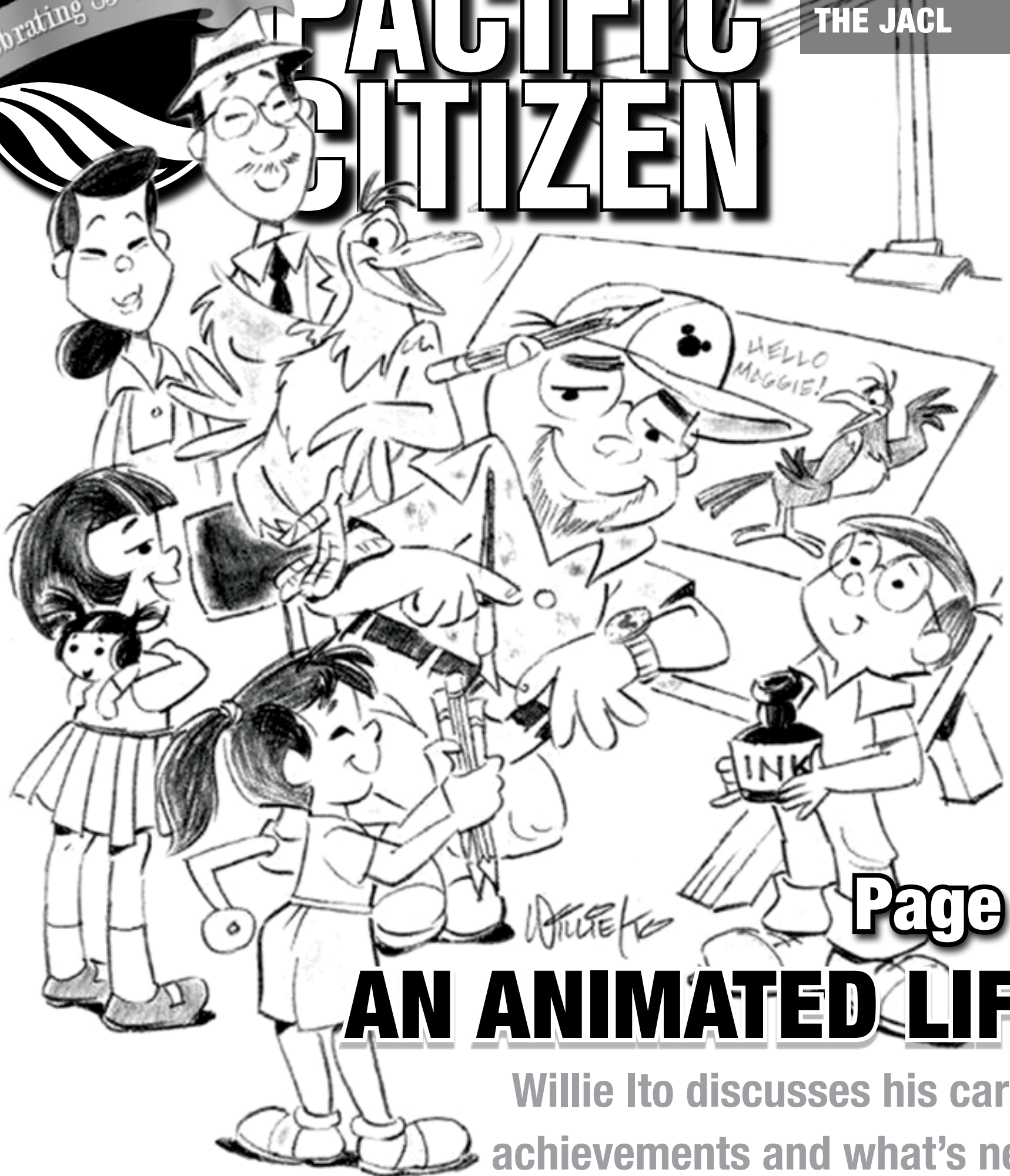


Aug. 22-Sept. 4, 2014

THE NATIONAL  
NEWSPAPER OF  
THE JACL

Celebrating 85 Years!

# PACIFIC CITIZEN



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## AN ANIMATED LIFE

Willie Ito discusses his career achievements and what's next.

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# JACL: DON'T MIX POLITICS AND RACISM

By JACL National

The JACL issued the following statement on Aug. 7.

The battle to win favor in the marketplace of political ideas took a distasteful turn recently with racial rhetoric at a political rally in Wyoming and in an election campaign in Kentucky.

Twitter posts attacked Elaine Chao, the former secretary for the Department of Labor, and musician Ted Nugent used a vile racial slur at a political rally.

Chao, who is married to Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), was the target of a racial attack in an attempt to tarnish McConnell's campaign for the Senate in Kentucky. In several Twitter

posts, Kathy Groob, a Democratic activist and the founder of a group called Elect Women, said, "She (Chao) isn't from KY, she is Asian," and "Wedded to free trade China." The posts were rebuked by the Democratic Party and were taken down.

While speaking before the Big Horn Basin Tea Party gathering, Nugent used the slur "Japs" to underscore his notion of evil. In criticizing the government, he said, "... we have bent over since World War II because we couldn't believe that good — the universally celebrated good of America crushed the universally understood evil of Japs and Nazis. We couldn't believe that the government that

represented us in good over evil could possibly turn on us . . ."

The use of racism continues to plague the everyday lives of Asian Americans in the utterances by Groob and Nugent. It's unfortunate that racist quips continue as a convenient tool to inflame a pliable segment of the electorate. The JACL has consistently railed against these tactics because we know that provoking fear by using racism is often effective.

The JACL has stated repeatedly that it is important to confront racism wherever it appears. We cannot afford to be bystanders, especially when haters seek to spread fear.

In the coming months, political campaigns will seek to gain an advantage where the partisan divides are deep and where certain issues are extremely contentious.

It will be important for everyone to remain vigilant and respond where necessary because our best defenses for combating racism are education and the reliance on good people to stand up, speak out and reject it. ■

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## JACL DENOUNCES 'JONAH FROM TONGA'

The JACL said Aug. 1 that it is "disturbed" by HBO's decision to air a new Australian "mocumentary" comedy series "Jonah From Tonga."

In the series, a white Australian actor, Chris Lilley, performs in brown makeup and a wig to depict Jonah, a young

Tongan teen living in Australia.

"Jonah and his Tongan peers are portrayed as disrespectful, aggressive and delinquent," the JACL said in a statement. "Numerous scenes in the series mock or misrepresent Tongan culture and customs. Although styled as a comedy, there is nothing clever or funny about the harmful and offensive stereotypes perpetuated by 'Jonah From Tonga.'"

"Too often, bigotry and racism are employed in the pursuit of humor; when done correctly, satire can be a powerful weapon for revealing and skewering the irrationality and absurdity of the racist ideas. Yet the juvenile and crude characterizations in 'Jonah From Tonga' only reveal Lilley's deep ignorance and disrespect of the Tongan people."

"Whether the content of this series is acceptable elsewhere, it is an affront to the sensibilities of American audiences who understand that honoring diversity implies a healthy respect for the dignity of all cultures."

"The JACL is disturbed that HBO would condone such a racist and offensive show and urges HBO to pull 'Jonah From Tonga' from its lineup."

The producers of "Jonah From Tonga" describe it as "an adventurous journey into the life of 14-year-old rebellious schoolboy Jonah Takalua, his family, friends and the crew of teachers and counselors who are exhaustively trying to help him channel his seemingly limitless energy into bigger and brighter things."

The cast includes Tama Tauli'I as Jonah's brother, Isaia Noa as his father, Linda Horan as his aunt, Jane Reupena-Niko as his cousin, Eigawe Hunt as his sister and Tevita Manu as his uncle.

The show has elicited protests from members of Australia's Pacific Islander communities. Prinnie Stevens, a former contestant on "The Voice Australia," posted on Facebook, "I have always despised the stereotypes that society put upon us as Tongans/Polynesian people." ■



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## NIKKEI VOICE

# HOW ARE ASIAN AMERICANS REACTING TO THE NEWS FROM FERGUSON?

By Gil Asakawa

I just got back from a week in Washington, D.C., attending the Asian American Journalists Assn.'s annual convention. I sat in on a lot of interesting (and some not-so-interesting) sessions about social media and journalism, about why it's important to cover the Asian American Pacific Islander community, and lots of other current topics in the news.

But one topic was barely mentioned as part of the panel discussions: The death of 18-year-old Michael Brown, an unarmed African American man who was shot by a local police officer in the small town of Ferguson, Mo., a suburb of St. Louis.

He was killed on Aug. 9, and for the next week — during the AAJA convention — the tension in Ferguson between protesters and law enforcement has been front and center in the news.

The scenes during the first nights, when local police showed off their military hardware and went after protesters with tear gas, evoked nothing less than the civil rights era of the early 1960s, the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago or anti-war protests on college campuses across

the country and the deadly volley of gunfire that killed four students at Kent State University in 1970.

That night led to a brief peace, when the state's governor assigned state patrol to take over for the overmilitarized local police force. The state troopers are led by an African American Ferguson native who chose a community-based, nonconfrontational approach to calming the neighborhood.

But tensions and violence resumed after a bungled announcement of the name of the police officer who shot Brown, and the next night, the governor announced a curfew. The National Guard was called in.

It's been a huge ongoing breaking news story, and it's not over yet.

It's easy to assume that the original shooting, the heavy-handed military reaction and curfew are racially-based. The suburb of Ferguson is mostly black, but the local police department of 53 officers only includes three black officers. That's why images from the civil rights struggles — marchers being attacked with water cannons and snarling police dogs — come to mind with little prompting.

These parallels should have all of us, including AAPIs,

thinking about the state of race relations in America, both then and now.

But at the AAJA convention, conversations about Ferguson were private conversations among attendees, not on panels. I heard Ferguson mentioned twice, once in a panel about covering the Asian American community and then by Jose Antonio Vargas, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Filipino journalist who's an undocumented immigrant.

Richard Prince, an African American columnist for the Maynard Institute, an organization for training journalists of color, attended the AAJA convention and wrote a column titled "Do Asian American Journalists Have a Stake in Ferguson Story?" that calls out the lack of reaction to Ferguson.

I don't have an easy answer why Ferguson wasn't the official buzz at our convention. The programming was decided months ago, and the organizers weren't prepared to fold in an all-new topic in an ad hoc fashion; "people here are focusing on jobs and career, and you tend to be in a bubble" at conventions (according to AAJA President Paul Cheung).

**>> See FERGUSON on page 16**



## FTW: FOR THE WIN

# ARE YOU A FAN?

By Tiffany Ujiye

In a conversation with someone over dinner, I was explaining my time at Comic Con, and I said something along the lines of "the fans were crazy, and Comic Con was crazy."

It's hard to make sense of the ridiculously elaborate costumes people made and wore all through San Diego's 2014 Comic Con International, which was held July 24-27 at the San Diego Convention Center. There were Marvel superheroes, the entire Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle gang and characters I have never even heard of before all smashed into one place.

On my first day, I remember taking a good look at the Exhibit Hall map. The building's 525,701 gross square feet was covered in all things popular culture — you name it, and it was there: video games, comic books, graphic novels, movies, TV shows and so much more.

Then there were the lines and lines and even more lines to wait for panels, special releases and exhibits. Visitors would spend hours or even days waiting in partitioned rows to watch the latest "Walking Dead" season on AMC or watch a sneak peak of the next "Avengers" movie. I could feel this incredible hunger from crowds hustling to be in the same space as these actors, creators, artists, writers and culture icons.



Suited up female fans of "Halo" were just some of the thousands of fanatics at this year's Comic Con.

Some fans would start their day at 5 a.m. to wait in line for several hours before the convention opened to have a chance to buy limited-edition toys. This is true because I ran into a college friend who had done just that to purchase his Batman figurine!

By random chance, I was strolling past the Marvel booth when suddenly a wave of bodies came over me. An elbow

had conveniently landed in my face when I turned to see that the booth had started to hand out free posters of the new "Avengers" film. I later discovered that these posters were again limited and a one-time deal going for handsome prices on eBay.com. These fans were insane. They were obsessed.

My dinner date cut me off and asked, "You do know what fan is short for, right?" I stopped chewing and thought about it, slightly offended.

"Well, it means fanatic," he said. Up until that point, I had never given the word *fan* much thought. What comes to mind when I imagine fans are screaming girls at a boy band concert or an entire sports arena cheering on their respective teams, but in this case, I would see the latex-covered Captain America in 84 percent humidity and 77-degree weather. Crazy, right?

Oxford English Dictionaries defines a *fanatic* as "a person with an obsessive interest in and enthusiasm for something." That's fair; I would consider some fans at Comic Con a little obsessive. Yet, the definition and history of fandom, especially in the United States, is incomplete and widespread.

**>> See FAN on page 16**



# JAPAN MARKS HIROSHIMA ANNIVERSARY

Mayor Kazumi Matsui invites world leaders to visit A-bombed cities.

By Associated Press

**TOKYO** — Japan marked the 69th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, with the city's mayor inviting world leaders to see atomic bomb-scarred cities first-hand to be convinced that nuclear weapons should not exist.

Speaking before a crowd of survivors, their descendants and dignitaries including U.S. Ambassador Caroline Kennedy, the mayor urged U.S. President Barack Obama and others to visit, referring to a proposal made at a ministerial meeting in April of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative in Hiroshima.

"President Obama and all leaders of nuclear-armed nations, please respond to that call by visiting the A-bombed cities as soon as possible to see what happened with your own eyes," Mayor Kazumi Matsui said. "If you do, you will be convinced that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil that must no longer be allowed to exist."

About 45,000 people stood for a minute of silence at the ceremony in Hiroshima's peace park near the epicenter of the 1945 bombing that killed up to 140,000 people. The bombing of Nagasaki three days later killed another 70,000, prompting Japan's surrender in World War II.

The number of surviving victims, known



The Hiroshima Peace Arch Dome, which honors atomic bomb victims.

as "hibakusha," was just more than 190,000 this year. Their average age is 79, and many of the attendants at the ceremony were their younger relatives and descendants. Hiroshima officials said that 5,507 survivors died over the past year.

The anniversary comes as Japan is divided over Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent Cabinet decision to allow the country's military to defend foreign countries and play greater roles overseas. To achieve the goal, Abe's Cabinet revised its interpretation of Japan's post-World War II pacifist constitution.

Abe said at the event that as the sole country to suffer nuclear attacks, Japan has the duty to seek to eliminate nuclear weapons. But he did not mention his push for a more assertive defense posture. ■

## PLANNED GIVING ENABLES YOU TO HELP YOURSELF WHILE SUPPORTING YOUR FAVORITE CHARITY

By Steve Okamoto, JACL Planned Giving

**P**lanned giving provides donors with a unique opportunity to help themselves financially while supporting their favorite charities.

As head of JACL's Planned Giving effort, I am available to explain these surprising benefits in easy-to-understand terms.

I can offer members compelling suggestions for helping others while helping themselves through the same donation. This approach makes it possible to make a tax-deductible gift to the JACL while retaining the right to receive payments.

The most popular tool to accomplish this is a charitable remainder trust. The No. 1 benefit from a CRT is:

To exchange highly appreciated but low-yielding property into a lifetime stream while avoiding the capital gains taxes that would be owed if the property were sold. Since the property is donated to a CRT, it is not subject to estate taxes.

To learn more about this very popular Planned Giving tool, contact Steve Okamoto at [steveokamoto1@gmail.com](mailto:steveokamoto1@gmail.com).

## APAs in the News

### Doi Todd Receives Margaret Brent Award



**CHICAGO** — Associate Justice Kathryn Doi Todd (retired) is the recipient of the 2014 Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award.

Given annually by the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession on Aug. 10 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston during the ABA Annual Meeting, Todd joins such previous honorees as Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Todd became a lawyer after working as a secretary in a law office in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, where she helped Japanese Americans with their legal issues. She went on to open her own office, becoming one of only three Japanese American women lawyers in the L.A. area.

Todd was then appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to the Los Angeles Municipal Court, making her the first female Asian Pacific American justice in the U.S. In 1981, she was appointed to the Los Angeles Superior Court, and in 2000, she served on the California Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, where she remained until her retirement in 2013.

The ABA Women Lawyers of Achievement Award honors outstanding women lawyers who have achieved professional excellence in their area of specialty and have actively paved the way to success for others.

The award is named for Margaret Brent, the first woman lawyer in America.

### Albert Shen Named National Deputy Director of the MBDA



**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Albert Shen has been tapped to serve as national deputy director of the Minority Business Development Agency, announced MBDA National Director Alejandra Castillo on Aug. 1.

Shen, a second-generation Chinese American and native of Washington state, will manage the agency's day-to-day operations and its national network of 44 business centers.

"I am honored to accept this appointment . . . and I look forward to elevating the narrative of economic development importance for all minority businesses in this country. The demographics of our economy are changing rapidly and minority businesses must be at the policy table in order to close the wealth gap in the United States and meet the demands of a competitive 21st century international economy."

The MBDA is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses.

### Toshiko Shimoura Is Awarded Japan's Foreign Minister Commendation



**MICHIGAN** — Toshiko Shimoura of Southfield, Mich., has been selected as one of 10 individuals in the U.S. to receive the Foreign Minister's Commendation by the government of Japan. This honor is conferred on individuals and groups each year for outstanding efforts and valuable contributions to mutual understanding and friendly relations with Japan.

Shimoura attended Michigan State University after spending her high school years in an internment camp during World War II. Upon earning a degree in microbiology, she worked as a bicolony laboratory director before returning to Michigan and becoming active in her community to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions about Japanese and Japanese American citizens. She is a longtime leader of the Detroit chapter of the JACL.

In addition, she has served as an ikebana instructor for many years, working to promote a cross-cultural understanding between Japanese and Americans through her intricate floral arrangements.

Shimoura will receive her honor from Kazuyuki Katayama, consul general of Japan in Detroit, in an upcoming award ceremony.

### Minami Tamaki LLP Attorneys Named to 'Best Lawyers' List



**SAN FRANCISCO** — Minami Tamaki LLP partners Dale Minami, B. Mark Fong and Seth I. Rosenberg have been selected by their peers for inclusion in the 21st edition

of the Best Lawyers in America in the practice area of Personal Injury Litigation — Plaintiffs. It is the second year in a row that Minami, Fong and Rosenberg have received this honor.

In addition, partner Minette Kwok was honored for the practice area of Immigration Law.

Since it was first published in 1983, Best Lawyers uses a peer-review survey of nearly 50,000 attorneys to select the lawyers who are named to the list. ■

# TULE LAKE HOLDS ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

This year's theme, 'Criminalizing Dissent: The Tule Lake Jail,' focuses on validating and honoring the experience of those who dissented during WWII.

The Tule Lake Committee hosted the biennial four-day pilgrimage over the July 4 holiday weekend to connect pilgrims with the historic Tule Lake Segregation Center and its turbulent and complicated history.

More than 350 participants came from all across the United States and Japan to take part in the journey. Departing from West Coast cities including Berkeley, Eugene, Olympia, Portland, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle and Union City, they traveled by bus, which is an integral part of the pilgrimage, as it allows the pilgrims to create a community that reflects on the experience of those who were forced from their homes on the West Coast in 1942 and imprisoned in 10 War Relocation Authority camps and other detention facilities in remote areas all over the U.S., including Tule Lake.

This year's theme was "Criminalizing Dissent: The Tule Lake Jail." According to the TLC, the focus was on segregation and the 12,000 dissidents who were branded as "disloyal" and imprisoned at the maximum-security Tule Lake Segregation Center.

Dissent became a crime that led to a lifetime of stigma, a stigma that, to this day, is still felt within the community.

The goal of the Tule Lake Pilgrimage was to lift that stigma, validate the experience of those who dissented and create an environment where understanding, acceptance and healing can take place.

The program was packed full of activities and sessions. There were also viewings



A group photo of pilgrims born at Tule Lake

of documentaries including "Cats of Mirikitani," "From a Silk Cocoon," "Jimmy Murakami: Non Alien" and "A Flicker in Eternity."

Many participants also took part in the Castle Rock hike; this year, the oldest person to make it to the summit was 84 years old, a mere teenager when incarcerated at Tule Lake.

The TLC and the National Park Service worked together to offer participants two separate options for tours of the historic site.

Tour buses staffed by NPS rangers and volunteers visited a latrine foundation, jail, California State Historic Site marker and Camp Tulelake, where interpretive presentations were given.

At the jail, pilgrims were greeted by Jimi Yamaichi, who spoke about the Army stockade and the jail's construction.

At Camp Tulelake, the Tanimoto brothers recalled their detention after their housing block protested the loyalty questionnaire.

The other tour was collaboratively conducted by Cultural Resource Manager Jessica Middleton and TLC's Barbara Takei, and it focused on historic use, significance and potential future uses for the National Historical Landmark area and its existing structures, including the carpenter shop, stockade and two motor pool buildings.

At the invitation of the TLC, members of the local community also attended activities

at the Tulelake-Butte Valley Fairgrounds and the Tule Lake Pilgrimage cultural program at the Ross Ragland Theater in Klamath Falls, Ore.

This year's keynote speaker was Wayne Merrill Collins, son of the late Wayne Mortimer Collins, who is revered among Tule Lake's segregants as a passionate defender of Japanese American civil rights.

Collins spoke of the government's forced removal and wartime incarceration program as a source of duress that led thousands of U.S. citizens to give up their citizenship and of his father's 20-year fight to help thousands of Japanese Americans reverse the damage done to them by this unprecedented denationalization and deportation program.



Pilgrims took part in a hike on Castle Rock.

This year's Tule Lake Pilgrimage was a powerful and healing event, one that allowed those who gathered to reflect on the injustice of the wartime incarceration as well as honor those individuals who suffered a lifetime of humiliation and stigma.

The Tule Lake Unit is open year round and offers tours on Saturdays in the summer.

**For more information or to schedule a ranger-led tour for other times, call (530) 260-0537.**

## BRIDGING COMMUNITIES: Building Communities of Courage

By JACL National Staff

The national program Bridging Communities of the JACL recently took a group of high school students to the Nidoto Nai Yoni "Let It Not Happen Again" Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial in Washington.

The memorial is located on the former Eagledale ferry dock where on March 30, 1942, 227 Americans of Japanese descent were forcibly removed from their homes and unjustly incarcerated during World War II. It is also the satellite site of the Minidoka National Historic Site in Idaho.

This year, the program featured two main sessions: an interactive workshop and an educational trip to the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. The interactive workshop engaged participants in lively discussions and activities focusing on self-identity, community and stereotypes and propaganda.



Participants of Seattle's Bridging Communities program at the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial

During the trip, Clarence Moriwaiki, president of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Assn., immersed the students in the history of the island through an interactive tour of the memorial.

"Learning about the memorial from a classroom is very different from actually walking down and visiting the memorial," said high school student Mikayla Kato.

Students also had the opportunity to interview those who were formerly incarcerated

from the island and those who developed the memorial site. These recorded interviews will be used to create an educational video to help preserve and interpret the legacy of the memorial.

After the pilgrimage, students collaborated with each other to produce a short media presentation that embodied the collective message behind the memorial through eyes of their generation. Students presented their work and personal reflections to their communities on June 28.

Bridging Communities: Building Communities of Courage is located in Seattle and is a collaboration between the Bainbridge Island Historical Museum, Power of Words Committee of the JACL Seattle Chapter, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community (BIJAC) and Muslim Association of Puget Sounds (MAPS). The program is funded, in part, by a grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program.



# SHINING A LIGHT ON PEACE AND HARMONY

The JACCC holds a three-day 'Remembering Sadako' celebration festival.

By *Connie K. Ho*  
Contributor

“A star shining bright to shield from the cold, inori, inori, say a prayer for harmony.” Yuji Sasaki held a guitar in his arms, strumming and singing these words about compassion and harmony. The nephew of Sadako Sasaki, the young victim of the Hiroshima atomic bomb who attempted to fold 1,000 origami cranes in a symbol of peace, was a participant in the three-day festival “Remembering Sadako: Folding for Peace.”

Held in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo from Aug. 1-3 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, the event brought together community members and performers in hopes of remembering Sadako Sasaki’s life and spreading her message of empathy and understanding.



Folded paper cranes and a copies of Sadako Sasaki's story at the "Remembering Sadako" event at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center

One of the highlights of the weekend was a speaking event by Masahiro Sasaki, Sadako Sasaki’s older brother, who traveled from his home in Fukuoka, Japan, to present at the JACCC. Following the dropping of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima in 1945, his 12-year-old sister was diagnosed with leukemia and passed away in 1955. His presentation to the crowd in the JACCC’s Garden Room was moving and brought tears to those in attendance.

Sasaki was able to lead an intimate and engaging conversation at the “Remembering Sadako event,” something that hasn’t been done in the past. He recounted the bombing of Hiroshima, how flames engulfed his family’s home, leaving nothing but rubble. The bomb happened all in an instant, and people were left in disfigured form while iron, stone and glass were all melted in the blast.

“War provokes people to kill one another. It decays the human mind, it causes an affectionate heart of mercy to burst into scorching flames of hatred. Please remember that hatred only breeds hatred,” said Sasaki through a translator.

He spoke about his sister’s experience growing up and staying in the hospital for treatment. When she was diagnosed with subacute lymphocytic leukemia, she started to keep count of her white blood cell count without others knowing. Tracking this data helped her see how long she had left with family and friends.

“Despite knowing she had little time to live, she accepted it without complaint or bitterness. She was always calm and composed in her behavior, and she kept her pain and suffering wrapped in her little, compassionate heart. It was in this way that she showed us all a remarkable way in which to live,” Sasaki said.

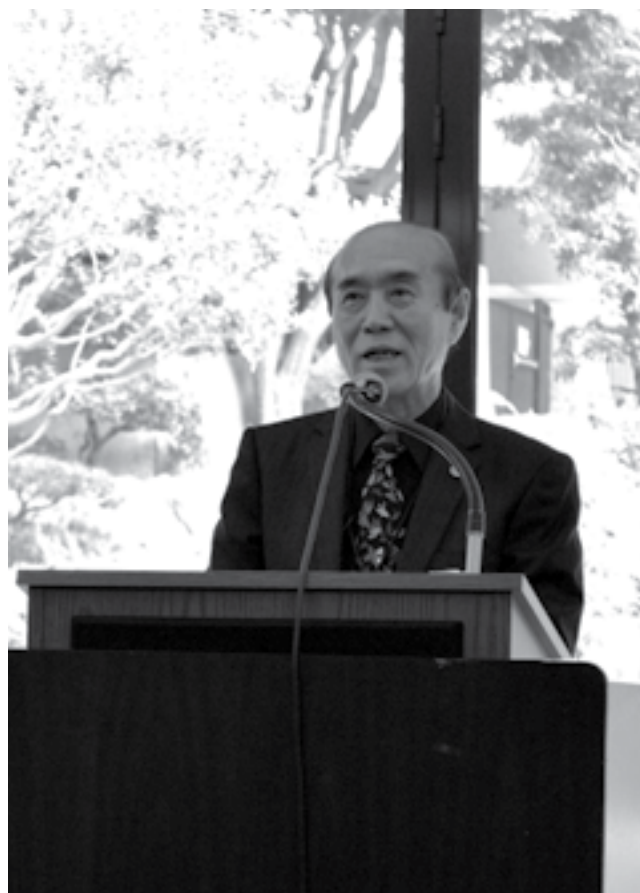
Sadako Sasaki believed that if she folded 1,000 cranes, her

wish would come true. She began to fold the cranes from wrappings of her medicine and gifts from visitors. She passed away before she was able to complete the 1,000 cranes, but her classmates helped to finish the remaining number and buried the cranes with her.

“We must continue to tell of these tragedies, however we should not speak with resentful hearts. In exchange for her life, this is the lesson Sadako has taught me, and so in her short life, this is what she has left behind,” Sasaki said.

One of the students who helped raise money for Sadako Sasaki’s monument in Hiroshima also spoke about her experience. During that time, 3,000 schools across Japan participated in the fundraiser. The grassroots efforts, which led to the construction of the Children’s Monument in Hiroshima Peace Park, were initiated in memory of the children who were lost in the atomic bombing.

“When I was in high school, she was about 12 and I was 18 years old, I went to high school in Hiroshima, and I heard about her sad story from our classmates. We all felt so sad, and we felt we had to do something to remember her struggle and then also let the other people know how important to say no more Hiroshima,” said Toshie Mosher of San Marino, Calif. “Sadako’s story became so big, and it inspired everybody. I still admire what she did. After I hear the story from Sadako’s brother, it makes me feel more admiration to her. I’m kind of hoping her legacy will spread all over the world, and then we will have a much more peaceful world.”



Masahiro Sasaki speaks to a crowd in the Garden Room, fondly remembering his sister’s strength and determination while battling leukemia.





The Grateful Crane Ensemble and Yuji Sasaki (*with guitar*), Sadako Sasaki's nephew, perform a special bilingual performance of "Inori – Sadako's Prayer" at the "Remembering Sadako" event.



A Sadako monument stands in her honor in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Japan.

Later that night, the Concert for Peace was hosted at the Aratani Theatre in Little Tokyo. Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter Melissa Manchester took to the stage to perform famed hits such as "Through the Eyes of Love" and "Don't Cry Out Loud." She was joined by saxophonist Justin Klunk and multi-instrumentalist David Lindley.

"People that have attended really appreciated Melissa Manchester's performance and the feeling she brought forth. She had been blogging all week about peace, posting on Facebook about her thoughts on peace, so it was nice to have her in the mix to help us spread the message," said Leslie Ito, president and CEO of JACCC.

The song "Inori," commemorating the life of his aunt Sadako Sasaki, was also performed by singer-songwriter Yuji Sasaki.

"Folding cranes one by one, she always believed, someday she would be free from the pain in her heart. In a world where peace would reign, no wars to be fought, and every child will find happiness," he crooned. "She gazed into the night sky and made a wish, that someday she could be a shining star. Her light will guide the world to a better place, every one will live together in eternal peace and happiness."

On the third day of the program, there was a live, interactive storytelling performance of Sadako Sasaki's life presented by the Grateful Crane Ensemble in the Doizaki Gallery of the JACCC.

The group performed the children's story "The Tortoise and the Hare," as well as book songs like "Where Does the Wind Blow?"

"This event brings the community together to where everything started in a way," said Candace Watase, a volunteer from Whittier, Calif.

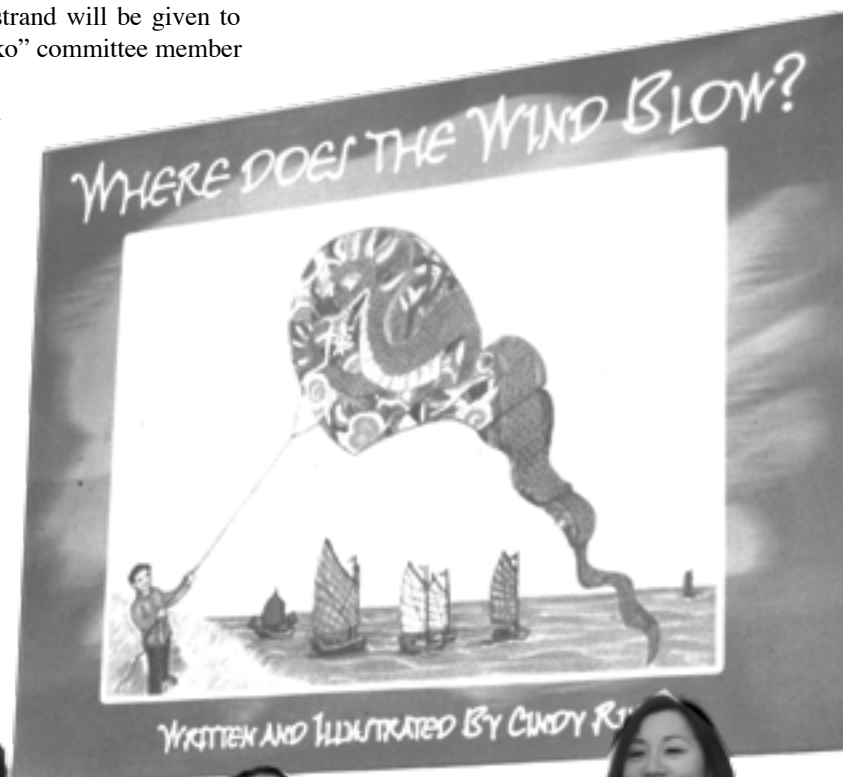
The second annual celebration of peace also included a tea ceremony dedicated to peace, an interfaith ceremony and an origami-folding workshop. The JACCC aims to fold 3,000 cranes. Last year, one strand of paper cranes was sent to Sadako Sasaki's elementary school and another strand was sent to a museum at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. This year, the organization hopes to have one strand of paper cranes to keep in Los Angeles, another to be taken back to Hiroshima with the Sasaki family and a third strand will be given to the family of a "Remembering Sadako" committee member who recently passed away.

"I think the overall feeling and message was peace and children and really showing compassion to each other. I know that with the current world events, peace and a push for peace is a really important message, especially with what's happening in the Middle East right now," Ito said. "People really enjoy being a part of something, and it's very tangible and it's the act of participating in something bigger that really appeals to people. That's what I'm really trying to do — to engage people in the arts and culture."

In addition, the JACCC has been working on strengthening relations with key contacts in Japan for

next year's "Remembering Sadako" event. For 2015, the organization has plans to make the event even bigger as it is the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing.

"We're trying to build the relationship with Japan and the Consulate General of Los Angeles has been very supportive — building bridges across the country and really positioning Japanese Americans as that bridge between the two countries," Ito said. ■



(From left) The Grateful Cranes' Haruye Ioka, Darrell Kunitomi, Shawn Shimoda, Helen Ota and Keiko Kawashima also conducted interactive storytelling performances of popular children's stories.





# AN *Animated* LIFE

Willie Ito is awarded the Inkpot Award at this year's Comic Con International, where he also announces the premiere of his latest book 'Kimiko' in 2015.



PHOTOS: TIFFANY UJIYE



Willie Ito holds his Inkpot Award, given to him by Comic Con International, moments before the spotlight discussion with Leslie Combemale of ArtInsights.

*By Tiffany Ujiye*  
Assistant Editor

**I**n the sea of costumed Batmans, Super Marios, Sailor Moons and all things pop culture was an 80-year-old man with a sun-faded Disney baseball cap in a patterned green Hawaiian shirt and slacks.

At this year's 2014 Comic Con International in San Diego, Calif., artist Willie Ito was awarded the Inkpot Award on July 26 for his 60 years of achievement in animation. The Inkpot Award is an honor given to professionals in the fields of comic books, comic strips, animation, science fiction and other related areas of pop culture. Past recipients include such icons as Ray Bradbury, Will Eisner, Hayao Miyazaki, Stan Sakai and Steven Spielberg, to name a few.

"I always thought that possibly one day I might deserve it," Ito said of his honor. "I truly never expected it."

Since 1991, the San Diego Convention Center has housed Comic Con International, the world's largest hive of all things pop culture, dedicated to creating awareness and appreciation for the genre. These platforms include anything from comic books to full feature films to toys and everything else in between. The four-and-a-half day event swallows downtown San Diego in art and media, attracting more than 130,000 attendees from all over the world. Yet, in the middle of the foot traffic hovering over the latest "Avengers" film or AMC's "Walking Dead" panel was a remembrance to animation's golden years.

Leslie Combemale of ArtInsights, a gallery specializing in animation and film art located in Virginia, discussed Ito's life, revisiting his childhood at Topaz Internment Camp in Utah and his time after World War II as an animator.

During his career, Ito helped animate such renown projects as the famous spaghetti scene in Walt Disney's 1955

animated film "Lady and the Tramp" with mentor Iwao Takamoto and the 1957 short "What's Opera, Doc?" during his time at Warner Bros. under the direction of Chuck Jones. Later, Ito went on to animate "The Beany and Cecil Show" with Bob Clampett and then "The Flintstones," "The Jetsons" and many other cartoons at Hanna-Barbera.

Today, Ito is working on his third book, which is titled "Kimiko," about a Nisei girl living in San Francisco. The children's book is a parallel to Ito's life experience growing up in Japantown and his memories from Topaz.

"I want to talk about Topaz," Ito explained. "You don't always hear about Topaz, and so it made sense to do a book about it."

"Kimiko" will premiere in 2015 at the opening of the Topaz Museum and Education Center in Delta, Utah. Ito, along with other former internees, attended the museum's groundbreaking ceremony on Aug. 4, 2012, and he plans on returning for its opening. No official date has been announced yet, but Ito expects to finish "Kimiko" in time for opening day.

Back in 2005, Ito and Shig Yabu, a childhood friend, collaborated on creating and publishing "Hello Maggie" and "A Boy of Heart Mountain" under Yabitoon Books, a publishing company the collaborators created themselves. Both tomes drew from their creators' experiences of being incarcerated during WWII and the need to further educate children on what life was like during the war.

Today, readers can find these books on Amazon.com and at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center in Wyoming, the Japanese American Veterans Assn. in Virginia and other Japanese American booksellers and museums.





At Comic Con, Ito happily signed autographs for his fans.



A collection of autographed and hand-drawn art pieces illustrated by Ito, including iconic characters and scenes he drew during his 45-year animation career

While “Kimiko” is his latest project, Ito’s love for animation and drawing started almost 75 years ago in San Francisco at a local theater in Japantown.

“This one day I truly had an epiphany,” Ito explained to the Comic Con audience while accepting his award. A 5-year-old Ito and his father, Will Katsuichi Ito, had gone to see Disney’s “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.” The film premiered in December 1937 in full Technicolor and was a boxoffice success, becoming 1938’s top-grossing sound film.

“I was sitting in this theater, and in living Technicolor came seven little men marching across the screen. My fate was sealed, and after the film, my father took me to the Woolworth store and he bought me a Dopey bank,” Ito recalled.

To this day, Ito has the Dopey bank that he was unable to bring with him when he and his family were incarcerated at Topaz. His memories of life in camp are still very vivid in his mind.

Ito first learned about the war on a Sunday afternoon when he, his aunt and his future uncle were returning to San Francisco after spending a day at the beach in Santa Cruz. Ito saw the armed guards with their weapons,

checking each car entering the city and asking for identification.

“I thought, ‘Gee, what’s going on?’” Ito explained. “Finally, we saw the newsstands and it read, ‘War.’ I never knew what that word meant until I found out that Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese.”

A profound hysteria created by inflammatory journalism spread fear in the U.S., leading President Franklin D. Roosevelt to sign Executive Order 9066 on Feb. 19, 1942. The exclusion act incarcerated Japanese Americans from the West Coast outside of Hawaii and forced them into detention centers within the western United States. As a result, more than 120,000 people of Japanese descent were forced to leave their homes and businesses behind. For Ito, it was not just all of the above but also his prized Dopey bank.

“(Before the war,) I put the Dopey bank on my dresser, and every morning I would see my Dopey. His character made an impression on me, and it was a magnificent feeling,” Ito said. “It was one of the most valued things I had, and suddenly, I couldn’t take it with me. We could only take what we could carry in two hands.”

Ito continued his love for animation in camp, drawing on Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward & Co. catalogs that his family received every three months. Within the catalog margins, Ito would draw Disney characters, including Dopey, in random sketches and then animate them by flipping the pages with his fingers.

After the war, Ito’s family returned to their former home in San Francisco, which was kept safe thanks to a Chinese American family. Upon first re-entering the house, Ito ran upstairs to his bedroom, where he found his Dopey bank still sitting on the dresser.

Ito’s 45-year animation career began several years later when he landed his first job at age 19 at Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, Calif. During that time, he was attending the Chouinards Art Institute in Los Angeles and worked as an apprentice and inbetweeners, a job title given to animation students. It was at Disney that he assisted with the production of “Lady and the Tramp” and later 1967’s “The Jungle Book,” mentoring under Takamoto.

“They called in an Asian guy to see my portfolio, and I really needed that,” Ito said about his Disney job interview. “I had just left the comfort of Japantown and now I’m here in Hollywood. It was a different world with not a lot of Asian people, and even though it was only nine years after the war, I didn’t know what reaction I would get. When I saw Iwao, the anxiety was drained.”

The apprentice-mentor relationship was as rewarding as it was challenging for young Ito.

“Iwao would chop up my drawings, criticize it and change it. He was such a perfectionist — he wanted to see perfection,” Ito remembered. “I would go back to my desk totally devastated, and I thought I should’ve taken my father’s advice.”

Ito’s father had suggested early in his career that Ito attend barber college to obtain a license should his animation job fall through. Although his family was supportive of his time in Hollywood, they were always concerned about the late nights Ito spent in the studio.

“But I grew a thick skin,” Ito said with a smile. “This business isn’t for everyone, and a lot of people hated it, but I always saw it as a learning experience. The criticism made me a lot stronger.”

After a year and a half at Disney, Ito was hired at Warner Bros. He then moved to Hanna-Barbera for 14 years, working with Clampett before making another jump to Sanrio.

The comic strip department was dissolved when Ito returned to Disney years later. However, he spent another 23 years there until he retired as the director of Disney Character Art International, working with international offices to mentor artists and making sure the integrity of Disney characters were maintained.

Now retired and working on “Kimiko,” Ito is also working on a coloring book for “Hello Maggie” and “A Boy of Heart Mountain.” Today, he lives with his wife, Rosemary, in Monterey Park, Calif. Together, they have four adult children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. His house is full of cartoon memorabilia and, of course, his beloved Dopey bank.

Ito’s love for animation, Dopey and life continues, and the stories never end. Even today, Ito still sits at his drawing table, taking on new projects about old memories.





# SACRAMENTO HOLDS FORUM ON THE 1984 SIKH GENOCIDE IN INDIA



PHOTO: ENSAAF

Protesters in India rally against the killing of Sikhs and the ensuing government cover up.

By Andy Noguchi  
Civil Rights Co-Chair of the Florin JACL

The 1984 slaughter of thousands of Sikhs in India horrified a Sacramento crowd of 75, including many elected officials and 15 other Asian and Pacific Islander American reps supporting the Sikh community, at the “Remembering the 1984 Anti-Sikh Pogroms” forum on July 16, which was sponsored by the American Sikh Political Action Committee along with Amar Shergill and Darshan Mundy. November marks the 30th anniversary of the Sikh genocide in India.

Sikhs are the fifth-largest world religion and concentrated in the Punjab State of India, where they make up about 2 percent of the country’s population. Men are often distinguished by beards and turbans, a sign

of their religious devotion.

There are 23 million Sikhs worldwide, including 500,000 in the U.S. according to statistics presented at the forum. “Ninety-nine percent of those wearing turbans in the U.S. are Sikhs,” explained one speaker. The Sikh American community, facing unfair backlash after 9/11, have been key pillars of civil and human rights efforts in recent years.

Sikhs in India have a long history of pushing for equality, democracy, freedom and autonomy, as shown in their Anandpur Resolution of 1973. Some Sikhs have advocated for full independence.

The ruling Indian government strongly repressed this movement, often resulting in tragedy. This included the June 1984 military attack ordered by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi against the holy Sikh Golden

Temple that killed an estimated 3,000 people; the October assassination of Gandhi by her two Sikh bodyguards; and the November massacre of thousands of innocent Sikhs, including more than 3,000 in the capital of New Delhi.

Local veterinarian Gupreet Singh told the forum of his experiences when he was a 15 year old in New Delhi. He saw mobs chasing and attacking Sikhs in the park. Some people were saved only due to compassionate Hindu neighbors who were able to hide them.

Elk Grove Unified School Board member Bobbi Singh Allen, who is a Sikh, shared that on a 1988 family trip to India, the police were still ominously looking for her outspoken Sikh father. Allen said that “our government apologized to the Native Americans and Japanese Americans, so must the Indian government.”

In 2010, Sikh religious leaders labeled the mass murder of these innocent men, women and children as “genocide carried out to eliminate Sikhs from the country.”

The Indian Central Bureau of Investigation finally concluded in a 2012 report that the ruling Congress party and New Delhi police had organized and backed the 1984 massacre. “Of 32 members of the Congress Party identified (in the attacks), no case against them was ever brought,” stated forum speaker Bachittar Singh of Ensaaf, a human rights group seeking justice for the victims.

Several community groups attended the event, including the Chinese American Council of Sacramento, which was represented by leaders Honey Lum, Joyce Eng and Alex Eng. Joyce Eng commented that unknown to her and other Americans at the time, these atrocities were “perpetrated by elected officials and law enforcement agents. This is a horrific crime and should not be tolerated by anybody.”

Many public officials also came to the forum to show their support, including California State Insurance Commissioner

Dave Jones, State Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, Sacramento County D.A.-elect Ann Marie Schubert and State Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada.

Yamada has been an especially strong backer of the Sikh community, saying that “the first step toward reconciliation is acknowledging the facts.” Yamada also sponsored the successful 2012 California Workplace Religious Freedom Act to help prevent discrimination against Sikh, Muslim and Jewish religious dress.

Amar Shergill wrote that community friends need to understand “the significant role that the events of 1984 continue to play in the lives of local Sikhs. Many families in our region were personally affected by the genocide and its aftermath.” He shared at the forum that there is currently a “growing right wing fundamentalist culture in India, putting Sikhs and other minorities at risk.”

Basim El-Karra, executive director of the Council on American Islamic Relations — Sacramento Valley, echoed those concerns. He told forum attendees that in 2002, Indian mobs massacred 1,000 innocent Muslims under similar circumstances in Gujarat State, then under Chief Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership. Today, Modi is the prime minister of India.

Marielle Tsukamoto, president of the Florin JACL chapter and a young prisoner in the World War II concentration camps for Japanese Americans, agreed on the importance of defending human rights. Tsukamoto said that she learned something important at the forum, and Americans have “an obligation to look beyond our borders.”

The American Sikh Political Action Committee continues to educate others through a public solidarity letter as the 30th anniversary of the 1984 massacre approaches in November.

For more information, visit [www.facebook.com/AmericanSikhPAC](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanSikhPAC). For information on the human rights group Ensaaf, visit [www.ensaaf.org](http://www.ensaaf.org).

## GO FOR BROKE ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF SECOND ANNUAL STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

The Go For Broke National Education Center is proud to announce the winners of its 2014 High School and College Student Essay Contest. Thirteen students will share \$6,000 in prize money.

Christopher James Lindsay, a freshman at Iolani School in Honolulu, won the top prize in the high school division for his essay “Silent Heroes.” Spencer Tanaka, a sophomore at California State Polytechnic University, took home first place among college and university students. Each recipient will receive \$1,000 for their achievement.

Students were asked to write

about the Nisei soldier experience. In all, the GFBNEC received more than 220 essays from all over the country. Winners hail from California, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland and Washington.

A panel of local student educators served as judges. Students wrote about the heroic accomplishments of the Nisei soldiers and how these men served as inspiration in their own 21st century lives.

“This contest provided a wonderful opportunity for students to connect to the Nisei veteran story in a meaningful way and ensure that the lessons embodied in these

heroic stories are not forgotten,” said Don Nose, president of the GFBNEC.

GFBNEC acknowledges the Pacific Global Investment Management Co. and an anonymous donor for sponsoring its cash prize awards.

The 30 winning essays will be presented in a booklet at the Evening of Aloha Gala Dinner, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary on Sept. 27 at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites in downtown Los Angeles.

For more information, visit [www.goforbroke.org](http://www.goforbroke.org).

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# HARUKI MURAKAMI'S LATEST BOOK DRAWS CROWDS ON ITS FIRST DAY OF RELEASE

Bookstores across the nation host midnight launch parties for English-translated copies of 'Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage.'

By P.C. Staff

**S**kylight Books, a small, cozy general bookstore in Los Feliz, Calif., hosted a midnight launch party on Aug. 11 for Haruki Murakami's latest book "Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage." Murakami first published the book in his native Japan in April 2013, where it became a bestseller, selling millions during its first week.

Now translated in English, booksellers across the United States also hosted midnight release parties of their own.

The iconic Skylight Books, which stands in the shadows of famous Griffith Park, welcomed fans and readers of Murakami's works with 45 autographed copies of his latest offering. At 10 p.m., Skylight opened its doors, offering live music along with wine and other refreshments as lines of eager fans snaked through the store's bookshelves. Each customer was allowed to purchase only two copies and unlimited additional unsigned copies.

Murakami's formidable international career is apparent, as store employees were surprised at the large turnout.

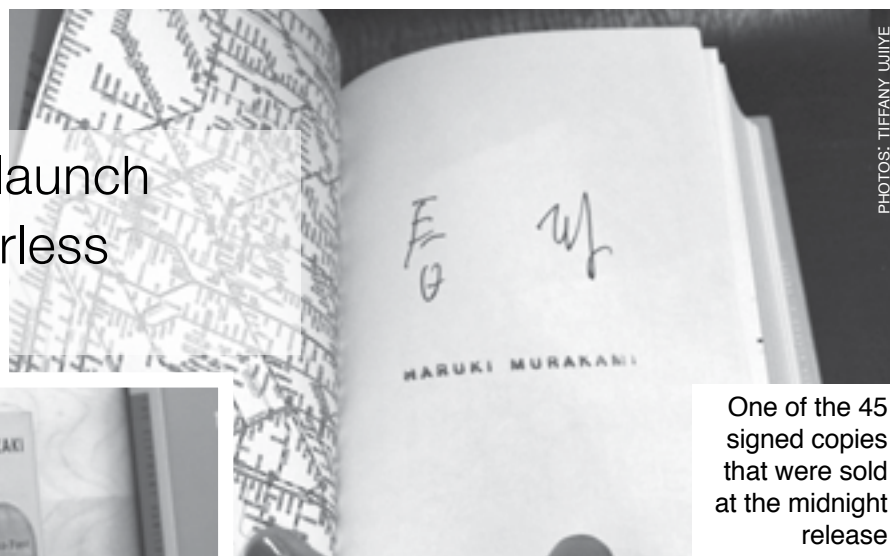
"We've had other midnight releases," said Skylight



Murakami's latest book on display at Skylight Books

Books Event Manager Mary Williams. "But this turnout is wonderful. I didn't expect it to be so big."

Such a showing is hard to ignore as the contemporary



One of the 45 signed copies that were sold at the midnight release

Japanese writer has had his works translated into 50 languages. His numerous awards, both in Japan and international, include the World Fantasy Award, the Franz Kafka Prize and Jerusalem Prize.

"Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage" digs deeper into Murakami's signature fantasy and reality fiction writing. The story follows a young man, Tsukuru Tazaki, who is haunted by a great loss. Dreams and nightmares surface with unintended consequences around Tazaki's world as his past attempts to mend the present.

According to NPR's Meg Wolitzer, she writes in her review that "the novel feels like a riddle, a puzzle, or maybe, actually, more like a haiku: full of beauty, strangeness, and color, thousands of syllables long."

Readers eager to take a stab at Murakami's "puzzles" and "haikus" waited for the clock to strike 12:01 a.m. for their opportunity to purchase the author's hardcover book and a chance to get their hands on the first 45 signed copies. ■

## NEWS BRIEFS

### After Heavy Rain, Hiroshima Landslide Leaves 36 Dead and Seven Missing

**TOKYO** — Rain-sodden slopes collapsed in torrents of mud, rock and debris Aug. 20 on the outskirts of Hiroshima city, killing at least 36 people and leaving seven missing, according to Japanese police.

Hillsides were swept down into residential areas in at least five valleys in the suburbs of the western Japanese city after heavy rains left slopes unstable.

Authorities have issued warnings that additional rain could trigger more landslides and flooding.

Landslides are a constant risk in mountainous, crowded Japan, where many homes are built on or near steep slopes. Hiroshima's geology, consisting of highly water-retentive soil, makes the city particularly prone to such disasters according to Hiroshi Ikeya, a landslide expert at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies.

### Schatz Defeats Hanabusa in Tough Hawaii Senate Primary

**PAHOA, HI** — Incumbent U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz won a tense Democratic primary election in Hawaii, proving that he is no longer just a senator who was appointed to his seat — he has captured the confidence of Hawaii voters.

The dramatic race to finish the term of the late Sen. Daniel Inouye was tinged with emotional residue from the past. Schatz was challenged by U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, who at one point said that he wasn't a true incumbent because he had been appointed by Gov. Neil Abercrombie after Inouye's dying wish that Hanabusa replace him.

Now after an election that stretched over nearly a week because Tropical Storm Iselle knocked out power and

closed polling stations, Schatz has carried his slim election-night lead to a victory.

Schatz edged out Hanabusa, capturing 48.5 percent of the vote, compared with Hanabusa's 47.8 percent.

### Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL Celebrates Its 80th Anniversary



Watsonville-Santa Cruz centenarian JACLers Dr. Masako Miura (left) and Nancy Iwami cut a birthday cake.

**WATSONVILLE-SANTA CRUZ, CALIF.** — Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL celebrated its 80th anniversary on Aug. 2, honoring four centenarian members as well, including Nancy Iwami, Dr. Masako Miura, Hiroko Shikuma and Enji Shikuma.

President Marcia Hashimoto welcomed all and accepted an Assembly resolution from State Assemblyman Luis Alejo, as well as read a congratulatory letter from National JACL President David Lin.

During the celebration, the documentary "Issei: The First Generation (1984)" by Toshi Washizu was also shown.

Through the years, the chapter has been contributors to the redress and reparations campaign, to the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism, advocates for the inclusion of the Military Intelligence Service to the Congressional Gold Medal campaign for the 100th/44nd RCT veterans and requesting the U.S. Postal Service to issue commemorative stamps for the Nikkei nation (the 10 camps). In addition, its Speakers Bureau on the wartime incarceration annually reaches 2,500-3,000 students of the Monterey Bay region.

### Guinness World Records Declares 111-Year-Old as World's Oldest Living Man

**TOKYO** — A 111-year-old retired Japanese educator who enjoys poetry has been recognized as the world's oldest living man.

Sakari Momoi received a certificate from Guinness World Records on Aug. 20. He succeeds Alexander Imich of New York, who died in June at the age of 111 years, 164 days.

The world's oldest-living person is also Japanese: Misao Okawa, a 116-year-old woman from Osaka.

Momoi was born Feb. 5, 1903, in Fukushima prefecture, where he became a teacher. He moved to the city of Saitama, north of Tokyo, after World War II and was a high school principal there until his retirement.

Momoi said he enjoys reading books, especially Chinese poetry, and sometimes practices calligraphy. He said there is no special trick for his longevity, but his caretakers say Momoi keeps early hours and eats healthy, according to NHK public television. He has five children and lives at a nursing home in Tokyo.

Momoi is one of 54,000 centenarians in Japan. The country has the highest average life expectancy — 80.21 for men and 86.61 for women.

— Associated Press, P.C. Staff and JACL National



## EDUCATION MATTERS

Although it was still summer vacation, participants in the Teacher Training Workshop coordinated by the Seattle Chapter of the JACL and the Bellevue Arts Museum filled the auditorium on Aug. 9 to learn more about the Japanese American experience.

The combined efforts of the Seattle Chapter's Stan Shikuma, who also serves as a National Education Committee member representing the Pacific Northwest, and Eileen Herbert, education curator at BAM, brought about this very unique workshop for educators.

Those who attended the Saturday workshop heard personal accounts from Anna Hasegawa, Lilly Kodama, Yosh Nakagawa and Elsie Taniguchi. Between them, the speakers shared first-hand accounts about Bainbridge Island, the Puyallup Fairgrounds, Minidoka and Tule Lake as they spoke during the morning session. During lunch, they were also available to answer additional questions, including inquiries by docents who participated in the workshop.

Docents wanted to learn more about why Americans of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated during World War II because it directly ties into the tours they are currently leading as part of the Art of Gaman exhibit, which is on display at BAM through Oct. 12.

The Art of Gaman exhibit showcases more than 120 arts and crafts objects made by Japanese Americans in U.S. internment



Participating in the recent Teacher Training Workshop in Seattle were (back row, from left) Greg Marutani, Eileen Yamada-Lamphere, Eileen Herbert, Gloria Shigeno, Stan Shikuma, Sandra Grant and (front row, from left) Frances Ikegami, Anna Hasegawa, Elsie Taniguchi, Yosh Nakagawa, Lilly Kodama and Karen Yoshitomi.

camps during WWII. Items on display include tools, teapots, furniture, toys, games, musical instruments and jewelry — all of which are physical manifestations of the art of *gaman*, a Japanese word that means “to bear the seemingly unbearable with dignity and patience.”

Educators and volunteers toured the Art of Gaman exhibit, as well as viewed art by Roger Shimomura and the tag project by Wendy Maruyama, which consists of 120,000 tag replicas that were issued to those impacted by Executive Order 9066. An origami exhibit was also on display for

participants to view.

The workshop's facilitators were Greg Marutani and Sandra Grant, both members of the JACL's National Education Committee.

In addition, JACL Pacific Northwest Regional Director Karen Yoshitomi contributed much insight and information about the redress movement and the role that many individuals, organizations and elected officials played in bringing about the eventual passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which President Ronald Reagan signed into law on Aug. 10, 1988.

Through his extensive network, Shikuma reached out to many individuals and organizations in the Seattle area to prepare for this workshop. As a result, they sent representatives with educational materials, often enough to allow the participating educators to take copies of printed material and/or DVDs. Many educators added these materials to the JACL Curriculum Guide and Terminology Handbook that they received as part of the workshop.

The program is funded, in part, by a grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service and Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program.

***The next Teacher Training Workshop will be in Merced, Calif., on Sept. 26. For more information, contact Robert Taniguchi at [taniguchi.r@mccd.edu](mailto:taniguchi.r@mccd.edu).***

## TWIN CITIES JACL EDUCATION COMMITTEE ASSISTS STUDENT WITH NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROJECT

By Twin Cities JACL

Every year, the Twin Cities JACL Education Committee receives requests from students who are participating in the National History Day competition. The requests include using resource materials from the chapter's extensive collection, oral history interviews or advice and feedback on their projects.

National History Day is a yearlong academic program focused on historical research. Students work individually or in groups conducting primary and secondary research around an umbrella topic.

This year's theme was “Rights and Responsibilities in History.” Approximately 600,000 students, ranging from sixth-12th grade from across the United States, America Samoa, Guam, international schools and Department of Defense Schools in Europe and Asia participated in the competition.

Over the past several years, the Twin Cities JACL has had students win awards at the local, regional and state level, but not until this year has a student received an award at the national competition held in Washington, D.C.

In June, Mary Jo Dalsin, a seventh grader at St. Wenceslaus School in New Prague, Minn., located about 40 miles from the Twin Cities, was awarded third place in the junior individual documentary division for her 10-minute video titled “Japanese Internment: Rights, Responsibilities and Reparations.”



Seventh-grader Mary Jo Dalsin from New Prague, Minn., at the National History Day Competition in Washington, D.C., with her third-place medal in the junior individual documentary division for her video “Japanese Internment: Rights, Responsibilities and Reparations.”

Dalsin interviewed TC JACL Education Committee Chair Sally Sudo for inclusion in her documentary.

“It is always interesting to see how students are able to incorporate the Japanese American World War II experience

into the History Day Theme,” said Sudo. “The TC JACL heartily congratulates Mary Jo for her efforts and fine work.”

Dalsin's mother, Emily, describes her experience during the national competition as follows:

“Each student is given a 20-minute timeslot for presenting his/her project. Documentary students begin their presentation by giving each of the three judges a 500-word essay on their topic and an annotated bibliography. The judges read the written information and then the student plays his/her 10-minute documentary. After the documentary ends, the judges interview the student. The interview/question portion of the program takes about five to seven minutes, during which the student is quizzed on many aspects of the project.

“During the interview, MJ (Mary Jo) was eloquent and educated. She answered the judges' questions thoughtfully and with poise. We had been working with her all week to get her ready for the interview portion of the competition. I thought I had come up with every possible question, but I was wrong. At the end, one judge asked, ‘Where do *you* come down on this issue? How *should* the line between government responsibility for national security and citizens' rights be drawn?’ My heart started beating a mile a minute. I didn't know if MJ had ever considered how *she* felt about this issue. She knew how others felt . . . but had she ever considered her own opinion?

“When she spoke, I almost fell over. She was clear, articulate and thoughtful. She could have been a college freshman, not a 12-year-old little girl as she spoke to her judges. I was beyond impressed! At that moment, I understood the strength of the NHD program. My kid was the expert, and she was telling a story that she knew inside and out. She kept the judges' attention and provided details that I didn't know she knew. I was so proud!” said Emily Dalsin.

***To view Dalsin's award-winning video, visit <http://youtu.be/pPhu6N-147c>.***





# COMMENTARY

## ‘DRUNK HISTORY’: DANIEL INOUE’S HEROISM TOLD WITH TEQUILA

By Kota Mizutani

JACL National Youth/Student Council representative

At this past JACL National Convention in San Jose, I had the pleasure of being part of a youth plenary session regarding Asian Americans in comedy. The session highlighted recent depictions of Asian Americans in comedy media, which were undoubtedly racist and perpetuated common stereotypes of Asians. Although the panel addressed a broad variety of issues surrounding racist comedy, we forgot to include a very important part of any discussion on minorities in the media: examples of appropriate and educational illustrations of Asian Americans in comedy.

I would’ve been able to cite the perfect example during the panel if the show “Drunk History” had aired its episode, featuring Japanese American legend Daniel Inouye, a month early.

At its core, “Drunk History,” a Comedy Central show created by Derek Waters, is a series of short history lessons pulled from a specific American city or region. OK, that’s not entirely accurate.

The magic of this hit series is that in each segment, a narrator recounts a history tale after consuming enough alcohol to be only barely coherent (and sometimes not even that). Notable actors further enhance each episode by playing out and lip-syncing the narrator’s dialogue.

The result is absolutely hilarious, but the motive behind the show is more sobering (no pun intended).

In an interview with the *Baltimore Sun*, Waters said his dream is to find stories that will make viewers wonder, “Why weren’t we taught that in school?”

I was certainly not taught about Daniel Inouye in school.

Thus, it was fitting that in last week’s episode, radio personality and actor Phil Hendrie took on recounting Sen. Inouye’s life as a young man bent on overcoming discrimination, serving his country with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during WWII and becoming the first Japanese American Congressman and Senator.

Of course, all while running on a full tank of tequila.

Steven Yeun of AMC’s “The Walking Dead” plays the role of Inouye alongside actor James Hong, who briefly appears as Inouye’s father.

If you can get past his barrage of F-bombs, asides and slurs, Hendrie does a surprisingly good job of accurately conveying the heroism and major accomplishments of the larger-than-life World War II veteran and politician.

It may appear as if the narrator is just making the story as he or she goes, but Derek Waters asserts that historical accuracy is an important facet of “Drunk History.” “They’re all passionate about the story or know something about it,” Waters said of the narrators in an interview with Fox News. “We will send them research, but never put words in their mouth. We want it to be as factual as possible.”

Although I wish that an Asian American had narrated the segment (I’m sure we can all think of more than a few good nominations for this setup) I find little fault in the episode.

The concept — both creative and funny — shares Inouye’s story with a demographic that would not normally be exposed to this little-known tale in American history. Indeed, last season, “Drunk History” averaged 1 million viewers a week and is the highest-rated TV original series with men 18-34 years of age, according to the *Baltimore Sun*.

What’s more important, however, is that in the Inouye

segment, Hendrie makes sure to observe a high level of respect for Inouye, the 442nd and the Japanese American struggle.

He emphasizes the prejudice and discrimination that Japanese Americans faced during and after World War II and even mentions President Barack Obama’s tribute to Sen. Inouye when he passed away in December 2012.

It is exactly this balance between funny and fact that defines the healthy illustrations of Asian Americans in comedy, of which we need more.

As an involved JACL youth member and National Youth/Student Council representative, it is my goal to spread interest in the stories of Japanese Americans and other American minorities in innovative ways so that we can prevent these crucial stories from fading away in our national dialogue.

But please don’t take my word for it! Check out the “Drunk History” episode for yourself on Comedy Central’s website (though I don’t recommend it for young children) because, as the end of the episode contends, there’s nothing wrong with drinking to a true patriot.

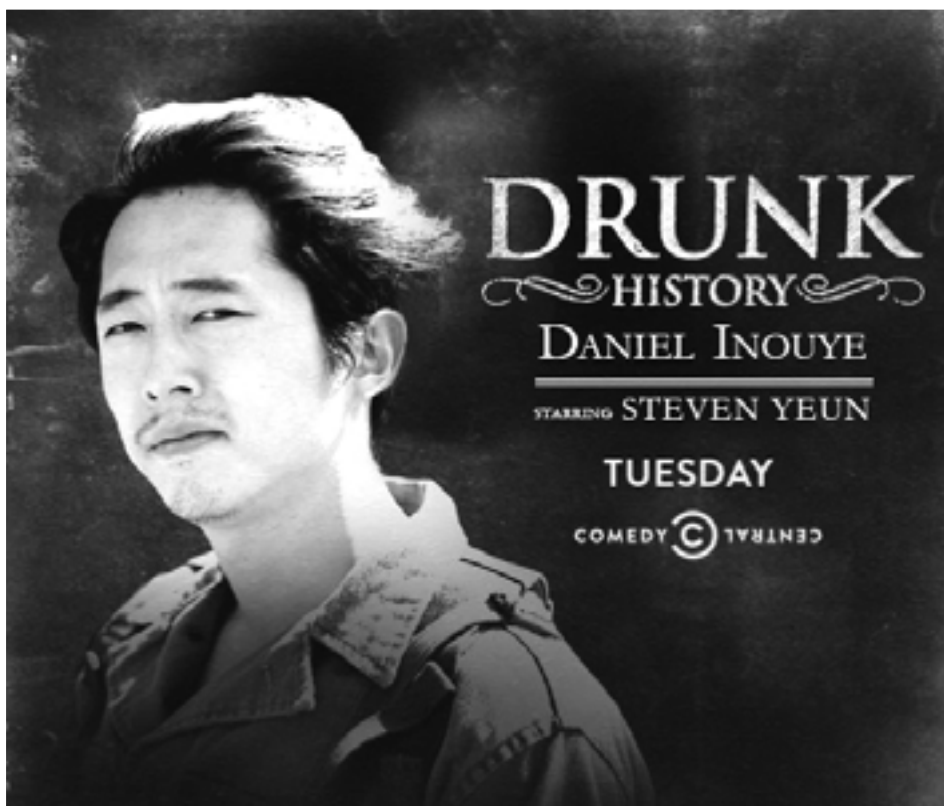
**Comedy Central’s “Drunk History” airs Tuesdays at 10 p.m., with repeat episodes airing throughout the week. Check your local TV provider’s listings to confirm show times.**



PHOTOS: COMEDY CENTRAL



PHOTOS: PACIFIC CITIZEN



PHOTOS: COMEDY CENTRAL

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

**'Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice' Screening****San Jose, CA****Sept. 4, 7 p.m.****Japanese American Museum of San Jose****534 N. Fifth St.****Cost: Free**

This evening will reflect on the impact and influence of Asian Americans in the Silicon Valley and their innovation in technology, arts and culture, media and community. JAMsj will be screening 'Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice,' a documentary chronicling the history of Kochiyama's political activism. The film will touch on her legacy and passion for civil rights.

**Info: Reserve tickets at [www.jamsj.org](http://www.jamsj.org).****CALENDAR****National****2014 National JACL Gala Awards Dinner****Washington, D.C.****Oct. 6, 6-10 p.m.****Capital Hilton****1001 16th St. NW.**

This year's Gala Awards Dinner, themed "A Salute to Champions," will celebrate JACL and community members. Keep an eye out for event details and updates.

**Info: Visit [www.jacl.org](http://www.jacl.org) or call (202) 223-1240.****MDC****Annual Aki Matsuri****Albuquerque, NM****Sept. 28, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.****National Hispanic Cultural Center****1701 Fourth St. SW****Cost: Admission \$5, free parking**

This year's annual fall festival, themed "Bushido: The Way of the Warrior," will be full of activities, food and live entertainment. Don't miss out on the Japanese vintage car club shows, vendor booths and a special samurai exhibit.

**Info: Visit [www.nmjac.org](http://www.nmjac.org) or call (505) 565-2185.****PNW****Roger Shimomura: An American Knockoff Exhibit Reception****Pullman, WA****Sept. 18, 6-8 p.m.****Washington State University Museum of Art****Wilson Road****Cost: Free**

Roger Shimomura's exhibit dives into the Japanese American experience during internment and related historical events. Shimomura will be lecturing at the opening reception.

**Info: [www.museum.wsu.edu](http://www.museum.wsu.edu) or call (509) 335-1910.****Meet and Greet with Producers and Cast From 'Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain'****Pullman, WA****Oct. 15, 7 p.m.****Compton Union Building Wilson Road****Cost: Free**

David Ono, Jeff MacIntyre and Patti Hirahara will offer audience members an insider's view of the production. This will be Ono and MacIntyre's first visit to Washington State University to see the WSU George and Frank C. Hirahara Collection of Heart Mountain, the inspiration for the award-winning documentary.

**Info: Visit [www.cub.wsu.edu](http://www.cub.wsu.edu) or call (509) 335-6678.****Deco Japan: Shaping Art and Culture, 1920-45****Seattle, WA****Oct. 19****Tateuchi Galleries****140 E. Prospect St.****Cost: Adults \$7**

The Seattle Art Museum has nearly 200 works on exhibit, revealing the widespread impact of Art Deco on

Japanese culture. Mediums include sculpture, painting, print, ceramics and many other items that introduce the spectacular craftsmanship and sophisticated designs of Japan's contribution to the movement.

**Info: Visit [www.seattleartmuseum.org](http://www.seattleartmuseum.org) or call (206) 654-3100.****NCWNP****Nikkei Angel Island Pilgrimage San Francisco, CA****Oct. 4, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.****Immigration Station at Angel Island State Park**

Rediscover the little-known history of the Japanese and Japanese American legacy at Angel Island, where 85,000 persons of Japanese descent landed between 1910-40. The event will honor the legacy of George Araki and Alexander Weiss.

Presenters include Judy Yung, Grant Din, Japanese military POWs, Linda Harms Ozaki and members from the San Francisco JACL.

**Info: Visit [www.nichibei.org/angel-island-pilgrimage](http://www.nichibei.org/angel-island-pilgrimage) or email [programs@nichibei.org](mailto:programs@nichibei.org)****PSW****'Citizen Tanouye' Screening Pacoima, CA****Sept. 7, 2 p.m.****San Fernando Valley Japanese American Cultural and****Community Center****12953 Branford St.****Cost: Donation ticket \$10, bento ticket \$10**

A film created by eight ethnically different high school students investigates Sgt. Ted Tanouye and the impact the war had on Torrance, Calif. A Q&A will be held after the screening with producers Craig Yahata and Robert Horsting.

**Info: Contact Brian Moriguchi at [sfvjacl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sfvjacl@sbcglobal.net) or Patty Takayama at [pe.high.mtn@juno.com](mailto:pe.high.mtn@juno.com).****Noh: Moon Viewing and Sake Los Angeles, CA****Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m.****JACCC James Irvine Japanese Garden****244 S. San Pedro St.****Cost: General Admission \$35, JACCC Member \$30**

Master Motonori Umewaka of the Kanse School of Noh will perform two works, "Hagoromo" and "Mayflower." In addition to these plays, the evening will include Kagami Biraki, which is a ceremony that includes the opening of a cask of sake.

**Info: Visit [www.jaccc.org/noh.php](http://www.jaccc.org/noh.php) or call (213) 628-2725.****PSW 2014 Annual Awards****Benefit Luncheon****Los Angeles, CA****Sept. 20****Skirball Cultural Center 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.**

This luncheon will honor those in the community whose life and work reflects

the idea and legacy of the JACL. Highlights include a recognition for the Nikkei LGBTQ Initiative Program, API Rise, Bridging Communities and local leaders. Honorees include Mary Adams Urashima, Asian and Pacific Islanders for LGBT Equality and riKu Matsuda.

**Info: Call (213) 626-4471 or email [info@jacplsw.org](mailto:info@jacplsw.org).****JACL Summer BBQ****Montecito, CA****Sept. 21, Noon****Manning Park****Cost: Adult \$10, children \$6**

The Santa Barbara JACL chapter cordially invites all friends and neighbors for the annual JACL barbeque. Get a chance to win raffle prizes and feast on tasty summer foods. The festivities will be held at the lower picnic area in Manning Park. Please RSVP by Sept. 17.

**Info: Call Naomi Muneno at (505) 963-4954 or Roxanne Nomura at (805) 452-9766.****ADVERTISE HERE**

Events in the calendar section are listed based on space availability. Place a 'Spotlight' ad with photos of your event for maximum exposure.

**FOR MORE INFO:**

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# Memoriam

**Fujikawa, Miyoko Sugi, 94**, Oakland, CA; Aug. 9; predeceased by her husband, John Misuo "Moose"; survived by her children, Bruce, Mark (Georgia), Kirk (Karen) and Scott (Betty); 8 gc; 6 gcc.

**Hayashi, Yukiko, 91**, Los Angeles, CA; July 29; predeceased by her husband, George Iwao Hayashi; she is survived by her children, Dennis Wayne (Mary), Gary D. and Dee Ann Hayashi; also survived by many other family members.

**Higa, Grace Fuyu, 94**,



Los Angeles, CA; July 30; she was predeceased by her husband, Soyei Higa; daughter, Jane Fukuda; granddaughter, Lee Ann Fukuda; she is survived by her daughters, Beatrice (Sadao) Yotsukura and Sandra (Stanley, predeceased) Miyashiro; also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; 5 gc; 3 ggc.

**Honda, Toshiyuki, 87**, Honolulu, HI; Aug. 10; was an Army veteran; he is survived by his wife, Elaine; sons, Terrance and Kevin; sister, Rose Nishida; 3 gc.

**Inouye, Sawae, 84**,



Los Angeles, CA; Aug. 2; she is survived by her husband, Shinji; brothers, Shunzo (Yoriko) Mise and Kunio Sasaki; brother-in-law, Kenichi (Tsuyako) Inouye; sister-in-law, Hiromi (Phillip) Choy; also survived by many relatives, nieces and nephews.

**Kodama, Sadao, 97**, San Pedro, CA; Aug. 1; he was predeceased by his wife,

Shizuko Kodama; son, Jeffrey Sadao Kodama; he is survived by his son, Gordon (Clare); also survived by many nephews, nieces and other relatives.

**Komoto, Midori, 92**,



Ontario, OR; she was predeceased by her husband, Joe; daughter, Mary Jo; son-in-law, Jim Lum; siblings, Tomiko Iwata, Taichiro and George; brother-in-law, Kazuo Kazuo (Dorothy) Komoto; she is survived by her children, Judy Lum, Bob (Janet), Marcia (Ron) Kusaka, Melanie (Wayne) Gilbert; 3 gc; 1 ggc.

**Myers, Terri Reiko, 49**,



Buena Park, CA; July 26; she is survived by her husband, Ronald Myers; parents, Kuni (Julie) Kitajima; father-in-law, James Pitts; mother-in-law, Betty Pitts; siblings, Matt and Cheri Kitajima; also survived by many other relatives.

**Moriyama, Albert Shoichi, 80**, Aiea, HI; Aug. 8; he is survived by his wife, Lillian M., daughters, Lora Lee E. Akscyn-Moriyama and Erin M.; brother, Wynters.

**Murakami, Sumiye, 94**, Los Angeles, CA; Aug. 1; she is survived by her sons, John (Jane) and Henry (Charlene) Murakami; also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; 2 gc.

**Nakagawa, Matsuka Kifune, 96**, Honolulu, HI; Aug. 15; she is survived by her son, Roger; daughters, Shirley Woodhull and Kathy Christensen; brother, Yasutsuga; 7 gc; 3 ggc.

**Nago, Miyoko, 90**, Honolulu, HI; Aug. 3; she is survived by her daughters, Carol R. Youngquist, Irene N. Sakoda and Amy S. Nakagawa; 7 gc; 6 ggc.

**Ono, Jane Ayako, 93**, Cerritos, CA; July 29; she was predeceased by her husband, Jaxson Y. Ono; daughter, Joanne Y. Osumi; grandson, Anthony A. Salazar; she is survived by her children, Joyce L. (Earl) Iwamoto, Randall K. Ono and Sheri T. Salazar; brother, George Kamada; sister, Yae Sugino; 4 gc; 2 ggc.

**Oshiro, Randall Owen, 61**, Kapolei, HI; Aug. 8; he is survived by his wife, Rosanne Anderson; son, Michael; daughters, Kimberly and Marissa; brother, Ryan; sister, Karen; 6 gc.

**Rinaldi, Kazue, 93**, Los Angeles, CA; July 30; she is survived by her daughter, Chieko Saugaya; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Sakamoto, Dorothy Kimiye, 84**, Kaneohe, HI; Aug. 9; she is survived by her husband, Tom; sons, Neal and Ivan; brothers, Robert and Wayne Kaneko; 3 gc.

**Shigeta, James, 85**, Los Angeles, CA; July 28; he is survived by his loving siblings, Howard T. Shigeta, Barbara (Wayne) Sato, Clarence (Eleanor) Shigeta and Wilfred Joe Shigeta; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Sugimoto, Joan Tame, 93**, Kaneohe, HI; Aug. 11; she is survived by sons, Derek and Dean; brother, George Toyota; sisters, Gladys, Eleanor Graff, Harriet Oda, Evelyn Kuroda and Deanna Galestian; 6 gc.

**Takaki, Russell Glen, 59**, Gardena, CA; Aug. 6; he is survived by his wife, Jaimee Itagaki; mother, Lilly Takaki; sisters, Kathleen (Glenn) Madokoro and Teresa (Robert) Matsushima; brother-in-law, Kenny Itagaki; sister-in-law, Sharleen Inouye; also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Takushi, Violet Uehara, 81**, Honolulu, HI; Aug. 8; she is survived by her husband, James "Jimmy"; daughters, Stanette Kitamura, Tammy Kimura and Starr Quon; stepson, Jon; step-daughter, Jan Bachman; sisters,

Bessie Teruya, Alice Eto and Myrtle Yoshioka; 11 gc.

**Tsutsui, Lydia Kumeko, 95**, Honolulu, HI; Aug. 2; she is survived by sister, Dorothy Kino; 1 gc.

**Yamamoto, Kokichi 'Koke,' 95**, Cupertino, CA; July 31; he was predeceased by his wife, Kazumi; he is survived by his son, Clifford (Donna); siblings, Sachi Nishiseki, Yoneji (Sam), Kenji, Tommy and Tsugi (Sue) Takayama; he is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; 2 gc.

**Yaguchi, Margaret 'Maggi,' 80**,



Long Beach, CA; Aug. 4; she was predeceased by her husband, John; daughter,

Sharon Aiko Miotke; she is survived by her sons, Steven and David (Cindy) Yaguchi; son-in-law, Jeff Miotke; mother, Kikuyo Utsumi; siblings, Kei Utsumi and Aiko (Craig) Backhus; 5 gc.

**Yoshida, Walter Toshio, 81**, Kihei, HI; July 31; was an Army veteran; he is survived by his brothers, Roy (Sally), James (Merie); sisters, Ethel Asato, Jean Reagan, Sally (Bruce) Bell and many loving nieces.

**Yoshihara, Koichi Frederick**,



90, Rosemead, CA; Aug. 10; he is survived by children, Sandy Shinobu (Glen) Kubokawa, Joyce Chiyo (Andy) Will and Lisa Miyuki Yoshihara; also survived by many nephews, nieces and other relatives; 4 gc.

## HIROSHI UYEHARA



Uyebara, Hiroshi, 98, Medford, NJ; surrounded by family members, he died on July 29. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Grayce K. Uyebara, brother Isamu "Sam" Uyebara; he is survived by children, Christopher, Lisa (Bill Sax), Laurence and Paul (Mary Yee); sister, Yuri Moiruchi; 5 gc; 3 ggc.

Born in Oakland, Calif., Hiroshi grew up in Los Angeles, attending UCLA and graduating from UC Berkeley. In May 1942, his family was sent to Rohwer until 1944, when they were released and moved to Philadelphia. At Rohwer, he met his future wife, Grayce Kaneda. After camp, he became president of the Nisei Council in 1946, which later became the Philadelphia Chapter of the JACL. He served as chapter president in 1959 and 1986, historian and recognitions chair at various times but was a longtime board member, serving as EDC Governor, secretary and treasurer.

Memorial service is planned for 2 p.m. on Sept. 20 in the auditorium of Medford Leas, 1 Medford Leas, Medford, NJ 08055. In lieu of flowers or koden, donations may be made to the JACL, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115, designated for the Uyebara Internship Program.

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## FERGUSON &gt;&gt; continued from page 3

But when I think about it, there haven't been many instances of Asian Americans protesting and marching as a group. Individuals have been involved in political activism — some high-profile Japanese Americans were involved in the civil rights movement, for instance, and marched alongside black leaders (and even with the Black Panthers).

There were protests during the era that established Asian American studies in universities. And there were protests after the Vincent Chin murder in 1982, arguably a pivotal moment when an "Asian American" identity came together. But there weren't mass protests when Japanese Americans were rounded up and sent to concentration camps during World War II.

Maybe our cultural values keep us from such public displays of anger and frustration, until we're pushed too far.

I wish the speeches at the gala dinner mentioned Ferguson more than just by Vargas. It would have been cool to change a panel on the fly and turn it into a discussion of Ferguson. I hope we as a group didn't keep quiet because we think this is "not our problem." I know we don't.

It would be a real shame if, as a community, Asian Americans accept this injustice meekly, like our own community accepted incarceration.

Because that was terribly wrong, the same way



One of the few times Ferguson was mentioned (in passing) was in this panel, "Do Asian American Journalists Have a Stake in Ferguson Story?" Pictured (from left) are Hansi Lo Wang (NPR), Shefali S. Kulkarni (PRI), Ernabel Demillo (CUNY-TV), Emil Guillermo (AALDEF) and moderator Phil Yu (Angry Asian Man).

anti-black violence was wrong, the same way crack-downs on Vietnam War protesters was wrong, the way Vincent Chin's murder was wrong and the way Michael Brown died was wrong. And we should call out what's wrong in the world.

*Gil Asakawa is a member of the Pacific Citizen Editorial Board and the author of "Being Japanese American." He blogs about Japanese and Asian American issues at [www.nikkeiview.com](http://www.nikkeiview.com), and he's on Facebook, Twitter and lots of other social media. He was recently named the 2014 Asian American Journalists Assn. AARP Social Media Fellow.*

## FAN &gt;&gt; continued from page 3

According to historian Lawrence Levine's "Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America," music and theater entertainment between 1850-80 created the first kind of fan behavior as "passionate engagement."

However, [fancyclopedia.org](http://fancyclopedia.org) marks Hugo Gernsback's 1929 "Amazing Stories" as the father of today's fandom culture.

In 1930, Gernsback was unable to pay his writers but invited readers to contribute stories. The magazine would later evolve into "Science Wonder Stories," which launched the science-fiction genre. During the 1960s and '70s, the fan movement grew into an epidemic that consumed comics and heroes, establishing canons for American popular culture.

Of course, comics and science fiction are just one slice of the American pie. I haven't even considered political or sports fans.

Back at the restaurant, my dinner date then asked, "What would you wait in line and through bad weather for?"

Again, I sat there kind of paralyzed because while I pointed my fingers at the Zelda's and Super Mario's, I lost sight of why I was

at Comic Con in the first place. My assignment was to report on cartoonist Willie Ito's amazing lifelong achievement and share his story through the *Pacific Citizen*.

Maybe I didn't care about the figurines and panels, but I cared about their stories and about Willie. This was why I went to college, so that I could have my face slammed by doors when investigating a story or struggle through workshops to have my papers shredded by my peers.

There's a level of "passionate engagement," as Levine put it, that you need to have to make anything worth it. I love stories, and I love reporting on them just as much as the fans love their superheroes.

For a moment, could you imagine going through life and not being a fan? In fact, I feel a little sorry for those who don't want to understand fandom because to have that feeling of being completely and utterly passionate about something is beautiful. I think it's a part of what makes us human.

What are you a fan of?

*Tiffany Ujiye is the new Assistant Editor of the Pacific Citizen.*

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