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Welcome to the World of...
Letter From the Editor

T

here’s no place like home. There’s no place like home.” Famous lines from one of Baum’s most loved stories, 1900’s “The Wizard of Oz.” As Dorothy traveled throughout the Land of Oz — acquiring wisdom, courage and the heart to believe along the way — what she finally realized was that home is truly the heart of one’s existence.

This year’s holiday theme is “Home for the Holidays,” and inside this special issue you’ll find a wide assortment of contributions showcasing the importance of home and how vital it is to the significance of one’s roots.

Each and every new day brings with it the opportunity to undertake a new journey on our life path, and knowing we have a homebase from which to start makes the adventure magical. The P.C. has been the home newspaper of the JACL since 1929, and as we celebrate our 85th anniversary in 2014, we are thankful to every one of our supporters — the P.C. Editorial Board, JACL staff, members and readers — who are there to continue to help us operate and deliver the news. We are ever-more appreciative of your monetary donations, for you alone helped make the launching of our brand-new website in November a reality.

Finally, thank you to all of the JACL chapters who solicited ads for this year’s issue. We hope the commissions earned will allow your chapters, which serve as your “home,” to thrive, as the work you do is so important to the mission of civil rights.

And to my truly dedicated and talented P.C. staff, I thank you for making my “home away from home” a bright place to be each and every day of my own journey . . . even without a pair of sparkling ruby-red slippers on my feet.

— Allison Haramoto, Executive Editor

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Saving Historic WINTERSBURG

The fight is on to preserve the Huntington Beach, Calif., property, long considered a mainstay in telling the history of the Japanese American experience in Southern California.

By Connie K. Ho, contributor

Treasure the story there.” That’s what Mary Adams Urashima thought one day during a traffic stop in Huntington Beach, Calif. It was the 1980s, and Urashima’s interest was piqued by routine drives past a farm property that she would later learn was owned by the Furuta family. The former journalist, now an independent consultant for government affairs and media relations, became intrigued by the structures.

In 2004, when Urashima heard that the property was changing hands, she asked other local historians about the site and began looking into saving the buildings of Historic Wintersburg. She came to know about the history of the land, and it became the spark in preserving the property.

To Urashima, Historic Wintersburg is a rare Japanese pioneer site in Orange County that was hidden in plain sight for many years and deserves all the recognition it can in telling the story of the Japanese American experience in Southern California.

Wintersburg Village formed in an area in Orange County at a time when the ranchos were selling off large tracts of land. According to Urashima, in the 1860s, ranchos began selling off land and California had recently become a state. Pioneers, farmers and businessmen were moving across the country while railroads were beginning to lay track from Los Angeles County to Orange County.

The story of the Furuta family spans three generations. In 1900, Charles Mitsui Furuta arrived in the U.S. and landed in Washington State. As a result of the bubonic plague, the teen was not allowed to disembark the ship to meet with his brother, Soichi, in Hawaii. He found work in Tacoma, Wash., laboring in the lumber and railroad industry. Furuta then began to hear about Southern California and Orange County; he learned that there was a Japanese community forming there and that he could find work in the area.

At the time, Orange County was still very rural, a small community with dirt roads. In 1908, Charles Mitsui Furuta and Rev. Hisakichi Terasawa bought land in Orange County. In 1912, wanting to return to San Francisco, Terasawa deeded the five acres in Wintersburg Village in title to Charles Mitsui Furuta. At that time, Furuta returned to Japan to meet Yukiko Yajima, a 17-year-old from Hiroshima who would become his wife. They returned to the U.S. and, the following year, the final touches were made on the construction of the bungalow on the property.

Charles Mitsui Furuta made sure his wife and family had the best, and the property spawned a goldfish farm during the 1920s and 30s. At a time, there were three goldfish farms on Historic Wintersburg, while there were only a dozen across the country. Wintersburg Village became the heart of the Japanese community in Orange County.

In 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt subsequently signed Executive Order 9066 the following February. The order leads to the construction of military exclusion zones in the western U.S. and forces the evacuation of Japanese Americans; the Furuta family was sent to the Colorado River Relocation Center in Poston, Ariz. Charles Mitsui Furuta was taken to the Huntington Beach Jail, then Tujunga’s “Tuna Canyon” immigration detention center and lastly Lordsburg Alien Internment Center in New Mexico. During WWII, there were instances of war hysteria and rumors fueled. In an oral history, one individual recounted how others were speaking about the netting on the tops of the Furuta family’s goldfish ponds, as if they were antennas to communicate secrets to Japan.

The Furuta family returned to Wintersburg Village in 1945, and the property later became home to a flower farm of water lilies.
“Before water lilies, grandfather grew fruits and vegetables. Aunt has stories filling strawberry boxes — strawberries, tomatoes, all sorts of produce. When I was growing up, there were still remnants of fruit trees,” said Norman Furuta, grandson of Charles Furuta.

Flash forward to the 20th century. Rainbow Environmental Services (then known as Rainbow Disposal) purchased the Historic Wintersburg property from the Furuta family in 2004 to prevent residential development. Many of the older Furuta family members could no longer farm and maintain the farm.

In 2011, the company proposed a zone change to industrial/commercial with an application to demolish all the structures, including the goldfish and flower farm barn, three of the Wintersburg Japanese Presbyterian Mission structures and the Furuta 1912 and 1947 homes. In November 2013, the Huntington Beach City Council certified an Environmental Impact Report for the “Warner-Nichols” Project, which approved the application for the demolition of the six structures. The city council also gave the Historic Wintersburg Preservation Task Force 18 months to save the Furuta Goldfish Farm and Wintersburg Japanese Presbyterian Mission.

There are six structures on the property that are considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, including the 1910 mission, the 1910 parsonage, the 1934 church building, the 1912 bungalow, the 1947 ranch house and a pioneer barn that was estimated to have been between 1908 and 1912; those structures all between 1908 and 1912; those structures all belonged to the Furuta family and the majority of the structures are near Warner Avenue. The Furuta family also donated a portion of their farm property, which was originally five acres, for the Japanese Wintersburg Presbyterian Mission effort.

“Embracing that this history is there and that it’s significant is important. No one else has a place like this, the six structures, the history and the arc of a century,” Unashima said. “I think you need to put the face on the buildings, you need to know the story.”

The group is currently fundraising for the stabilization of the property, with funds supporting work to safeguard the buildings. They have until May to figure out partnerships and a way to acquire the property. One possibility is working with a group that can preserve some of the farm uses.

“It would be great if they could preserve some aspect of farming, which it was used for so long and it is an integral part of the community. It would be wonderful to continue that tradition,” said Norman Furuta, the youngest of three sons of Martha and Ray (son to Charles Mitsui Furuta) Furuta.

According to Unashima, younger demographics are interested in a modern take on preservation, where they could go to a coffee house or a restaurant that has an authentic history. The goal is to find something that would sustain the site and create some revenue.

“It’s a very exciting prospect to create an urban farm on the farm land for a farm-to-table program. There are restaurants, chefs, hotels who want to buy organically grown products — we think this may be a way in terms of an economic engine that makes preservation of the site sustainable and they’re very excited to be a part of a historical site. They love the history of it,” Unashima said. “We want uses that are respectful of the history. We want uses that won’t damage the buildings.”

In the fight to save the historic site, the organizers continue to share the stories of the site, and some of the Furuta family members will appear in an upcoming PBS episode of the program “Our American Family.”

“It’s mind-boggling to think that a television show would think our family was interesting enough to do an episode,” said the 62-year-old Furuta, who is based in San Francisco while his two older brothers still reside in Orange County. “One of the unique things is that my grandfather was an amateur photographer. He left quite a legacy of old negatives and prints of farm life. And actually, even back in Japan, he took a fair amount of photographs, so he kind of photographically documented the Japanese American experience in the country.”

In addition, this past June, Historic Wintersburg was named one of the 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in the U.S. by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The recognition by the organization dovetails with a nationwide initiative by the U.S. National Park Service in February 2013 that worked to identify ways to preserve Asian American Pacific Islander heritage, as less than five percent of historic sites in the country represent Asian American heritage.

“Historic Wintersburg is a unique cultural site that tells the important story of early Japanese American immigrants as they sought to make a new life and build a community in Southern California,” said Stephanie Meeks, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in a written statement. “We strongly support a collaborative effort that preserves Wintersburg’s historic landscape while building upon its longstanding role as an educational and supportive space for the Huntington Beach community.”

To learn more about the efforts in preserving Historic Wintersburg, visit historicwintersburg.blogspot.com as well as follow updates via Historic Wintersburg’s social media platforms on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and Twitter.
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Joy Yamasaki
Oscar Linares &
Nicolas Linares
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From
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(773) 334-4861

In Memory of
HIRAOW “SMOKY” SAKURADA

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SHARON HARADA

HOLIDAY GREETINGS
TANAKA
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I was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am a fourth-generation Japanese American and fifth-generation Chinese American. By growing up in Hawai‘i, I was able to experience racial privilege. By racial privilege, I mean I was always well-represented and never felt out of place because so many people had the same cultural values as I did and looked just like me.

However, everything changed when I went to Los Angeles for my undergraduate degree. I experienced implicit and explicit racist comments or microaggressions. According to Sue et al. (2007), “Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily, verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults towards people of color” (p. 271). Some comments I received were: “You speak English well,” “Go back to your home country” and “Why are you getting your degree in communications and not something related to science or math? You are Asian, right?” These microaggressions prompted me to create a documentary as my senior project about microaggressions toward Asian Americans in Los Angeles, which ultimately helped propel me to decide to pursue a master’s degree in Asian American Studies in San Francisco.

While in San Francisco and learning about the history of Asians in the United States, I was beginning to wonder what my life would be like if I was born and raised in a country of my ancestors. I realized, while some Japanese and Chinese traditions were passed down to me from my grandparents, it was not extensive enough. I knew I wanted to go to Asia to learn about my cultural roots and bring that knowledge back with me to the United States to share with my family and friends. However, I was also aware of the different types of prejudices or risks of me going to one of my ancestral countries as a form of nationalism that would take place instead of racism in terms of discrimination.

Ultimately, the potential positive experiences outweighed my fears, and I decided to explore my options for a way to live and learn about one of my ancestors. I found out the best way for me to live and work in Asia was to teach English as a second language. After pursuing many teaching options, I was happy when I received a non-April Fool’s email on April 1 explaining that I had been accepted to the coveted Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, or more famously known as the JET Program.

The JET Program is a cultural exchange program between Japan and nations from around the world. According to the JET Program’s website, as of July 2014, there have been more than 60,000 participants from 63 countries working with the program. Currently, there are 4,476 people participating in the JET Program (http://www.jetprogramme.org/en/introduction/statistics.html). There are three different types of jobs under the program: assistant language teacher (ALT), coordinator for international relations (CIR) and sports exchange advisors (SEA). The ALT’s main job is to assist a Japanese teacher of English (JTE) in English class.
while also helping out with extracurricular English activities such as English camps or English speech contests. CIRs work with the local governments of Japan as interpreters for government officials, making pamphlets, and also advising travel plans for international visitors. Finally, the primary job for SEAs is to work with local governments by promoting intercultural communication through sports (http://www.jetprogramme.org/aspiring/positions.html).

I work as an ALT in Tottori Prefecture at Aoya Senior High School. My primary job is to incorporate English lesson plans with my JTEs (through team teaching classes) while providing a cultural perspective from my home country and home state. Some examples of topics I have spoken about in my team teaching classes are: my self-introduction lesson, where I included facts about Hawai‘i, Halloween and Thanksgiving. Currently, I am preparing a lesson plan incorporating English lesson plans with my JTEs on what was taught to the students in the past or what they were probably taught during middle school. For the Christmas holidays, one JTE stated, “There is a family party on Christmas Eve where we eat Christmas cake. On Christmas Day, presents are given to children.” I was completely shocked to hear that children receive presents on Christmas Day, which is similar to our Christmas Day traditions back in the United States because many Japanese households are Buddhist.

While talking to another JTE, I pointed out how commercialized Christmas is in Japan because I see many Christmas decorations in stores, Christmas lights are also shown in public places and Christmas songs are heard regularly when I do my grocery shopping. Despite the abundance of Christmas items throughout Tottori and in the stores, the JTE stated, “There are a lot of Christmas decorations that are public, but many families do not put up their own decorations. If they do, it is only for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.”

I completely agree with her because I usually see many houses back in the United States, filled with Christmas decorations including lights, snowmen, reindeer and Santa Claus. However, even though these items could be bought at local stores in Japan, I have not seen one house display Christmas decorations of the property.

For New Year’s festivities, one of my JTEs stated, “It is very calm. There are no big fireworks or parties. Instead, on New Year’s Day, many families go to the shrine and pray.” After getting a sense of what students already know about each holiday, I decided to put a poll together from other Asian American JETs from different prefectures to see what they taught in years past or will be teaching to complement my ideas. A first-year JET located in Ayabe, Kyoto, stated, “I am going to have a game and cookies! And probably show a fireworks video if I can get the projector to work.” Another first-year JET placed in Fukuyama, Hiroshima, said, “I will probably introduce Santa, have them do some sort of craft and if I’m feeling very daring, make gingerbread houses!” Similarly, a first-year JET participant based in Yamana, Kamamot, declared, “I am planning on making gingerbread houses in [English] club. Also, I have a bulletin board where I will feature American Christmas.” Finally, a second-year JET participant who is teaching in Osaka, Gifu, articulated: “For [Christmas], I taught about the story of Rudolph and compared/contrasted Japanese traditions with American traditions. For example, it is common for couples to go out for an expensive dinner on [Christmas] Eve and eat KFC [Christmas] cake. . . . As for New Year’s, I taught about making New Year’s resolutions, shared my experience[s] I had in Taiwan when I went there for New Year’s and showed a video of fireworks off of Taipei 101.”

While having different inputs and ideas from my JTEs and other Asian Americans who are also in the JET program with me, I will be teaching my students about unique Christmas artifacts they are unaware of such as Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, gingerbread houses, Christmas wreaths, and along with the Christian “version” of Christmas. I will also show fireworks from different cities around the world on New Year’s Eve while putting emphasis on the ball dropping in Times Square and the fireworks show in my hometown.

Aside from my work duties, I am able to experience one of my personal goals, which was to explore a culture and its traditions of one of my ancestries. Since arriving in August, I have been able to travel to Hiroshima, Osaka and Kyoto. In these places, I have been able to explore many shrines, eat delicious authentic Japanese food and take part in cultural festivals that I would not have known about or partook in back in the United States.

Getting back to my fear of discrimination, since I am an “invisible” foreigner in terms of physical appearance, I do not get treated any differently or get weird looks as my non-Asian friends do. However, whenever I go places, since I look and am Japanese, people expect I can speak the language and know all the customs. Despite my lack of knowledge in both departments, the Japanese nationals do not express any hatred toward me. In fact, when I say I am a fourth-generation Japanese American from Hawai‘i, many people are thrilled and try to speak English with me.

While traveling to different parts of the country, particularly Osaka and Kyoto since I went in the middle of November, I noticed Tottori is not the only prefecture that celebrates Christmas in terms of decorations and holiday items. I was particularly shocked when there were a lot of Christmas decorations in both Osaka and Kyoto train stations. Ultimately, I am excited to spend at least one year in Japan. Since I have only lived in places that offered two seasons, one thing I am looking forward to is observing all four seasons. Even though I am not used to really cold weather, the one thing I am looking forward to the most is experiencing a “White Christmas.”

SOURCES:

Ryan and his friend, Eimi, hike Fushimi Inari in Kyoto, which is famous for its many torii gates.
Happy Holidays from Omaha, Nebraska

Rudy & Carol Mudra

Happy Holidays & A Happy New Year to All

From Chapter members and Board members
La Donna Yumori-Kaku, President

Wishing you a season filled with joy, love, and many wonderful memories.

SHARON ISHII
2502 S. 101st
BILLY, MILES
JORDAN
Omaha, Nebraska

Happy Holidays
Shiro and Cathy Shiraga

Happy Holidays
and Pres{ey Igowsky
Jim Miyazaki

Happy Holidays
from THE OMAHA JACL
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Paul and Atsuko Kusuda

Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year
Eddie Jonokuchi

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
Eugene and Eri
William and Eri
Groups and Marc Cobb
Fred and Shira, Alex and Jen
Pramenkos

Wishing All Our Friends
and Relatives a Joyous Holiday Season
BILLY, MILES
AND
SHARON ISHII JORDAN and
CELINE
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Omaha, NE 68124

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Jessica Loock
Kevin, Amy, Victor and
Artia McCollough
Kevin Miyazaki
Bill and Barb Sugayama
David Sugayama
Tom and Marty Sugayama

Happy Holidays
and Blessing
to all our friends and family.

Season’s Greetings!

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Happy Holidays
from San Diego

Happy Holidays
from the
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Hauling junk might sound like a down-and-dirty job, but it's a telling journey into people's private homes and lives.

By Tiffany Ujiiye, assistant editor

John Nakama knows all about junk. Most days on the job are pretty average for the 1-800-Got-Junk? franchise owner in Encino, Calif., hauling away for his customers the assorted bank safes, 1960s newspapers, broken appliances, outdated furniture, jewelry, forgotten groceries and sometimes the occasional supernatural spirit.

At its busiest, Nakama's team experienced five jobs a day on weekdays and up to 10 jobs on Saturdays, with three truck teams out in the field. Each truck, which can hold roughly 15 cubic yards, removes a variety of trash and leftovers from homes and businesses. Everything is divided in the truck, with 40 percent of the items tossed into the landfill and 60 percent put away for recycling and donating. Nakama charges his clients based on volume or how much space the junk is expected to occupy in a truck. Customers can call a corporate call center to schedule pickups and quotes for their property.

The removal service started by Canadian Brian Scudamore in 1989 began as a simple trash removal service, but it soon gained national popularity after shows such as A&E's "Hoarders," now in its sixth season, and TLC's "Hoarding: Buried Alive," now in its seventh season, featured the company in its episodes.

Today, the junk removal service has approximately 850 operational trucks throughout Australia, Canada and the United States, with approximately 170 franchises globally. In 2012, the company’s total revenue peaked at $106.4 million — all from hauling away junk.

While the shows focus on very extreme hoarding cases, Nakama and his team go into real-live homes daily with no cameras, no lights and no hoarding specialist.

"A lot of the jobs I did felt like archeological digs, especially the hoarding ones," Nakama explained. With piles of junk reaching to the ceiling at some locations, he recalled seeing newspapers and magazines dated recently but as his crew slowly removes layers on layers of boxes, he finds that the dates slowly go back in time.

"It's like each layer is another year and another time — it's interesting in that sense," Nakama explained. "But it's not always interesting because sometimes it can get uncomfortable."

In 2004 when Nakama purchased his franchise, he arrived at an apartment with one other employee, expecting a regular cleanup job.

Each 1-800-Got-Junk? truck holds 15 cubic yards of trash or treasures. The memorable jobs often include several trucks.
“We walked in there, and I was blown away by how many books this guy had,” Nakama said. The homeowner had died recently, and the homeowner’s brother had called in for the removal service. “There were just books everywhere — even up to the ceiling — and on top of that there were newspapers and magazines. Some of them weren’t even cracked open — you could just tell that he bought them and never touched it again.”

Books alone from the home filled 30 cubic yards of space in the 1-800-Got-Junk? trucks, with roughly 40 percent of the books in brand-new condition.

During the job, Nakama noticed photos in the home. “Usually, I can separate myself from the people and their homes,” he said. “But I saw a picture of the guy who died, and that gap of separation just got smaller. For me, personally, I love pictures. I think pictures are truly worth a thousand words, and they can capture a moment long after it’s passed. So, seeing the photo of the owner hit something in me.”

Nakama noticed in the picture that the man had a stretched T-shirt collar — known as a “baco neck collar” for its worn-out look.

“That detail stuck out to me like maybe he didn’t take care of himself and this was his house,” Nakama said.

In many jobs, trends do emerge. Nakama said, primarily with the discovery of papers, books, newspapers and magazines, suggesting clients’ need to hold on to information. Other trends include finding what he calls “secrets,” like adult magazines and toys or items that might be embarrassing if the homeowner’s family found them. Yet, the sheer volume of whatever he finds is always the most striking at each job. It’s quantity over quality for him.

“I always thought it was odd that people could keep so much stuff inside of their home,” Nakama said.

According to the latest psychiatry’s standard guidebook, the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,” hoarding is listed under the obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. The condition is described with excessive accumulation of stuff at the expense of efficiency. Extreme clutter can increase health risks, poor sanitation and a disruption in daily activities and personal relationships. According to the American Psychiatric Assn., roughly 2 percent-5 percent of the population has a hoarding disorder.

On episode 20 of “Hoarders” during its third season, 1-800-Got-Junk? was the official junk removal service, and Nakama and his crew found themselves in the middle of a house that was covered in 10 inches of rat feces.

The episode highlighted a gentleman named Glen who lived with 2,500 free-roaming rats in a home located in Llano, Calif. There was little furniture within the home itself, however the sheer volume of rat droppings and rats within the walls made this an especially memorable job for Nakama.

“It was awful,” Nakama remembered. “The house was uninhabitable.”

Glen’s hoarding began with just three pet rats that exploded to thousands after his wife passed away from heart failure. Within the episode, the ASPCA, a rat rescue and the Humane Society were called in along with 1-800-Got-Junk? to participate in the episode.

“The show definitely brings in the most extreme jobs — like the rat one,” Nakama said.

But it isn’t always the extreme hoarding cases and homes that stand out to Nakama. In 2004 at one of his earliest jobs, a home brought goose bumps bubbling and his hairs standing in full attention.

“I don’t believe in ghosts, but something about that job was eerie,” Nakama recalled. The owner had recently passed away, and her two sons helped John and his team remove items within the two-story building.

One son, however, was occupied with taking pictures from the living room floor. Nakama found it odd that the man was taking pictures, but he continued to work.

That afternoon once the home was cleared, Nakama and another employee asked what the photos were for. The son replied that he was taking spectral images. Spectral images are full spectrum photos that capture ultraviolet and infrared light often thought to reveal disruptions in the light — or spirits.

The son showed Nakama the camera, and the photos revealed several images with small little dots on the frame.

“He thought they were spirits,” Nakama laughed. “But I just thought it was dust. Again, I love photos and photography but . . . it’s just dust.”

Moments later in the kitchen, looking up from the camera, the son asked, “Did you . . .”

Before he finished his sentence, Nakama experienced a feeling of motion, something traveling through him. The hairs on his arms began to stick straight up. Goose bumps emerged throughout his body.

“It was this feeling that something walked right through me, and I had never before felt the weight of goose bumps that big before,” Nakama said.

When he looked up, the son completed his sentence. “Did you feel that?” he said. “That was my mom walking through here. I feel her throughout the house.”

The men in the kitchen paused and looked at each other. It just so happened that the son was a ghost hunter and the author of a book Nakama had been reading about ghosts entitled “The Haunted Whaley House II.”

“I still haven’t seen a ghost, but that day really shook me up,” Nakama said.

While the home itself wasn’t exceptional in its contents, the experience was supernatural. Over the years, 1-800-Got-Junk? has received calls from businesses and storage units, but the homes themselves can offer interesting cases and unusual experiences.
Other jobs have brought Nakama a different kind of spirit. A client who was a doctor was away at a conference and returned to his home only to find that the power in his two wine cellars, both holding more than 480 bottles each, had turned off. Nakama and his crew were called in to remove the cellar and the wine since the client believed that they had gone bad. However, they were just fine.

"I took home the coolers and the wine," Nakama said. "Some of the bottles were worth several hundred dollars, and after popping a few open and tasting them, I knew they were still good. So, now I have a lot of wine at home."

"I think my parents, coming from Japan during a difficult time after the war, needed to hold on to whatever they had," Nakama explained. His parents, Fumio and Kazuko, moved to the U.S. after the war and later met in Fresno, where they were married and raised Nakama and his younger brothers, Steve and Paul.

Nakama explains that though he grew up in a regular middle-class home, there was always an urge to keep something that maybe they didn’t need right then but might later.

"To clarify, my parents aren’t hoarders because I’ve seen hoarding and what that looks like," Nakama said. "But they do hold on to a lot of things that I think are in large part due to them being immigrants and going through a difficult time."

"You can’t take any of this stuff with you when you pass. I haul away people’s lives, but you realize that it’s not the material things that really matter. It’s the memories. Maybe instead of buying a new pair of skis, I’ll just take a picture of them," Nakama laughed. "It’ll last longer."

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A Holiday in Southeast Asia

A former JACL fellow travels to Asia to take part in a Designing for Social Innovation & Leadership course sponsored by the United Nations Mandated School for Peace & Sarus.

By Rhianna Taniguchi, contributor

I spent my Thanksgiving in Cambodia. Not quite home for the holidays like my mother would prefer, but rather with people from over 17 countries.

Being Japanese American from Hawaii, I sometimes feel I have no “place.” Japan is not my home, Hawaiian culture is often exclusive and Americans are white (according to foreigners). Who are my people? Who do I fight for in a world of borders, colors and languages?

These questions lingered as 24 people came together from all corners of the world to the Designing for Social Innovation & Leadership course in Bangkok, Thailand, and Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The course, put together by the United Nations Mandated School for Peace & Sarus, took place Nov. 17-30.

Within hours of our first day, it was apparent that the participants were explorers with impresssive lists of cities and languages under their belts.

One of the facilitators was from Ohio and started an international exchange program to bring educational opportunities to Southeast Asians. He'd dedicated years of his life to building this program, and I had no idea why. Why would a white guy from Ohio spend arguably the best years of his life building educational opportunities for people on the other side of the planet?

Yes — if it were easy, fast and fun, I'd do it, too, but it wasn't. It was years of work and sweat for a culture, language, color and nationality that were completely foreign to him. Don't get me wrong, I'm all about service to others, but I was thrown by his dedication to a group to which he had no apparent connection. Our conversation led to the concepts of belonging and community. He'd never felt at home in Ohio or throughout the States. He understood the culture in the United States just as much as that in Southeast Asia. Everything was changing everywhere,” he said as we ate curry on the Phraya River. His journey started with empathy.

I contemplated this, and throughout the month, I found others like me, people finding their place in a global world. Where is home? Is it where our ancestors came from, where we were born, what language we speak, where we spent our childhood, where we lived in the longest, the food we eat? Most all of the participants had lived in multiple parts of the world, and one had moved over 30 times.

My findings: We're a global generation, constantly exploring and growing.

During our trip, we visited Chulalongkorn University, the oldest university in Thailand, where we learned about different structures of peace and case studies in Southeast Asia focusing on conflict resolution. In each case, the person who was the key peacemaker had been a culturally competent leader. They had been able to go beyond their personal experience or use it to create a more peaceful world beyond tolerance and toward empathy; this is the role of multicultural and global citizens. This is the role Asian Americans have played in the past and the role our young people are taking on now.

Yes, we are a bridge of cultures, but beyond that, we are peacemakers. In schools and communities, our youth are breaking stereotypes, standing up for others and raising their voice against injustice. They also have been reaching out beyond their own groups.

With the Ferguson decision, immigration policy and other recent changes, our youth need to use their creativity to make changes in our government and our society. How do we do this effectively and make lasting change as young people?

For me, it's curiosity, awareness, vulnerability, creative thinking and concrete action. I have deep respect and value in others, but many times, I don't value myself. Being a peacemaker requires you to value your experiences, history and who you are individually. Peace requires making a “place” for yourself and those around you.

Home is not a physical place for me. I will work to create a world that actively advocates for equity and peace — and that will be my home.

The Designing for Social Innovation and Leadership Course is a unique international program that leverages field-based immersion and online classes to create experiential learning for graduate students, professionals and practitioners interested in creating social impact around the world.
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Doreen
Kawamoto

Happy Holidays
Linda Tanaka

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We deeply appreciate your friendship and support!

The Negoro-Miya Family

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Lloyd K. Ito, M.D.
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Happy Holidays!
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Happy Holidays!! We are so grateful for the messages of hope and understanding which JACLers around the country are sending to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals and their families.

To greater peace in 2015...
Marsha & Tad Aizumi, son Stefen, and son Aiden and wife Mary

Happy Holidays!

Kimiko McCown
Happy Holidays!
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Kara & Shaun Tanaka
Happy New Year!
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Happy Holidays!

Kimiko McCown
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Celebrating 85 Years!
It’s not what you look at that matters, it’s what you see.” — Henry David Thoreau.
In 1976, the United States of America celebrated its 200th anniversary. America would embrace the lofty principals of justice for all and the equality of its citizenry under the law, regardless of race, color, creed or religion. The United States of America would be the land of the free and home of the brave.

Reality, of course, didn't always match those words. Every generation of Americans has had to push hard to help the nation meet those goals of becoming that more perfect union. It was fitting, then, that the Bicentennial Year was also when President Ford rescinded President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, a cruel mockery of those founding ideals.

It was also fitting that in 1976, the National Broadcasting Corp. aired the made-for-TV movie adaptation of "Farewell to Manzanar," the book written by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and published in 1973 that recalled how her family was forever impacted by E.O. 9066.

The movie starred a who's who of Japanese American talent, on- and offscreen. Its actors included Yuki Shimoda, Nobu McCarthy (playing two roles), Clyde Kusatsu, Akemi Kikumura, Mako, Pat Morita, Seth Sakai, James Saito and Momo Yashima. Young Jeanne Wakatsuki was played by Dori Takeshita.

"FTM" also helped launch the professional careers of Paul Chihara, who composed its original music, cinematographer Hiro Narita and production manager Richard Hashimoto.

While the book was specific to Houston's family's experience, it became a stand-in for the experiences of many Japanese American families whose lives were also affected by E.O. 9066 and a crossover success that introduced many young people in Japanese American communities to how racial prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership affected a particular group of Americans who were removed from their homes and incarcerated for years by their own government.

As for "Farewell to Manzanar" the telefilm, it was produced by Universal Studios on a budget of $700,000 — and it didn't happen without some controversy.

The year before NBC aired the telefilm adaptation of "FTM," Japan's Sony Corp. introduced the Betamax, a home video-cassette recorder, and as the American Revolution changed the concept of the nation state, the Betamax would revolutionize home entertainment.

Again, like the American Revolution, it would take a battle to make it happen — in the American court system. It pitted Sony against MCA, the parent company of Universal Studios, the producer of "FTM." MCA was against a device that could allow someone to record TV broadcasts for personal use, to be time-shifted and viewed at one's leisure.

Feeling threatened by this new technology, MCA, with other entertainment companies supporting it, sued Sony for marketing a device that allowed copyright infringement.

Sony, however, prevailed over MCA in a case decided by the Supreme Court, which essentially ruled that taping a show for personal viewing at a later time fell under the heading of fair use.

That MCA lost was, ironically, a boon for the entertainment industry complex; VCRs made it possible for movies and TV shows to be resold to the public. Sony vs. MCA would turn out to be one of the greatest financial windfalls ever imagined for the entertainment industry.

"Farewell to Manzanar" aired on March 11, 1976, but without content. Some groups and individuals within the Japanese American community took issue with it, even before it was completed.

According to an article written by Gail Murakami in the March 12, 1976, edition of the Pacific Citizen, the Southern California Manzanar Committee and its leader, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, had sought preproduction involvement with the script of the telefilm, which was directed, produced and co-written by John Korty, who shared screenwriting credit with "FTM" author Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston.

Murakami noted how "members of the Southern California Manzanar committee released a public statement (on July 1, 1975) criticizing Korty, who also directed 'The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman,' for failing to consult with them in the early script writing stages."

The same article noted that playwright and gadfly Frank Chin lambasted the "FTM" telefilm as "the most despicable, self-righteous white racist vision of Japanese Americans in American film." Chin, who had a small role in the movie, also said he wanted his name removed from its credits.

"FTM," however, also had its supporters and defenders, one of whom was JACL member Edison Uno, who, as the man who came to be known as the father of the Redress Movement, had the bona fides to refute the telefilm's criticism. A technical consultant on "FTM's" production, Uno came to the film and Korty's defense when he said, according to the article: "I am willing to stick my personal reputation and integrity on the film."

"FTM" co-author Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston was also quoted in the article: "It really saddens me very much that Chin feels that way, but I understand and I respect his rights as a person and a writer.

"We realize that it is not the only and perfect statement, but given the realities and limitations of the television medium, we tried our best," she continued.

Indeed. While it didn't fare as well as Korty's prior work, "FTM" did garner a pair of Emmy nominations, one in the category Writing in a Special Program, Drama or Comedy Adaptation, and for Narita, Achievement in Cinematography for Entertainment Programming for a Special. While "FTM" won no Emmys, it did win the 1976 Humanitas Prize for Korty and the Houston for its script.

Jeanne Houston also wrote a letter that was published in the March 19, 1976, issue of the P.C. to defend the movie and praise Korty. In part, it read: "We also wish to publicly express our continuing admiration for John Korty, who produced and directed the film. It was our belief from the beginning that his exceptional honesty and sensitivity made him the ideal director, and that belief has been strengthened during the past two years.

"It is a great misfortune that he has been libeled in print, called a 'white racist' and viciously linked with the Nazi party and the Ku Klux Klan. This is an unjust assessment of a man with such high professional, moral and aesthetic standards. In addition to his years of filmmaking experience, he brought a great deal of humanity and compassion to the difficult task of adopting our book into film."
One exception, however, was "FTM." In the years after it aired in 1978, "FTM" remained commercially unavailable. It was almost as though it had never existed.

The home video entertainment revolution that made so many movies available to so many people had invisibly passed over one of the few mainstream productions to depict the interracial romance of Japanese Americans during WWII. No one, it seemed, knew why.

In the years after "FTM" aired, the Redress Movement, which had roots in the years before the film aired, gained momentum. It culminated, of course, in President Ronald Reagan's second term, when he enacted the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

Through it all, "FTM" still remained unavailable.

According to Maria Kwon, director of retail enterprises at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, it was, since its first day on the shelf, the most requested video that people wanted to buy from the museum's gift shop — but it was simply unavailable.

The commercial absence of "FTM" was also a mystery for Korty.

Korty, who works out of Point Reyes Station, Calif., said that over the years he also had tried various means to see about getting "FTM" released for the home market — but his efforts were for naught.

People would also call Korty asking to buy a copy of the film, but he'd have to refuse. "I'd have to say 'I'm legally prohibited. I have one or two VHS copies, and I can't duplicate or sell them.'"

On May 24, 2001, the 15th VC Film Festival (now known as the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival) arranged a screening of "FTM" in Little Tokyo as the event's closing motion picture. The screening was a rare opportunity to see it and on a big screen, no less.

At the 2001 VC Film Fest, it was also announced by Universal Studios and then-Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante that approximately 10,000 VHS tapes of "FTM" were to be distributed to all of California's public schools and libraries. But if you wanted to buy a copy, you were still out of luck. That would take another 10 years.

Between 2001 and 2011, VHS would be supplanted as the go-to format for home video by a new format: the DVD. So when the announcement came in 2011 that "FTM" would finally become commercially available, not only was it on a format superior to VHS, but also its exclusive home there would be at double the most appropriate home there could be: the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.

Marvelous as this development was, it nevertheless raised so many questions about the obvious being: Why did it take so long?

Unlike everyone else who wondered why it was unavailable, however, Kwon was in a position to do something about the situation — but it came about by serendipity.

One day, while speaking on the phone with her friend Jane-Ellen Dawkins, Kwon had a thought. Why not ask Dawkins about "Forgive Me, Mum?" She worked for Universal's video vault in Playa Vista.

Via email, Kwon connected with Dawkins' boss, Sheila Hill, vp of NBC Universal Television Consumer Products, and Dawkins had her answer.

It turned out it came down to money.

For "FTM," it came down to what businesses call ROI or return on investment. From Universal's perspective, the costs involved to make "FTM" available on DVD could not be recouped due to low sales projections and therefore would not justify the investment needed to make it available.

The cost of replacing DVDs wasn't the issue, from a mass production standpoint, DVDs are relatively inexpensive to produce. According to Kwong, Hill said the real reason why Universal had never made "FTM" available commercially was because Universal didn't own the rights to all the music used in it.

Kwon said, "Well, how much would it cost to get those rights?" According to Hill, it was about $40,000.

Kwon asked, "Has anybody ever thought of replacing the music with something else that they desired?" Hill said that it could be done, though it might cost as much as $50,000. Kwon told Hill that JANM had a professional media arts department and access to Japanese American musicians and composers, and maybe this approach could be used.

Universal did connect Kwon with a company they used to come up with replacement music in similar situations. Universal also assigned an attorney who Kwon said was very helpful, especially since the contact paperwork was for one of its big-budget feature films, not a small potatoes, decades-old film.

Once the attorney knew what JANM's intentions were and the resources it had, it was able to downsize things and ease the way to actually make "FTM" a DVD with JANM as the exclusive rights holder for five years.

And, as it turned out, the original music was kept intact. But that also took some extra effort, and Kwon gave credit to John Banks, JANM's director of programs. "John really felt strongly that Korty would want his film to be intact," said Kwon.

Korty, for his part, was "especially happy" upon hearing that his film, which was out of circulation for so many years, was becoming available.

"For me to be promoting it could come off as being very self-serving. I think it's much better that it is a nonprofit organization," said Korty.

"I think that's what makes the difference. It wasn't a career move; it wasn't a commercial move on anyone's part."

Finally, after all her years working at JANM, Kwon could now answer "yes" to museum store customers who wanted to know whether "FTM" was for sale.

Those who have since asked since "FTM" became available on DVD. According to Kwon, the deal JANM made with rights holder NBC Universal gives the museum a five-year exclusive license, conditionally renewable upon expiration. JANM had to spend some money to get the DVD made, pay for music rights, etc. and it needed to sell at least 4,000 a year to meet NBC Universal's goal of selling at least 20,000 DVDs in five years.

After a strong start in sales once it became available in 2011, the "FTM" DVD to date has only sold about 4,000 copies at the retail price of $24.95.

Presuming Universal Studios doesn't revoke JANM's five-year exclusivity and put "FTM" back into its vaults and instead continues to let JANM be the film's exclusive distributor, the DVD will still be far from being a benchmark, even if, after which any sales become profit.

A sure way of conveying the Japanese American experience, especially with regard to the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast, long-term incarceration and the culmination of the Redress Movement would be via films like "FTM."

A partial solution to the problem of getting that story out there, especially to young people, was put forth by local and regional and national Japanese American organizations to contact JANM's Kwon to see about purchasing the "FTM" DVD in bulk (and get a substantial 40 percent discount off the retail price to distribute to members, as well as every municipal and university library, plus every public school from middle school to high school from across the country). Coupled with a plan to coordinate with school social studies and history programs, the "FTM" DVD, after almost four decades, might finally fulfill its potential to convey the most difficult aspect of the Japanese American experience, a lesson from which all Americans could benefit.

Who, as credited by many for getting the Redress Movement going, died in 1976 in the movie that followed the "FTM" film. He never saw the movement he helped start result in an astonishing legal and moral victory that proved that the principles he espoused, the United States of America, stood for more than fancy words on parchment. There was no way he might have foreseen the home video revolution that made so much history to be able to be truly appreciated. If he were alive, however, it's probable he'd be happy that "FTM" was finally available for all Americans to see and learn from so that history would never repeat the same mistake again.

To purchase "Forgive Me, Mum?" on DVD, visit http://janmstore.com/236121.html. For information on bulk purchases of the DVD, contact Maria Kwon via email at mkwong@jannm.org.
Wishing everyone a happy holiday season and a healthy & prosperous New Year!
David Lin

Happy Holidays!
David Kawamoto
San Diego, CA

Happy Holidays
Matthew Farrells

Holidays Greetings
From Pacific Citizen Editorial Board

Season's Greetings from the Holiday Issue Project

In memory of Mike & Etsu Masaoka
-Michelle & Richard Amano

Mele Kalikimaka Hau’oli Makahiki Hou
Carol & David Kawamoto

Arizona JACL Chapter

Happy Holidays!
Michelle & Richard Amano

Holidays Greetings
Carol Kawamoto

Happy Holidays from The P.C. Staff

Holding everyone happy holiday season and a healthy & prosperous New Year!
Happy Holidays from the Berkeley Chapter!

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Eric, Bill, Kenneth & Kita Fics
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Cookie Ikuko Takeshita
Laura Takeuchi (posthumously)

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In memory of Miyo Fujikawa
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Happy New Year 2015
Nakamura-Stephens Family

Peace
Tosh, Kenji & Kaz Mori

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Craig, Helen, Alex, Chloe, Tyler, and Koko

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In Loving Memory of Laura Takeuchi
Thank you for your dedicated service to improving people’s lives. From seniors to children, you’ve touched so many in ways you may not even have known. Your compassion, selfless dedication and commitment to the well-being of all, especially our Nikkei, Asian and non-Asian communities alike, will continue to guide and inspire us.
Your Family, Friends & the communities you served, dearly miss you!

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The Congressional Gold Medal Traveling Exhibit Makes Its Final Stop in Texas
The Smithsonian’s Congressional Gold Medal traveling exhibit made its final stop in Houston, Texas, after a year of crisscrossing the United States. The seven-city traveling exhibit “American Heroes: Japanese American World War II Nisei Soldiers and the Congressional Gold Medal” was organized by ABC Entertainment Group.

Representatives of Asian American organizations met with ABC executives on Jan. 24 in response to an insensitive skit that aired on the “Jimmy Kimmel Live” show on Oct. 16, 2013. The skit triggered national protests over its depiction of racism and the promotion of genocide. As a result, Asian American organizations met with the network to discuss the incident and formulate measures to prevent future occurrences. In addition, ABC agreed to incorporate programming around Asian American Heritage Month in May to counter racial stereotypes and racism.

Toyota Announces Plans to Move Its U.S. Base From California to Texas
In May, Toyota Motor Corp. announced that its U.S. headquarters would be moving from California to Texas to get closer to its Midwest assembly plants and improve communication between units now spread over several states. The company will relocate to its new facilities in Plano, Texas, from Torrance, Calif., by 2017. The move will bring together nearly 4,000 employees.

 Monterey Hosts Japanese American Heritage Days Event
Thousands of attendees gathered at Monterey’s Old Fisherman’s Wharf on May 3 and 4 to celebrate Japanese culture at the city’s first-ever Japanese American Heritage Days event, co-sponsored by Monterey’s Old Fisherman’s Wharf Assn. and the JACL of the Monterey Peninsula. Prior to WWII, the Japanese had a dominating presence on Fisherman’s Wharf, with many residents working in the wharf’s numerous canneries; following the war, many residents returned, encouraged by a welcome-back petition signed by local residents, including John Steinbeck and Edward “Doc” Ricketts.

The Poston Community Alliance Receives a National Endowment for the Arts Grant to Expand the Documentary “For the Sake of the Children”
The documentary “For the Sake of the Children,” which focuses on the multigenerational impact of the World War II mass incarceration of Japanese Americans, received a $20,000 grant to expand the project into a touring film that will include family stories from other WWII camps. Produced by the Poston Community Alliance, the film originally focused on the struggle mothers endured to raise their children behind the barbed wire of Poston. Directed by Joe Fox and James Hubbe, the film is scheduled to be released in 2015.

The Smithsonian and the National Veterans Network to honor Japanese Americans who served heroically in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service. (Pictured) World War II veterans Tommie Okabayashi of Houston (left) and Texas 36th service man Robert Peiser of Harlingen, Texas, were reunited during the opening ceremony at Holocaust Museum Houston.
Oshogatsu brings out real holiday spirit as friends and family gather together to ring in the new year.

By Karen Mizoguchi, SELANOCO Chapter

There is no better way to ring in the new year than with family, friends and food. And while the toughest meal preparations may come during Thanksgiving and Christmas for some, my first-generation Japanese family saves the holiday feasts for New Year's Eve and Day. The real holiday spirit is felt most during the time around Oshogatsu, or New Year's celebrations in Japanese.

Hours before the countdown even begins, the family is gathered around the dining room table. And year after year, everyone looks forward to the traditional course of fresh sashimi with cuts of bigeye tuna, salmon, flounder, sweet shrimp, sea urchin, squid and abalone. The unbelievably buttery texture and high quality of the assortment are luxuries my young cousins and I have come to be spoiled with. My mother acquires the pounds of raw fish the night before from a local seafood company as my sushi chef uncle prepares the first course on individual wooden plates that are brought out of the pantry only once a year.

As the children help set the table, we hear the sounds of the annual Japanese music show “Kohaku Uta Gassen” playing in the background on the television in the nearest room. This star-studded show program goes on for four hours and features the biggest names in the Japanese music business. Before saying “itadakimasu,” everyone hurries to take a picture of the table on their cell phones and tablets. While we savor the amazing delicacies, my aunt is finishing the next course, the chawanmushi, or traditional egg custard dish found in Japan. The velvety smooth mixture is steamed with shiitake mushrooms, kamaboko and chicken with hot dashi in a teacup-like container. The rule of thumb in my family is to not overstuff one’s stomach before the clock strikes midnight because there is more food to be enjoyed in the next coming hours. While my family tends to strictly stick to the Japanese channels on the small screen, on Dec. 31, there is always an exception 10 minutes before the official countdown to catch the very end of “Dick Clark's New Year's Eve” on television.

And as the entire family watches the descending disco ball in New York’s Times Square, we loudly shout out the remaining seconds of the past year knowing what food to expect next. Celebratory hugs and kisses are given on the way to the kitchen, where everyone helps boil the buckwheat noodles for the tashikashi saba, literally translated as “year-crossing noodles.”
It is customary in most families in Japan to eat it as the very first dish in the new year. My mother explained that the long noodles of the toshikoshi soba are symbolic of a long life ahead. Annually, my family combines the freshly boiled soba noodles with store-bought broth so it’s ready to eat. Additionally, there is the option to add grated yamaimo, which is a very starchy garnish made from a Japanese mountain yam that my family tops their noodles with. As with most Japanese noodle dishes, the toshikoshi soba is expected to be enjoyed with loud slurps. The children used to always take great pleasure in competing for whom can make the biggest noise while eating the first meal of the year. Traditionally, it is bad luck to leave noodles in one’s bowl because it may be a bad omen for the next 12 months. As the first day of celebrations comes to a close, the entire family helps to wash dirty dishes and put away the clean ones.

With just a few hours of sleep, daylight awakens the entire family for more dishes to celebrate gōman, which literally means “Jan. 1.” We exchange “obemashite omedetou gozaimasu” (Happy New Year) salutations to everyone we see for the first time as a welcoming greeting. My family eats special dishes called osechi-ryori, which is cooked and prepared days before the start of the new year. Individual dishes are packed into compartmentalized Jubako boxes that resemble a bento. Each food item has a specific meaning with particular placement.

Many of the dishes represent prosperity, fertility, good health and, most of all, a long life. Karōnmae (black soybeans) in the osechi are an essential item we consume every year. Depending on your age, the number of beans changes, as one must eat one bean for each year he or she has lived. The meaning of the black beans is to continue to work hard with diligent pace. Kazunoko (herring roe) is enjoyed by both men and women to symbolize fertility. Kamaboko (the pink broiled fish paste) represents the rising sun and celebration of the new day. Whole prawns are meant to be eaten for a long life, while kurikinton (mashed chestnut) signifies prosperity. And my personal favorites are the datemaki (sweet rolled egg mixed with mashed shrimp), as well as the kai een bream), which represents the phrase medetai, translated to mean an “auspicious event.”

Throughout the years, my aunts have incorporated our family’s own unique additions. In the layered osechi boxes, nikumaki (mini beef rolls) have come to fill the spaces. For the second- and third-generation members of the family, there is potato salad and roast beef stew. Furthermore, we enjoy a large red lobster that is steamed and lightly seasoned the night before. The mix of nontraditional foods is to represent the blended Japanese American side of our family. As much as keeping the authenticity of New Year’s dishes is essential, including new items are ways to mix in our own modern traditions.

And the cherry on top of the two-day celebrations is the oden. It is a ceremonial Japanese soup with mochi rice pieces and miso broth eaten specially on Jan. 1. The rest of the ingredients include chicken, mitsuba (Japanese parsley) and carrots that are intricately cut to resemble sakura flowers.

I have come to learn and appreciate the traditional foods that are shared around the dining table. New Year’s Eve and Day have become yearly reunions and reminders that family is the most important. The role of food has become the most consistent element to bring relatives and family friends together. For me, a large part of what makes this time of year special and a valued tradition is enjoying the abundant flavors of each dish with loved ones. Nothing is written down as record of how things should be correctly done — not even the family recipes of the dishes are written down. Hopefully, I will be able to re-create the traditions that I have come to enjoy like celebrating the countdown with toshikoshi soba and waking up to eat the osechi.

I look forward to learning the recipes from the older generations to continue family customs for years to come. It is through such unique experiences that we learn who we are, based on discoveries of what ritualistic behaviors have been celebrated. As a child at family gatherings, I have closely observed my aunts and uncles, my grandparents and my own parents, feeling a deep connection to honored traditions. The positive memories give a sense of belonging and identity that keep the past alive.

— In loving memory of Yumi Morozumi

Bigeye tuna, salmon, flounder, squid, sea urchin, sweet shrimp, sea bass and abalone are placed on black wooden plates along with garnishes of cucumber, oba leaf and sprouts.
Sec. Eric Shinseki Resigns Amid Vets' Health Care Problems

Beset by growing evidence of patient delays and cover-ups, embattled Veterans Affairs secretary Eric Shinseki resigned from President Barack Obama's Cabinet on May 30, taking the blame for what he decried as a "lack of integrity" in the sprawling health care system for the nation's military veterans. In his speech to the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, Shinseki said, "I extend an apology to the people whom I care most deeply about - that's the veterans of this great country - to their families and loved ones, who I have been honored to serve for over five years now. It's the calling of a lifetime."

'Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain' Garners Three Emmy Awards

"Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain" won three Emmy Awards at the 66th annual Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards on July 26. Co-producer David Ono won for Outstanding Writer - Programming and co-producer Jeff Machaty won for Outstanding Editor - Programming and Outstanding Videographer - Single-Camera Programming. "This isn't just a win for the show, it's a win for the entire Japanese American community," said Machaty. Added Ono, "I'm deeply honored to have the opportunity to keep these important stories alive. Over 70 years later, they are still so relevant."

No Indictment for Ferguson, Mo., Police Officer Darren Wilson in the shooting death of Teenager Michael Brown

A Missouri grand jury announced on Nov. 24 that it had decided not to indict Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson in the shooting death of unarmed teen Michael Brown in August. The decision was made public by St. Louis County prosecutor Robert McCulloch and was immediately received outside by crowds of protestors who had filled the streets near the Ferguson police station. Protests sprang up in cities from New York to Los Angeles (picture is a protestor that was captured on Instagram); in Washington, President Barack Obama, calling for peaceful protests, appeared before TV cameras, telling the nation, "We need to accept that this decision was the grand jury's to make," and that the Ferguson case "speaks to broader challenges that we still face as a nation."
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Immigration Amnesty/Ferguson Affects Citizens Across All Home Fronts

The National JACL Issued the Following Statement on Nov. 21

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Japanese American Citizens League, the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States, applauds President Obama’s announcement (Nov. 20) of an executive order to provide relief from deportation to an estimated 5.2 million undocumented residents in the United States. The proposal will reform long overdue immigration enforcement policies and streamline the process for highly skilled immigrants and college graduates to remain in the United States. Priscilla Ouchida, executive director of the JACL, stated, “The president’s proposal is an important first step toward helping families. Parents will no longer have to live in fear of being separated from their American children, and bright students will have an opportunity to contribute to the American economy. Now it is up to Congress to finish the job.”

The Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities (AANHPI) benefit from the president’s plan as they compose an estimated 12 percent (1.3 million) of the total undocumented immigrant population. Under the new executive order, parents of U.S.-born and legal-resident children, as well as undocumented childhood arrivals, have a three-year grace period from deportation.

The National JACL Issued the Following Statement on Nov. 29

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is deeply troubled by the grand jury’s failure to indict Officer Darren Wilson for killing Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, in Ferguson, Mo., this past August. We support those who are working tirelessly to reform a broken system. Though profoundly disturbing, the results of the grand jury are not entirely surprising, given a process that seemed wholly indifferent to securing an indictment, a legal system that rationalizes police brutality and a society that continues to devalue black and brown lives. It is impossible to understand Brown’s death outside the context of a society that rests upon deep foundations of anti-black racism; a broken system that works to economically, emotionally and physically devastate people and communities of color.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is conducting an investigation to determine whether federal civil rights charges can be brought up against Darren Wilson. In addition, the DOJ is continuing its investigation surrounding issues such as the training of police officers, racial profiling and the use of force. JACL supports these initiatives and encourages our members to be involved in the conversations, locally and nationally, to create the systemic changes our country needs. The struggle for racial equity does not end with Ferguson. JACL will continue to work alongside our partners for institutional change. It is important for everyone to stand together in pursuit of justice, while respecting the voices and activism of those who are most affected.

Letters to the Editor

A Response to JACL’s Statements on Amnesty and Ferguson, Dated Nov. 30

Dear Editor,

JACL recently issued two statements, the first one praising President Obama’s Executive Action on Amnesty and the second critical of the Ferguson situation. Please allow me to offer an alternative opinion on both cases.

Seventy two years ago, a different president issued an Executive Order. There are many similarities between EO 9066 and Obama’s proposed Amnesty. In 1942, a specific immigrant and ethnic group was targeted. The language of the EO 9066 didn’t explicitly say so, but everyone knew President Roosevelt was talking about Japanese Americans. Then as now, the president was playing on racism, emotion and mass hysteria. Then as now, the president knew his order was unconstitutional and therefore illegal, but went ahead anyways. Then as now, there was no legitimate reason for the action. The action was taken for purely political reasons.

There is no question that Immigration Reform is necessary. As far back as 2008, Obama was campaigning on Immigration Reform. For two years, Obama’s party had complete control of Congress and could do pretty much as it pleased. See Obamacare. For the next six years, Obama’s party controlled the White House and the Senate, and still they did nothing on Immigration Reform. Obama himself has publicly stated on at least 25 different occasions that he couldn’t legally take executive action on the issue. In the summer of 2014, events transpired that moved immigration to the fore of political debate, so President Obama announced that he would take executive action, but only after the mid-term election. The political message was loud and clear:

Now the election has taken place, and President Obama will face no further referendum on his policies or agenda. By his action, he has chosen to violate his solemn oath to uphold the Constitution. This should be of great concern to JACL and all of its members. There are two legal principles that should always guide JACL. The first is due process of law and the second is the presumption of innocence. Inherent to both of these principles is prohibition against a rush to judgment.

In Ferguson, Mo., we have now witnessed due process of law, although there was a rush to judgment and there was never a presumption of innocence. A legal decision has been reached, and it is unpopular with a large number of people. But justice has been served. Justice is not vengeance, and vengeance is not justice.

Many people, including a biased media, race baiters like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, President Obama, Attorney General Holder and Missouri Governor Nixon, all conspired against the truth, but a principled (Liberal Democrat) District Attorney resisted all of the political pressure and insisted on due process. Even President Obama reminded the nation that we are first and foremost a nation of laws. It’s too bad he forgot that fact when he took executive action on amnesty.

My opinions are in complete alignment with the mission, principles and goals of the Japanese American Citizens League.

Sincerely,

David Uemura
Auburn, Calif.
Response to the Letter
From David Unruhe,
Dated Dec. 1

Dear Editor,

The JACL recently issued two statements, the first in support of administrative actions taken by the president to implement much-needed reforms to the citizenship process and the second criticizing the decision of the grand jury in Missouri relative to the death of Michael Brown. Both statements aligned with the civil rights positions of our coalition partners, including the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. As an organization that has historically acted to raise consciousness about civil rights disparities, both statements were consistent with JACL’s mission.

JACL has taken difficult positions in the past. I remember the divisive debates over redress and over marriage equality. JACL’s quick support of Arab and Muslim Americans the day after 9/11 was uncomfortable. Today, we are proud of those actions. I am proud of this organization that has risen above controversy to put what is right first.

I disagree with Mr. Unruhe’s charge that President Obama’s implementation of immigration reform aligns with President Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066. The immigration reforms do not target a specific group. The reforms benefit a wide swath of immigrants including Asians and Pacific Islanders who are disproportionately represented among the many who are on long lists waiting for the opportunity to become citizens.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was expanded to block citizenship for any immigrant from Japan. From its very creation, the JACL has been in support of citizenship reform that would allow Japanese immigrants to become citizens. The executive order that allows law-abiding, tax-paying Americans to become citizens is balanced and is a small step forward on an issue that has languished in Congress. It is widely believed that if the immigration reform bill is taken up for vote, it will be adopted. The problem has been that the bill has been locked up in the House of Representatives. Support of the president’s executive order brings much-needed relief and is consistent with the ideals of JACL.

An executive order in and of itself is not bad — if you search the White House website, you will find dozens and dozens of orders issued by this president. The president has used the proclamation process to implement increases in the federal minimum wage, to address Ebola and to deal with climate change. A stance that an executive order is automatically unconstitutional is unfounded.

In a nation in which discrimination is no longer posted on signs that separate persons of color from the white community, racial prejudice is measured by disparate impact. Is one population being treated differently than another? Is the impact on one population different than the impact on the rest of the community? Is the outcome different because of a person’s race, gender or sexual orientation? Mr. Unruhe presumes that our legal system always functions without bias. That is not the case. When a litmus test is applied, civil rights organizations have come to the conclusion that the system in Ferguson, Mo., is flawed.

JACL has spoken up on many occasions when it is apparent that the system has not worked. This is the foundation of civil rights work. This is the basis for our participation on amicus briefs. This is our motivation for joining rallies on behalf of marriage equality, immigration reform and education equity. Staff worked closely with the VP of public affairs to draft a statement that addresses racial bias in the grand jury’s process and decision on the Michael Brown case.

The issues we work on are controversial. JACL nudges the conscious of Americans. Better Americans for a Greater America. JACL has challenged many government policies and decisions that were biased. Sometimes it is not that easy. Sometimes the more divisive issues are those that become the best of what we are.

Sincerely,
Priscilla Ouchida
JACL executive director
Footage depicting the civil rights advocate is needed to put the finishing touches on a new short film that will pay homage to his lasting legacy.

By Holly Yasui

One of my main motivations for making a film about my father, Min Yasui, was to find and preserve footage of his unique oratorical style. That was the essence of who he was: outspoken, never afraid to speak out... or act on his principles, from the day he violated the military curfew in 1942 until his death in 1986, still fighting for redress.

“I wish I had started on this project 30 years ago, when he was making speeches all over the country, drumming up support for redress. Back then, there must have been recordings of some of his hundreds, perhaps thousands, of speeches he made at universities, community events, meetings, churches, etc.

“At that time, I was in college. As a member of an Asian American student group, I helped organize a symposium at the University of Wisconsin. My dad was the keynote speaker. I remember feeling nervous and a bit embarrassed when he commenced with a blast of old-fashioned stentorian oratory, bellowing out the names of the ‘Camps.’ I saw my peers — hip, sophisticated youth — rolling their eyes at his dramatic delivery as he thundered through the list: Amache, Gila River, Heart Mountain, Jerome, Manzanar, Minidoka, Poston, Rohwer, Topaz, Tule Lake. Then he described the terrible conditions in those ‘god-forsaken’ places and began to engage the increasingly attentive audience. As he wove his arguments with oratorical flourishes of rhetoric and cries of anguish and indignation, I stopped looking around. At the end, I stood with the rest of the crowd in a standing ovation for the small, thin, gray-haired man who had the heart and the roar of a lion.

“I’m hoping against hope that readers of the Pacific Citizen may have or know someone who might have an old cassette stored in the attic or garage of Min Yasui delivering fire and brimstone.

“I’ve collected hundreds of photos and documents, filmed over a dozen interviews and locations and three filmmakers have generously given me permission to use footage from their work: Steve Okazaki (“Unfinished Business”), Lise Yasui (“Family Gathering”) and Mike Goldfine-KUTV (“Citizen Min”).

“I’m now getting ready to embark upon the massive task of selecting material to be edited into a 15- to 30-minute short. It would be wonderful if, as a result of this article, someone could lead me to more video material, which I would cherish and almost certainly use in my work.”

This film is part of a larger project, the “Minoru Yasui Tribute,” which will culminate in 2016, the centennial of Yasui’s birth.

To contact Holly Yasui, email her at minyasuitribute@gmail.com.

Little Tokyo Service Center Unveils the Final Design and Plans for the Budokan Project

LTSC discusses its plans to complete funding for the complex’s $23 million capital campaign.

LOS ANGELES — The Little Tokyo Service Center revealed the final version of its new design for the Budokan project, a multipurpose sports and activities complex that will be located in downtown Los Angeles during a community meeting on Nov. 25.

The complex, which will be located at 237-249 S. Los Angeles St., between Second and Third Streets in Los Angeles, will feature gymnasium and support space totaling 31,000 square feet, a mezzanine and terrace totaling 9,000 square feet, a rooftop park totaling 18,000 square feet and parking totaling 31,000 square feet. In all, the complex will occupy 88,000 square feet.

To date, the LTSC has raised more than 50 percent of its goal for the $23 million capital campaign.

LTSC is working with Gruen Associates, who will serve as chief architect for the project. Once completed, the complex will host an array of sports activities, including basketball, martial arts and volleyball, as well as feature after-school programs, special events, tournaments and additional community programming for all ages.

“We are very excited to share with the public the finalized version of the design for the Budokan of Los Angeles,” said Dean Matsubayashi, LTSC executive director. “Overall, we spent a considerable amount of time and have now come up with a design which reflects important key elements including long-term sustainability, cost alignment with our campaign goal and fulfillment of the community needs.”

Since the launching of the capital campaign in August 2011, LTSC has made significant strides with the project. After submitting its application to the City of Los Angeles, Department of Planning, in August, the Budokan project is about to receive final approval and complete the entitlement process.

Alongside this milestone, and led by Alan Kosaka, chair of the Budokan Capital Campaign, the team has now amassed just under $13 million, or just more than half of the campaign goal. Funding has come mainly through public sector sources (federal, state, county and city), which includes notable funding from the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation — Prop 84 ($5 million), City of Los Angeles — Prop K ($250,000 and $1.3 million) and Los Angeles County — Prop A ($1 million).

LTSC has also received a letter of interest from a potential funder to complete the final 20 percent of the campaign (approximately $5 million). With nearly 50 percent committed and the remaining 20 percent identified for the backend of the campaign, LTSC is currently working to put together the final 30 percent over the next year and a half.

LTSC will look to target the rest of the funding through additional public sector funds, foundation grants and through a large-scale grassroots campaign that will target individual donors on all levels. It is anticipated that LTSC will complete its fundraising effort by mid-2016 and target a groundbreaking in fall 2016.

“I am extremely excited to reach this important milestone and raise over half of the campaign goal, said Kosaka. "I am looking forward to working with our campaign team to close out these efforts in the next year and a half an initiate construction soon so we can fulfill this long-awaited dream for Little Tokyo that will have tremendous long-term impact for the downtown region.”

LTSC Community Development Corp. is a nonprofit community-based organization that has been providing services for nearly 35 years to the greater Los Angeles community.
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Thank You from the PACIFIC CITIZEN
What Is Home?

As the sole navigator of your own life, it is important that home serves as the anchor — the North Star — of your journey.

By Kristy Lauren Ishii, JACL National Youth Student Council Representative

Home used to be a cozy house off the Hwy 68 freeway, right on the border between Salinas and Monterey, Calif., where I would carve pumpkins, put up Christmas stockings and play the piano. Home was where I ate Mom’s banana nut bread, where I played piano by the staircase and where I curled my hair before school dances. Since leaving, home has taken the form of felt emotions, adding to a growing web of feelings that I’ve struggled with and changed during my time in college.

July 2012 marked my first year living away from Salinas. I referred to Salinas as my home while unknowingly creating a temporary one-room home in my De Nave Plaza dorm room at UCLA. Far removed from everything that I had previously known, I missed competing and traveling with my volleyball, soccer and softball teams. I reminisced about my time as Jr. JACL Salinas Valley Chapter president, organizing community events with local leaders and enjoying bonfires at Carmel beach, as well as hosting the Senior Bingo Night and Hawaiian BBQ annual fundraiser with people we considered family. I longed for the 11 years of two-week summer camp, Hikari No Gakko, which was where I got to see Japanese American families and friends. I felt disconnected from my elementary and high school friends who lived over 300 miles away in Salinas, or at UC Berkeley and SJSU. Even folks who lived less than 100 miles away at LMU, UCI, UCSB and Cal Poly SLO were difficult to keep in touch with.

The first chapter of college started during the eighth grade, when my second-grade classmate and best friend left for Danville in eighth grade, when my best friend left for Danville in eighth grade, when my uncle underwent a quadruple-bypass surgery at age 35 or when I was rejected from the ER room and had her own nurse on call. Not a single experience from my past could have prepared me for that 10-hour night spent at the hospital. Rather, it was a collective sense of vulnerability that I established back home that perhaps came from my top private school — someone was always present and encouraging I felt the need to talk about the experience with my parents again without having to justify my decisions.

Months later, people often inquired, “Oh, my gosh, I wouldn’t be able to do that.” I asked myself now why I wasn’t worried. How did I keep it together?

Close family relationships I made in Salinas influenced my response and reaction to this incident. One of my roommates’ relatives came to the hospital to visit and sign documents because she was a minor. The family member left within 30 minutes, to my own disbelief. She told me that they were not close relatives anyways, and she thanked me for staying. In that moment of uncertainty and vulnerability, the lines between friends and family became blurred. I felt as though I gained a sister that night, therefore I could not leave until she left the ER room and had her own nurse on call.

I thought about my friends, relatives and mentors who helped me stay positive when things went south. When my best friend left for Danville in eighth grade, when my uncle underwent a quadruple-bypass surgery at age 35 or when I was rejected from the top private school — someone was always present and encouraging. I felt the need to be present for my roommate.

Roommate

Home is a feeling we create between not just places, but also people as well.

The first chapter of college started during the eighth week of my first year, during fall quarter. Four years prior to the day I met my former roommate, and she had an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD), which functions as both a pacemaker and defibrillator, surgically connected to her heart. This battery-powered device had saved her life two times before. Then four days after returning to UCLA from Thanksgiving break came her third cardiac arrest.

The moments I spent holding her hand in the ER room through the night until morning changed our friendship. We had only known each other for eight weeks, but her tight grip made me feel like her life was depending on my facial expressions, my words and my reaction to her pain. I couldn’t be anything but outwardly positive, but on the inside, I was afraid and confused beyond belief.

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Kristy and her family (from left), Dr. Linden Ishii, Janice Ishii and Brian Ishii, at a homecoming game during UCLA’s Parent’s Weekend at the Rosebowl in Pasadena, Calif.

Kristy’s current roommates and roommate are (from left) Michael Fletcher, Patrick Webb and Makena White. All have played Club Volleyball for UCLA.
All of these groups were places where I temporarily found a home. These moments of searching for a place I felt like I belonged, or an environment where I could depend on others for help, in a foreign city and campus, were some of the most challenging moments I have endured. All in all, these experiences gave me a new perspective of family and home.

Home was my anchor — my North Star to face the storms and discover new things about others and myself.

**Home Away From Home**

As summer 2013 came to a close, I found myself in a strange gap between living situations. At the time, it wasn’t feasible to drive five hours home only to return the next day. I felt homeless for a moment because my living plans were in limbo. I needed a place to stay between the move-out date from my summer sublet in Midvale Plaza to the day when I could officially move into my new dorm room for my second year at UCLA.

Time was pressing, so I decided to timidly phone my friend who lived in a nearby apartment, asking if I could crash on his couch. He generously let me stay, not just that one time, but ever since.

I was imbued with gratitude. The feeling of home was there in having a friend to depend on when you’re far from your hometown.

Fortunately, throughout the past two years, my graduate student friend has offered to help me load and unload my belongings to and from dorm rooms and apartments. He’s an example of the people who further the “home away from home” feeling.

Ensuing my second year, I ran into the same predicament. This time it was mid-June and he was about to leave for vacation, but a wave of gratitude overcame me when he said, “You can stay while I go.”

At the time, as I checked out of the dorms with all of my belongings strategically stacked like Tetris cubes inside my silver Acura MDX, I learned in that moment that sometimes it’s O.K. to ask for help without being burdensome.

I have since come to the conclusion that it is possible and sometimes necessary to create a home away from home.

I’ve become more attached to Los Angeles, but my most recent move from dorm to apartment was myself finding a new way to create comfort, safety, and redefine what “home” meant to me. Living in an apartment means that I now have a living room, kitchen and balcony, unlike the one-room dorm setup during my first two years of college.

Permanence was a new feeling that I had forgotten while at UCLA. Being able to stay in one place for an entire calendar year, instead of packing up everything and driving from location to location, is comforting. Secondly, being able to let other people spend the night is gratifying, because I am familiar with the feeling of needing a home away from home.

Salinas has become my point of reference while I was living in Malibu. However, I was not a resident of Salinas but a visitor in the rooms and apartments. I’ve started clearing out my bedroom in Salinas. Each memory triggers memories of past relationships and personal growth.

As summer 2013, Kizuna Camp Musubi commenced. Six camp counselors from Los Angeles applied for a four-day program to teach middle school students and faculty about the Japanese American heritage. Throughout Little Tokyo, at Tanaka Farms and Visual Communications, we bonded with each other and had the most memorable week.

**My Room in Salinas**

Home must remain relevant, otherwise, our memories might expire. Perhaps the hardest realization of home as a feeling and not a single place emerged when I started clearing out my bedroom in Salinas. Each time I return to Salinas, I am asked to clean out sections of my room. Every return to Salinas results in baring up past memories to be stored in the attic, throwing away old school projects or giving old sports jerseys and clothes to goodwill. Simultaneously, becoming numb to old friendships and building up the courage to make even greater memories and friendships throughout the years that I will be living in Los Angeles, however short or long, has become a harsh reality.

I take pictures of my room each time I go home, but I feel like my room is anchored in the past, as if there is still a young middle school girl living in the tiny sanctuary. All I see are the photographs of a 10-year-old softball player, countless tournament medals hanging on a horizontal coat rack, two windows fringed with green, pink and yellow rick-rack and tiny pink pom-poms, a matching queen-sized bed and a green wall with six white wooden letters, K-R-I-S-T-y.

In all honesty, my room and my hometown are foreign to me. Home is about a current time and place. My Salinas home is comprised of a specific time and a place, tucked away in scrapbooks and digitally saved photographs, so it’s hard for me to visit a home of memories expired.

I realized that this room was my home, but I see now that I have the potential to build home wherever life takes me.

The memories are still forever attached to the physical location that is Salinas, but the feeling has become stale. This space and the lingering feeling of being home are solidified in memories, representing past relationships and personal growth.
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HOME for the Holidays

'Today I choose what will make the holidays filled with love and acceptance because that was the greatest gift I received when Aiden transitioned.'

By Marsha Aizumi

It was the beginning of December 2008, and I already had a long list of things to do for the holidays: presents to buy and wrap, cards to write, company parties to attend and, of course, family gatherings to cook for and a house to clean and decorate. I was already feeling the stress of the holidays, but nothing could prepare me for the pressure I would feel when my daughter announced to me on Dec. 6 that she was a transgender individual... a person who thought and felt like a male but was born in a female body.

My daughter proceeded to explain that she wanted to transition to be in alignment with how she thought and felt as soon as possible. The world that I knew and understood began to unravel, and all the stress I felt from the upcoming holidays vanished. In its place I now felt a pressure 10 times greater than before. And I had no answers to the questions that began to come at me one by one.

Although our daughter had already come out once before as a lesbian, this coming out was different. Being a lesbian meant we still had a daughter. Now we would have to let our daughter go and in her place welcome a son. Could we overcome the sadness of releasing the daughter we thought we knew for 20 years? Could we embrace our new son, Aiden, with the same love we had for our daughter?

My husband and I grieved. But the statistics for transgender individuals who are not accepted by their families are shocking... over 57 percent attempt to take their own lives, according to a Williams Institute and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention report dated January 2014. No matter how deep my grief, I knew that losing my child, whether daughter or son, would not be an option. And though Aiden had numerous thoughts of suicide, he never dropped to the depths of hopelessness and attempted to take his own life. For that I will always be grateful.

When I think about those days six years ago, I often wonder how we made it through that month. I remember the worry, the confusion, the sadness and the fear that hung like an ominous cloud all through December. I also remember the joy, the relief, the overwhelming love and acceptance I felt when each of our family members and friends embraced Aiden upon hearing that he would be transitioning to be his true self.

No words, gifts or actions could ever mean more to me than when my brothers, sister-in-laws, nieces, nephews, other extended family or friends took Aiden in their arms and said it doesn’t matter who you are on the outside, you are still the same person we love on the inside. I still feel the emotions of those days even six years later, and I want to cry.

Aiden always says, “Momma, you cry the most when you feel loved.” And sharing this story brings back all the love I felt from each of these people who did not judge my child or our family, but accepted and loved us with their whole hearts.

And so what changed our home that month were so many things. But what really changed our home was how our family changed through this process.

1. We Put Our Focus on What Is Important

I used to fret about buying the perfect gift, wrapping it with the perfect paper and ribbon, having the perfectly decorated house and, of course, sending the perfect Christmas card. The stress made me dread the holidays and of all the things I “had” to do.
A Game for Generations

Keiro’s Holiday Bingo event blends together participants of all ages and brings with it seasonal cheer and a true sense of community.

By Tiffany Ujiye, assistant editor

Do I hear a bingo?” asked Yossh Fukunoto, who was dressed as Santa Claus at Keiro’s Los Angeles Campus in an auditorium full of Boy and Girl Scouts, troop members, senior residents, parents, administrators and volunteers on Dec. 13.

Several voices shouted in response, “Bingo!” from one of the 37 tables.

For more than 25 years, Holiday Bingo has brought festive cheer to residents at Keiro Senior Health Care, the largest healthcare provider serving the Japanese American community in the Los Angeles area since 1961.

Gary Kawaguchi, a volunteer at Keiro for more than 30 years and president of Visions for Keiro as well as the chair-elect of Keiro’s board of directors, remembers the first holiday bingo event drew in roughly 80 residents.

“We wanted to do something different with the residents,” Kawaguchi explained. “It wasn’t the usual fundraiser, but rather something where the residents could have fun, smile, win prizes and interact with the younger generation — the scouts.”

Girl Scout Troup 12135 and Boy Scout Troup 738 from Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles have been participating since the event’s inception many years ago, playing and participating in the game with senior residents.

“Seeing the kids work with the seniors, yelling out bingo, handing out prizes to the seniors is really my favorite part,” said Jennifer Uyeda, who has been a Keiro volunteer for more than 20 years. “Thank goodness for the parents, too. Everyone pitches in, but the kids really put the finishing touch to the Holiday Bingo.”

Some 40 families arrived this year at the Holiday Bingo, donating an array of prizes for the seniors to win.

Prize bags included Clif Bars, soaps, tissue, blanket, crackers, notepads, fortune cookies and other household knick-knacks.

While bingo is a game of chance, every resident walked away with a small gift bag and a token from the Girl Scouts called “swaps.”

Swaps, the tradition of Girl Scouts exchanging keepsakes, came in the form of a small wreath made from a bottle ring, green pipe cleaners and a pin clasp finished off with a red ribbon.

Each was handmade by one of the Girl Scout members and distributed to all residents.

A freshman at Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts in Los Angeles, Leila Sandoval was one of the scout members making a swap.
Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts performed "Frosty the Snowman" before residents and audience members during the intermission.

"It’s fun," Sandoval said while pulling the red ribbon into a bow on her wreath. "The seniors are nice, and they ask you things like, 'How old are you,' and 'What grade are you in?' We talk about how they like bingo, and I meet new seniors every year."

She remembered one year when a gentleman at her table was excited to win a prize of tissues, socks and soaps. "He was really excited," she smiled. "Everyone likes bingo."

Malia Sandoval, who is in fourth grade and is Leila’s sister, agreed next to her. "Yeah," she echoed. "Everyone likes bingo!"

Holiday Bingo serves that purpose in mixing generations together. Scouts were paired with a senior resident, where they were encouraged to help the seniors with their bingo cards while also striking up conversations and small talk.

"The residents and scouts help each other out with the cards," Kawaguchi explained. "It’s fun to see the excitement, and sometimes the residents coach the kids through bingo."

Karl Kim, a member of the board of directors for the Japanese retirement home and member of the Advisory Council of the Friends of the Institute for Healthy Aging and Keiro, enjoys "scouts get excited for the prizes even if it’s not for them. They get pretty competitive even when trying to help pour the tea. It’s good for the scouts."

Although the bingo event only lasts a few hours, with a small intermission in between where the scouts performed Christmas holiday songs such as "Mele Kalikimaka," "Happy Me" and "Frosty the Snowman" for the residents, it is an opportunity for both young and old to take in the spirit of the season.

"This is a great opportunity for the girls to learn about their heritage," Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Master Trainer Ted Oyama said while holding a swap wreath in his hands. "Especially while making their swap and giving it to the seniors."

Holiday Bingo’s intermission also had a sweet treat from Fugetsu-do, a famous Japanese confectionary store in Downtown Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. "It’s my favorite part of Holiday Bingo!" Oyama joked.

As the bingo games came to an end, Fukumoto in his Santa Claus outfit greeted the last of the seniors to leave the auditorium. "You guys have to start taking charge," Fukumoto laughs when thinking about the next generation to come. "We’re getting old!"
Today, I choose what will make the holidays filled with love and acceptance because that was the greatest gift I received when Aiden transitioned.

Some years, I don’t send Christmas cards, and I no longer feel guilty about that choice. On Christmas Day, our whole extended family does not always get together, but we pick a day that works for everyone. Sometimes it is the week before or a few days after Christmas. We all have married or engaged children who now have obligations outside our family. What is most important is that we are able to get together and enjoy each other’s company.

And our traditional family Christmas dinner for my husband, my two sons and daughter-in-law could end up being Christmas breakfast, lunch or dinner. Whatever makes everyone feel loved and peaceful is always my picture. With Aiden being married now, we also want to be respectful of his wife’s family. I can be the best mother and mother-in-law by being generous with my son’s in-laws.

2. Our Home Is Filled With More Happiness, Love and Gratitude, Not Just During the Holidays, But Also Throughout the Year.

When I asked my husband what has changed for our family, since Aiden’s transition, he says, “Because our son is happier, there is more of a feeling of happiness during the holidays and in our home. And I love to watch both of our sons interact with family during holiday gatherings. . . . What a joy to see them comfortable being themselves.”

For me, I feel what has changed is we openly appreciate and express love more often. We hug each other and say, “I love you” more than we ever did. We say, “Thank you” as much as possible. Growing up in a Nikkei family that did not say the words “I love you” or even hug each other much until our parents were elderly, I love the feeling of verbally and physically expressing our appreciation and love for those who mean so much to us. It was awkward in the beginning, but now it feels so natural. And it adds a feeling of warmth and connection that seems to stays within our hearts.

3. We Are More Comfortable Being Uncomfortable

Prior to Aiden’s transition, our family tended to avoid uncomfortable situations and not talk about them. It was easier to ignore issues, steer clear of difficult topics, rather than confront them head on. Today, we know that thorny subjects that need to be addressed don’t go away, but become a wedge between the hearts of all of us. So, we lean into our discomfort and discuss things as soon as we can. Sometimes, it takes a few discussions, but we have come to realize that the most important thing is our relationships with each other. If we want those relationships to be the best they can be, then it is not up to the other person to create that relationship — it is up to us.

In the end, whenever we move into the holidays, I don’t think about all the things I have to do now. I think about who I need to be. I want to be kind, loving, accepting, generous and gracious. I want everyone entering our home to feel welcome, cared about, accepted and loved. And when people leave our home, I hope they feel they are leaving a loving space and can’t wait to be invited back.

When Aiden first announced that he would be transitioning to be our son, all I could see were the things I would lose, the challenges I would have to face and the changes I would have to make. But in the end, Aiden’s transition brought more love into our home, more happiness into the holidays and more joy in everyday moments. We truly found our home, not in the physical place that we lived, but in the heart of who we became. Our home became a place where we could show up authentically and remember what was most important.

May your holidays bring the same to you and those you love . . .

Marsha Aizumi is an advocate in the LGBT community and the author of the book “Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance.”
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Youth sent to Japan in 2014 on Kakehashi program to study Japanese history and culture, meet political leaders, and witness Fukushima recovery efforts
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Exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History secured for 2017, covering EO9066, Internment, Nisei veterans, and Redress

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(The list above includes the individuals who generously donated $150 or more to the annual Spring Campaign.)
It's the JA Holiday Food Season!

By Gil Asakawa

I've resigned myself to a fact of life: I gain weight in the fall, and I don't lose it until spring. It's kind of like how my cat gets fat for the winter and sheds weight along with hair when the weather gets warm. Except I don't have survival as an excuse.

I just eat too much, and I don't stop until after the holidays.

This year, the problem has been exacerbated by a family trip to Japan in late October. We spent two weeks traveling from Kumamoto in Kyushu to Hiroshima, and then on to Tokyo before flying back. And everywhere we went, I had to dine on the local specialities. I especially loved the matsutake (also known as inari, a sort of pancake/pizza with meat and seafood and batter and ramen noodles, which is a famous dish in Hiroshima.

After our return to the States, I just kept eating, because the holidays were upon us. Oh, well. I have to chew down — I can't be rude! What I love about the holidays, though, is how Japanese Americans have added our own twist to the normal seasonal culinary traditions.

Thanksgiving kicks off the multicultural culinary holiday season that Japanese Americans are lucky to eat through for two straight months. We get the best of Western holiday feasts, those huge banquets captured by painter Norman Rockwell in a previous generation. But we also insert our Japanese culture with dishes only we eat, and then toss in some dishes that are peculiar to Japanese Americans, that Nihonjin would find strange.

Like all Americans, JAs celebrate Thanksgiving with the requisite main course of turkey.

My wife and I had our annual Thanksgiving feast at her parents' house. The turkey was great, and all the usual trimmings were on hand: mashed potatoes, green beans (sauteed with bacon, though, not theicky mushroom soup casserole that Campbell's has foisted onto Americans as a "tradition"), apple and pumpkin pies. We veered from tradition by making most of it gluten free (and still delicious), and I cooked up a cheesy butternut squash polenta.

But two things identified our Thanksgiving as being distinctly Japanese American. There was a matsutake mushrooms grilled with bacon dish, which is a treat because the very expensive matsutake is something JAs have been "hunting" in late summer for decades in the mountains west of Denver, but the harvest has been shrinking each year as other people find out and gather the mushrooms for sale instead of for personal use. The family agreed the flavor of the mushrooms evoked childhood memories of growing up in Colorado. When we told relatives in Japan about bringing home rice sacks of matsutake, everyone was amazed — the stuff has gone for as much as $1,000 a pound in Japan.

The other JA cultural habit: We also poured gravy not only on our mashed potatoes and dressing, but also on mounds of rice. In fact, when my stepson and his family showed up after eating with his partner's family, the one thing they came for even though they were already stuffed was the rice with gravy.

When I was young, my family had similar Thanksgiving meals. My father cooked the turkey and used an oyster stuffing that I didn't care for but ate anyway, drowned in gravy. The highlight for me was also the mounds of rice, over which I'd pour the gravy.

Rice is the food fabric that's woven through all our cultural traditions. Growing up, Christmas dinner always came with rice.

Christmas is a mixed bag for us, though many Americans opt for ham dinners. My mom never cooked ham much when I was young (I remember having roast beef or prime rib more often than not), and now, we mix up our Christmas dinners. To accommodate various family schedules, we break up the feasting. We cook a small dinner for my wife's side on Christmas Eve, and we pick a foodie theme each year. It might be Mexican, or Italian, and the next Chinese or Chinese American with stuff like shrimp with lobster sauce, egg foo young, etc.) and then a return to Japanese (suki­yaki and shabs-shabu are favorites). Then we have a Christmas Day lunch with my mom and broth­ers that usually has a cultural mix of dishes. One tradition that some JA families might maintain is dining at Chinese restaurants on Christmas Day, because some of them are open. It's also a popular dining option for Jewish families.

The biggest pig-out of the holiday season, of course, is the New Year's Day, or Oshougatsu, family meal. Along with rice with almost every meal, most Japanese Americans I know agree that this is the one food tradition that has been handed down over the generations. Language might fade, other cultural values might evolve, but Oshougatsu and its many symbolic foods, called Osechi Ryori, are still familiar rituals. We usually go to an uncle's home and dine with extended family.

New Year's eating starts with oden, the light dashi broth soup with mocha, or the version I grew up with (my mom being from Hokkaido, I suspect this was comfort food for wintry nights): Oshirako, the sweet bean paste soup with mocha.

A lot of old-school Japanese dishes get served, like nishime, black beans (for good luck we eat odd numbers), kamaboko, kombu, renkon and more common fare like tempura and sushi, though usually there's more futomaki and inari sushi, much more working-class fare than the fancy schselman nigiri sushi you can get from Japanese restaurants.

Being JA, we also have some hybrid Americanized stuff, like twice-baked potatoes and Korean beef cooked by Auntie Mitzi, and colorfully layered Jell-O made by Uncle Steve. I'm always very happy if someone brings Spam musubi. I often make what we call "Kakimochi," an addicting cracker that tastes like teriyaki-flavored oseme that's made from Doritos corn chips — you can't get more multicultural than that!

I love our jumble of culinary concoctions, tossing together family recipes handed down over the generations with very Japanese American inventions.

A final sign that a dinner is a JA holiday feast is that there's way too much food. It's a rule in our household: We cook twice as much food as necessary for the actual dinner, just so that everyone can go home with nokori, or "leftovers," in Tupperware containers, margarine or whipped topping tubs, or even cleaned-out restaurant take­home containers. Everyone knows they have to take the extras, or we'd end up eating the nokori for a month.

Japanese American culture is a culture of generosity, and nothing shows generosity to family more than cooking enough to make sure everyone can enjoy their holiday meal for days afterwards!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, EVERYONE!

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, and he's on Facebook, Twitter and lots of other social media. He is the 2014 Asian American Journalists Assn. AARP Social Media Fellow.
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As we quickly approach the new year, the P.C. is struggling to reach its 86th birthday and survive for the next generation of community members, leaders and developers. Help us continue to cover national news, go in-depth with social issues and record the ever-changing Asian American narrative.
In Memoriam

2014

Tributes

Grayce Uyehara
July 4, 1919 - June 22, 2014

Uyehara, Grayen, 94, Mount Holly, NJ; June 22. During her tenure as the executive director of the JACL Legislative Education Committee, Uyehara was widely known for her "Action Alerts" sent to JACL chapters, providing updates on the redress campaign status. As a lifelong member of the JACL, she served as president of the Philadelphia chapter and governor of the Eastern District Council, in addition to service on many national JACL committees. She later became the chairperson of the JACL Legacy Fund.

Hiroshi Uyehara
1916 - July 29, 2014

Uyehara, Hiroshi, 98, Medford, NJ; July 29. Uyehara grew up in Los Angeles, attending UCLA and graduating from UC Berkeley. In May 1942, his family was sent to Rohwer Camp, where he met his future wife, Grayce Tamada. 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 1989, historian and recognition chair at various times but was a longtime board member, serving as EDC Governor, secretary and treasurer.

Yuri Kochiyama
May 19, 1921 - June 1, 2014

Kochiyama, Yuri, 93, Berkeley, CA; June 1. Prominent Japanese American human rights activist Yuri Kochiyama was known for her work with Malcolm X and Black Power organizations during her four decades of empowerment movements. In 1965, Kochiyama was famously photographed in "Life" magazine, showing her comforting the murdered Malcolm X moments after his death at Harlem's Audubon Ballroom. She and her husband organized with community groups for redress, and during 9/11 she opposed racial profiling of Arab and Muslim Americans, speaking 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" and was honored at the Fred Korematsu Day event in San Francisco. Her life is featured in the Japanese-language book "Yuri: The Life and Times of Yuri Kochiyama"; her memoir, "Passing It On"; her biography, "Heartbeat of Struggle: The Revolutionary Life of Yuri Kochiyama"; two documentaries, "Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice" and "Mountains That Take Wing: Angela Davis and Yuri Kochiyama - A Conversation on Life, Struggles and Liberation." She is survived by four children; gc: 5; ggc: 3.

Ginoo, Irene M., 63.

Montebello, CA; Nov. 20; she is survived by her husband, Milton; daughter, Lori; she is survived by other family in California and Hawaii.

Hamano, Mitzi, 87.

Temple City, CA; Nov. 27; she was predeceased by her husband, Kinzo Hamano; son, Paul Hamano; she is survived by her children, Greg (Rossa), Cathy (Sergio Gonzalez) and David Hamano; sister, Judy Yukiko Tamada; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 5.

Hiji, Tsuguo, 91.

Westlake Village, CA; Nov. 7; he was predeceased by his parents, Sabunji and Emi Hiji; wife, Betty; sister, Allee Hisako Yokoyama; he is survived by his children, LaAnn (David) Shado, Kenji (Akiko) Hiji, Doris (Clifford) Koteke and Donald (Alice) Hiji; siblings, Hisao Rob (Hisako) Hiji, Chiyo Nishimori, Lily (Frank) Sawai, Mae (Oshogoro) Kanemitsu, Frank (Betty) Hiji and Robert (Harriet) Hiji; gc: 11.

Hirano, Takeshi, 94, La Palma, CA; Dec. 2; he is survived by his daughter, Holly (George) Nauta and Lauré Hirano; sisters, Chikko Takehashi and Sumiko Kubota; sister-in-law, Elaine Hirano; gc: 3; ggc: 1.

Hirasuna, Setsuko Suzuki, 104, Fresno, CA; Aug. 26; she is survived by her husband, Fred Hirasuna; she is survived by her children, Larry T., 64; Ginoza, Irene M., 63; Montebello, CA; Nov. 20; she is survived by her husband, Milton; daughter, Lori; she is survived by other family in California and Hawaii.

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OBITUARIES

she is survived by her children, Ron (Gail) Ito, Beverly (Chris) Ito, Takako (Sylvia) Ito and Donna (James) Hallett; siblings, George (Fudge) and Michi Kodama and Margaret Satow; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 8; ggc: 1.

Iwasaki, Marjorie Sachiko, 92, Montebello, CA; Oct. 25; she was predeceased by her husband, Munod Iwasaki; she is survived by her sons, David and Norman (Susan) Iwasaki, daughter, Karen (James) Hirdle; sister-in-law, Sarah Nakao, niece, Tileen (Doc) Feetham; gc: 8; ggc: 1.

Kanoske, Dorothy Kenko, 85, Los Angeles, CA; Nov. 22; she is survived by her husband, Roy Kawaratani; she is also survived by her son, William Sunao, sister-in-law, Mitsuko Korin; son, William Satow; nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Kato, Walter Young, 90, Northridge, CA; Nov. 26; he is survived by his wife, Anna Chieko Kato; children, Norman (Nancy) Kato, K. (Cindy) Duff and Larry Kato (Dorothy); gc: 7.

Kawaguchi, Toshio, 87, Los Angeles, CA; Nov. 7; he is survived by his children, Dr. Alan (Linda) Kawaguchi and Karen (Robert) Chang; sister, Terry K. (Dr. Linda) Kawaguchi and Karen Marie (Liz) and David Sakai; brother-in-law, David Kikuchi; he was also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Kori, Shoja, 79, Fullerton, CA; Dec. 1; he is survived by his wife, Mitsuko Kori; children, William Yoshimoto (Kristin) Kori; brother, Edward (Jamie) Yasuko; Kori; he is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives here and in Japan; gc: 2.

Konishi, Martha Sadami, 93, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA; Nov. 9; she is survived by her son, Warren (Irene) Konishi; she is also survived by many relatives; gc: 2; ggc: 1.

Masumiya, George Hiroshi, 91, Lakewood, CA; Nov. 29; he is survived by his mother, Rose Marler), and sister, Marjorie (Steve) Kawcak; she was a former internee at Gila River Camp; she is survived by her children, Samuel Nakada, Raymond (Lois) Itoh; grandson, Takanori Ikeda; he also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 1.

Nakamoto, Jitomi, 90, San Gabriel, CA; Oct. 21; she is survived by her dau­gh­ter, Donna (Byron) Yamamoto; wife, Reine Nakamur; brother, Yasuo (Atsuko) Sugihara; sisters-in-law, Hideko Sugihara Tomo and Mielke Sugihara; nephew, Shoji (Tami) Nakamura; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 4.

Nakadate, Hisako, 85, Gardena, CA; Nov. 20; she was a former internee at Gila River Camp; she is survived by her children, Samuel Nakada, Raymond (Lois) Itoh; grandson, Takanori Ikeda; he also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 1.

Nakashima, Jason Tatashii, 87, Torrance, CA; Nov. 14; he is survived by his wife, Eleanor T. Nakashima; children, Karen, Keith, Terry (Colleen) Nakashima and Shawn (Divid) Denison; brother, Shigeo Nakanishi; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 7.

Nitta, Jane Hashimoto, 91, Culver City, CA; Nov. 3; she was a former internee at Camp Jerome and is a veteran owned and operated Grand curve in Little Tokyo in the 1970s; she is survived by her husband, Larry Toshio Nitta; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 7; ggc: 7.

Oda, Shizuko Barbara, 86, Montebello, CA; Dec. 3; she was predeceased by her son, Akio; she is survived by her husband, Frank Tenenbous; sons, Robert and Michael; he is also survived by his children, Curtis and Michael; gc: 7; ggc: 2.

Otsumura, Ray Masato, 82, Hacienda Heights, CA; Nov. 2; he is survived by his wife, Katherine; daughters, Stephanie (Tama) Takeda and Karen (Steven) Schneidt) Otsumura; sister, June (Gerald) Kitano; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 7.

Sako, Shin, 85, Gardena, CA; Sept. 8; he was predeceased by his wife, Rose Goto, brothers-in-law, George Okasaw and Lawrence “Paco” Kichid; nephews, Ron Adachi and Gary Yamamoto; he is survived by his sisters, Etako Okasawa, Marie Kamata and Nancy Sone; sister, Rose Uyeki; brother-in-law, Yo Ohishi; sisters-in-law, Mary Yamamoto; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 6; ggc: 4.

San, Shiro, 80, Gardena, CA; Sept. 8; he was predeceased by his brother, Ross Goto, brothers-in-law, George Okasaw and Lawrence “Paco” Kichid; nephews, Ron Adachi and Gary Yamamoto; he is survived by his sisters, Etako Okasawa, Marie Kamata and Nancy Sone; sister, Rose Uyeki; brother-in-law, Yo Ohishi; sisters-in-law, Mary Yamamoto; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 6; ggc: 4.

Sakai, Teruko Victoria, 85, Torrance, CA; Nov. 5; she was predeceased by her husband, Munomura; parents, Toshio and Hanako; sons, Alan (Mary), Peter (Lisa) and David Sakai; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Sakurai, Richard Sadachi, 48, Montebello, CA; Dec. 7; he is survived by his mother, Rose Sakurai; siblings, Richard, Susan (Jennifer) Sakurai and Kathleen Tsuruken Dunlevy; he is survived by many nieces and nephews; gc: 2.

Sakuma, Kiyomi, 96, San Gabriel, CA; Oct. 19; she was a former internee at Tule Lake; she is survived by her husband, George, daughters, Debbie (Samuel) Alexander and Ely (Blondy) Hollenberg.

Tanaka, Ayako N., 90, Los Angeles, CA; Nov. 14; she is survived by her sons, Allen and William Tanaka; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 4.

Tanaka, Anna, 92, Santa Monica, CA; Nov. 29; she is survived by her children, JoAnn (Baba) Koiwai, Carole (Clyde) Yamagishi, Karen and Barbara (Jim) Swigert; siblings, Hana Kiyohara; niece, Shihoko Yotsumi, Toyaio Hamahara; brother-in-law, KI Wada; sister-in-law, Kay Shidachi; she is also survived by many nieces and nephews; gc: 7; ggc: 3.

Tsujii, Sachiko, 90, Los Angeles, CA; Dec. 6; she is survived by her daughter, Marlene Tsuchi Taihoku; son-in-law, Christopher Dale; she is also survived by other relatives; gc: 1.

Watanabe, Jessie Tatsuta, 96, Los Angeles, CA; Nov. 9; she is survived by her husband, Larry Tatsuta; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 4; ggc: 2.

Yamagata, Laurence Iwao, 85, Los Angeles, CA; Nov. 20; he is survived by his beloved wife, Diane; daughter, Lenes; sister, Mary (Joe) Sumida; nephews and nieces; gc: 6; ggc: 2.
THANK YOU TO THE 2014

Alameda Ray Hayame
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Berkeley Jim Duff
Berkeley Vera Kawamura
Berkeley Al Satake
Berkeley Alexandra Tagawa
Boise Valley Robert Hirai
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Eden Township Ron Sakaue
Fresno Charlene Kiyuna
Fresno Bobbi Hanada
GLAS Janet Okubo
GLAS Miyako Kadogawa
Idaho Falls Dale Cawley
IDC Jeanette Misaka
Livingston-Merced Steve Teranishi
Lodi Bill Hinkle
MDC Colleen Morimoto
Mile High Richard Hamai
NCWNPDC Patty Wada
### Holiday Issue Helpers!

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