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WASHINGTON UNION HIGH SCHOOL AWARDS HONORARY DIPLOMAS TO NISEI STUDENTS

FRESNO, CALIF. — One of life’s greatest moments is receiving a high school diploma, a moment that signifies the beginning of one’s future. For Nisei students attending high school at the start of World War II, that moment was taken from them when they were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to live in various internment camps. Although these students might have received their diploma in camp, they didn’t receive it from the schools they attended.

On June 6, Washington Union, a rural high school district at the southwest border of the Fresno, Calif., city limits, paid tribute to those Nisei students that attended the school from 1942-46 by awarding them honorary high school diplomas.

Fifty Nisei students were found in the 1946 yearbook, and representatives for 44 out of the 50 Nisei students were contacted. Sixteen Nisei attended the graduation ceremony, with 21 confirmed family members also attending as stand-ins for the Nisei honorees unable to attend.

The recognition was made possible through the California Nisei High School Diploma Project, along with the generous support of the Washington Union High School administration and staff, in particular, Principal Derek Cruz. In 2004, AB781 (Lieber) was passed mandating that all high school districts provide honorary retroactive diplomas to Nisei who were not awarded their diplomas in ceremonies with their classmates as a result of their forced removal and incarceration during World War II.

Honorary diplomas were also available posthumously to families.

The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California led a statewide outreach and educational campaign for AB781, where more than 1,200 Nisei were located and given an opportunity to receive diplomas.

As a result, behalf honorary diploma presentations have been made all over California, rewarding more than 500 diplomas to Nisei or their families.

In the Central Valley, diploma ceremonies have been held at Edison High School, Clovis High School, Clovis West High School and Reedley High School.

In 2009, AB 37 was passed and implemented by the California Nisei College Diploma Project to do the same for Nisei attending colleges and universities.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

For a Japanese American, it has been very, very painful to watch the news these past few weeks. Those who knew Gen. Shinseki believed in him, knew him to be an honorable man, a patriot, a veteran of the Korean War in which he served with distinction.

There is no way to ignore the outcome, but surely there must be many like Mark Shields of PBS’ “NewsHour” who can give an accurate portrait of Gen. Shinslick.

Give them a chance to write about the innumerable problems he inherited or the service to this country.

Sincerely yours,

Toshiko Nakamura Watanabe
FTW: FOR THE WIN

THE WAY OF THE WORRIER

By Tiffany Ujiye

Why do you need to stay out so late?” my parents would ask me. “What are you doing? Where are you going, and who will be there?” These are some of the questions I must ask every time I leave my house, and because of this, I try to moderate my weekend outings. Now, one might think that I resent my parents for questioning my nocturnal habits at the age of 22, but that assumption is wrong. I do not hate my parents for questioning me, their adult daughter.

The reason for this is because I understand them. I’m not saying that I know what they’re doing, but I have a teeny tiny clue as to what might be like. It’s a very small understanding, but it’s enough to help me step back and realize that my parents are not my enemy as the state No. 1.

One evening in my freshman year of college, I forgot to text my mom where I was after getting off work at 12:30 a.m. My roommates and I had a long night at the UCI Student Center, dining tables, and chairs for a banquet. Normally, we were hungry afterward and found ourselves at the In-N-Out across the street for milkshakes and fries.

By two a.m., I came home to find the kitchen lights on, and sitting in front of my seat at the dinner table was a meal; a bowl of fluffy white rice, udon noodles with sprinkled green onions and a small plate of glazed wafer crackers on a woven placemat with chopsticks and a glass of water. The condensation on the glass was still foggy and mildly warm, meaning my mom had been up waiting for some time before patting my meal. The milkshake and fries were still sitting in my stomach along with the guilt. If I had only tested her when I first woke, she wouldn’t have stayed up and prepared dinner for me. I felt horrible and loved at the same time.

And so that night, I had two dinners.

Since then, I’ve stopped having a short fuse with my parents whenever they asked me where I was going or what I was doing. I’ve understood that they love me. Their tests, calls and questions came from a good place.

Four years after finding my mom’s home-cooked meal, I was out on another evening in the Communion Lounge in Costa Mesa to meet a few friends for drinks. I arrived with my best friend, and after a few too many drinks, she was incredibly intoxicated.

At around 3 a.m., I decided it was time to head home so I could make it to work on time the next day. As the designated driver, I asked if my friend wanted to leave. She looked straight into my eyes and said she was staying. After all, it was her birthday weekend, and our friends at the bar had offered to drive her home for me since they’d be staying longer.

I rolled my eyes. “OK, call me when you’re safe at home,” and we went our separate ways.

She never called. I was in bed checking my phone periodically, and at 4:30 a.m., I called her — with no answer. The hours passed, and I must’ve nodded off because at 7 a.m., I woke up to find no new messages. My imagination ran wild with teen dramas, cat stories, and TV news reports from Channel 15.

> See WORRIER on page 16

FOR THE RECORD

COMFORT WOMEN

By John Iwata

In February, an article appeared in the L.A. Times and on the Internet about the controversy surrounding a statue erected by the city of Glendale to memorialize the approximately 200,000 comfort women, mostly Korean, forced into sexual slavery during WWII by the Japanese army.

A lawsuit filed in the federal court by two private citizens and a nonprofit organization (not named in the Times article) seeks to force Glendale to remove the controversial statue, located in a public park.

The lawsuit states that Glendale, by erecting the statue, has taken a position on what the suit claims is an undervalued international debate about the “proper historical truth” of the comfort women.

“The proper historical truth” is an interesting phrase, but curious since the Japanese government does not deny the existence of the comfort women. If there is any point of contention, it seems to center around the question of who these women were. Some claim they were prostitutes, implying they willingly followed the Japanese army during the period in question and were, as others insist, sex slaves.

But in 1993, Yohei Kono, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, released a statement acknowledging Japan’s responsibility for recruiting comfort women for military brothels and expressed the government’s apologies to the women. Subsequently, the Japanese government established a fund to provide assistance to former comfort women.

In February of this year, former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama stated during an official visit to South Korea that Japan had committed “irreparable wrongdoings” and should apologize and offer compensation to the women.

The Japan Times reported in April that the Japanese government made overtures to South Korea to put an end to the issue... before the two countries mark the 50th anniversary next year of normalizing diplomatic relations.

According to the Japan Times article, Japan is “considering extending humanitarian measures such as an official apology and funding for the women.”

I first became aware of the comfort women issue when Bay Area activist and former JACL National President Clifford Uyeda wrote a book on the subject in the late 1980s. Never one to shy away from the delicate, Clifford made it public after he had discovered information about the comfort women while doing research on the MIS, about whom very little was known at the time.

In the course of his research on the war in the Pacific, he came across mention of this issue of comfort women used as sex slaves by the armies of Japan. I think it was the next morning that he mentioned this to me, still shaken and deeply disturbed by what he had discovered.

A decade later, Mike Honda raised the issue when he was in the California Assembly and again when he reached Congress, putting the issue on the international stage. Needless to say, the Japanese did not take kindly to Honda’s actions, but knowing him, I do know his motives weren’t to embarrass himself but to find justice for the women who were victims of Japan’s actions.

It’s clear that this issue will not go away until the Japanese government enacts measures that can help put this issue to rest. Unlike some of the events that occurred during the war, this particular issue is not open to interpretation, nor the facts arguable. It’s not something that can be swept under an interpretative rug of history and made to disappear. The existence of those military brothels was not the action of some rogue commander in the field. They were part of the morale-building effort of the army, a approved policy.

> See COMFORT WOMEN on page 16
NPS ANNOUNCES $2.9 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR JA CONFINEMENT SITES

WASHINGTON, D.C. — National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis announced June 10 that 21 grants totaling more than $2.9 million will be given to help preserve and interpret the World War II confinement sites of Japanese Americans.

More than 120,000 Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, were imprisoned by the U.S. government following Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

“Japan’s stories and the National Park Service is committed to sharing this tragic episode of our nation’s past and what it teaches us about the fragility of our constitutional rights,” Jarvis said. “These funds will help us get a better understanding of the past, engage new audiences and build new partnerships in the preservation of these historic sites and lessons they hold.”

Projects selected include the stabilization of the historic elementary school at the former Poston site in Arizona; an educational training program for 600 teachers across California on the local and national stories about the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII; and an exhibition exploring the significance of the Congressional Gold Medal awarded to Japanese American veterans of WWII who served in the military while their families lived behind barbed wire.

Grants from the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program can go to the 10 War Relocation Authority centers established in 1942 or to more than 40 other confinement sites. The goal of the program is to present the current and potential future studies about the influence of the WWII confinement history and a commitment to equal justice under the law. Successful proposals are chosen through a competitive process that requires applicants to match the grant award with $1 in non-federal funds or “in-kind” contributions for every $1 they receive in federal money.

For further information about the se projects, visit http://www.nps.gov/whpg/h/ACST.

‘Witness — The Legacy of Heart Mountain’ Garners Awards and Emmy Nominations

LOS ANGELES — The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II is a profound chapter in American history, and their only crime was being Japanese American.

ABC7 Eyewitness News Anchor-producer David Oono and Jeff MacIntyre, co-producer, are telling this story through their documentary ‘Witness — The Legacy of Heart Mountain.’

Through the largest private collection of more than 2,000 photographs taken at Heart Mountain and interviews with local Southern California residents and descendants such as Judge Lance Ito and Brian King of Pixyto Do Condemnation, a visit to the actual camp site, this documentary brings a powerful message of what can happen when civil liberties are traded for fear and discrimination.

On June 19, the Television Academy announced its 66th annual Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards, with ‘Witness’ receiving four total nominations in the categories of Arts and Culture/History, outstanding writing (Oono) and outstanding editing (MacIntyre) and outstanding videographer (MacIntyre).

In addition, ‘Witness’ has received a Radio Television Digital News Assn.’s Edward R. Murrow Award and the KRTV/SD’s National Unity Award, which honors outstanding achievements in the coverage of cultural diversity in the communities they serve. The Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards will be presented on July 26.

To further educate the public on this important issue, a website has been created to share information on what happened in Heart Mountain through newly discovered documents from the camp and WRA, as well as various organizations such as the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, the Japanese American National Museum and University of California, San Diego.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.HEARTMOUNTAINFILM.COM.
JACL NYSC CONCLUDES SPRING 2014 YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMITS

By JACL National Staff

Kota Mizutani (second from left), Eastern District Council representative, leads a discussion at the Chicago Youth Leadership Summit's "Don't Get Too Comfortable" event.

The JACL Youth/Student Council hosted two Leadership Summits on May 31 in San Jose, Calif., and Chicago, Ill.

Sponsored by State Farm and Southwest Airlines, the Youth Leadership Summits seek to build a network of JACL youth leaders who understand local, regional, and national Asian and Pacific Islander issues and empower the next generation of advocates through community organizing and personal development.

The San Jose Youth Leadership Summit, "Asian Americans in Politics," was hosted by Elizabeth Uno, Northern California Western Nevada Pacific Youth Representative, and Kevin Mod, National Youth Representative, at the Israel Memorial Building, where they focused on API political engagement.

There were 40 attendees, and Evan Low, mayor of Campbell, Calif., and the youngest openly gay Asian American mayor in the country, gave the keynote address. Low also brought the mayor of Cupertino, Calif., Gilbert Wong, who spoke with the audience as well.

Kim Delaney of Southwest Airlines also attended the Summit and generously distributed $20 LLV workout sets as a supplement to the State Farm water bottles and workbooks that participants were given.

This Youth Leadership Summit was organized partially in preparation for the upcoming JACL National Convention, which will be held next month in San Jose.

The Chicago Youth Leadership Summit, "Don't Get Too Comfortable," had 15 attendees and was hosted by Remy Hidaka, Midwest District Council's representative, and Kota Mizutani, Eastern District Council's representative, at Christ Church of Chicago in Chicago.

This Summit explored API racial and ethnic identity, as well as ways in which discrimination still affects the API community.

Pacific Southwest Regional Director Stephanie Nishikawa and Assistant Program Director Christine Manteau also led workshops in which participants defined and identified various identity matters ranging from racial/ethnic identity to citizenship status.

The participants in these exercises were able to unpack various forms of oppression that they've experienced and the areas in which they experience privilege. As an immediate result of attending the Chicago workshop, one participant started an advocacy campaign concerning a racist incident that occurred on a previous high school campus, which affected another Summit participant. She was able to engage 40 other alumni who opposed the racist incident.

Overall, these Youth Summits, though differing in theme and content, allowed space for the youth of JACL to start thoughtful dialogues, strategize ways to combat intolerance, create change at an institutional level and ultimately serve as venues for young people to be in community with each other.

The NYSC is looking forward to its next round of Youth Leadership Summits, which will be held in fall 2014.

Please contact Stephanie Nishikawa at mishikawa@jcl.org or your local NYSC representative with any questions.

FLORIN JACL AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

Leesa Kikutani (center) with her parents, Kenneth and Cindy

Elizabeth Uno (center) with her parents, Richard and Irene

Floren JACL honored Leesa Kikutani and Elizabeth Uno as its 2014 scholarship recipients during an Ice Cream Social held July 24 at the Floren Community Historical Center in Sacramento, Calif.

Each applicant was judged on achievements in academics, school and community involvement, community service and personal interviews.

Kikutani attends California State University, Long Beach, where she is working toward a bachelor of science degree in biology with a minor in physiology and chemistry. Her plan is to attend medical school and become a pediatrician. She is a 2012 graduate of Elk Grove High School.

Uno comes from an active JACL family, and she currently serves on the National Youth Student Council of the NCWNP District Young Representative, as well as the newsletter editor for the Florin JACL. Upon graduating John F. Kennedy High School in 2007, Uno attended the University of California, Los Angeles, majoring in history and minoring in applied developmental psychology.

She recently completed a multiple subject teaching credential and is working on her master's degree in education at the University of California,Davis.

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ALL IT TAKES IS MAGIC

Renowned international magician Shoot Ogawa curates the ‘Magic of Japan Week’ at the famous Magic Castle.

Magician Shoot Ogawa (right) mentors up-and-coming Japanese magician Akinobu Mitsui.

By Tiffany Ujiye
Assistant Editor

Around 1 a.m. at the illustrious and haunted Magic Castle in Hollywood, Calif., Shoot Ogawa recently after his final performance in one of the famed venue’s small showrooms. He’s tired and satisfied with the shows he performed that evening. He’s finally ready to head back to his apartment, located only a few minutes away.

But the 35-year-old magician, born and raised in Tokyo, Japan, calls the Magic Castle his true home. Over the course of his 15-year career with cards, stage, stage magicians, and illusionists in the world.

Today, Ogawa mentors Akinobu Mitsui, an up-and-coming right-hand magician who also performs at the Magic Castle on a weekly rotation.

He’s really one of the premier performers,” Ogawa admitted about his student. “He’ll spend days or months performing the same trick over and over again because that, to me, is talent—to be so dedicated.

At the Victorian-era mansion, which has hosted some of the greatest illusionists in the world since it first opened its doors in 1963, Ogawa coordinates shows for the Academy of Magical Arts, a nonprofit organization whose members include some of the most celebrated magicians and illusionists in the world.

Last month, he curated the fourth annual “Magic of Japan Week,” where magicians from Japan came to perform their unique style, humor, and Japanese magic to Castle guests.

“It is my honor to work with each performer,” said Ogawa. “I am very excited to bring some of the best magicians from Japan to perform at the Magic Castle—some of whom are appearing in America for the first time.”

In the early years of Ogawa’s career, magicians tried to steal his name, calling him a masked magician who exposed secrets and tricks. In 2001, a magic society in Japan banned the TV series Ogawa performed on as dangerous because he explained how tricks were done. The show, in fact, was a kids’ program. Ogawa wanted to inspire future magicians and allow them to witness the possibilities of magic, having everyone to participate. Unable to deal with the gossip and the belief that all Japanese magicians hated him, Ogawa looked across the Pacific, where the Magic Castle had approached him.

When Ogawa first arrived in America, he struggled with custom and culture changes. He didn’t have another Japanese magician to help him transition easily. Japanese magicians didn’t have a place on an American stage for him, but it never changed his magic.

“I just want to be me,” Ogawa explained. “On and off stage, I’m the same person.”

He was following his dream of becoming a performer, recognizing from a young age its ability to bring people together and spread wonder to the world.

Now in Hollywood, Ogawa explained to members of the Magic Castle that he would be performing magic, despite what others said. With VH5 copies of his video program and a word-for-word translation on the screen, Ogawa landed a job at the Castle and a world tour to Europe and South America.

In 2002, he took first place at London’s MacMillan International Magic Convention with his double-hand motion and ninja rings routine, making him world renowned for his slight-of-hand techniques. No fancy stage props or flashing lights needed.

The following year, the American Academy of Magicians awarded Ogawa as its “Magician of the Year” in the Close-up Category.

Since then, Ogawa has been mentoring up-and-coming magicians like Mitsui, and he is proud of his transitional leap from Japan to America, all while keeping his magic intact.

To this day, Mitsui continues to wow American audiences at the Magic Castle, and he is grateful to Ogawa for imparting his knowledge of the industry on to him.
A NEW DTLA SKYLINE

FUSION FOODS STEAM UP L.A.'S STAPLES CENTER WITH MORE FLAVORS AND HEAT.

Folks at the 626 Night Market continued their culinary dominance with a visit to the Staples Center in Los Angeles on June 20-21. The San Gabriel Valley locals visited downtown for the first time in Lot 7 outside the famed venue, featuring new foods, artists and performers.

"The skyline played a big role in the event in setting the ambience, energy and the vibe," founder Jonny Huang explained. "Like all of our events, we try to incorporate as many local vendors as we can, bringing in a lot of local merchandise, food, performers and artists from downtown."

The weekend also included an Art Battle with contestants Chris Oak, Darren Inouye, Eddy Lee, Geoff Parvaz, Gmonik and Keenan Chapman. Attendees were allowed to vote on their favorite live art demonstrations from each artist while listening to the DJ Dance Floor.

In the latest foodie trend, sea food poke made a splash at the DTLA Night Market. Mama Musubi and chef Jay Beraud together whipped up a secret menu featuring a wasabi poke. The petite serving packed a punch with its fresh sushi tuna, sweet onions, sesame seeds and green onions served with a wasabi style on a lettuce leaf. This vendor and chef team also served up curry rice balls with smoky Berkshire pork sausages and a tangy Japanese curry aioli, adding in that extra twist.

A few tents down from Mama Musubi was Sticky Rice Burger. As the name implies, the Sticky Rice Burger is built between two rice buns — perfectly shaped and perfectly sticky — sandwiching together a house sauce, cabbage and a generous, gooey beef patty.

This time around, the 626 Night Market spiced things up with less Asian-inspired vendors and opened its doors to other international foods. Unfortunately, the ever-smelly sticky tofu tents did not attend the weekend's festivities, but flavors from India, Mexico, the Middle East, Indonesia and Europe arrived and were well represented.

First-time vendors Paella Artisans served Spanish paella pescadora (seafood with saffron) and their paella robusta (chicken, pork and chorizo with papas).

From our neighbors up north, the famous Japadog from Vancouver, Canada, made a splash with its Japanese-fusion hot dog truck. Attendees had a chance to take a bite into yakisoba noodle fillings, boundai slices, radish, kimchi, seaweed, Japanese mayonnaise and teriyaki. This tender and delicious combo, bringing a fresh kick to the Night Market.

Not to say that hungry waters didn't have a chance to eat fusion foods, as the intersection between ramek and everything else was bustling over the weekend. Delicious hybrids included platters from Umaya Ramen's ramen pizza and Keiko Shimamoto's Sushi Ramen Burger.

On the classic side, the historic Formosa Café from West Hollywood offered up delicious drinks and dishes. The restaurant's movie history includes Frank Sinatra's late-night dinner runs and visits from Clark Gable along with James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor.

For a different taste plate, attendees had a chance to try boba and hookah in an odd but exciting marriage by Bob's Bistro. The hookah garden gave patrons a chance to sip on boba and puff on one of the vendor's 20 tobacco flavors.

Be on the look out for more exciting and odd fusions at the next 626 Night Market, July 18-19, at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia, Calif. For more information, visit the website at www.626nighmarket.com.

— Tiffany Ujjie
THE SOLES OF J-TOWN

Fancy footwear at RIF, Jason Markk and DunkxChange are putting Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo in the sneaker game.

By Tiffany Ujiye
Assistant Editor

Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles is a quaint historical and cultural real estate, sitting between the 110 Freeway and the Los Angeles River. Equipped with Japanese architecture, American characters, a historical museum and delicious dining, Little Tokyo draws in locals, community groups, students on field trips and tourists all year long. It sits at the core of the largest Japanese-American population in North America, and possibly for sneakers.

Sure, it’s not the sneaker culture epicenter, but it’s hard to ignore Little Tokyo’s increasing popularity with sneaker enthusiasts and businesses. In a quarter-mile radius on and next Second Street is RIF Los Angeles, Illest, Jason Markk and Footland Sports. Four stores related shape-shifting, next to sushi restaurants and Japanese craft stores.

A casual stroll through the plaza is met with a high chance of spotting Mitsuru Café’s image as kids are sporting trendy sneakers. Now amongst the usual crowds is a new set of visitors: from professional athletes to actors — journeying into Little Tokyo for an entirely different purpose.

They come to visit stores like RIF Los Angeles, a consignment sneaker store. The museum-like sneaker store is originally named L.A. Avenue when owners Ed Mateo and Jeff Martin opened the store from Kai Nagawa in 2006. The name change to RIF came from Mateo and Nagawa because RIF is short for retrofits and was reinvented not just shoes but culture and ideas.

“It just stuck to us,” Mateo explained. “We didn’t want just for sneakers.”

At the time, L.A. Avenue had another location in Shibuya, Tokyo. But Nagawa decided to sell the Little Tokyo store due to the shipping economy.

A new RIF faced an increasing unemployment rate, the end of the housing boom and a shrinking consumption rate. Sneaker communities weren’t popular, and neither was selling Nike basketball shoes and collectibles.

“But Jeff and I thought, ‘Why not?’” Mateo said, leaning back in his seat. He and Nagawa pulled together a small loan and kept RIF in Little Tokyo.

Back in 2006 when Mateo and Nagawa purchased L.A. Avenue, only one other sneaker consignment store existed in Los Angeles, Flight Club on Airfix Avenue. Originally from New York City, Flight Club is a quality retailer and the world’s largest sneaker marketplace.

In the reselling game, it’s not about how cool it is, it’s about merchandise” Mateo said, explaining Flight Club’s strength. “That’s why they’ve been so strong all of these years. They control the pricing. The prices are high and everyone complains, but people still buy them.”

Even with a large inventory and hand in the market, shoes like RIF remain highly relevant because of the culture, bringing in customers from across the nation to Little Tokyo.

“There’s no loyalty in the game,” Mateo said. “At the end of the day, it’s who has the shoe, and who has it at the better price. There’s no, ‘I’m with Flight Club’ or, ‘I’m with RIF’ in my opinion at least.”

For RIF and Flight Club, prices are made when clients bring in product to the store, in this case, shoes. Next, the shop and the client will negotiate the shoe’s market value to sell at an appropriate price. Once the shoe is sold, a certain percentage is given to the client and the shop.

“That’s where consignment was,” said Mateo. “When you go to Japan, they don’t just have consignment shoe stores. You’ll find women’s clothing, purse stores — everything. So, the original owners brought that idea down here to Little Tokyo because it was a Japanese company.”

RIF opened its second consignment location just next door in 2012, and it carries premium streetwear clothing and accessories. Both stores receive special visits from such recording superstars as Macklemore and Kendrick Lamar, as well as the NFL’s Mark Ingram and actor Orlando Bloom. The list goes on and on.

Just visit their Instagram @riflaangels and one can see the 200,000-plus followers to see pieces of Little Tokyo in the background and endless scrolling of visitors coming into the store.

“There was someone from Chicago who came down,” Mateo recalled. “He brought down his U-Haul on a Saturday with over 160 pairs on it, and we bought them.”

The collection carried recent Nike sneaker releases, as well as retro Michael Jordans and the entire Supreme SB set, including two low darks, dunk high Supremes and a set of blazers. Each shoe sold for roughly $600 a pair and moved quickly off the shelf.

“You can tell it was a collection he had built over time by just the merchandising he had,” Mateo said. “I kept the dunk low too — just one.”

Today, the majority of RIF’s sales are generated from online consumers, with orders coming in statewide and internationally. The store still experiences regular foot traffic each and every day.

Just across the street from RIF is Jason Markk, a friend to RIF and sneaker enthusiasts everywhere. Jason Markk, a premium goods and accessories brand for the sneaker market, opened its first brick-and-mortar shop last month. The shop offers a full cleaning service for sneakers, ranging from a classic clean at $10 to a PurSpecial at $20 for deep cleaning on premium materials.
In-Depth

The shop has already received visits from two pairs of Kobe 9 Elites, an OG pair of 1985 Air Jordan 1's and all of the Yeezy models and colorways for service. Before and after photos are available on the store's Instagram @ jasonmarkk, bringing back sales to life.

President Jason Mark Anguvaran from Torrance, Calif., was born to a Filipino mother and a Thai father. As an Asian American kid growing up in the South Bay, he always had an interest in sneakers, wearing Nike’s and Vans Slip Highs around town.

In 2006, the same year Malaco and Malakani purchased RIF, Anguvaran found a hole in the growing sneaker culture. “For a long time I was using a home remedy to clean my sneakers, and I thought, ‘There’s gotta be a better way,’” Anguvaran explained. “I went to meat markets — even boutiques — and asked how they cleaned their shoes. Everyone had their own solution, but they didn’t have that one-go-to product. Then I realized there was a hole there that I could fill, so I developed this concept, and I jumped ship.”

The California State University, Long Beach, grad moved his left job in a advertising agency a year later and founded Jason Markk, which is named after his first and middle name, plus an extra “k.” Operations began in his parent’s garage in Torrance, then on to his store’s home in Signal Hill, then to the Arts District in Downtown before finally settling in Little Tokyo.

“It just felt right,” Anguvaran said, thinking about the store’s opening. “I’m so glad that we made the decision to move to Little Tokyo.” Prior to signing a lease in Little Tokyo, Anguvaran and his team considered La Brea Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue, recognizing that elevated streetwear brands such as Stussy, Undefeated and Union lived there.

“Nothing against La Brea, I love La Brea, but we never try to do what’s necessarily hot or trendy, so in that aspect, we were doing our own thing and not following...”

Anguvaran said, “So, Little Tokyo felt right for the brand.”

Along with its popular cleaning service, visitors to the flagship store can view an Under Armour Air Jordan IV, a yellow Lobster SE, Wu Tang Clan Dunk High and a Watch the Throne LeBron 9 in a small gallery exhibit that will regularly change with different collections and collectors.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen any of these shoes in person,” a customer said looking through the glass.

“Just on a computer screen, crazy.”

Within the first several weeks of its opening, visitors have included hip-hop artist Trinidad James, former NFLKite, the checker Shawn Merritt and Los Angeles Clippers owner Ryan Hollins.

“With quite a few pairs come in as referrals from our friends over at RIF,” Anguvaran said. “It works out perfectly because when the customer gets their kicks cleaned by us, it increases the sneakers’ value and everybody wins.”

Although the flagship store doesn’t accept shipped sneakers to the store for service at this time, that may change due to increased interest. Discussion for more store locations is already in the process, with New York as Jason Markk’s next stop. Plans also include Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, London, Spain and Tokyo.

“Never, to be honest, did I think I’d open a brick and mortar,” Anguvaran said smiling. “I love it.”

Currently, Jason Markk offers only nine shoe cleaning products, but will include a website by the end of July that provides waterproofing and protection for shoes. Anguvaran and his team are also developing a solution to remove yellowing from discolored soles without the use of gloves and masks. Since existing products on the market are dangerous to handle, Jason Markk hopes to create a safer solution.

As the sneaker community grows, so, too, have national shoe collector events, where collectors and sellers can meet to buy and sell shoes.

National events like Dunkxchange visited Little Tokyo for the first time in conjunction with Jason Markk’s store opening last month. Dunkxchange drew in a little more than a thousand visitors to Little Tokyo who were looking to buy the latest Kicks 1s or classic Michael Jordans.

NowKick.com, the largest sneaker blog online, posted a full-pagination video of Little Tokyo highlighting the shops and shoes. (To view the video, visit www.nowkick.com or www.dunkxchange.com)

The traveling sneaker event is a buy-sell-trade space for sneaker enthusiasts and entrepreneurs as well as artists and performers, touring to cities such as New York City, Miami, Honolulu, San Francisco and Las Vegas.

International tours in the coming year include stops in London, Puerto Rico, Paris, Berlin and Australia, with a possible visit to Japan.

“We haven’t been to Japan because it’s just physically difficult with limited space,” CFO Curtis Brown explains. “But we’re still looking into it. We already went to the Philippines with a good turn out because the Asian consumer is huge.”

Founded in 2006 by Gary Hughes as the original buy-sell-trade sneaker show, Dunkxchange hosted its first event in Orange County that same year, drawing in a nearly 1,000 people to welcome several thousand attendees last year at Chelsea Piers in New York City.

“We’ve never done an outdoor event, and Jeff at RIF thought it’d be kind of cool to do something together,” Brown said. “We started talking, and it turned into an event.” Prior to RIF, Mal banana was a vendor at Dunkxchange, buying and selling his sneakers.

Now after making a splash in Little Tokyo, Dunkxchange could return next year.

As sneaker culture becomes mainstream, catching the words of reporters and magazine features, players like RIF and Jason Markk in Little Tokyo are putting their foot on, more appropriate, their sneakers in the game.

A woman inquires about a Jordan 11 at Little Tokyo’s DXC.

RIF store front with its iconic bench is a popular photo op for customers and celebrities.

Inside RIF’s store sits rows of shrink-wrapped sneakers selling anywhere from $100-$8,000.
WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JACL NATIONAL CONVENTION

By JACL National Convention Committee

As busy as Convention-goers will be with the National JACL Convention business meetings, some of the more remarkable events that will be available for a attendee will be the workshops covering unique discussion topics under the Convention’s theme, “We Are America.”

All are encouraged to review the workshop schedule and attend one or more that have been scheduled during the Convention. Each session is designed to be 90 minutes in length. A registration fee and signup are required to ensure availability of space. Following is a list of workshops under the “We Are America” theme:

BREAKING THE MOLD

Presenters: Roy Hibayashi, PJ Hibayashi and Johnny Mort
Moderator: Lisa Hira Touda

In Japan, taiko was performed for rituals to summon or drive away evil spirits or give spirit and courage to warriors. In North America, these artists helped spread taiko across the U.S. and Canada to become a dynamic blend of sound, movement and rhythm that fuses Asian roots with a Western flair.

Roy and PJ Hibayashi are the founders of San Jose Taiiko and are the 2011 recipients of the National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Fellowship in Folk and Traditional Arts. Mort is a musician and arts education administrator from Los Angeles and one of the seminal members of Kimara Taiko from Los Angeles and the original taiko drum met for the group Hiroshima.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF HEALTH INSURANCE

Presenter: Stephen Divisch

Changes brought on by the Affordable Care Act have affected every American. The health insurance industry has struggled to comply with the new law, including the JA Health Benefits Trust. Divisch, a longtime JACL member who has worked as the administrator of the JACL Health Benefits Trust (now JA Health Benefits Trust) since 2001, will present strategies for choosing health insurance, give information on financial assistance and tax implications and tell you what you can expect for the coming open-enrollment period.

NIKEI GENEALOGY SOCIETY — FINDING YOUR JAPANESE ROOTS IN THE U.S. AND IN JAPAN

Presenters: Linda Harms Okazaki and Melinda Crawford

Have you ever wanted to learn more about your family history? Have you wondered about when and where your Japanese ancestors immigrated or what really happened to your relatives in camp? Genealogy is a popular hobby and documenting your personal family history is a way to have a deeper understanding of the Japanese American experience.

Topics will include immigration, laws in the U.S., vital records, internment camp files, and more. A Q & A session follows the lecture.

IDENTITY IF NOT A MATH EQUATION: MULTIRACIAL, MULTIETHNIC AND MIXED IDENTITY

July 9-12, 2014 • San Jose, CA • Registration Form

A separate form must be completed for each individual/youth package registration. To register online or obtain additional mail-in forms, please visit www.jacl.org. Convention Package includes: Welcome Mixer (reception and buffet and Valley of the Heart reading), Awards Luncheon, Youth Luncheon, Sayonara Banquet, Hiroshima Concert, workshops, and breakfasts. Youth/Students are individuals age 25 or younger or full-time students. A la carte events may be purchased at multiple quantities for family and friends.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Return 100% by June 1, 2014 • Return 50% by July 1, 2014

No returns after July 1, 2014.

Mail payment and form to:
2014 JACL Nat’l Convention
Attn: Registration
640 San Jose JACL, 565 N. Fifth Street, San Jose, CA 95112
Questions? (408) 295-1250 or 2014registration@jacl.org

1. EVENTS

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À LA CARTE EVENTS

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TOTAL $_____

2. REGISTRANT

Last Name, First Name
Address
City
State
Zip
Home Phone
Cell Phone
Email address
JACL Chapter

3. PAYMENT METHOD

☐ Enclosed is a check for $________ Payable to JACL 2014 Convention
☐ OR Please bill $________ to my credit card:

☐ VISA ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express

Card Number
Exp. Date (MM/YY)
Security Code

Cardholder Name
Cardholder Signature
City
State
Zip
TOPAZ HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1945 TO CELEBRATE 69TH YEAR REUNION

OAKLAND, CALIF. — Sixty-five years ago, they received their diplomas from a high school in the Topaz, Utah, Concentration Camp, the only high school in the country that ever had a concentration camp as its campus.

In the years since, they have lived successful and fulfilling lives, but they never forgot their roots.

On June 28, the Topaz High School Class of 1945 gathered for a weekend reunion at the Sequoyah Country Club in Oakland. The reunion included a visit to Topaz, where the majority of the students attended school.

Members of the Topaz High School Class of 1945 gather in San Francisco's Japantown for last year's reunion.

For more information or to participate, contact Somae Ochikubo at ochikubo@earthlink.net or Kathy Sumia at kathy.sumia@wur.com.
**RINKS SANO**

A personal look at farming life in California’s great Central Valley

By Danilo Urquiza

NCWFP District Governor

If you’ve ever driven through California’s great Central Valley, you’ve seen the signs: “Food Grows Where Water Rains.” “Water = Food = Jobs,” etc. To most Californians, the current three-year drought is merely an inconvenience. To farmers like Firebaugh’s Rinks Sano, it’s a matter of survival.

In 2011, the last “wet” year, Sano Farms received less than 50 percent of the water it needed from the federally controlled water system. In 2014, California has notified him that he will receive zero percent. That’s zero, as in nothing.

Sano Farms must determine how much of its 4,200 acres will remain fallow — and for how long. That’s an easier decision for row crops such as tomatoes, but it is for orchard crops like almonds. For example: How do they grow almonds in the Sacramento Valley if they don’t have enough water to grow them?

Sano Farms supplies three different almond wholesalers, including the massive Blue Diamond, that decision becomes even harder. Following this year’s harvest, Sano Farms will be pulling out one entire orchard of mature almond trees.

Fortunately for Rinks, that is a decision he no longer has to make as he has delegated day-to-day operations of Sano Farms to his children, Alan, Bobby and Lori. Rinks has earned that right as he turned 90 in 2013.

He is still sharp and independent, and most days, his biggest decision is whether to drive to the polo room in Pismo or to walk to the golf course. His biggest physical struggle is Miss Firebaugh’s Disease — he’s extremely hard of hearing. On my most recent visit, he was sitting, but not talking, so communication was dependent on eye contact and a lot of gesticulating.

Rinks Atsushi Sano was born in 1923 on Bacon Island in the Sacramento Delta. The Sano family worked as shibakas, men who were hired for a small wage to cut trees and nippers.”

Rinks’ father eventually found work in Michigan, and he was able to earn a decent living and even had enough money to visit the racetrack and bet on the ponies. Rinks is looking forward to the Belmont Stakes when California Chrome, born and raised by his neighbor, cattle and thoroughbred breeder John Harris, will be running for the Triple Crown.

In 1945, Amache closed, and the Sano family returned to the Livingston area, where they were greeted by signs saying, “No Japs Wanted” and “Keep Out You Rats.” And Livingston was one of the friendliest communities in California.

Both of Rinks’ parents died soon after the war. Rinks and his brother began farming in the LeGrand area. Rinks married Helen Yamano in 1951, and they established a home in Merced while continuing to farm in LeGrand. Rinks and Helen raised their four children, including daughter Julie, in Merced.

In the early 1970s, Rinks moved his farming operations to Firebaugh, where both land and water were cheap and plentiful.

The rest, as they say, is history.

I recently took a tour of the Sano headquarters in west Fresno County. My first stop was the repair barn, which is the size of an airplane hangar. The barn was full of tractors of all shapes and sizes, more different kinds of tractors than I knew existed.

I asked Bobby Sano how many tractors were on the ranch, and he replied that he couldn’t even guess at the answer. In addition, there are fertilizer spreaders, shakers, sprayers, sorters, pruning teams, almond harvesters and other equipment that was a mystery to me.

Then came the tomato harvesters, each of which is the size of a small naval vessel. These incredible machines dig up the plants, separate the tomatoes from the rest of the plant, sort the tomatoes, mulch the grounds and turn the mulch to the soil — all at the same time.

Most of the tomatoes on the Sano Ranch are processed tomatoes, meaning they will end up on your dinner table as spaghetti sauce or ketchup rather than on your hamburger or in your salad.

The next stop on the tour was “the shop,” which is the heart and soul of the whole operation. The shop houses the parts department and the fabrication division.

The parts department seems to be your neighborhood auto store. In fact, the domain of Alan Sano, takes care of the parts they don’t have or that don’t exist. With all of the equipment and tools, it feels more like a Sears department store than a farm shop. Other corners of the shop had more work stations, break facilities, toolers, uniforms and other agricultural industry needs.

At this point, I was convinced that Sano Farms is just like any other farm, only much, much bigger. I wasn’t prepared for the pipe storage yard. These are literally miles upon miles of irrigation pipes stored there, all stored by length and diameter.

The entire 4,200 acres have been mapped out and color coded with the location of wells, pumps and the size of irrigation pipes needed to get water from Point A to Point B. This is my reminder that even with all of the sophisticated farm machinery, the life blood of any farmer will always be that which the rest of us take for granted: water.

There were still lots of farm operations left to tour, but it was obvious to me that Rinks was a genius to get to the pipe storage yard and that I was keeping Alan and Bobby from more important work. I asked Rinks why he felt such loyalty to IACFL. He simply replied: “IACFL stood up for us when nobody else would.”

IACFL will be honoring the Sano family at the National Convention San Joaquin Dinner on Friday, July 11, at the Dole Tree Hotel in San Joaquin, Calif.
## 2014 Obon Festival Schedule

Obon, an annual Japanese Buddhist custom to honor the spirits of one’s ancestors, has evolved into a family holiday that is celebrated each summer, primarily in July. Traditionally, lanterns are hung to guide ancestors’ spirits back home, delicious food is enjoyed and bon odori dances are performed to pay homage to families’ loved ones. Following is a tentative schedule of various Obon celebrations across the nation and in Hawaii.

### JUNE

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Dancers take part in the bon odori at last year's San Jose Buddhist Church Obon.
The Art of Gamag
Bellevue, WA
July 3
510 Bellevue Way
Cost: Adults $10, Families $25

The Art of Gamag exhibit showcases more than 120 artifacts made by Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II. Visitors will witness the creativity and ingenuity of the incarcerated as well as the concept of gamag, a Japanese expression for "enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity." Works range from tools, wood carvings, paintings, furniture and toys. The exhibit continues until Oct. 14. All JACL members will receive $2 off admission price if they show their JACL membership card.


>> NATIONAL

Go for Broke Essay Contest
Torrance, CA
June 30
Go for Broke National Education Center
367 Van Ness Way, Suite 511
Attention ninth grade to college students: enter the annual Go for Broke Essay contest to receive cash prizes. Awards will be given to the top nine student qualified entries, with the top two receiving $1,000. The contest closes on June 30, and winners will be notified July 1.

>> EDC

Films: The Tales & Tragedies of
Kenji Mizoguchi
CAMBRIDGE, MA
June 23, 7 p.m.
Carpenter Center.
Cost: General Admission $9, Seniors and Students $7
"The Woman of the Rumor" is the final feature in Kenji Mizoguchi's film series hosted by the Harvard Film Archive and co-hosted by the Japan Foundation. Mizoguchi's cinema reflects his supreme artistry, and he remains one of today's best Japanese filmmakers.
Roger Shimomura:
Great American Museum

New York, NY
June 28
Flomhaft Gallery
547 W. 27th St., Suite 200
Cost: Adults (ages 11+) $8
Experience and experiment a summer evening in the Japanese gardens with a cold drink at the Morikami Museum. Guests will enjoy Pan-Asian cuisine from Morikami's courtroom cafe and a roaring drum performance from Fushu Dailo. Seating is limited to the first 50 guests and tickets will be sold at $8 at a first-come, first-served basis at 5:30 p.m.
Info: Visit www.morikami.org or call (561)-495-0233.

Haisai Nakamura-za Kabuki
New York, NY
July 7-12
Rose Theater
14 W. 44th St. at Broadway
Cost: Tickets $45-$150
For its Lincoln Center Festival engagement, the Haisai Nakamura-za company has revived a rarely performed 19th-century ghost story, "Kusano Chibusa no Enoki," at the Rose Theater. Watch the artist transformations and performances in the thrilling kabuki drama performance.

55 Salisbury St.
Cost: General admission $14
Visit prints by Meijiro Ryugoji, a Japanese artist, in his Maji color Exhibit. Ryugoji's neo-pop prints are imaginative and vivid examples of "East meets West." The paintings aim to energize and invigorate the depiction of mixed cultures.


>> PSW

24th Annual Walk for Rice
Seattle, WA
June 28, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Seaward Park
9002 Lake Washington Blvd.
Registration fees vary.
Help raise money to provide rice and food for the Asian and Pacific Islander communities through ACRS Food Bank. All ages are welcomed to participate in the 2.5-mile walk. Those interested in forming a team or wish to volunteer can register online.

>> NCWNP

TAIKO in Concert
Sonoma, CA
July 11, 7 p.m.
Event B. Parson Theater
1601 E. Cotati Ave.
Cost: Tickets $20 presale and $20 at the door
Sonoma County Taiko and Sonoma County Matsuri present a JACL-sponsored event "TAIKO — Asian Thunder From the Land Down Under." TAIKO is a premier taiko drumming ensemble based in Sydney, Australia. Since 1997, TAIKO has developed a reputation for their performance with dramatic energy and dynamism.

>> PSW

'USS' Izusu: The First Generation Film Screening
Gardena, CA
June 29, 11:30 a.m.
Gardena Buddhist Church
1517 W. 166th St.
Cost: Free admission

Filmed in 1982, Yoshiko Wada's 54-minute documentary explores Japanese Americans in the rural San Joaquin Delta and their experience before, during, and after World War II. Through the eyes of the Japans, learn about their lifelong struggle through assimilation and the depth of racism they experienced.
Info: Call Patti Nishimura at (310) 527-7255 or email patti.nishimura@gmail.com.
Target: Free Family Saturdays
Los Angeles, CA
July 12, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Japanese American Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
Cost: Free admission
Celebrate Summer Solstice: Japanese Tattoo Tradition in a Modern World" with tattoo and print-making-inspired activities. Please check out the online schedule for a complete list of events and activity times.

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:
TiffanySpacificcitizen.org (213) 620-1747
In Memoriam

Yuri Kochiyama

MAY 19, 1921 - JUNE 1, 2014

BREEZE, CALIF. - Prominent Japanese American human rights activist Yuri Kochiyama, who also worked with Malcolm X and Black Power organizations during her four decades of movement movements, died of natural causes on June 1. She was 93.

Born Mary Yuri Nakahara on May 19, 1921, in San Pedro, Calif., she was one of three children of immigrants Seikichi Nakahara and Tayako Sanozuki Nakahara.

Kochiyama’s community service began in her youth as a Sunday school teacher, but her life changed forever on Dec. 7, 1941. Her father, recovering from ulcer surgery, was taken away from the family home, where she was detained at the Tule Lake internment camp. He was denied medical care in prison and died six weeks later.

While she and the rest of her family were sent to an internment camp in Jerome, Ark., where she organized a letter-writing campaign to Japanese Americans who were serving in the military during World War II. In 1944, she was released to help run a USO center for the soldiers in Hattiesburg, Miss. There, she met Bill Kochiyama, a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and they were married in 1946.

Following the war, the Kochiymas moved to New York, where they raised six children. While living in an apartment in Harlem, Yuri joined her poor black and Puerto Rican neighbors in the fight for better schools and neighborhoods. While demanding better jobs for African Americans and Puerto Rican workers, Yuri was among 600 people arrested for blocking the entrance of a construction site.

In 1963, Yuri met Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam leader, and was drawn to his proclamations for black liberation. Soon, Kochiyama began to study his ideas and joined his Organization of Afro-American Unity, for a time, she became a Muslim.

Kochiyama and her oldest son were in the audience at Malcolm's Audubon Ballroom in 1965 when Malcolm X was assassinated by rival Black Muslims. A famous life magazine photo shows Malcolm X lying on the floor moments after being shot, holding his head in his hands. Kochiyama's connection with Black Power made her a leader of the emerging Asian American Movement. In the late 1960s, over the next decades, she campaigned against the Vietnam War, was a featured speaker at Hiroshima Day events and became a voice between East and West Coast activists.

In the 1980s, she and her husband organized with Concerned Japanese Americans and East Coast Japanese Americans for Redress to demand that New York be added as a site of Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearings.

Following 9/11, she opposed racial profiling of Arab and Muslim Americans and spoke out against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2005, Kochiyama was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize through the “1,000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005” project.

Last year, she was honored at the Pledge of Allegiance Day event in San Francisco.

I didn't wake up and decide to become an activist,” Kochiyama told the Dallas Morning News in 2004. “But you couldn’t help notice the injustices, the inequalities. It was all around you. Kochiyama is survived by four children, nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Hugh Burleson

JUNE 7, 2014

SEATTLE, WASH. — Hugh Burleson, a longtime JACL, Millennium Club Member, Thousand Club Lifetime Member, Seattle JACL member, former Lake Washington JACL member and president and longtime Pacific Citizen Editorial Board Member for PNWDC passed away at his home on June 7.

Until the end of last year, Hugh also was president of the Bellevue Sister Cities, and on the board for Eastern Nisqually Mutual Assurance. Funeral services were private.

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NEW SAKAGUCHI RESEARCH FUND IN JA STUDIES ESTABLISHED AT UCLA

An endowed research fund in the amount of $1 million has been established at the UCLA Asian American Studies Center through the estate of the late Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi and his late wife, Kazuko. The Dr. Sanbo and Kazuko Sakaguchi Research Fund in Japanese American Studies will support students, community-based partnerships and a wide range of research-related activities.

"The remarkable gift from Dr. and Mrs. Sakaguchi will only strengthen our excellence in Japanese American studies," said David K. Yoo, director of the center and a professor of Asian American studies. "Students, scholars and community-based partners will benefit in perpetuity from the generosity of the Sakaguchi family."

Sanbo Sakaguchi earned a bachelor's degree from UCLA in 1939 and then attended medical school at Marquette University in Wisconsin. During that time, his family in California was incarcerated along with nearly 120,000 other Japanese Americans on the West Coast during World War II.

Upon his return to the Los Angeles area following the war, Sakaguchi married Kazuko (Kuri) Peruta.

The Sakaguchis were pillars of the Japanese American community, especially in the San Fernando Valley, where Dr. Sakaguchi and his sister, UCLA alumna Dr. Mary Sakaguchi Oda, practiced medicine for nearly 50 years. The Sakaguchi family supported a wide range of activities for youth, and the main hall of the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center was recently named for Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi.

Yoo said the Asian American Studies Center is proud that the Sakaguchi Research Fund will join two academic prizes established previously by Dr. Mary Sakaguchi Oda for the study of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. The center also acknowledges UCLA alumna Akemi Kikumura Yano, a visiting scholar at the center, for her assistance in securing the gift.

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COMFORT WOMEN >> continued from page 3

This comfort women statue was dedicated in Glendale, Calif., on July 20, 2013. It is an exact replica of a statue located at the Japanese embassy in Seoul.

It seems to me that the only way the Japanese can resolve this issue is to offer an apology and direct individual compensation to each of the 55 surviving comfort women. What ever the cost of such a gesture (and I think it should be enormously generous, given the horror these women experienced), it would be far costlier for Japan to keep burying the issue in political rhetoric and continue to be the target of South Korea’s wrath.

Resolutions between nations are never an easy matter and are complex in ways difficult to understand for outside observers. That may very well be the case here, but one thing is clear: The existence of the comfort women is a known fact. It’s out in the open, and however it was that the women found themselves in that situation, the fact remains that they were there as sex slaves. That is the proper historical truth.

This issue may be beyond the purview of the JAACL’s mission, but it’s too profound a human rights issue to ignore any longer. It’s time the JAACL considers a resolution at the San Jose convention to express its views on this sensitive issue.

John Yatsuhki is former JAACL National Director.