the "Asian Cookbook" that was edited by Nisei women for JASEB (Japanese American Services of the East Bay) or what is known today as J-Sei, in Emeryville, Calif. Other "special friends" who shared recipes in this vintage collection were Nikki Bridges, Chizu Iiyama, Sen. Dan Inouye, Fred Korematsu, Norm Mineta and Ben Takeshita Mom was a great cook! When my mom was 13, her mother died, so mom cooked for her father and two brothers from a young age. She also made tempura, chow mein and sukiyaki with hamburger. She became a great, happy cook.



Gomoku Meshi — Five Ingredient Rice

3 cups rice, washed with proper amount of water. Let stand 30 minutes in rice cooker.

Part I
1 chicken thigh or breast (remove skin, bone and cut into small pieces)
1/4 cup dried mushrooms, presoaked in warm water. Squeeze dry and slice thinly
1/4 cup raw carrots, grated (use large grate)
1/4 cup takenoko (bamboo shoots), sliced gobo or lotus root (renkon)
1 large aburaage sliced into thin strips

Part II
2 tsp sugar
1/4 cup sake
1/4 cup shoyu
1/4 cup dashi

Add Part I to Part II. Bring to boil in saucepan and simmer 5 minutes. Let cool slightly. Add to rice and turn on rice cooker. When done, let stand 10 minutes. Mix with rice paddle and let stand another 10 minutes with cover on. Can add frozen peas at the end for color.

See KITCHENS ON PAGE 49

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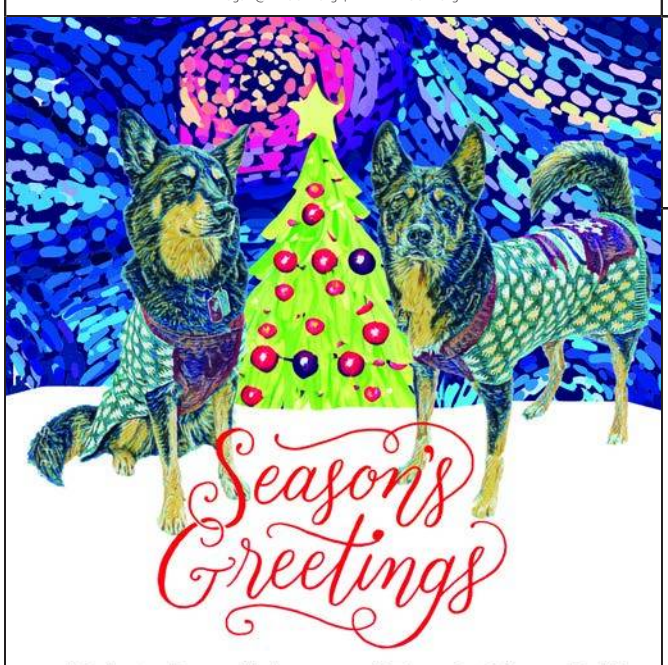
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(Hello to Bean Nakano and Zeus & Athena Doi!)

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In memory of these and other friends and neighbors who raised their families, contributed to their community, served their country, and enriched our lives.

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Steve Arima & Elaine Ogawa

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The Yatabe Family

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Lary Schectman
Chicago, Illinois

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Happy New Year of Dragon 2024
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Clovis

Merry Christmas
And a COVID-FREE 2024!
- Clovis Chapter, JACL

The Eternal Brush

Katsushika Hokusai, best known for his masterpiece 'THE GREAT WAVE,' has an enduring influence across the arts.



"Snowy morning, Koishikawa" from "Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji," about 1832. Color woodblock print. Japan. 1927,0613,0.13

PHOTO: TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM, GIVEN BY RN. SHAW.



"Under the wave off Kanagawa ('The Great Wave')" from "Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji," late 1831. Color woodblock print. Japan. 2008,3008.1.JA

PHOTO: TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM. ACQUIRED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF ART FUND AND A CONTRIBUTION FROM THE BROOKE SEWELL BEQUEST

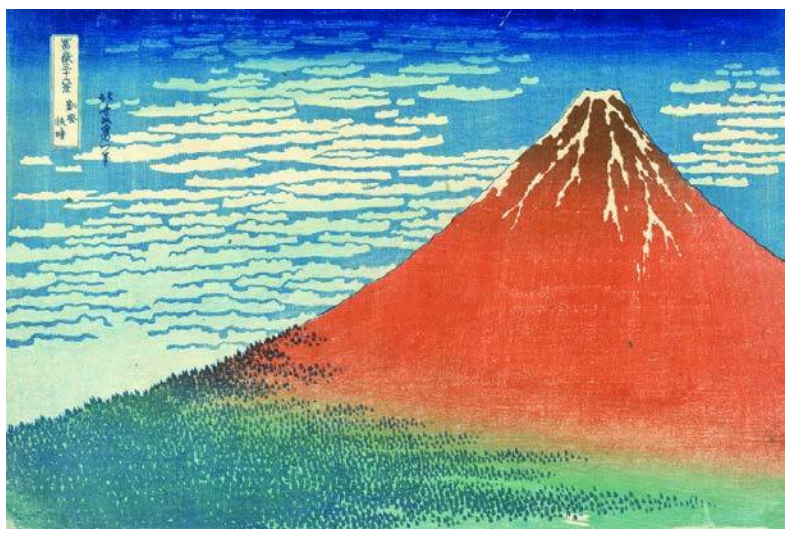
By Alissa Hiraga, Contributor

Nearly two centuries ago, Katsushika Hokusai imagined a magnificent scene off the shores of Japan — a frothy, giant wave menacing fishermen on their boats. Snow-capped Mount Fuji is perceptible in the distance, its serene, fixed form a contrast to the ferocious movement of the sea.

"The Great Wave (Under the Wave Off Kanagawa)" continues to permeate our imagination and psyche as a singular example of Japanese woodblock prints. It's certainly the most recognizable image in Hokusai's "Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji" series.

Viewers who become familiar with the series discover the works are a visual homage to the sacred Mount Fuji, which held a deep spiritual significance for the artist. It began as a set of 36 images and expanded to 46 due to commercial success.

The portraits illuminate what daily life was like in Edo, Japan. "Snowy morning, Koishikawa" is set against a tranquil snow-covered landscape where a group enjoys the view and birds flying overhead. In "Fuji View moor, Owari province," the image conveys the unsung glory of a day's hard work. The vibrant Prussian blue pigment used in "The Great Wave" is prominent throughout series.



"Clear day with a southern breeze ('Red Fuji')" from "Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji," late 1831. Color woodblock print. Japan. 1906,1220,0.525

PHOTO: TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Hokusai uses a wide range of color effects as seen in the stunning "Red Fuji" portraits, with hues that evoke the stoic nature of the mountain: a peaceful view in "Clear day with southern breeze" and during a storm in "Sudden rain beneath the summit," where lightning appears to scar the base of the mountain.

"Thirty-six Views" reflects Hokusai's interest in the eternal — Mount Fuji is the constant, while the elements and sceneries around it are in flux. Hokusai was enthralled with the notions of progress and transcendence, believing his talent would grow with age to reach a divine artistry in his 100s.

Hokusai's skill never diminished with age — "Thirty-six Views" was created in his 70s, and the superlative "Ducks in flowing water" was produced a few years before his death at 89.

He used different names throughout his artistic career (*Hokusai* in translation is "North Studio"), with each name representing a life milestone or spiritual belief. While impressively productive in old age, Hokusai produced remarkable works during his early years. Among these are exquisite hanging scrolls of flowering plum trees, birds and "Warrior hero Tametomo and the inhabitants of Onigashima Island," intricately layered with colors and cut gold leaf.

Born in 1760, Hokusai created his art during the Edo (Tokugawa) period, when Japan was shut away from the rest of the world. In 1638, violent persecution of Japanese Christians and the perceived threat of Western influence drove the shogunate to close Japan off from the world in a heavy-handed lockdown that would last more than 200 years.

Japan's culture and economy flourished during this isolation, as the country reimagined itself as a physical and spiritual bubble or "floating world," apart from the travails of human existence. Entertainment districts and indulgent pursuits thrived.

"Ukiyo-e" art or "pictures of the floating world" was born out of Edo (now Tokyo). Paintings and woodblock prints depicted beauty, Kabuki theater and nature. With origins as a woodcutter's apprentice and working at a studio that specialized in Kabuki prints, Hokusai would create an estimated 30,000 prints over a 70-year artistic period.

He touched across the visual and performing arts through his paintings and wood block prints, as well as through his interpretations of literature and poetry,



"Warrior hero Tametomo and the inhabitants of Onigashima Island," 1811. Hanging scroll painting, ink, color, gold and gold leaf on silk. Japan. 1881,1210,0.1747

PHOTOS: TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM



"Cormorant and morning glory," about 1830-32. Hanging scroll painting, ink and color on silk. Japan. 1881,1210, 0.1899

such as the design series of the classical "One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets."

He traversed mediums and subject matter, working with brush paintings and paper art. Hokusai is known to be the first to use the term *manga* with a collection of drawings for his students called "Hokusai Manga."

"Beyond the Great Wave: Works by Hokusai From the British Museum" is currently showing at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, Calif. The traveling exhibition features more than 100 paintings, drawings, woodblock prints and illustrated books preserved by the British Museum. The exhibition also shares the stories of six collectors who helped the British Museum build the Hokusai collection in the 1850s.

For Alfred Haft, curator of the "Beyond the Great Wave: Works by Hokusai From the British Museum" exhibition, Hokusai and his works embody wonder and possibilities.

"Hokusai was fascinated by everything around him and used his astonishing skill to bring the world to life through his incredibly detailed and varied paintings, prints and book illustrations. He puts us in touch with people, places and circumstances that, at first, might appear strange or new, but he makes them feel believable and real. He welcomed an encyclopedic range of subjects into his art, and that diversity has attracted a wide range of admirers. His art is amazing, but so, too, is his life story. Hokusai faced one personal difficulty after another; yet, he continued to improve and perfect his art through his very last years," Haft told the *Pacific Citizen*.

Hokusai died in 1849, several years before Japan reopened to foreign trade and art works began to circulate across seas. Although the artist never traveled outside of Japan, his works influenced new directions in Western art.

Hokusai's woodblock prints and paintings inspired American and French Impressionists, including Claude Monet, Vincent Van Gogh, J. Alden Weir and composer Claude Debussy. Hokusai's works remain in the creative consciousness across the arts.

For writers, Hokusai's sublime works hold profound meaning in the exploration of concepts like change, interconnectedness and transcendence. Naomi Hirahara's historical mystery "Clark and Division" was the Bowers Museum's October Book Club selection and paired with the "Beyond the Great Wave" exhibition.

The Edgar Award-winning author is one of the most important writers today for smart, satisfying mystery novels and her works on the experiences and contributions of Japanese Americans.

"I am currently drafting my next Japantown Mystery, 'Crown City,' in a journal featuring Hokusai's iconic wave print. Even though it's a two-dimensional image, Hokusai is able to capture the power and movement of that wave, which, for me, is symbolic of change, not only in the world or society involving things Japanese but also the plot lines in my mysteries. I take a very Western genre — the mystery — but populate it with Japanese American-centric characters, which inevitably alters the form. There's a clash of aesthetics and archetype characters. For instance, instead of the lone detective we see in noir standards like Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe, we have a young Japanese American woman, Aki Ito, who is very much connected to her family and community as both a choice and necessity as she's dealing with the aftereffects of the World War II camp experience," said Hirahara.

In Naoko Abe's delightful, award-winning book "The Sakura Obsession: The Incredible Story of the Plant Hunter Who Saved Japan's Cherry Blossoms," the subject is British adventurer Collingwood Ingram and his efforts to save the endangered great white cherry or *Taihaku*.

The book is a superb historical study of Japan and its cherry blossom varieties. At its heart is a poignant portrait of Ingram and his contributions in preservation. Hokusai and Ingram coincidentally shared the same birthday, 120 years apart, and, more significantly, a spiritual connection with nature.

In "The Sakura Obsession," Abe writes, "Hokusai, a member of Buddhism's Nichiren sect, believed that Japan's tallest mountain possessed secrets of immortality. Mount Fuji and cherry blossoms appeared in his most famous woodblock prints, which were usually carved on cherry wood from the mountains."

Ingram, who named his own tree varieties after Hokusai, felt a kinship with the artist.



Printed wrapper for "Mountains upon mountains," 1804. Color woodblock print. Japan. 1979,0305.0.440.4



"Poet Kan Ke (Sugawara no Michizane)" from "One Hundred Poems by One Hundred Poets, Explained by the Nurse," about 1835-1836. Color woodblock print. Japan. 1919,0715,0.4



"Ducks in flowing water," 1847. Hanging scroll painting, ink and color on silk. Japan. 1913,0501,0.320.

PHOTO: TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM. GIVEN BY SIR W GWYNNE-EVANS, BT.

Abe shared with the *Pacific Citizen*, "Collingwood Ingram learned about Hokusai when Japonisme, the 19th-century love for Japanese arts and crafts in Europe, reached England. Ingram shared his fascination of Mount Fuji with Hokusai. Hokusai expressed the wonder and mysteriousness of nature by painting Mount Fuji from many different angles to show its almost supernatural and transcendental beauty. For Ingram, who did not believe in a Christian god, nature was his religion and faith. I think that kind of awe toward nature's 'supernatural beauty' is what Ingram saw in Hokusai's paintings."

"Beyond the Great Wave: Works by Hokusai From the British Museum" is on view at the Bowers Museum until Jan. 7. For more information on the Bowers Museum and its exhibitions, visit www.bowers.org. For more information on the British Museum, visit www.britishmuseum.org.

RECOMMENDED HOKUSAI READING

Two beautifully designed hardcover books on Katsushika Hokusai, replete with stunning images, are especially noteworthy for its essays. Both books were authored and edited by Timothy Clark, an honorary research fellow and renowned Hokusai scholar at the British Museum.

"Hokusai: The Great Picture Book of Everything" (British Museum Press) features 103 drawings that demonstrate the artist's brush skills and remarkable attention to detail. Art lovers will enjoy Hokusai's images of the natural world and stunning mythical creatures.

"Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave" (Thames and Hudson in collaboration with the British Museum) accompanies the museum's exhibition and is a comprehensive exploration of Hokusai's life and works, focusing on the artist's final years. The book also includes the works of Oi, Hokusai's youngest daughter. Essays by Clark, Alfred Haft, Angus Lockyer, Matsuba Ryoko, Asano Shugo and the late Roger Keyes, who was a leading Hokusai scholar, offer extensive insights on the artist and his environment.

Mile High

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&
Best Wishes for 2024!

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Wishing all a Joyous New Year!

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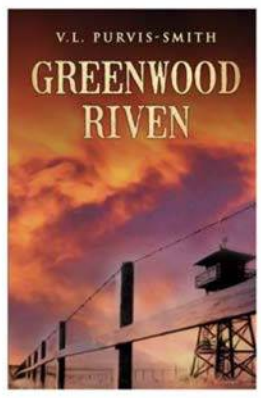
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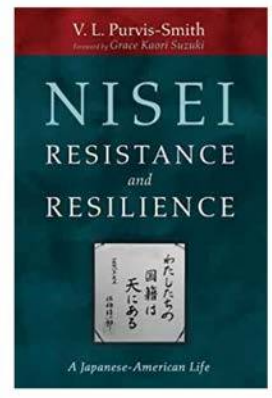
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Happy Holidays!



All the best for the year ahead.
Dylan Mori

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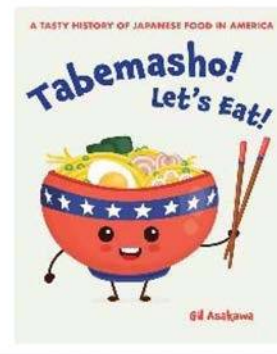
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'REMOVED BY FORCE'

COMING TO THE MAINLAND IN '24

The documentary about Hawaii JA's redress fight is a boon for Honolulu JACL.

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor

Odds are that if you're an adult Japanese American living in the mainland United States, you are well aware that during World War II, the federal government removed and incarcerated more than 125,000 people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast, regardless of whether one was a U.S. citizen or a Japanese national with legal permanent resident status who, at the time, would have been proscribed from becoming a naturalized citizen.

And, you probably know that in August 1988, Japanese Americans succeeded collectively in using their First Amendment right to "petition the Government for a redress of grievances" via the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which resulted in not only monetary compensation ($20,000 per still-living person so treated) but also an apology from the federal government, signed by its chief executive, the president of the United States of America.

But did you know that something similar occurred in Hawaii, that there were Japanese Americans who were also forced from their homes in the aftermath of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor? And this group of approximately 1,500 people whose rights were violated during WWII had to then fight to also receive redress compensation and apology?

Or, that the JACL's Honolulu chapter was instrumental for winning this legal wrangle?

If this truth is new to you, don't feel too badly. Turns out that even on the islands, this was a story largely unknown to many locals.

Until now.

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Thanks to a new documentary titled "Removed by Force: The Eviction of Hawai'i's Japanese Americans During WWII," this overlooked-but-important story has been met with gratitude and enthusiasm across Hawaii, from Honolulu to Maui to the Big Island.

And, beginning next year, "Removed by Force" is coming to the mainland.

Directed, written and edited by filmmaker Ryan Kawamoto, who co-executive produced it with William Kaneko, and presented by the Honolulu chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, "Removed by Force" is a documentary that tells a subchapter of a subchapter of U.S. history that to this day many Americans are still either unaware of — or misinformed about: what happened after President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066.

Inked on Feb. 19, 1942, EO 9066 authorized the military and the federal government to, euphemistically, "evacuate" and "relocate" anyone of Japanese ancestry living along the West Coast's "Exclusion Zone" to "internment camps" — for their "own safety" — under the guise of "military necessity."

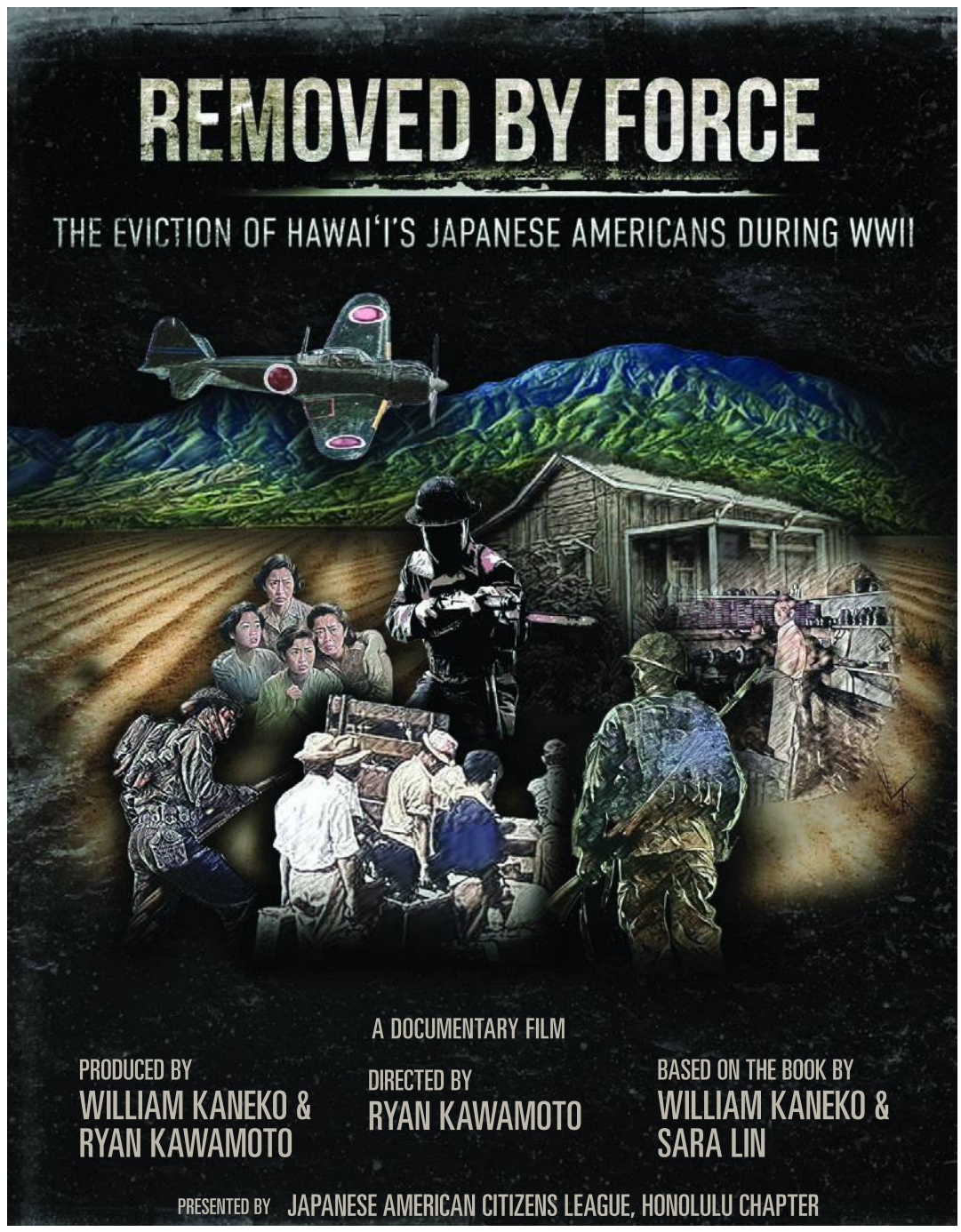
Many decades later, the government's Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians would conclude that those actions — forced removal and subsequent incarceration at concentration camps located in remote and desolate inland areas — were actually the result of "racial prejudice, wartime hysteria and the failure of political leadership."

"Military necessity," meantime, was a canard, a convenient way to effect the removal of an unpopular nonwhite ethnic minority and seize valuable agricultural land owned by that group.

Regarding the different treatment that Japanese Americans in Hawaii and Japanese Americans on the mainland each received, the popular narrative has been that because of the proportion of a large JA population in Hawaii to everyone else in the islands, it was unfeasible to do a mainland-style "remove and incarcerate" operation — and, furthermore, the labor of Japanese Americans was needed for the war effort.

In other words, building mainland-style War Relocation Authority Centers — of which there were 10, in California, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona and Arkansas — that each held thousands of people of Japanese ancestry in Hawaii could not happen.

Although essentially true, "Removed by Force" adds layers to that narrative, showing that despite the differences in the experiences, scope and scale of mainland Japanese Americans and Hawaii Japanese Americans, the effect of governmental overreach was also felt in Hawaii.



Poster for documentary "Removed by Force: The Eviction of Hawai'i's Japanese Americans During WWII," which will be coming to the mainland for several screenings beginning in 2024

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Since its completion earlier this year, "Removed by Force" has made a splash in Hawaii. "We had three screenings at the Hawaii Convention Center theater, which sold out," Kaneko said. "I mean, you're talking like 450 seats-plus. And then we had two screenings on the Big Island, another two screenings on Maui. We did presentations before the Hawaii Bar, at the Federal Bar Assn. We did one before the National Asian Pacific American Bar Assn. We also did one at the UH law school. So, we've been getting out."

On June 29, it was screened in Honolulu,



Redress workshop organized by the JACL's Honolulu Chapter at Moanalua High School in the 1990s is attended by those whose rights were violated when they were evicted by the U.S. government during WWII

PHOTO: HONOLULU JACL

with four state governors in attendance, as well as the sitting governor, Josh Green. (It's worth noting that "Removed by Force" screened in Los Angeles in July at the JACL's National Convention.)

It was also broadcast on local television four times: once on Hawaii's PBS affiliate on Sept. 29 and three times (Nov. 12, 19 and 20) commercially on KHNL and KFVE. It was also screened during October's Hawaii International Film Festival, where it was nominated in the category Best Made in Hawaii Feature Film.

For the filmmakers, the response to "Removed by Force" has been a gratifying experience that exceeded their expectations. After it aired on local TV, Kawamoto said, "Reaction was great. Lots of positive comments about it. People wanted to know more and wanted to see it again." The documentary also spawned local newspaper and TV coverage.

Kawamoto also told the *Pacific Citizen* an anecdote that spoke to why this story of Japanese American removal in Hawaii was not well-known.

"One of the people featured in the film, whose family was kicked out from the farm, basically, he brought his whole family to this screening," Kawamoto said. "And at the end of the screening, a question was asked. The question was, 'How have you told this story to your family?' and his 55-year-old son yells out, 'My father never told us what happened to our family during the war. First time I heard the story was seeing the film onscreen.' "

That story underscores Honolulu JACL Chapter President Minda Yamaga's observation. "It tells these stories of our local history that had never before been documented, very rarely been discussed, was relatively unknown," she said. "So, it kind of had that element of discovery — 'Oh, wow, I didn't know this!' That automatically draw folks in.

"But the part that I think was remarkable with how personal and intimate it felt," she continued. "It just ended up being a really great film. … But what happened was, we had a few sold-out showings, the buzz got around town, people really wanted to see it. I don't think that the demand has substantially slowed down for viewing."

From Yamaga's perspective, "Removed by Force" has had a salutary effect on extant community connections. "That sense of community that we sometimes forget about was really reinvigorated," she said, referring to the feeling that was in the venues where it was shown.

The documentary also had a quantitative effect on the chapter. One example was that it led to someone who donated money to the Honolulu JACL. Another example was when a parent brought college-age daughters to a screening and one was so moved by it, she reached out later to become a volunteer for the chapter, despite being busy with school.

"I know all civil rights organizations and nonprofits are struggling with connecting to young people," said Yamaga. "So, I think both the fact that it brought in a new volunteer . . . we were very excited about that. And that's just an individual story."

Yamaga, also an attorney, says the documentary also had a larger effect. "Bill connected us to Ellen Godbey Carson, an attorney, and she's also a textile artist. She cares very deeply about developing civil rights leaders, social justice advocates. She makes these handmade quilts from vintage kimono fabric . . . and she's donated them to multiple organizations that she cares about as a fundraiser.

"So, she donated some of those to us also. We took the message and the funds raised by 'Removed by Force' and the additional donation by Ellen and created what we're calling the Quest to Uncover Innovative Leaders of Tomorrow fellowship — and the acronym, of course, is the QUILT fellowship, inspired by Ellen's quilts.

"We put out an application directed at high school juniors in October, and we've accepted four high school juniors into our QUILT fellowship, three on the island of Oahu, and one from the island of Maui. And each of them are from different high schools around the island, around the state. . . . I think that everything — the money, the community support, this idea that we can connect with some young people — can be directly linked to 'Removed by Force.' "



Ryan Kawamoto co-wrote, co-executive produced, directed and edited the new documentary "Removed by Force."

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



Speaking at a news conference are Mary Beth Wong and Owen Matsunaga, pro bono attorneys, and Allicyn Hikida Tasaka, who was serving as president of JACL's Honolulu chapter.

PHOTO: HONOLULU JACL



William Kaneko *(left),* past president of the Honolulu JACL chapter, and Clayton Ikei, the chapter's legal counsel, speak at a press conference about the Lualualei case.

PHOTO: HONOLULU JACL

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Every good story needs certain elements: a quest that has an uncertain outcome, but whose ending is surprising, satisfying and inevitable. Conflict. Antagonists. Heroes — and those who unexpectedly rise to the occasion to become heroes. "Removed by Force" has all that and more.

One example: A few years after President Reagan signed the Redress bill, Kaneko received a phone call from someone whose family was, literally, removed by force by the military from their home — but not incarcerated. He wanted to know whether he was eligible for redress. Kaneko answered truthfully: "I don't really know."

This was the first time Kaneko — or the JACL — had heard about anything like this. A legal determination was made that, yes, their rights were violated, there was no due process. But they needed more than a story to remedy the harm. Evidence was needed.

In a development not unlike Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga finding the last original copy of the "Final Report on Japanese Evacuation From the West Coast" in the National Archives that proved there was no military necessity in removing Japanese Americans from their West Coast homes during WWII, "Removed by Force" has its own version of that scenario.

To learn how that went down, one needs to see "Removed by Force." Fortunately, in early 2024, people on the mainland will be able to see the documentary. Not only will it make the rounds via the film festival circuit, on Feb. 16 and 19, it's slated to show at the University of Oregon School of Law in Eugene and the Japanese American Museum of Oregon in Portland. It is also scheduled to play on Feb. 21 at California State University, Long Beach, and Feb. 22 at a to-be-determined venue in Los Angeles, followed by screenings in San Francisco (Feb. 24) and San Jose (Feb. 25).

According to Kawamoto, another goal is also to have his documentary broadcast nationally on PBS. After that, something will be figured out for the home market, via streaming and/or physical media.

Not only that, a book by the same name, written by Kaneko and Sara Lin, upon which the documentary was based, will be published in February.

For Yamaga, the documentary puts things into perspective for Japanese Americans in Hawaii, whose experiences during WWII differed from their mainland cousins. "Even though the number of families that were affected was substantially smaller in Hawaii, just seeing the locations, hearing the stories told in the local Pidgin accent made it like all the more relatable. . . . Anytime something happens, a tragedy, you hear the comments of like, 'Oh my gosh, I never thought that could happen in my backyard,' and when it does, it just crystallizes the problems and the issues and the critical response even more. … When it's familiar, it just hits the heartstrings in a different kind of way."

Thanks to "Removed by Force," she says, "That's exactly what happened." ■

Washington, D.C



Wishing Peace & Health to all in the New Year!

from your friends in the JACL DC Chapter

jacl-dc.org

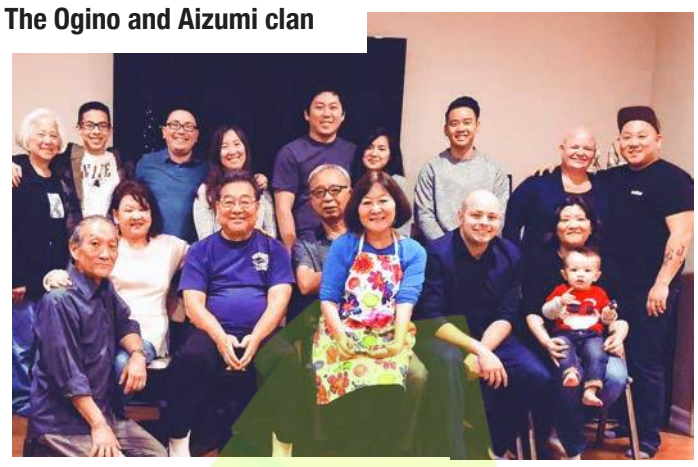
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The Aizumi family celebrating my daughter-in-law's birthday

The Ogino and Aizumi clan



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MARSHA AIZUMI



My friends at Ichi-Mi doing amazing LGBTQ+ work



Two of my favorite nonhumans, Kuma and Mochi

Marsha with co-chair Mia Barnett and filmmaker Corey Shiozaki at the 2023 JACL National Convention





Celebrating West L.A. Methodist and their open and affirming church

HEART-TO-HEART *Connections*



Some of my PFLAG family

By Marsha Aizumi

When I hear the word "connection," I think about the relationships that I value and how I feel when I am around them. Mainly, I feel safe to be myself. I feel like I matter. And I feel empowered to live authentically. We have heart-to-heart connections grounded in trust, respect, honesty and caring about each other. So today, I want to celebrate those who have filled my life with more blessings than I can count.

The most obvious connection I want to celebrate is my family. I am so grateful that they support my work to be an LGBTQ+ advocate, that they tell me the truth when I am wrong and how I can do better. I cherish that they value family and will do whatever it takes to help each other through difficult situations.

The most recent example of that is when I had a blood vessel burst in my eye. I didn't know what was going on, but my macular degenerative doctor took me immediately, so I knew it was serious. After running a number of tests, the doctor said the best course of action was to have a shot in my eye. I was traumatized, but I knew that it was better than losing my eyesight.

My husband was out of town. So, I called my son, Aiden, who lived the closest. He said, "Why don't I bring you dinner and stay overnight with you, just in case you need anything." I started off scared, but I felt so relieved . . . I wanted to cry.

I called my husband, and he offered to fly home a day early from his trip. I told him not to change his plans, but his offer made me feel so loved. And then my younger son was on call the next day if I needed another person to stay with me.

I didn't need anyone, but just knowing he would be there was so reassuring. Everyone made me feel cared about and safe. And so, I celebrate my connection to my family that allows me to ask for what I need and know I will be supported and loved.

I also celebrate my connections to extended family and friends. I count myself so lucky that my relationships with my family members and friends have stayed intact over time through all the challenges we have faced.

When I hear from others who are no longer connected or do not look forward to getting together with family during the holidays, I feel so fortunate to have people in my life with whom I love to spend time and always feel their unconditional love and acceptance. I celebrate the Ogino families, the Aizumi families and all my friends from college, work and those from my LGBTQ+ community.

I couldn't write this article about how loved I feel without talking about my dog, Mochi, or my grand-furbaby, Kuma. They are both senior dogs now and require a bit more love and patience, but they are so a part of my heart.

Aiden and Mary have to endure 20 minutes of Kuma crying when they come to my house. It is Kuma's way of expressing how excited he is to come to "Granny's house."

And Mochi oftentimes doesn't hear me leave the room because her hearing is diminishing, and so I hear the pitter patter of Mochi's nails on our hardwood floor, looking for me, sometimes expectedly and sometimes frantically when I am out of her sight.

I celebrate Mochi and Kuma, who have taught me so much about forgiveness, always seeing the best in others and expressing their feelings openly and lovingly.

Finally, I celebrate my connections to LGBTQ+ communities I belong to like PFLAG and Okaeri. This work as led me back to my Japanese American community and organizations like JACL, JANM and LTSC.

All of them have given me a place to belong and provided me with a deep sense of purpose and meaning. This work and my strong connection to the people who are also supporting this work have been a gift that has enriched my life and empowered my spirit of advocacy.

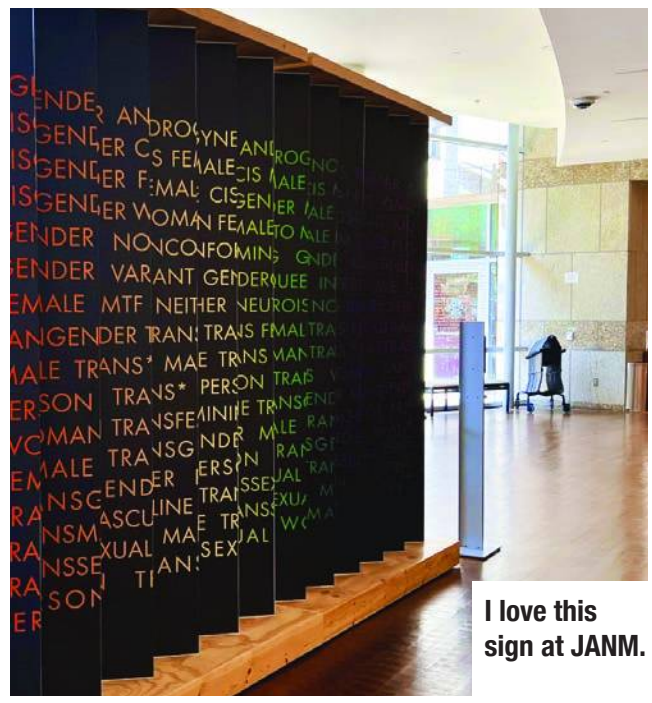
Through all the connections that I celebrate, I am so grateful for all the richness and diversity that has been brought to me and the wonderful stories that have opened my world and my family's world to greater compassion and understanding.

So, from the hearts of the Aizumi Family, we wish you a wonderful holiday season filled with continued moments of deep connections and celebration of all that fills your heart with hope, joy and always love.

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

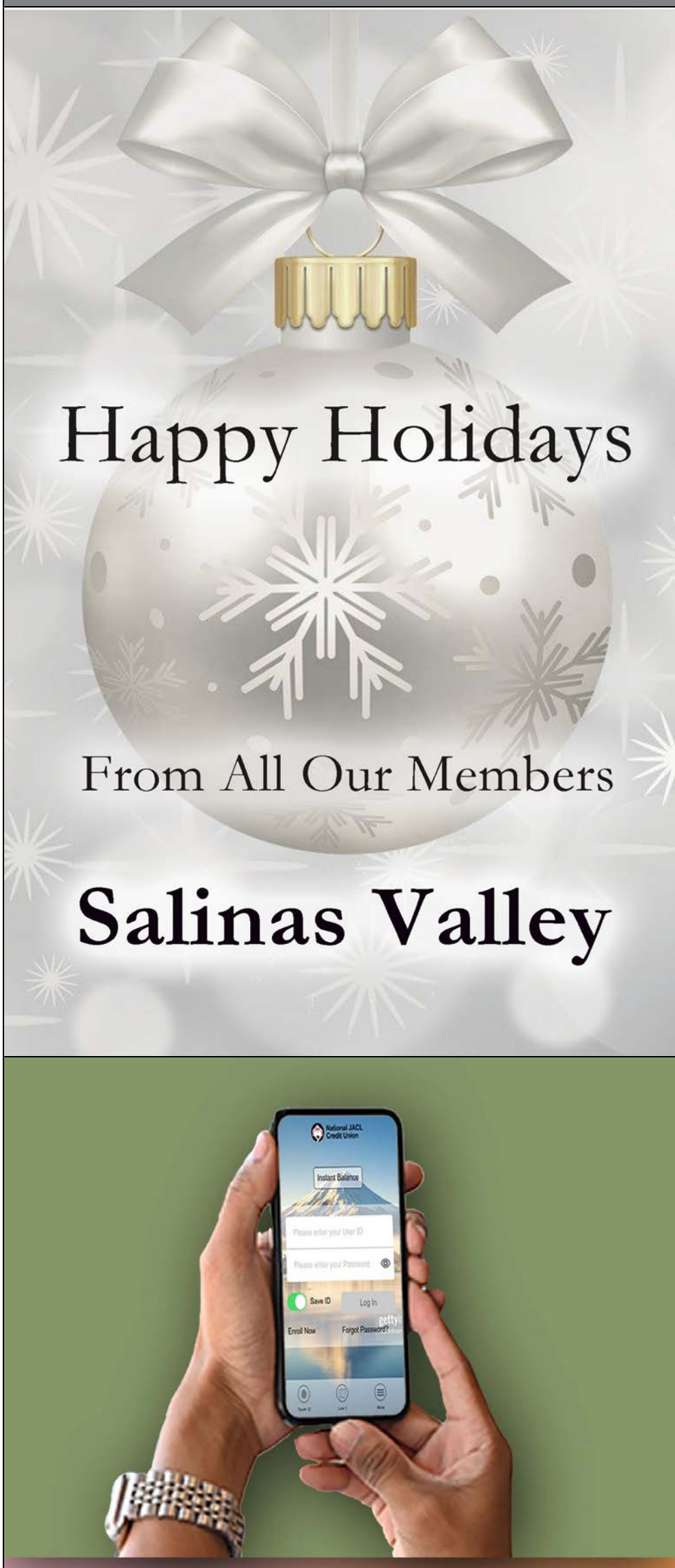
– Maya Angelou

Marsha Aizumi is an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and author of the book "Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance."



I love this sign at JANM.

Salinas Valley



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Abashiri, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Otaru, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.
Hyobaku Ice Festival, Asahikawa Snow Festival, Sapporo Snow Festival,
Hyoto Winter Festival. **WAITLIST**

JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Mar 17-29
Tokyo, Shimoda(Commodore Perry sites), Shizuoka, Lake Kawaguchi, Kofu,
Matsumoto, Kiso Valley, Narai, Tsumago, Nagoya.

JAPAN HOLIDAY CRUISE (Carol Hida) . . . . . Apr 10-27
Tokyo, Yokohama, Maezaki, Kobe, Kochi, Fukuoka, Sokcho/So Korea,
Kanazawa, Niigata, Otaru, Aomori, Hakodate, Yokohama. Holland American Line

ICELAND HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Jun 5-11
Reykjavik, Blue Lagoon, Strokkur Geyser, Gullfoss/Golden Falls,
Thingvellir National Park, Viking Ship Museum.

GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . Jun 16-26
Tokyo, Hakone/Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experiences. **WAITLIST**

EASTERN CANADIAN CAPITALS HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . .Sep 18-26
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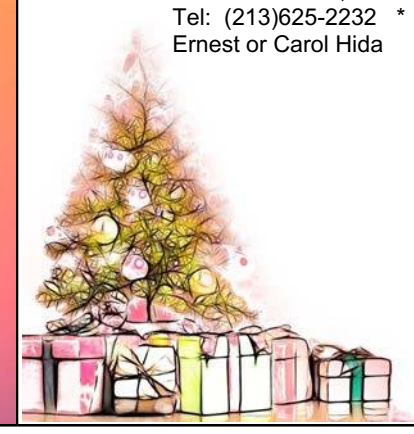
KOREA HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Oct 11-24
Seoul, Bullet Train, Gyeongju, Busan, Jeju Island, Jeonju, Daejon,
Nami Island, Seoul, DMZ, K-Drama sites.

NATIONAL PARKS & CANYONS TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Oct 13-18
Las Vegas, Mesquite, Hoover Dam, Grand Canyon West,
St. George, Bryce Canyon & Zion National Park.

JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Nov 10-22
Kyushu-Shikoku. Fukuoka, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Ibusuki/Kagoshima, Miyazaki,
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PHOTOS: COURTESY OF GIL ASAKAWA



Gil Asakawa attended the recent Hanzawa-Sakuma Family Reunion, the first gathering since 2016.



Gil's cousin, Laura McHugh (left), and her husband, John, taught him how to make laulau, as Erin Yoshimura (back toward the camera) washes the gigantic laulau leaves to wrap up the meat.



KAZOKU, OHANA: The Ties That Bind

By Gil Asakawa

I did not grow up attending family reunions. When I was a kid in Tokyo, I only knew my mom and dad and my two brothers. We visited my mom's family in Hokkaido a few times, so I met my grandmother, aunt, uncles and a couple of cousins. But no warm, huggy family reunions. It was much later, after my dad died of cancer, that I became curious about his side of the family.

My mom and I even tracked down my dad's family in Fukui, where they lived during World War II. I only knew of my dad's family the little bit he told me when he was diagnosed with lung cancer (after a lifetime of smoking Lucky Strikes, thanks to the U.S. Army for introducing him to the habit), and I happened to ask him, "Hey dad, what was it like to be in Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Your grandfather moved us all to Japan in 1940. We weren't there when the war started."

"Whaaat?!?!" I coughed.

It's true. The Asakawa family — my dad and his seven brothers and sisters were born in Hawaii in the 1920s and '30s — was in Japan when Pearl Harbor was bombed. My grandfather was had a successful construction company in Honolulu in the 1930s, but he decided to take everyone back to Japan a year before war broke out in the Pacific.

My dad was 8 years old when he left Honolulu and 13 at the end of the war, when he went to work as a houseboy for the U.S. Occupation Forces and eventually then joined the Army. He met my mom in Hokkaido during the Korean conflict, and my brothers and I were all born in Tokyo. Those years are a book in the making (slowly).

What I learned about my grandmother was that she tragically died before the Asakawas were to get on the ship to Japan, literally on the night before the departure. We learned she was a "mail-order bride" sent to Hawaii to marry my grandfather. That's it. Period.

Until 2006, when I was in California for a book signing of "Being Japanese American." I sat under a tent in the backyard of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose when a young woman came up to me, and when I asked for her name and spelling for the autograph, she declared, "We're related. My mom is your cousin." Then, she put down a flier on the table and added, "You need to come to our family reunion."

That's when I learned my grandmother, Tomeno Hanzawa, was the daughter of another construction company scion in Honolulu, not a mail-order bride. And she did die literally on the eve of the family's departure for Japan, which delayed the trip by a month to July of 1940. Her death was under mysterious circumstances according to some reports — that's another book waiting to be written.

In any case, 2007 was the year Erin and I attended our first Hanzawa-Sakuma Family Reunion, and I met more than a hundred relatives that I had no idea I had. It was held at a restaurant on Shafter Army Base on Oahu, and I ended up blogging about the experience.

Then, in 2016, Erin and I were lucky enough to attend another reunion. And now, we just retuned from a week in Hawaii, where we got to be at the first one held since 2016 (Covid scrapped the planned 2020 celebration).

There were about 85 attendees of all ages at the Natsunoya Tea House, a beautiful space on a hillside overlooking Honolulu. The food was a fabulous Hawaiian-style spread including maze gohan mixed rice, mac and potato salad, chashu pork, tonkatsu fried-breaded pork cutlet, teriyaki chicken, yakisoba and tempura.

We got to sit and chat with and remeet cousins, uncles and aunties, and it was a wonderful, heartwarming time. My cousin, Aileen, whose daughter Joy was the woman who came up to me in San Jose, led an obon dance around the dining hall after our meal. My younger brother, Glenn, a professional photographer, was asked to take photos of the day; he attended with his partner, Kathy.

Because we Asakawas didn't grow up with a big family around us, this kind of celebration is almost unimaginable. At least Erin, who grew up with lots of relatives in the Denver area, has attended holidays, celebrations and, yes, funerals, with lots of relatives.

In Hawaii, we were surrounded by so many *ohana* — family — who embraced us as if they'd known us all their lives — it was transformative. No longer were Glenn and I (and Gary, our older brother in Colorado Springs) and our mother, who lives near us in a memory care center, just a small but not always close nuclear family. We felt part of a *community*.

We stayed with my cousin, Laura McHugh, and her husband, John, and one day, her twin sister, Regine, came over with her husband, Dick, to teach us how to make laulau — meat and fish wrapped in laulau (tarot) leaves and tied up with a ti leaf and twine, then steamed for hours and served with poi, lomi salmon and chicken with long rice. We also dined at amazing fancy and downhome restaurants for oxtail soup, ramen, adobo rice and kalbi. We had shave ice for a snack and papaya with lilikoi every morning.

Ohana in Japanese is *kazoku*. In my experience, most of the families I knew growing up were small, with maybe a couple of kids. Back in the day when Japan was much more an agricultural land, and certainly for the early Japanese American immigrants who worked on farms in Hawaii and the western U.S. mainland, large families were the norm. Kids would grow up to help on the farm.

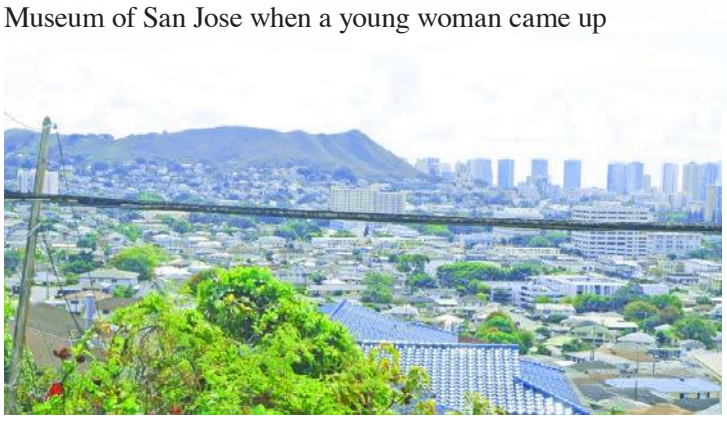
Modern Japanese *kazoku* are smaller (especially in the city centers like Tokyo), as are modern American families. At the Hanzawa-Sakuma family reunion, the younger families seemed to be mostly smaller, with one or two children. No more of the eight kids who made up the Asakawa household of the 1930s.

Family ties are the deepest connections we can make. Networks of families make communities, and for communities like Japanese Americans, the deep sense of ethnic, cultural and historical ties make us stronger and richer.

I feel richer for having attended this year's Hanzawa-Sakuma Family Reunion, and I look forward to going to Hawaii, where it's so easy for our community to feel at home, more than once before the next family reunion, which hopefully will be in 2026.

Thank you to all my ohana, *mahalo and aloha nui loa*.

Gil Asakawa is the author of "Tabemasho! Let's Eat! The Tasty History of Japanese Food in America."



The Hanzawa-Sakuma Family Reunion was held at the Natsunoya Tea House, which overlooks downtown Honolulu.



Members of the Hanzawa-Sakuma family

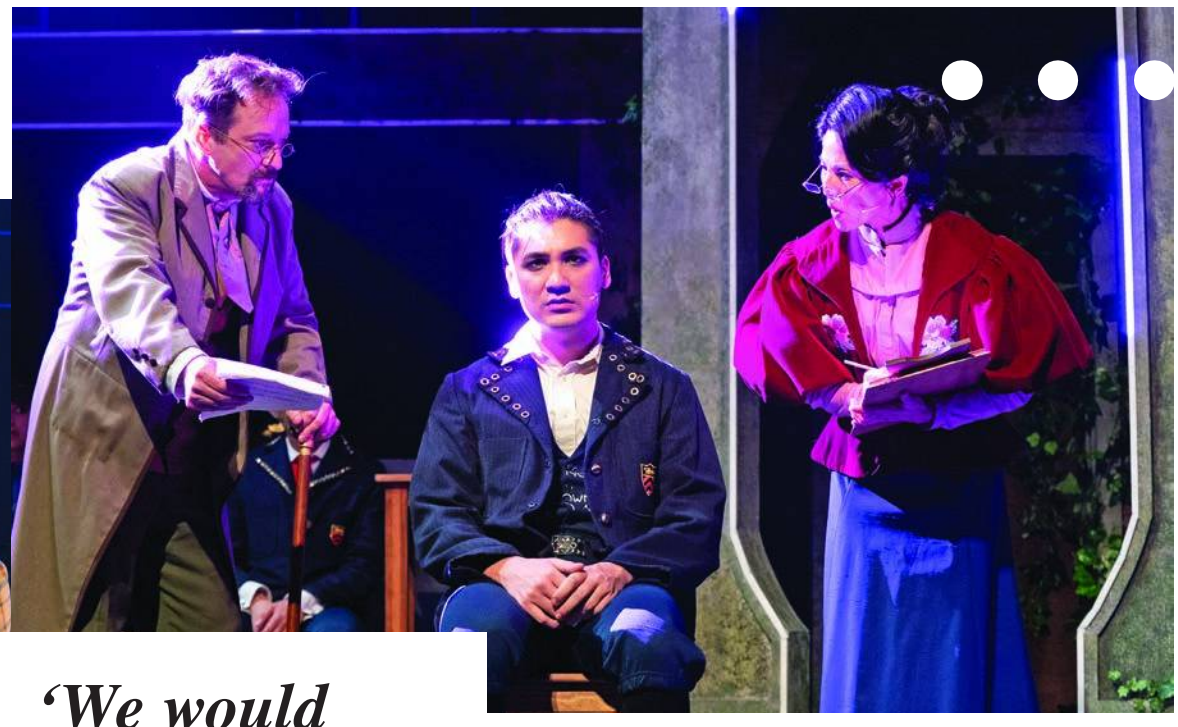


Gil's cousin, Aileen Moriwake, leads the family in an obon dance.

East West Players' production of "Spring Awakening," the Tony Award-winning musical, was directed by former EWP Artistic Director Tim Dang and features Thomas Winter in the lead role as Melchior.

PHOTOS: JENNY GRAHAM





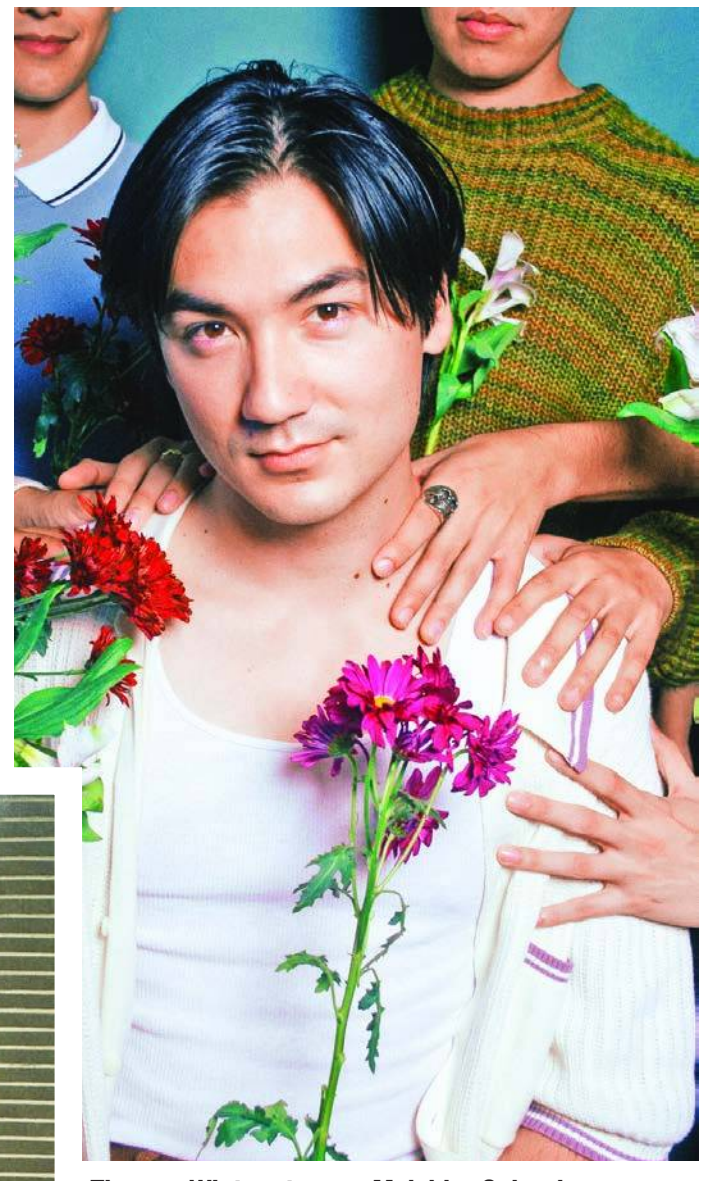
Thomas Winter *(center)* with co-stars Daniel Blinkoff and Tamlyn Tomita



Winter with Mia Sempertegui, who plays Wendla Bergman

'We would frequently take trips to Little Tokyo, and that's how I started getting a lay of the land and developed my own connection to the community.'

— Thomas Winter

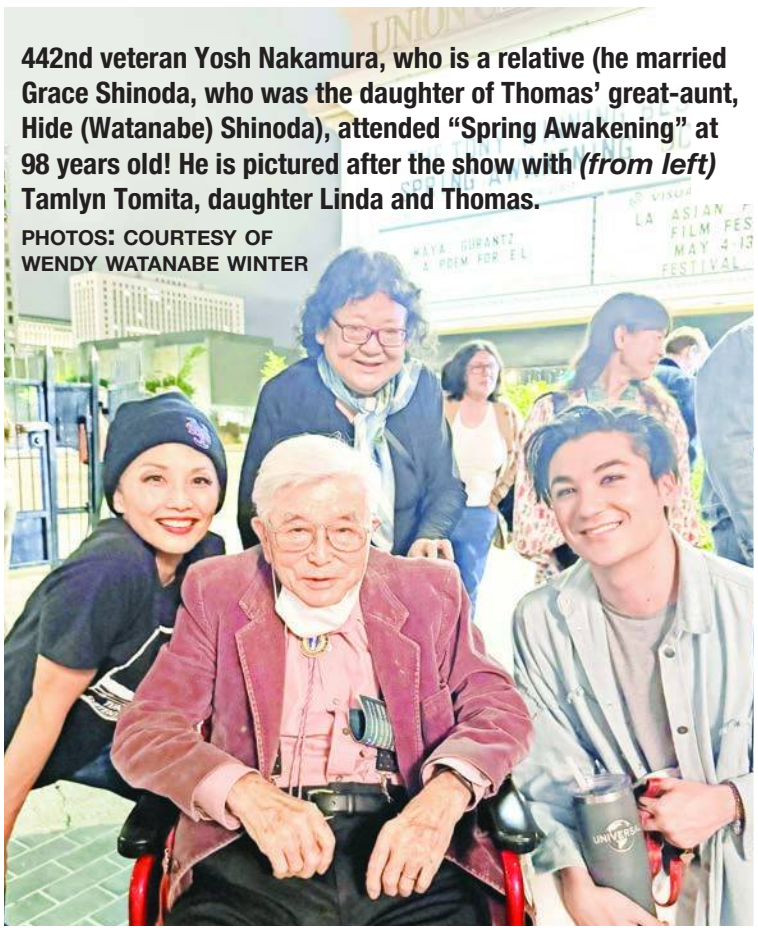


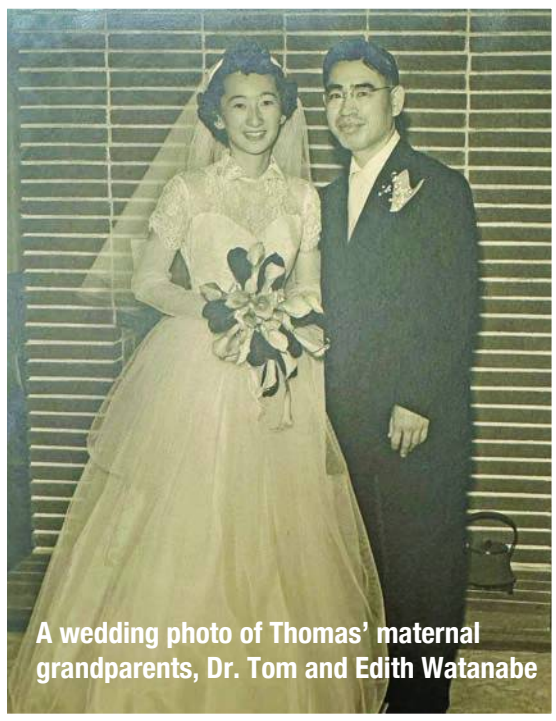
Thomas Winter stars as Melchior Gabor in East West Players' "Spring Awakening."

PHOTO: TJ RAMIREZ

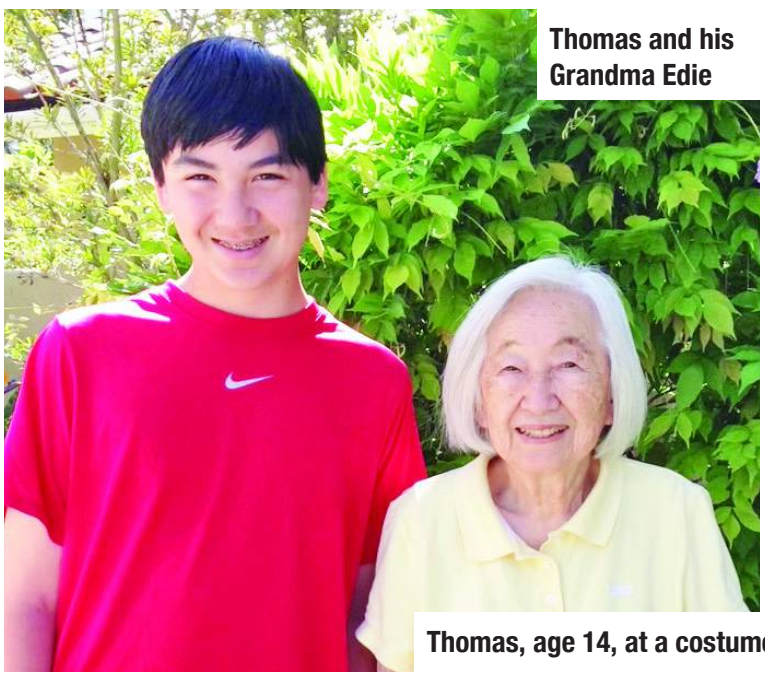
442nd veteran Yosh Nakamura, who is a relative (he married Grace Shinoda, who was the daughter of Thomas' great-aunt, Hide (Watanabe) Shinoda), attended "Spring Awakening" at 98 years old! He is pictured after the show with *(from left)* Tamlyn Tomita, daughter Linda and Thomas.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WENDY WATANABE WINTER





A wedding photo of Thomas' maternal grandparents, Dr. Tom and Edith Watanabe



Thomas and his Grandma Edie



Thomas, age 14, at a costume fitting for his first show, "Singin' in the Rain"



Dr. Tom Watanabe

Winter in Spring (Awakening)!

As the lead in East West Players' musical production of 'Spring Awakening,' multitalented Thomas Winter is connecting his past to his promising future.

By Athena Mari Asklipiadis, Contributor

Front and center on the East West Players' stage in Little Tokyo as the lead in the Tony Award-winning musical "Spring Awakening," actor Thomas Winter gives the Nov. 19 sold-out audience a performance to remember. Playing angsty teen Melchior Gabor, Winter comes in hot on the chilly closing night of the musical at Los Angeles' historic David Henry Hwang Theater.

The musical, in production since October, had been playing to packed audiences and received numerous raving reviews. When reflecting on his role as Melchior, Winter shared with the *Pacific Citizen* that his character is complex and "deeply flawed and whose flaws can easily paint him as an unlikeable protagonist. It has been a blessing to play a role that presents such a challenge, which simultaneously offers me so many opportunities to grow as a performer." That room for growth and humble approach made Winter the perfect fit for such a role.

With heavy themes like teen pregnancy, abuse, suicide and abortion, the very diverse and young cast, comprised mostly of EWP newbies, deliver scenes like seasoned pros. Set in 19th-century Germany, the musical's juxtaposed cast of multiracial actors was a surprising contrast that not only worked, but also added a layer of visibility we don't often see in mainstream theater or film.

Seeing Asian and mixed-Asian actors talking of and acting out scenes about adolescent sexuality is not too common, even in 2023. Director Tim Dang shares how the casting of "Awakening" represents today's changing demographics: "The population of our American youth will soon be majority POC (persons of color). All of our young Gen-Z performers are POC, most being of mixed heritage or mixed race," he shared.

For Winter, the casting of the show was especially meaningful. "I have to thank Tim for being such a collaborative director and letting me explore all of the different ways that I thought to represent Melchior as a mixed-race character in this show. . . . Melchior is not just played by a mixed-race Japanese actor, he is also being represented as a mixed-race Japanese person who exists in the setting of 'Spring Awakening.'"

Broaching the topic of being Hapa/mixed and auditioning, Winter shared how it can go both ways. "Some say that I'm ethnically ambiguous and will thus be favored to play a wide variety of roles. On the other hand, I have personally seen and experienced the opposite," he said. "I have had a director once tell me that I didn't look Japanese enough to play a role for a short film when I was the only Japanese actor who auditioned. And after a performance of 'Spring Awakening,' an audience member shared with me that they were happy to see me onstage playing a mixed-race character, with Tamlyn Tomita and Daniel Blinkoff playing my parents (among other roles) because they said that seeing a mixed-race story portrayed onstage is not something that they would have seen in years past."

Articulately put, Winter continued, "I have seen recent strides being made for Asian women and differently abled people, but just because we are making strides for these groups doesn't mean that Hollywood is yet indicative of the world that we live in. Art should imitate life, and in order for it to do that, we must have stories that are indicative and inclusive of every person in this world. Perhaps this is an unattainable goal — to create a mirror of our society — but it should be the goal."

At just 23 years old, Winter is beyond wise for his age. He seems to know exactly where he is going, and starting his career as a part of the EWP theater troupe is a smart move that has proven successful for actors such as John Cho, David Hwang, Daniel Dae Kim and Kal Penn, who all spent their early days on the same stage.

As a Yonsei, fourth-generation Manhattan Beach, Calif., native, Winter was in good company alongside other talented Japanese Americans in "Spring Awakening," including actors Genki Hall and Tamlyn Tomita, as well as guitarist Hisako Ozawa from Tokyo in the orchestra.

Tomita gave a stellar performance as multiple adult female roles requiring numerous quick changes throughout the performance. She also played opposite her real-life husband, Daniel Blinkoff. Hall is another young talent we should keep an eye on who brings contagious energy and skill to the stage. The rest of the ensemble was equally as impressive, bringing refreshing youthful enthusiasm to the production.

Although "Spring Awakening" was Winter's first EWP production, being cast in a principal role is a testament to his enormous talent as a triple threat — an effortless singer, actor and dancer. This upcomer began acting at age 14 in local community theater. His passion morphed into purpose and that drive took him to the University of Southern California, where he double-majored in theater and economics. Currently, when he is not taking stages by storm, Winter is working for NBCUniversal in its Page Program.

While at USC, Winter explored his Japanese heritage via his involvement in the Nikkei Student Union, which acquainted him with the Japanese American community in Los Angeles.

"We would frequently take trips to Little Tokyo, and that's how I started getting a lay of the land and developed my own connection to the community," said Winter.

Thinking of the current climate and the future of Little Tokyo, Winter shared, "It is sad to see legacy businesses like Suehiro Cafe facing eviction as gentrification seems to be taking over the area. Myself and others in the cast visited Suehiro for the first time this year and quickly became fans. It's hard to understand how a business that continues to grow its consumer base is facing eviction. However, I am holding out hope that the outcry of support from the JA community and its allies will help businesses like this come back in the future."

Although Winter's advocacy and personal ties to the community didn't largely begin until college, his family roots run deep in Downtown Los Angeles' famous JA enclave.

Speaking with Wendy Watanabe Winter, Thomas' mother, I learned that Thomas is his grandfather's namesake, named after Dr. Thomas Watanabe, who grew up in Los Angeles' Boyle Heights area. Watanabe graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, and then from Rush Medical School at the University of Chicago before World War II.

Sadly, during the war, Watanabe's family was split up, as his father was taken by the FBI and his mother and sisters were taken to Manzanar. Wendy Watanabe Winter recalled, "Grandpa Tom was still in Chicago when his family was sent to Manzanar but was told that if he visited his family at Manzanar, he would be allowed to leave and return to Chicago. However, once he was there, they would not allow him to leave, and he was kept there but worked as a medical doctor in the camp."

After the conclusion of WWII, Watanabe's family settled in the Highland Park area of Los Angeles. He would later go on to meet his future wife, Edie, through the JACL, where they were both active. The Watanabes set up shop in Los Angeles, opening a radiology medical office named Central X-Ray Lab in Little Tokyo on Central and First Street (upstairs from Oomasa restaurant). Dr. Tom Watanabe remained in practice from the 1950s until his retirement in the early 1980s.

"He operated just across the street from JANM," Wendy Watanabe Winter shared. "My mom and her siblings have recalled stories about visiting his office as kids and helping him develop X-rays in his dark room. After my Grandma Edie passed away in March of this year, we found a huge archive of 8mm home video that my Grandpa Tom shot. Some of the footage included celebrating the opening of his radiology office and my mom and her siblings watching the floats at the Nisei Week Parade." Besides the JACL, Dr. Watanabe was also active in the Japanese American Medical Assn. and Centenary Methodist Church.

For Winter and his family, being a part of EWP is a full-circle moment. The theater stands less than a five-minute walk from the building where his grandfather's medical office once stood. Winter's experience has enriched his ties to the community in which his grandfather was so dedicated.

"East West Players has furthered my connection with the Japanese American community in Little Tokyo," Winter said. "Tamlyn Tomita is a huge figure within the JA community, and she has been generous enough to show me around all the good eateries and introduce me to the local businesses and business owners who have built a legacy in Little Tokyo."

As for what's next for Winter, he is candid about the unpredictability of the entertainment industry. While he survived the recent actors' strike and lack of paid opportunities, Winter remains hopeful for the future. "I am trying to gain a diverse skill-set as I enter this business, so that I can adequately prepare myself for anything that this industry throws at me. In the end, I hope to be a multihyphenate: an actor-writer-director," he said.

Winter has multiple projects in the works. He plans to make use of the family's old 8mm films by incorporating them into a short documentary he has been working on since his grandmother's passing to honor his heritage and family story.

"My film is about the generational role-reversal that everyone experiences in life: when they become the adults and the adults in their life start to become the children. Specifically, my film looks at this through the lens of how we document each other on camera," he said. "I think that everyone has experienced or will experience a point in their life when they decide to document their parents and preserve their family's stories. My film takes a look at this point in my life and the added layer of doing that within a Japanese American family.

"Aside from this, people can see me performing with the Cold Tofu ensemble," he continued. "Cold Tofu, for those who are unfamiliar, was founded in 1981 and is the nation's first Asian American improv and comedy group."

Winter's hard work and determination in the face of a post-pandemic landscape during an industry-wide strike resembles the same unfaltering strength his grandfather had practicing medicine while forcibly incarcerated during WWII and starting his own radiology lab post-war. Both hard working, both on the heels of major life-altering world events, both making their community proud, it's clear that the two Thomases share much more than just a name.

To keep up with Thomas Winter, follow him on Instagram @_thomas_winter. To learn more about EWP, visit https://www.eastwestplayers.org/.

Athena Mari Asklipiadis, a Hapa Japanese L.A. native, is the founder of Mixed Marrow, a filmmaker and a diversity advocate.

Contra Costa

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Ruth Ichinaga

Hau'oli Makahiki Hou
Aloha, Gerry Uesugi, Erin, Steve & Chris

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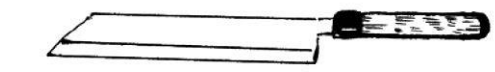
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KITCHENS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

TACO JUAN

By John Saito Jr., P.C. Editorial Board Chair



When I was a kid growing up in the early 1970s, our family enjoyed taking a 20-minute drive to a small taco shop in East Los Angeles. It was such a long time ago that the only thing I can tell you is that it was located on a busy street and that there was plenty of nearby street parking.

The diner was owned by an Issei woman named Mrs. Takeda. There was no marquee or signage with the name of the restaurant at the front of the property. My father simply called it, "Mrs. Takeda's." I think everyone else did, too.

I vaguely remember walking through an old, wooden-frame screen door that led you into a low-lit dining area. We were greeted by the familiar and welcoming scent of cooking oil crackling on a hot stove.

From there, it was all Mrs. Takeda. Small in stature, she wore cat-eye glass frames, her salt-and-pepper hair tied nicely in a bun. With a pleasant smile and an earnest demeanor, she greeted you, took your order with a pencil and notepad before heading straight to the kitchen to serve up some of the best hard-shell tacos in town.

There was a menu, and she probably served more than just tacos. But all we ever ordered were her tacos, as did virtually all of her other regulars.

Within moments, she was back at our table with our order. When my grandmother was still alive, we would pick her up on the way to Mrs. Takeda's. Grandma wore a full set of dentures, but she had a hearty stomach and a big appetite, so she dug in and savored every crunchy bite.

So did everyone else. Her seasonings made for a delicious meat filling, and she did something unique: Instead of lettuce, she stuffed her tacos with shredded cabbage.

We continued this tradition of eating at Mrs. Takeda's for several years until she announced on one of our last visits that she was going to retire. And just like that, our fun trips to Mrs. Takeda's came to an end.

Unfortunately, I never got her backstory. I don't know her first name, and we don't have any photos of her in our family album. It would have been neat to find out how a postwar Japanese American woman came to set up a popular taco shop in a predominantly Latino neighborhood.

Before she closed, my father asked her if she would share her recipe with him. She politely declined and chose to keep her recipe a best-kept secret. It wasn't until several years had passed that my father, who was born and raised in the East L.A. community of Boyle Heights and later spent more than a decade working as a JACL regional director, felt compelled to take a crack at re-creating her recipe.

It was difficult to tell how authentic his re-creation was compared to Mrs. Takeda's. But I have to say, we all enjoyed it. On one visit to my cousins' house for the Fourth of July, he pulled a surprise and said he was going to make tacos. He must have made about five dozen tacos. They were all gone before we started playing with our fireworks. And July 4 was his birthday, no less.

To my sister's credit, she asked my dad for the recipe before his passing in 2012. On the written note, she titled the recipe, "Taco Juan." After John Sr. had retired from the JACL in 1990, we encouraged him to open a taco stand and call it, "Taco Juan." But he had other plans in mind, and they didn't include making tacos for the masses.

Now, it looks like I'm the one who has become the designated taco maker in the family. Everyone seems to like them. So, here is the recipe. ***Enjoy.***

Taco Juan

2 dozen corn tortillas
1 pound ground beef (or ground turkey)
1 brown onion
4 celery stalks (chopped)
6 or more cloves of garlic (chopped)
Seasoning: Salt, pepper, cumin, chili powder (add to taste)
Cooking oil

For the cooked tacos:

1 cabbage (sliced fine)
1 tomato (chopped small)
1 onion (diced)
1 salsa or taco sauce
(We don't use grated cheese, but if you are fan of cheese, go for it.)

Fry ground beef/turkey and drain fat. Add rest of ingredients and cook until vegetables are soft. Set aside. Take corn tortillas (one at a time) and place over fire (medium to high) to soften (no more than 25 seconds on each side). Place the tortilla on a large plate and add a generous amount of meat filling. Fold the tortilla and thread with one toothpick through the middle. After filling all of your tacos, deep fry each taco to desired crispness. The ingredients are already cooked, so you are frying for a soft to hard taco. Pull out toothpick and add sliced cabbage, other toppings and salsa. Tips: Salt cabbage prior to eating (it softens it up). And use a prong or long wooden chopsticks when frying tacos.

GRACE PASTRIES' DANISH TEA CAKES

By Mitchell Matsumura, PSW





The following was written by Grace Pastries' family:
Whenever I mention to folks who grew up in the Los Angeles area during the '50s, '60s or '70s that my father owned Grace Pastries, tea cakes and dobash cakes inevitably enter the conversation. While I admit his multilayer dobash cake was great, the tea cakes always had a special place in my heart. His original tea cake recipe for 70 DOZEN that called for 16 lbs of brown sugar and 24 lbs of buttermilk (just to name a few ingredients) proved a little too unwieldy, not to mention impractical for us home kitchen bakers. So, without further ado, here is the tested, tried-and-true recipe for a more manageable number of Grace Pastries' Danish Tea Cake.

Makes 24

For the batter:

- **1 1/4 cup brown sugar**
- **3/4 cup extra-fine white sugar**
- **3/4 cup vegetable oil**
- **3/4 tsp salt**
- **1/2 tsp vanilla**
- **3 eggs (minus 1 tablespoon)**
- **1 1/2 cup buttermilk**
- **2 1/2 cup cake flour**
- **1/2 tsp baking soda**

For the icing:

- **6 tbsp butter**
- **1 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar**
- **1 tsp vanilla**
- **3 tbsp hot water**

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°.

Cream together the brown sugar, white sugar, vegetable oil, salt and vanilla. Add the eggs in three parts. Cream slowly for six minutes, continually scraping down the sides. Add 3/4 cup of the buttermilk, cake flour and baking soda until smooth. Add the remaining 3/4 cup of buttermilk.

Line the muffin cups with paper liners. Fill cups 2/3 full. Bake for 18-20 minutes, rotating pans halfway through. Let cool in the pans for 5 minutes, then turn out on cooling racks. Repeat with any remaining batter. Let cool completely before topping with the icing.

Heat the butter slowly and cook until until golden brown.

In a separate bowl, mix confectioners' sugar, vanilla and hot water together. Add the melted butter. Whisk until smooth.

While the icing mixture is still warm but the cakes are cooled, dip the tops of the cakes into the icing mix and cool again, careful not to layer the icing on too thickly.

Dad baked his tea cakes in restaurant-grade square muffin tins using regular round cupcake liners. Some specialty cookware stores may have the square tins, and you can also find them online, but I found mine at, of all places, Marshall's in the kitchen section.

Enjoy!

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Sites of Interest in NEBRASKA

By Stephen W. Kay,
Contributor

In keeping with the *Pacific Citizen* Holiday Special Issue's theme, "Celebrating Connections," this article provides an opportunity for Nebraska to connect with Japanese Americans across the United States and share the unique history of the Japanese in Nebraska. My first connection with the *Pacific Citizen* was in 2012, which led to the article, "Nebraska Churches Prep for Celebrations to Honor Japanese American Reverend" *(see Pacific Citizen's June 1-14, 2012, issue).*

At the conclusion of the Japanese Heritage Celebration Banquet in North Platte, Neb., on July 29, 2012, my closing comment was: "It is important that succeeding generations are aware of the accomplishments, experiences, sacrifices and service of the Japanese immigrants and their families in Western Nebraska."

Over the past 12 years, I have been doing research and collecting historical photos, articles and documents so this important part of Nebraska history is preserved.

Following the exhibit opening in North Platte, I started thinking about sites in Nebraska that would be of interest to *Pacific Citizen* readers. I am sure people from around the country would not only be surprised about the Japanese immigrants in Nebraska, but also the interesting places to visit.

When traveling across Nebraska, hopefully *Pacific Citizen* readers will consider stopping at the following attractions.

Japanese Hall at the Legacy of the Plains Museum in Gering
Legacy of the Plains Museum
2930 Old Oregon Trail
Gering, NE 69341
(308) 436-1989
(Japanese Hall – Grand opening will be held on June 8, 2024)
https://legacyoftheplains.org/plan-a-visit/exhibits/outdoor-exhibits/coming-soon-japanese-hall/
Email: *info@legacyoftheplains.org*

Japanese Exhibit at the Lincoln County Historical Museum in North Platte
Lincoln County Historical Museum
2403 N. Buffalo Bill Ave.
North Platte, NE 69101
(308) 534-5640
Museum Hours: May-September
Monday-Saturday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday: 1-5 p.m.
Link to *Pacific Citizen* article: *https://www.pacificcitizen.org/lincoln-county-historical-museum-opens-new-exhibit/*
https://lincolncountymuseum.org/
Email: *lincomuseum@gmail.com*

Hiram Hisanori Kano – Nebraska State Historical Marker in North Platte
Kano Icon, St. George's Japanese Mission Photo Display
Episcopal Church of Our Savior
203 W. Fourth St.
North Platte, NE 69101
(308) 532-0515
Hiram Hisanori Kano served as an agricultural adviser, counselor, minister and translator for the Japanese community in Nebraska. The Nebraska State Historical Marker will be installed in the spring of 2024.
St. George's Japanese Mission held services at Episcopal Church of Our Savior. The mission merged with the parish upon Kano's retirement on Jan. 30, 1957.
https://www.facebook.com/people/Episcopal-Church-of-Our-Savior/100067923733324/

Kawasaki Reading Room for Japanese Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
(Top floor of the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center)
Room: JGMC 302, Third Floor
505 S St.
Lincoln NE 68588-0450
(402) 472-3745
The Kawasaki Reading Room contains a Japanese library. Events are held regularly, providing the opportunity to experience Japanese history, culture, language, music, crafts and art.
Hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (except Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m., for Japanese Conversation Table)
https://modlang.unl.edu/kawasaki-reading-room
Email: *kawasakireadingroom@gmail.com*

Nisei Plaza at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Located north of Kimball Recital Hall on the University of Nebraska's City Campus
1113 R St.
Lincoln, NE 68588
Nisei alumni donated funds for the creation of a plaza on the University of Nebraska campus, which was dedicated on April 24, 1999.
https://unlhistory.unl.edu/exhibits/show/nisei/nisei-experience-at-unl/nisei-plaza



PHOTO: BRYAN MEDICAL CENTER, LINCOLN

William Jennings Bryan House, known as 'Fairview,' in Lincoln
4900 Sumner St. (49th & Sumner) at Bryan Medical Center, Bryan East Campus
Lincoln, NE 68506
(402) 481-3032
Tours are by appointment and must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance.
Bryan was a three-time Democratic nominee for the U.S. Presidency (1896, 1900 and 1908) and served as U.S. Secretary of State (March 5, 1913-June 9, 1915). In October 1899, young Yashirchiro Yamashita arrived at the Bryan home in Lincoln, asking if he could stay with them. Yamashita lived with the Bryans for over five years, earning a degree from the University of Nebraska. The Bryan family visited Japan for a month in October 1905. During this trip, Bryan met Hisanori Kano, age 16, while visiting the Viscount Hisayoshi Kano home at Iriarai, Ebara-gori, Tokyo Prefecture. Bryan, as secretary of state, worked against the discriminatory 1913 California Alien Land Law bill. In 1916, Bryan invited Hisanori Kano to come to Lincoln to study at the University of Nebraska.
https://www.lincoln.org/listing/fairview-the-bryan-museum/1310/

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Gallery Hours: Thursday-Saturday, 1-7 p.m.; Sunday, 1-6 p.m.
https://thekaneko.org/
Email: *info@thekaneko.org*



PHOTO: JOSHUA FOO

Japanese Park, Sunpu Castle Gate, Sunpu Chaya and Miniature Mt. Fuji
Lauritzen Gardens
100 Bancroft St.
Omaha, NE 68108
(402) 346-4002
An annual Japanese Ambience Festival is held at Lauritzen Gardens.
https://www.lauritzengardens.org/Visit/Events_and_Exhibits/Japanese_Ambience_Festival/
Sunpu Castle Gate and Mt. Fuji Replica
https://www.lauritzengardens.org/Visit/Gardens/Japanese_Garden_Future/index.asp
Hours: Currently open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
https://www.lauritzengardens.org/index.asp



Mia Jenkins, director of marketing at Lauritzen Gardens, provided the following information:

- "The Sunpu Castle Gate was a gift from the citizens of Shizuoka, Japan, to the people of Omaha to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Omaha Sister Cities Assn.'s friendship with Shizuoka. Sunpu is the former name of Shizuoka. The design is a one-third scale replica of the entry gate at the Sunpu Castle in Japan, built between 1585 and 1586 by the powerful shogun Ieyasu Tokugawa, who was the first shogun of the shogun era and brought Japan together under one rule for the first time. This symbolic gate serves as the entrance to Lauritzen Gardens' Japanese park."
- "The Sunpu Chaya is a small, free-standing, traditional wooden-roofed structure similar to a waiting room or gazebo. Craftsmen from Shizuoka, Japan, and Omaha, Neb., worked together to build this structure in 2015. It was a gift to the people of Omaha from the people of Shizuoka to symbolize 50 years of friendship."
- "Miniature Mt. Fuji, or "Fuji-san," sits on the border of the Shizuoka and Yamanashi Prefectures. It is an active volcano that last erupted in 1707 and is considered one of Japan's most sacred mountains. The replica at Lauritzen Gardens is 377.6 inches tall, making it approximately 400 times smaller than the real Mt. Fuji. Our Mt. Fuji was regraded in 2021 and planted with a well-adapted, native buffalo grass."

Many people are not aware of the unique history of the Japanese in Nebraska. It is my goal to bring awareness of these interesting attractions. ■

Berkeley

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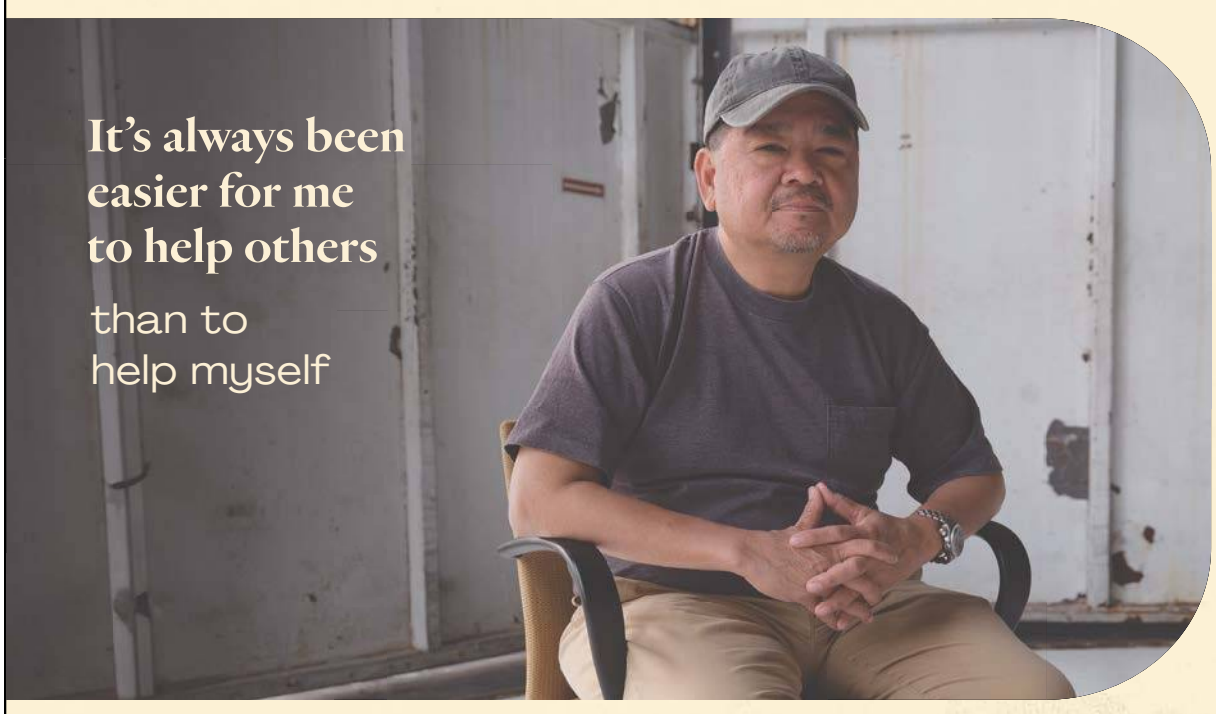


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AARP'S CONNECT2AFFECT

By Scott Tanaka



The end of the year brings about gatherings with family and friends, work parties and for my local JACL chapter, the annual Mochitsuki. Unfortunately, I couldn't attend this year, but it is a tradition for our chapter where we come together to pound rice to make mochi. We always have delicious food, including homemade ozoni, a traditional Japanese New Year dish!

Although this is usually a busy time for many, we know this isn't the case for everyone. Nearly 1 in 4 older adults are affected by social isolation. Studies have found that not only does isolation significantly increase a person's risk of premature death — a risk that may rival those of smoking, obesity and physical inactivity — but also being disconnected from community often means being disconnected from the supportive services and resources communities provide.

Research shows that being connected to one's community may help alleviate poverty and improve overall health. A strong social network can become a lifeline to the kind of support and financial resources that make a difference during times of need. Through Connect2Affect, AARP Foundation is calling attention to the issue and helping people build the social connections they need to thrive.

How It Works

Through Connect2Affect, the AARP Foundation provides visitors with tips on staying connected to their communities and helpful resources. Practical and urgent topics covered have included:

- How to spot scams when connecting online *(https://connect2affect.org/how-to-spot-scams-when-connecting-online/)*
- Getting help with high-speed internet bills through the Affordable Connectivity Program
- Using locators for national and local volunteer opportunities

In addition, through its grants program, AARP Foundation sponsors new research by national and local partners to explore how health systems, nonprofits and community organizations can connect older adults to services that address their needs. You can access this free resource by going to *https://connect2affect.org/*.

I want to highlight one of the above resources, volunteer opportunities. Volunteerism is a great way to meet new people. I have shared this before, but volunteers are core to everything we do at AARP and help us carry out our motto of "To serve, not to be served," as articulated by our founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus. You can sign up and learn more about becoming an AARP Volunteer by going to *https://www.aarp.org/volunteer/programs/*.

You can also visit AARP's Create the Good, which connects you with volunteer opportunities to share your life experiences, skills and passions in your community. AARP's Creates the Good offers volunteer opportunities within AARP and with other organizations. There are virtual opportunities, too. Visit Create the Good's website here at *https://createthegood.aarp.org/*.

How You Can Help

Social isolation affects people of all ages, but we need to be particularly mindful of the older members of our community, who may not have access to transportation to attend events like Mochitsuki. So, if you're able, reach out to your older members and see if they need a ride. Even a phone call itself can make a big difference!

If you know of someone who may be experiencing social isolation, consider sharing AARP Foundation's Connect2Affect resource or encourage them to explore AARP's volunteer opportunities. Staying socially connected not only helps us thrive as individuals but also our communities as well.

AARP Foundation works for and with vulnerable people over 50 to end senior poverty and reduce financial hardship by building economic opportunity. As a charitable affiliate of AARP, AARP Foundation serves AARP members and nonmembers alike. Through vigorous legal advocacy and evidence-based solutions, and by strengthening supportive community connections, AARP Foundation fosters resilience, advances equity and restores hope. To learn more, visit *aarpfoundation.org* or follow @AARPFoundation on social media.

Scott Tanaka is a member of the JACL Washington, D.C., chapter and is a policy, research and international affairs adviser at AARP.

LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

Great Gift Ideas for Seniors

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.



I was delighted to receive an email from Executive Editor Allison Haramoto stating that this year's theme for *Pacific Citizen's* Holiday Special Issue would be "Celebrating Connections." Since I was planning to submit an article about holiday gift ideas for seniors, this theme made it easy for me to narrow it down to one item.

Let me share why science and research say "connections" are important. An article I found on www.healthnews.com titled "The Power of Social Connection for Longevity" *(Nov. 9, 2023)*, says that research has consistently shown that seniors with strong social connections and a sense of belonging can lead to a longer lifespan, largely through the following factors and influences:

(1) Improved health — People with strong social support networks have a lower risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attacks and strokes. Social connection has been linked to improved immune system function, as well as decreased levels of inflammation, which is associated with chronic diseases and accelerated aging.

(2) Healthier habits — Having a strong social network can influence people to adopt healthier behaviors and avoiding harmful habits like smoking or excessive alcohol consumption. Social connections can also provide motivation and companionship for engaging in regular exercise, leading to improved physical fitness and overall health.

(3) Cognitive stimulation — Engaging with others in social settings fosters mental agility, creativity and problem-solving skills. Social interactions stimulate intellectual discussions, thus enhancing cognitive function and boosting longevity.

(4) Emotional well-being — Social connections alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation, promoting a sense of belonging and emotional well-being. Having a network of supportive relationships also provides emotional support during difficult times, contributing to overall mental well-being and supporting longevity.

(5) Improved adherence to medical treatments — Social connections can positively impact adherence to medical treatments and therapies, leading to better management of chronic conditions and improved health outcomes. Some studies have even found that people with strong social support networks tend to experience faster recovery and healing following surgeries, illnesses or traumatic events.

(6) Sense of purpose and life satisfaction — Social connections contribute to life satisfaction by fostering a sense of belonging, purpose and interconnectedness. Being part of social networks provides a supportive community that enhances overall well-being and creates a fulfilling and meaningful life.

(7) Social connection and mental well-being — Social connection is not only essential for our physical well-being, but it also has profound effects on our mental health.

(8) Reduced stress and anxiety — Social connections offer a supportive network that can alleviate stress and anxiety through understanding and empathy. Having strong social bonds can also help with navigating challenging situations by providing a sense of security and reassurance.

(9) Improved self-esteem and confidence — Social connections provide validation and acceptance, which can enhance self-esteem and boost confidence. Supportive relationships also offer feedback and encouragement, enabling personal growth and increased self-assurance.

(10) Enhanced resilience — Social connections provide a valuable resource for coping with life's challenges and accessing different perspectives and solutions. Being part of a social network also fosters a sense of support and belonging, which strengthens resilience and promotes mental well-being.

(11) Improved mood and happiness — Engaging in pleasant social interactions promotes positive emotions and laughter, which contribute to a happier and more joyful outlook on life. Sharing experiences and activities with others also fosters a sense of enjoyment and connection, leading to an uplifted mood.

That said, always remember that one of the very best gifts you can give to an older loved one is your presence and attention — those are priceless to your seniors and will always make a difference. But sometimes, physical presence can be a problem. So, here's what modern technology has come up with — a TV that your parent appears in and talks to you in real time (a lot like "The Jetsons").

ViewClix Smart Frames are the perfect way to easily connect with a senior loved one when visiting is not possible. Why? Because the senior doesn't need to do anything. It's kind of like a Zoom meeting for seniors with Alzheimer's. Since all the features are managed remotely by family and friends, there's nothing the senior needs to do to enjoy.

ViewClix Group Calls are an instant, hassle-free way to see each other and chat. There is no scheduling or invitation links to send for Group Calls. Simply start a Group Call and instruct family and friends to join, transforming the way families stay in touch with seniors. Best of all, it's a "tech-free" experience for the senior.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or judd@elderlawcalifornia.com. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.

Mount Olympus

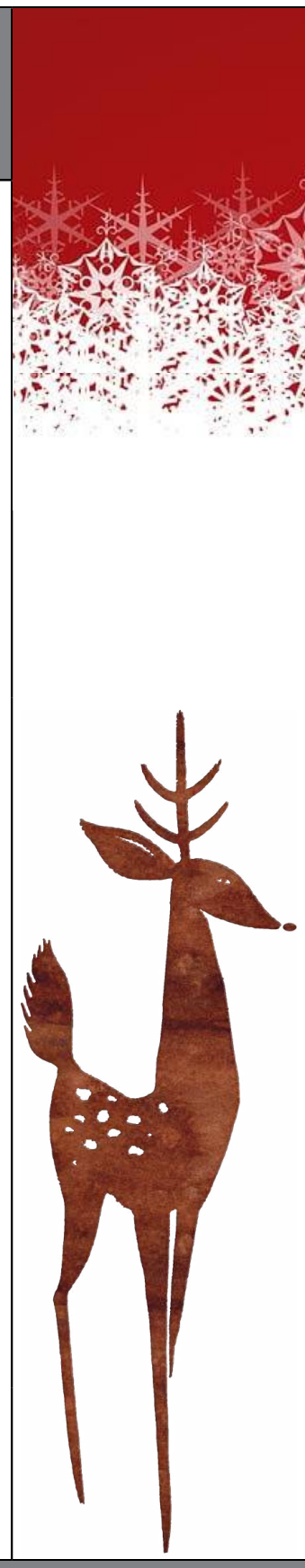


Happy Holidays from the

Mount Olympus JACL

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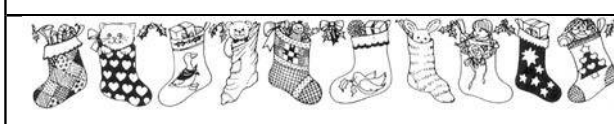
GLA

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Miyako Kadogawa
Nakazawa Family

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GREATER LOS ANGELES CHAPTER
JACL
Young Adults Group
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羅府大都市支部
Happy Holidays
From the GLA Chapter



Seasons Greetings

Akiyama, Guzman, Higashi, Misaka, Nodzu, Okawa and Watanabe Families

Philadelphia



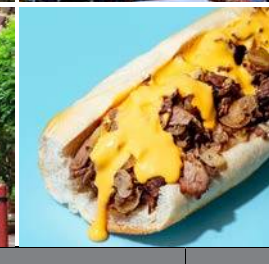


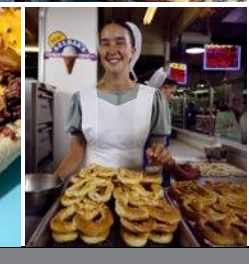
JACL PHL

Happy Holidays from the Philadelphia Chapter! We look forward to welcoming you to our city for the 2024 National Convention.

July 10-14, 2024







Idaho Falls

Seasons Greetings from Newly-Elected Board Members of Idaho Falls JACL



(Left to Right)
Matt Ishino, Lisa Olsen, Dale Cawley, Roger Haga, Connie Morishita, Mike Wheiler, Lora King, Jaxon King, Spyder King, Jon Ochi, and Tim Morishita.
(Not shown in photo)
Karen Sato, Walt Sato, and Jackie Sugai

Hoosier

Holiday Greetings for 2023

Hoosier JACL

Indianapolis, Indiana

Puyallup Valley

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11 a.m.–5 p.m.

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- Traditional *mochitsuki*
- Taiko
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NOTABLE 2023 LOSSES of Japanese Americans

Sam Araki

Born to Misano and Sakai Araki and incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in Arizona during WWII, Araki would go on to become the executive vp of Lockheed Corp. Missiles & Space Systems Group and president of Lockheed-Martin Missiles and Space.

Minoru "Sam" Araki of Saratoga, Calif., died Aug. 22. He was 92.

Trained as a mechanical engineer at Stanford University, where he also earned a master's degree, Araki was responsible for the development of the Corona satellite system, which was used for surveillance and reconnaissance during the Cold War. Corona is considered "the single most important source of intelligence on Soviet strategic forces."

Araki received the Von Braun Award for Excellence in Space Program Management and was a National Academy of Engineering Draper Prize winner. He was an Asian American Engineer of the Year. The National Reconnaissance Office named him a Pioneer of National Reconnaissance. Post-Lockheed, Araki started ST-Infonox Inc. and helped found Ecopia Farms.



PHOTO: KEVIN DEREK

Fumio Demura

The Yokohama, Japan-born karateka helped spread the martial art of karate to the United States and the rest of the world. Fumio Demura's role as a karate ambassador began after he moved to the United States in 1965, when he established a karate dōjō in Southern California.

Fumio Demura died April 24. He was 82.

He gained recognition among karate students by appearing on the cover of more than 60 different martial arts magazines and as the author of several books on karate and *kobudō* or traditional martial arts weapons such as *sai*, *bō, tonfa* (aka *tuifa*) and *nunchaku*, the last of which was popularized by cinematic martial arts superstar Bruce Lee. It was Demura who taught Lee how to use the weapon.

Demura had his own movie career, most significantly and mostly unbeknownst to the wider world, as Pat Morita's stunt double for the role of Mr. Miyagi in the original four "Karate Kid" movies. In February 2023, Black Belt magazine honored him for his 75 years of martial arts activity. (Demura began training in the martial arts at age 9.) The magazine also named him its instructor of the year in 1969 and martial artist of the year in 1975. He was twice honored as a member of Black Belt's Hall of Fame.

Randy Hagihara

The journalist, who began his stint at the *Los Angeles Times* in 1990, would spend more than 20 years at the paper before retiring in 2011. During his time at there, he was the senior editor of recruitment and in charge of what was then known as Metpro, its minority-recruitment program.

Randy Hagihara died Jan. 7 in Huntington Beach, Calif. He was 72.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, his entrée into a career in journalism came by way of working with Sacramento, Calif.-based investigative journalist K. W. Lee in the late 1970s via his ahead-of-the curve startup newspaper, *Koreatown Weekly.*

Randy Hagihara was predeceased by Janet, his wife of more than 40 years, and stepson Ian Kawata.

William Hiroto

A journalist, William Hiroto was born in Riverside, Calif., and was known by his friends and readers by the nickname "Wimp" and "Wimpy." During the latter years of his life, he contributed a column titled "Crossroads to Somewhere" to the *Rafu Shimpo*. His last column appeared in the paper's June 16 issue.

William Hiroto died June 23 in Los Angeles. He was 94.

Prior to serving in the Army, Hiroto was incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in Arizona during World War II. He later graduated from the University of Southern California with a journalism degree. In 2023, he was among of group of Japanese American military veterans who were recognized by USC for their military service.

Hiroto was predeceased by his wife, Margaret; and brother, Edwin Hiroto. He is survived by his sons, Russell (Jill) Hiroto and Jeffrey (Carol) Hiroto.



Fujima Kansuma

Born Sumako Hamaguchi in San Francisco on May 9, 1918, Kansuma dedicated her life to teaching classical Japanese dance to several generations of students. Her decades of activity included serving in 2018 as the choreographer at age 100 for the Nisei Week Parade in Little Tokyo.

Fujima Kansuma died Feb. 22. She was 104.

Hamaguchi's pursuit of learning classical Japanese dance continued when the family moved to Los Angeles and, after graduating from high school, Japan, where her kabuki dance teachers were Onoe Kikugoro VI and Fujima Kanjuro VI, who would later give Hamaguchi her *natori* or professional name, Kansuma.

After returning to the United States in 1940, Kansuma opened her first dance studio in Los Angeles and would later add more classes in other municipalities in L.A. County.

When the United States and Japan went to war, Kansuma's family and she would be held at the Rohwer WRA Center in Arkansas. She was nevertheless allowed to visit different camps to perform. Kansuma was recognized with the Order of the Precious Crown, Apricot, by the Japanese government in 1985 and the National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1987.

She is survived by her daughter, Miyako Tachibana, son-in-law Noriyoshi Tachibana, and grandchildren Jonathan Tachibana, Taizo Tachibana and Miwa Tachibana.



Martha Nakagawa

Less than two weeks after visiting the hospital for what she thought was a lingering stomach flu, journalist Martha Nakagawa received a cancer diagnosis on July 16 — her birthday.

Martha Nakagawa died July 28 in Los Angeles. She was 56.

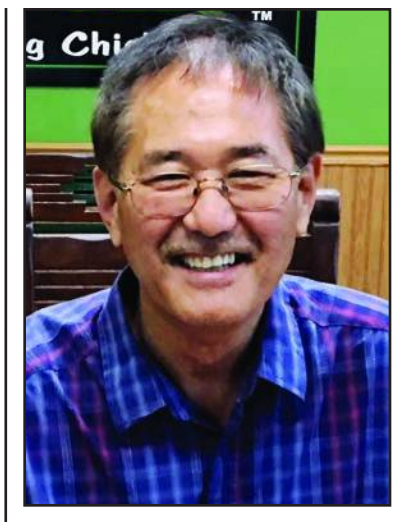
"She was in total shock," said her childhood friend, Marie Morohoshi, regarding Nakagawa's reaction to the medical results.

Nakagawa's journalism career included a five-year stint at *Pacific Citizen* (October 1998-June 2003) as assistant editor, as well as working on staff at *Asian Week* and *Rafu Shimpo*. She also contributed to *Hawaii Herald, Nikkei West, Nichi Bei Times* and *Hokubei Mainichi*.

Nakagawa was a graduate of Gardena High School and Stanford University and was the only child of Shigako Nakagawa, a Shin Issei, and Akio "Lawrence" Nakagawa, a Kibei Nisei born in the Sacramento Delta region of California.

Nakagawa was predeceased by her parents and is survived by her friends, life partners and many relatives in Japan.

To read a tribute for Martha Nakagawa written by Philip Tajitsu Nash, visit tinyurl.com/mwz5nb36.



Albert Okura

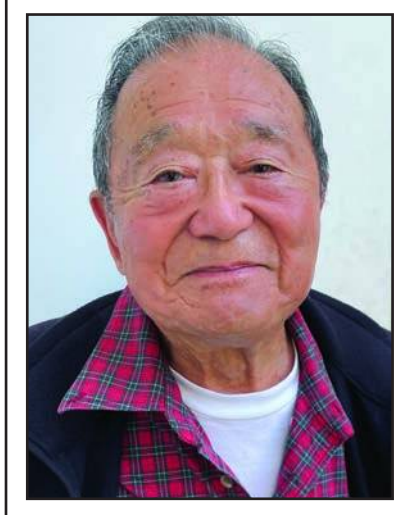
The founder of the Juan Pollo restaurant chain, Albert Ryo Okura in his book "Albert Okura The Chicken Man: With a 50 Year Plan" wrote: "My destiny in life is to sell more chicken than anyone in the world."

Albert Okura died Jan. 27, 2023, in Ontario, Calif. He was 71.

The Juan Pollo restaurant chain would expand to 25 restaurants, most located in Southern California's Riverside and San Bernardino counties, with a much smaller number in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

For Okura, it was all about the selling "the best tasting chicken," a phrase he trademarked — and selling rotisserie chicken would become his focus from age 32, when he founded his first Juan Pollo in Ontario, Calif.

Okura was predeceased by his parents. He is survived by his wife, Sella; sons, Kyle and Aaron, and daughter, Chloe; siblings, Robert Okura, Amy (Ray) Pong and Susan (Andy) Hoffman; and a niece and a nephew.



Fred Oyama

The California-born eldest son of the five offspring of Kohide and Kajiro Oyama, he had a 35-year career as a mathematics teacher at Los Angeles Unified School District schools, among them John Adams, Audubon, Stephen White and South Gate. With a parent, he took on the state's Alien Land Law that barred "persons ineligible to become citizens of the United States" from owning land in the 1948 Supreme Court case *Oyama v. California*.

Fred Oyama died Sept. 20 in Huntington Beach, Calif. He was 97.

In what was a common practice among Japanese Issei farmers — who were then precluded from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens by the racially discriminatory laws of the time — Kajiro Oyama purchased farmland in Chula Vista, Calif., in the name of son Fred Oyama, who was a U.S. citizen by virtue of having been born in California.

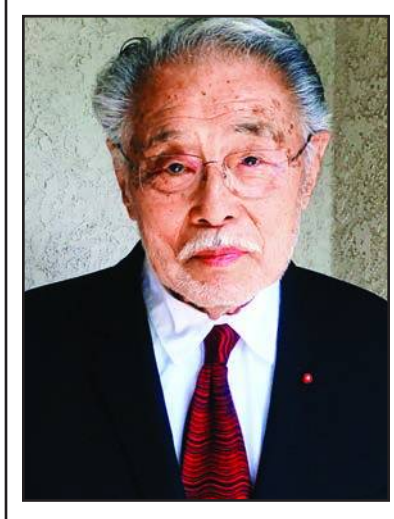
In 1944, San Diego County, however, attempted to seize ownership of the Oyama land by escheat, claiming that Kohide and Kajiro Oyama had perpetrated "fraud upon the People of the State of California" by deeding the land to their son, thus "willfully, knowingly and with the intent to violate the Alien Land Law."

When JACL learned of legal action against the Oyamas, JACL President Saburo Kido, working from Salt Lake City, persuaded Kohide Oyama to sue California over the legality of Alien Land Law. In 1946, the California Supreme Court unanimously upheld a trial court's decision in favor of reverting ownership of the Oyama land to the state, essentially ruling that the land was never legally owned by the Oyamas.

In the writ of certiorari that requested the U.S. Supreme Court review the case, attorney Al Wirrin helped write the following: "The Alien Land Law … deprives Fred Oyama, a citizen, of the equal protection of the laws and of the privileges and immunities of a citizen."

The high court rendered its decision on Jan. 19, 1948: Although the Alien Land Law was not invalidated, the majority found that Fred Oyama's rights had been violated. As for the state's Alien Land Law, even though it remained on the books until 1956, according to Mark Brilliant's 2010 book "The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978," the law's "enforceability had been dealt a crippling blow," thus bringing to a close most of the pending escheat cases that involved transfers of land from Issei parents to U.S. citizen offspring. This, thanks to the Oyama case, for which Fred Oyama took great pride.

He is survived by his second wife, Phyllis McGrath Oyama; his son, Pat Oyama; daughter-in-law Janice Oyama; daughters Jill Wong and Phyllis Oyama; sons-in-law Brian Wong and Lee Townsend; his stepdaughter, Lori Evans Matsumoto and her husband Stacy Matsumoto. He leaves behind his grandchildren Nathan Wong and his wife, Isabelle; Will Wong; Eva Townsend, Kyle Oyama and his wife, Rachelle; Eli Townsend; Kenny Oyama and Kalani Oyama. He had recently celebrated the arrival of his first great-granddaughter, Selah Oyama.



Minoru Tonai

A son of Issei immigrants Toyone and Gengoro Tonai, Tonai was born in San Pedro, Calif.,

and grew up on Los Angeles County's Terminal Island.

Minoru "Min" Tonai died on Sept. 4. He was 94.

After Japan's military attacked the Navy at Pearl Harbor in the territory of Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941, the Tonai family would be uprooted and incarcerated, first at an assembly center, then at one of the 10 concentration camps operated by the federal government's War Relocation Authority. In the case of the Tonais, it was Amache WRA Center in Colorado.

After WWII and returning to Los Angeles, Tonai graduated from high school and enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles. His eventual marriage to Mary Mitsuko Endo was delayed by America's entry into the Korean War.

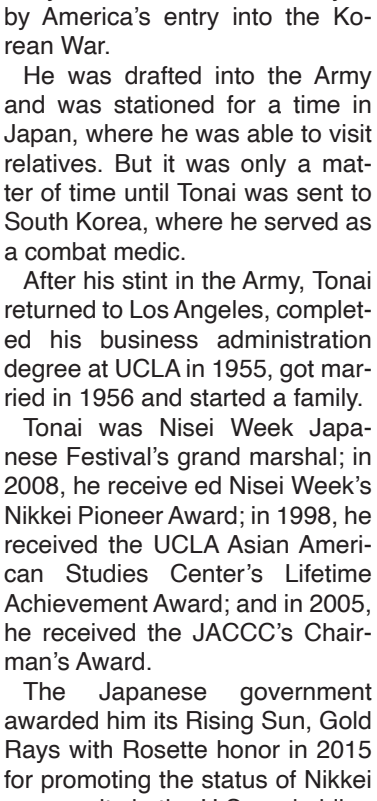
He was drafted into the Army and was stationed for a time in Japan, where he was able to visit relatives. But it was only a matter of time until Tonai was sent to South Korea, where he served as a combat medic.

After his stint in the Army, Tonai returned to Los Angeles, completed his business administration degree at UCLA in 1955, got married in 1956 and started a family.

Tonai was Nisei Week Japanese Festival's grand marshal; in 2008, he receive ed Nisei Week's Nikkei Pioneer Award; in 1998, he received the UCLA Asian American Studies Center's Lifetime Achievement Award; and in 2005, he received the JACCC's Chairman's Award.

The Japanese government awarded him its Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette honor in 2015 for promoting the status of Nikkei community in the U.S. and aiding in the mutual understanding between the nations.

Tonai was predeceased by his wife, Mary, in 2017, and his siblings. He is survived by his daughters, Susan Tonai Drews and Teresa Tonai, and son, John Tonai, as well as sisters-in-law, Yae Nagai, Elinor Sakado and Carole Endo; brother-in-law, George Endo; and many nieces,



Rosalind Uno

The daughter of Saburo and Mine Harada Kido, she was born in San Francisco on Nov. 14, 1933, and spent her early years in nearby Berkeley.

Rosalind K. Uno died July 18. She was 89.

During WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Poston II WRA Center in Arizona. One night her father, Saburo Kido — the wartime JACL national president — was beaten with "handmade ironwood clubs for 45 minutes" by other incarcerees opposed to JACL policies. The family was removed to Salt Lake City for their safety. The family moved to Los Angeles after the war.

She married Edison Uno in 1953 and had their first daughter in Los Angeles. After a few years, the family moved to San Francisco's Nihonmachi neighborhood so that he could attend law school.

By the early 1960s, the Uno family moved to the Richmond district. Edison left law school following a heart attack and pursued administrative positions, while Rosalind was a fulltime homemaker and mother, with Edison's health ever-present concern. She became a widow in 1976, when her husband died from complications following heart surgery.

Uno's life was enriched by her decades long association with the Frank McCoppin Elementary School community, first as a parent volunteer on the school site committee and later as an employee of the San Francisco Unified School District. She continued to volunteer as a library aide up until the age of 86 when the pandemic closed school sites in 2020.

Rosalind is survived by her youngest brother, Wallace Kido (Terry Glazier), nephew Michael Kido (Noriko Sato), daughters Elizabeth (Gene Tom) and Rosanne, and grandchildren Jes and Karissa Tom, and Andrew and Jon Ehrenberg, and close cousin, Kimi Klein (Joel).



Amy Uyematsu

An award-winning poet and a mathematics teacher, Uyematsu was born and raised in Southern California after her parents were released from incarceration at the Manzanar (California) and Gila River (Arizona) War Relocation Centers.

Amy Uyematsu died June 23 in Culver City, Calif. She was 75.

A Sansei, Uyematsu authored six poetry books: 1992's "30 Miles from J-Town," for which she won the Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize; 1997's "Nights of Fire, Nights of Rain"; 2005's "Stone Bow Prayer"; 2015's "The Yellow Door"; 2016's "Basic Vocabulary"; and 2022's "That Blue Trickster Time" (2022).

Prior to that, Uyematsu authored a seminal essay titled "The Emergence of Yellow Power in America" that appeared in the newspaper Gidra in 1969 (see tinyurl.com/3ua38jxh). She also contributed to "Roots: An Asian American Reader," a seminal textbook used in Asian American studies programs.

After graduating from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a bachelor's degree in mathematics, she a taught that subject for more than three decades in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Mary Uyematsu Kao reflected on her sister's "superachiever" life. In an email to the Pacific Citizen, Kao wrote: "As years went by, her movement activism found a loving home in the poetry community. Her voice was uplifted, and a symbiotic love created the legacy she has left us with today — her six poetry books and the historic front-runner of Asian American texts — 'Roots: An Asian American Reader.'

"'Roots' was used by Asian American students all over the country as the basis for starting Asian American Studies at their college campuses," Kao continued.

In 2012, the Friends of the Little Tokyo Branch Library honored Uyematsu for her contributions to the Japanese American community as a writer.

Uyematsu's survivors include her husband, Raul Contreras; son, Chris Tachiki; mother, Elsie Umatsu Osajima; and sister, Mary Uyematsu Kao.

TRIBUTE

TOM AONO

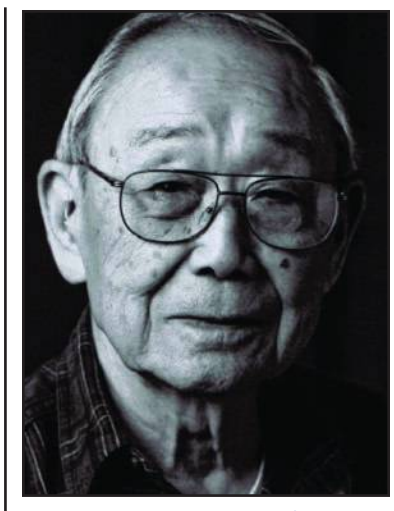


Tom Aono, 94, of Mission Viejo, Calif., died peacefully on Sept. 29, 2023. Tom was born Feb. 21, 1929, in Portland, Ore., to Yosaku and Sueko Aono. During WWII, Tom and his parents and sisters, Toshiko (Chikara Koike) and Yoneko (James Sugimura) were incarcerated at Minidoka in Idaho. The family returned to Portland and after Tom graduated from Gresham Union High School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving in Japan during the Occupation. Tom moved to Chicago where he met Lily Takagi (b. Fresno, Calif., Jerome and Rohwer). In 1956 Tom and Lily married and together they raised five children. Tom practiced as a structural draftsman where his work took him and the family to Michigan, Georgia and back to the Chicago suburbs. In 2000 he and Lily moved to Mission Viejo, where he eventually retired after 58 years in the profession. Tom will be remembered for his vivid recall of names and faces, love of cars, golf and bowling, and trips to the casino. We will fondly remember his devotion to our family and kindness toward friends new and old.

Tom is predeceased by Lily, his devoted wife of 63 years. He is survived by his five children: Fred Aono (Jenny Kiyomura), Caryn Aono, Joanne Aono (Brian Leber), Kristine Aono (Val Giddings) and Roberta Jeannette (Jeff). Tom was a proud grandpa to Marissa (Aono) Rudisill (Daniel), Alexandra Aono (Jack Custer), Colin Aono, Naomi Aono (Nikolai Laba), Calvin Giddings, Griffin and Carter Jeannette and great-grandpa to Kaleb and Luke Custer, and Benjamin and Elijah Rudisill.

The family wishes to express special appreciation to his devoted caregivers.

A celebration of Tom's life will be held on Feb. 3, 2024, at the Norman P. Murray Center, 24932 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, Calif. For more information, please contact the family at rememberingta@gmail.com.



Homer Yasui

The last surviving sibling of the nine children of the storied Hood River, Ore., Yasui clan, Yasui was born to Issei immigrants Shidzuyo and Masuo Yasui.

Homer Yasui died on July 25 in Seattle. He was 98.

Yasui's JACL résumé included stints as president of the Portland JACL chapter in 1973 and from 1980-81, followed by serving as the PNW district governor during the run-up to the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

A 1949 graduate of Philadelphia's Hahnemann Medical College, Yasui would practice surgery for 29 years, retiring in 1987. Prior to that, during WWII he had been imprisoned at the Pinedale Assembly Center near Fresno, Calif., then transferred with his family at the Tule Lake WRA Center, also in California.

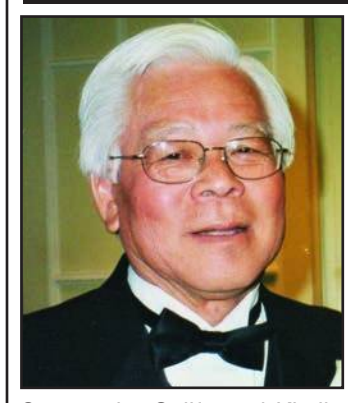
Yasui and Miyuki "Miki" Yabe, of Pasadena, Calif., were married in 1950 in New York after he completed a medical internship in Milwaukee, Wis. Upon learning that he would be drafted into the Army Medical Corps, Yasui instead opted to join the Navy and would be stationed in Iwakuni, Japan.

After being discharged from the Navy in October 1956, Yasui, with family in tow, moved to Portland, Ore. In 1958 he joined the Naval Reserve, retiring with the rank of captain in 1984.

Yasui was predeceased by his wife, Miki, who died on Dec. 14, 2018; their son, Allen Masuo Yasui; and his eight siblings. He leaves behind his three surviving children, Barbara, Meredith and John, plus eight grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and dozens of nieces, nephews and other extended family. ■

TRIBUTE

ROY HATAMIYA



Roy Riichi Hatamiya, a prominent Marysville, Calif., farmer of peaches, prunes, walnuts and almonds, died peacefully on Nov. 10, 2023, in Yuba City, Calif. at the age of 94. He was born in the District 10 area north of Marysville on Feb. 13, 1929, to the late Senichi and Satoki Hatamiya, pioneer immigrants from Hiroshima, Japan.

He was preceded in death by three sisters: Kikue (Tad) Tomita of San Jose, Tamaki (Eiitsu) Sugaya of Sunnyvale, Calif., and Kimiko, who died in infancy. He is survived by sister Toshiko (Kenji) Minabe of Livingston, Calif., and younger brothers George (Kashiwa) of Marysville, Calif., and Robert (Lillian) of Gridley, Calif.

Roy married Momoko Miriam Kawahara of San Lorenzo, Calif., in 1961, and together they raised three children: Michael of Yuba City, Calif., Ford (Tracy) of Albany, Calif., and Leslie (Randy Schieber) of San Bruno, Calif. He had four grandchildren: Evan and Alison Schieber, and Elle and Jude Hatamiya. Many nephews and nieces and their offspring fill the family tree.

Roy completed elementary school in seven years at the District 10 rural grammar school in June 1942. The following month, he was incarcerated with his family at the Tule Lake concentration camp in northeastern California and later transferred to the Amache concentration camp in Colorado.

He completed high school in three years, finishing at Amache High School. Upon his family's return to Marysville at the conclusion of the war, Roy attended Yuba College and completed his education at the University of California at Davis, majoring in pomology.

Roy joined his father in the management of H.B. Orchard Co., Inc., a farming enterprise founded by his father in 1919. Roy's brothers later joined the operation. By the time the three brothers retired in 2005, H.B. Orchard Co. had grown from an 80-acre family farm into 1,100 acres of orchards. Roy had a gift for metalworking, and together with his brothers fabricated many pieces of farm equipment.

Roy served as director and secretary of Reclamation District 10, director of Sunsweet Growers, director of the Federal Land Bank Association in Yuba City, member and president of the Marysville Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, member of UC Davis Alumni and Cal Bear Backers, and member of the Yuba County grand jury, as well as an appointed member to the California Cling Peach Advisory Board.

Roy's two avocations were music and fly fishing. He learned to play the French horn and trumpet in grammar school, and while incarcerated in the wartime camps, he played trumpet in dance bands. A 2012 documentary, "Searchlight Serenade," produced by PBS station KEET of Eureka, presents the story of dance bands in the concentration camps. Roy was one of nine surviving musicians discovered and interviewed for the film.

After starting to work on the ranch, Roy was persuaded to take up fly fishing by his cousin Tom Hatamiya. This led to many years of enjoyment, fishing for trophy rainbows and brown trout in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico with three longtime friends, Bob Kells, George Post and Bob Hanke, all of Yuba City. Trips to Canada and Argentina highlighted his experiences.

At his request, no memorial service will be held. Donations may be made in his name to the Marysville Chapter of the JACL (P.O. Box 2253, Marysville, CA 95901, or go to marysvillejacl.org) or to the National Japanese American Historical Society (njahs.org).

'Peace on Your Wings': Hawaii to L.A. to Hiroshima

A moving musical adaptation conveys the story of Sadako Sasaki.

By P.C. Staff



The cast of "Peace on Your Wings" performed on the Aratani Theatre stage in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo on Aug. 5 to convey the inspirational story of Sadako Sasaki

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

The story of diarist Anne Frank's untimely demise as a young victim of hate and world war has resonated across generations of readers throughout the world, thanks to assigned reading and book reports.

Similarly, the story of Sadako Sasaki — a *hibakusha* whose life ended at age 12 in 1955 from leukemia attributed to the radiation from the *genshi bakudan* dropped from a U.S. bomber over her hometown of Hiroshima, Japan, when the two nations were at war — has more recently also become part of the world's culture, sparked in part by Eleanor Coerr's book "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes."

Inspired by a legend that one who folds 1,000 origami cranes would have his or her wish granted, it would become the defining and defiant act of a girl who only wanted her health back.

The magical thinking that inspired Sasaki has nevertheless also inspired people of all ages who have learned of her story to make ending war and promoting peace a priority.

Is it any wonder that the story of Sadako and her paper cranes would become a musical stage play, "Peace on Your Wings"? It was a journey that began at Hawaii's Ohana Arts Youth Theatre Co. in 2014, thanks to the married couple Jenny Taira, the composer, and Laurie Rubin, the lyricist.

In August, the cast, musicians, production team and its producers visited Los Angeles, not just for the Aug. 5 and 6 performances at the Aratani Theatre in Little Tokyo but also to meet and hear from actual, now-elderly *hibakusha* at an event titled "Shadows for Peace: The Hiroshima & Nagasaki Experience Speaker Forum" held on Aug. 3 at Higashi Honganji, also in Little Tokyo, just days before the Aratani shows.

One of the speakers, 97-year-old Junji Sarashina, co-president of the American Society of Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors, related his bucolic boyhood in Hawaii, first in Maui, then in Honolulu. His father was a Buddhist minister. He shared how he went to Japan with his family when his elder brother had to return to take over a Buddhist temple in Hiroshima. Their father, however, stayed behind in Hawaii.

Then, the United States and Japan went to war. Toward the tail end of the war, the younger Sarashina was forced to work as a machinist at an ordnance factory. One morning in 1945, everything changed.

"I stepped out of the factory. At that moment, it was on Aug. 6, 8:15 in the morning when this orange blast — at the same time a tremendous explosion force — knocked me flat," Sarashina remembered. "Fortunately, I was standing next to a concrete wall. The building collapsed. The rooftop, bricks, window glass flying all over. And I was covered with this debris. A while later, I realized that I'm still alive. But I had no feeling. I couldn't hear. I couldn't see."

It was one of the sobering, real-life stories that helped the young actors relate not just to the story of Sadako Sasaki, who was just 2 when the Hiroshima bomb fell, but to people who were able to remember the experience of living through the explosion.

After the L.A. performances, the long-awaited goal of the Ohana Arts team happened in September. They were finally able to fulfill their own wish: put on the play in Sadako Sasaki's hometown of Hiroshima. Maybe there was something to folding all those cranes after all.

It was a vision that was supposed to happen on the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — but it was delayed three years because of the global pandemic. It could not be helped — but it finally did happen. It was a poignant, touching "homecoming" for the young performers who had spent so much time and energy to tell the story of a girl who decades earlier was not much younger than they were now.

(An NHK story about "Peace on Your Wings" in Hiroshima may be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=QCskKXssVho.)



American Society of Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors Co-President Junji Sarashina (with mic) relays his memories of when the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima



The "Peace on Your Wings" cast serenades the "Shadows for Peace: The Hiroshima & Nagasaki Experience Speaker Forum" panel on Aug. 3 at Higashi Honganji in Little Tokyo



"Shadows for Peace" panelists *(from left)* Hiroko Nakano, Taeko Okabe, Takako Agustsson, Howard Kakita and Junji Sarashina



"Peace on Your Wings" lyricist Laurie Rubin at the "Shadows for Peace: The Hiroshima & Nagasaki Experience Speaker Forum"



The "Peace on Your Wings" cast closes the show in front of a photo of Sadako Sasaki at one of the Aug. 5 performances at the Aratani Theatre

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MADDY TURNED HATE INTO HOPE AND STARTED A MOVEMENT



Maddy Park
Founder,
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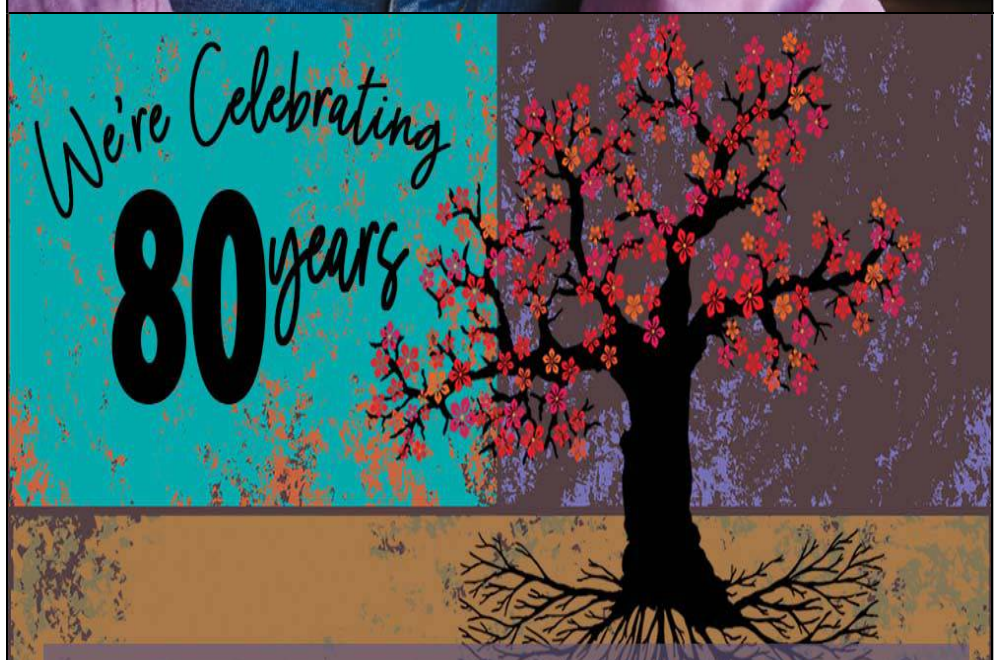
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