STILL TREKKING

JANM opens up a new exhibit dedicated to the life and times of George Takei.

Topaz Museum grand opening is officially set for July 7-8.

A Kakehashi Project participant reflects on her recent trip to Japan.
JACL ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT
OF WILLIAM YOSHINO

Dear JACL Members, Friends and Supporters,

The Japanese American Citizens League announces that Mr. William Yoshino will be retiring at the end of this month after 38 years of distinguished service. We thank him for his incredible dedication and humble leadership of the JACL and the Asian Pacific American community.

Mr. Yoshino was originally hired as the Midwest director in 1978, the year JACL officially launched its Redress Campaign. He assisted in organizing outreach to members of Congress in the Midwest for legislation to establish the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, as well as for the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. He then worked with the Office of Redress Administration to assist in contacting individuals who were eligible to receive redress payments.

Following the Redress Campaign, Mr. Yoshino helped to focus JACL on the issues of anti-Asian sentiment and hate crimes. His many contributions to this area include testifying in the U.S. Senate on the Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990, helping to focus JACL on the issue of anti-Asian hate crimes and hate incidents; and organizing and providing a space for students to present to the community the paper itself has the ability to connect with shared interests and identities. The Pacific Citizen’s devotion to helping students has opened doors for youth engagement.

From my personal experience as a student studying journalism, the Pacific Citizen has given me the opportunity to learn the in-depth process of newspaper writing and much of the behind-the-scenes work in the journalistic world. It has also provided me with the tools to learn beyond the classroom setting, so I can apply my knowledge to real life situations.

Donating to the Pacific Citizen will not only help the sustainability of the paper but will also help students stay connected by providing a sense of community and commonality among us.

Sincerely,

Juli Yoshinaga,

NYSC PC. Editorial Board Representative

Pacific Citizen has given continuous support to students and youth whom are eager to get involved within their communities.

With the launch of the Pacific Citizen’s annual Spring Campaign, I invite everyone to aid the Pacific Citizen to be sustainable and continue to be able to serve as a national JACL newspaper in our community.

As a student leader of my university’s Nikkei Student Union, the Pacific Citizen has supported student organizations by offering collaboration opportunities and providing a space for students to present workshops to the community.

The paper itself has the ability to connect youth around the nation by providing a space to share stories, dialogue and a sense of belonging with shared interests and identities. The Pacific Citizen and its devotion to helping students has opened doors for youth engagement.

Sincerely,

Juli Yoshinaga,

NYSC PC. Editorial Board Representative

JACL member? □ $50 □ $100 □ $150 □ $200 □ other

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PACIFIC CITIZEN

2017 SPRING CAMPAIGN

The Pacific Citizen’s mission is to “educate on the past Japanese American experience and to preserve, promote and help the current and future AAPI communities.”

JACL members: Change of Address

If you’ve moved, please send new information to:
National JACL
1765 Sutter St.
San Francisco, CA 94115

(415) 921-5225
ext. 25

Allow 6 weeks for address changes.

To avoid interruptions in delivery, please notify your postmaster to include the periodic change of address (USPS Form 3575).
LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

GIFTS FOR YOUR CAREGIVER: THE PITFALL YOU DIDN’T KNOW ABOUT

By Staci Yamashita-Iida, Esq.

Coming from a Japanese American community, I grew up calling my friends’ parents “Auntie” and “Uncle.” As a kid, I never questioned it. I understood we weren’t related, yet in my mind, there was no doubt that they were my family.

These days, the term “family” isn’t exclusively defined by blood relation. Family can be your stepmother, brother-in-law or your best friend. In fact, sometimes the ones you are unrelated to seem more like family than your actual relatives. Family refers to the loved ones — the people who you care for the most who are always there for you.

For many elderly individuals, this modern interpretation of family applies to their caregivers. This is especially the case for elderly individuals who see their caregivers more than anyone else. Caregivers become integrated into the family, or in some situations, like the example below, caregivers become the only family an individual has.

The Example

Shizuko has lived a long and happy life. She finds, however, that old age is both a blessing and a curse. Throughout her 94 years, she has parted with her husband, siblings and most of her friends. Coming from a small family and having no children of her own, Shizuko finds herself all alone, but for Lola.

For the past six years, Shizuko has employed Lola as her caregiver. Lola comes over four times a week for six hours each day, during which time Lola takes Shizuko to her doctor’s appointments, cooks her meals and does light housekeeping.

Over the years, Shizuko and Lola have grown very close, blurring the line between employer and friend. Shizuko spends Thanksgiving dinner at Lola’s house and even sends Lola’s children presents on their birthdays.

Shizuko still pays Lola weekly for her services, but she views Lola more like an adopted daughter than an employee. As such, when it comes time to drawing up her living trust, Shizuko names Lola as the sole beneficiary of her estate.

The Issue

The sincere and innocuous relationship described above is often the case with many caregivers. However, because the elderly can be vulnerable and susceptible to elder abuse, safeguards have been created to shield them from potential harm.

The Probate Code (which governs inheritance and estate issues in California) specifically states that benefactor transfers to the transferor’s care custodian are presumed to be the product of fraud or undue influence. In plain English, this means that if you leave a gift to your caregiver (particularly one that is not related to you), the law assumes that the caregiver malevolently forced you to do so.

This rule was created with the intention of protecting the elderly from being taken advantage of by their caregivers. There are many stories of caregivers who persuaded individuals with dementia to unknowingly sign a will bequeathing valuable jewelry and cars to the caregiver. Or worse, there have been cases where caregivers threatened to cease work, i.e., to stop feeding and bathing the individual, unless the individual agreed to leave the caregiver a large sum of money upon his or her death.

This, among many other reasons, is why the Probate Code presumes that all gifts made to an unrelated caregiver through a will or trust (or similar instrument) are the result of undue influence, fraud or duress.

The Solution

This article is certainly not intended to vilify caregivers. Caregiving is an arduous and stressful task that many people cannot handle. Unfortunately, there are always a few bad apples in the bunch, which is why the law scrutinizes acts involving a caregiver.

So, what if you have a caregiver whom you truly regard as family? How do you thank them for their time and efforts without issue? Fortunately, the Probate Code has an answer. Let’s go back to the Shizuko and Lola example.

If Shizuko wants to prevent Lola from experiencing any trouble from the inheritance that she will receive, then Shizuko would hire an attorney to conduct a Certificate of Independent Review (CIR).

The attorney must be an impartial third party who has nothing to gain by being involved. The attorney would speak to Shizuko privately (without Lola present) to counsel Shizuko about the nature and consequences of the intended gift.

>See GIFTS on page 12

A YONSEI TRANSPLANTED

HATE SPEECH SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED

By Matthew Onnseth

Americans have dug in along partisan lines, and the American university is no different. Higher education has long been seen as a bastion of liberalism, where the leftist majority of professors espouse Marxism and encourage students to silence, deride and defame their conservative peers, and any guests or speakers whose political views fall to the right of their own. In some ways, it’s true. Students regularly protest guest lectures from conservative speakers and often manage to shut them down.

Just last month, the student political union at my own school, Cornell, invited former Tea Party leader Michael Johns for a guest lecture.

The campus police, fearing the sort of violent protests that wracked UC Berkeley during a visit from firebrand Milo Yiannopoulos, told the student group they would have to pay several thousand dollars for additional security, or close the event to the public. The student group made the event private, and encouraged students to silence, deride and defame their speakers.

The protesters didn’t want Johns’ voice heard, and the student government rep didn’t want the protestors’ voices heard, either. The American university has grown as polarized as the American polity; both sides would prefer to retreat to ideological sanctuaries like vitriolic, self-assured campaigns of misinformation against the other side.

This kind of protest is hollowly triumphant — ridiculed as emotionally immature, and given the word is the ability to weigh differing points of view, to hold those beliefs arrived at them after no less a rigorous thought process than your own.

With that being said, hate speech shouldn’t be tolerated. Protests like the tantrum at UC Berkeley do nothing to challenge bigoted points of view; they only validate their holders’ beliefs that the other side is made up of milk-fed, overgrown infants incapable of dialogue.

Those kind of protests let bigots off the hook, too. They aren’t forced to defend their beliefs, aren’t forced to provide proof for their delusional exclusionist arguments.

When protests shut down a speech, the speaker wins — no matter what he or she was planning to say. The speaker’s supporters are righteously enraged, their opponents — hollowly triumphant — ridiculed as emotionally immature, or worse, totalitarian in their suppression of dissent.

The mark of a liberal education in the classical sense of the word is the ability to weigh differing points of view, to approach them seriously and assume that the people who hold those beliefs arrived at them after no less a rigorous thought process than your own.

With that being said, hate speech shouldn’t be tolerated. But rather than shutting it down and forcing it into hiding, we should drag it out into the open for all to see.

Matthew Onnseth is currently a student at Cornell University majoring in English. He seeks to give an honest portrayal of life as both a university student and member of the Millennial generation.
ANN BURROUGHS NAMED PRESIDENT AND CEO OF JANM

LOS ANGELES — The Board of Trustees of the Japanese American National Museum announced March 24 that Ann Burroughs has been named president and CEO of the museum. Burroughs had been serving in those roles in an interim capacity since June 2016.

"Ann has been a skillful leader of the Japanese American National Museum since her first day on the job. She quickly earned the respect and admiration of the museum's boards, staff, volunteers, supporters and the community at large," said Board of Trustees Chair Norman Y. Mineta. "She has helped articulate a vision for the museum that has resonated deeply with me, my fellow trustees and our governors."

Mineta added, "During Ann's tenure as interim president and CEO, we came to recognize that her deep professional experience, her vision and her passion for our mission made her ideally suited to our position. I know that Ann is the right person to lead the museum at this important time."

Burroughs brings more than 25 years of experience in nonprofit leadership and management, resource development, strategic planning and strategic communications. She has worked at the executive director level, as an interim director, as a member of senior management teams, as a nonprofit consultant and as an executive coach. She also has deep experience working with organizations in transition, as well as with diverse communities in the U.S. and multiple countries abroad.

Burroughs is currently the chair of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA.

"The Japanese American National Museum is an incredibly vibrant and vital institution, with board leadership, staff and volunteers who all demonstrate deep devotion and commitment to the important mission of the museum," said Burroughs. "I'm honored to continue on as president and CEO, and I am committed to reinvigorating and finding new ways to advance the museum's key values, emphasizing the importance of being vigilant about democracy and stressing the value of diversity in our world today."

Burroughs' work with Amnesty International USA is particularly meaningful to her because as a young activist in her native South Africa, she was imprisoned as a result of her anti-apartheid activism, and Amnesty International helped to secure her release.

Prior to coming to JANM, Burroughs most recently served as senior consultant at Social Sector Partners, an organization that focuses on supporting social sector organizations through strategic adaptation and repositioning.

She previously served as executive director of the Taproot Foundation in Los Angeles and as the executive director of LA Works. She has also been a consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation in its Communication Networks for Social Change Initiative, HandsOn Network in its corporate engagement program and the government of South Africa.

NPS: D.C. CHERRY TREES START BLOOM PERIOD

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Park Service says Washington, D.C.'s famous cherry trees are blooming again after a killing frost.

NPS spokesman Mike Litterst said in an email March 22 that the bloom period has begun and can last two weeks. He says officials expect the trees will reach peak bloom the weekend of March 25 around the Tidal Basin.

Officials announced March 17 that cold weather had killed half of the blossoms on Washington, D.C.'s cherry trees just as they were reaching peak bloom. Warm temperatures in February had caused an early bloom for the district's 3,800 Yoshino cherry trees, most of which are downtown, encircling the Tidal Basin.

Litterst said that 70 percent of the remaining blooms are now at a stage just before "full bloom." He also said that expected cold weather later in the week means the blooms won't develop further then. Warmer temperatures needed for the blossoms' development are expected at the end of the week.

The cherry trees are also expected to be in full bloom this weekend, according to the National Park Service.

PBS Series Seeks Nikkei Participants for New Series

The Public Broadcasting Service, in conjunction with London-based Blink Films, is making a new social history series called “We’ll Meet Again” and is seeking participants. The series will help trace lost friends, connections and family, reuniting people who have lost contact during a key moment in American history — from the soldier forced to leave his child in Vietnam to the Japanese Americans thrown together by confinement in American prison camps during World War II.

The focus will be on first-person appearances as they examine how outside events interrupted and redirected their lives. A team of archivists, researchers and private investigators will assist the person in tracing his or her lost friend, family member or “significant” stranger.

Anyone interested in participating in this program is encouraged to email mark.usher@blinkfilms.us or call (888) 487-2771.

Former Manzanar Superintendent Frank Hays Dies

Frank Hays, associate regional director for natural and cultural resource stewardship and science in the National Park Service’s Northwest Region, died suddenly on March 3 from a heart attack at the age of 58.

Hays served as superintendent of the Manzanar National Historic Site from 2001-05, where he oversaw the growth of the site during a vital time in its development. His death came on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the MNHS.

“We are saddened to hear of the passing of Frank Hays this past Friday,” said Bruce Embrey, Manzanar Committee co-chair. “As superintendent of the Manzanar National Historic Site in 2001-05, Frank helped bring the plans developed in prior years to life. It was a pivotal period for Manzanar.”

Funeral services were held March 13 in Tucson, Ariz. Hays is survived by his wife and three children.

Japan’s Parliament Proposes Abdication Law for Emperor

TOKYO — Japanese ruling and opposition parties have given Prime Minister Shinzo Abe a proposal urging his government to write a special one-time law that would allow Emperor Akihito to abdicate.

The March 17 proposal will go to a panel of experts commissioned by Abe to compile a final report on the abdication within the next few weeks. The government is expected to submit the legislation to parliament around May so it can be enacted during its current session, which ends in mid-June.

Akihito, 83, expressed last August his apparent wish to abdicate, saying his age and health may start limiting his ability to fulfill his duties.

He would be the first emperor to abdicate in 200 years. Crown Prince Naruhito, Akihito's eldest son, is first in line to the Chrysanthemum throne.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson Says North Korea Has No Need to Fear the U.S.

TOKYO — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called on North Korea March 16 to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, saying the isolated nation “need not fear” the U.S.

Tillerson made that declaration after meeting Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo, where they discussed possible new approaches in dealing with Pyongyang.

He said 20 years of U.S. diplomatic and other efforts to get North Korea to denuclearize have failed, but gave no specifics about how the Trump administration, which is currently doing a policy review, would tackle the issue. Tillerson described the weapons programs as “dangerous and unlawful.”

Tensions are running high on the divided Korean Peninsula, and North Korea recently launched four missiles into seas off Japan and where the U.S. is currently conducting annual military drills with South Korea.

Former MLB Player Manny Ramirez to Make Japan Debut

TOKYO — Former Major League Baseball star Manny Ramirez is set to begin the next chapter of his baseball career by playing for the Kochi Fighting Dogs of Japan’s independent Shikoku Island League.

Kochi is the capital city of Kochi Prefecture on the island of Shikoku. The city has an estimated population of 340,000.

"I’ve always wanted to play in Japan," the 44-year-old Dominican said in a comment posted on the team’s website. "I really appreciate the opportunity the Kochi team is giving me to continue my career. I’m really looking forward to playing in Japan.”

— P.C. Staff and Associated Press
Topaz Museum Grand Opening Set For July 7-8

A full day of activities is planned to mark the museum’s new exhibits.

For more information, visit the museum’s Facebook page, website or call (435) 864-2514.

UCLA Kyodo Taiko to Perform at 48th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage

Los Angeles — UCLA Kyodo Taiko will perform at the 48th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, sponsored by the Manzanar Committee, on April 29 at the Manzanar National Historic Site.

UCLA Kyodo Taiko will open the program at 11:30 a.m., while the main portion of the program will begin at noon.

The theme for this year’s pilgrimage is “Never Again to Anyone, Anywhere! 75th Commemoration of Executive Order 9066.”

The event will also recognize the 25th anniversary of Manzanar being declared a National Historic Site on March 3, 1992.

Each year, more than 1,000 people from diverse backgrounds, including students, teachers, community members, clergy and former internees, attend the pilgrimage, which commemorates the unjust incarceration of more than 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry in 10 American concentration camps, and other confinement sites, located in the most desolate, isolated regions of the United States, during World War II.

Manzanar was the first of the American concentration camps to be established.

Manzanar’s 11th consecutive pilgrimage appearance at the Manzanar Pilgrimage this year, UCLA Kyodo Taiko is the first collegiate taiko (Japanese drum) group in North America. Its members made their debut at the Opening Ceremony of the University of California, Los Angeles’ commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Japanese American Internment, which was held in February 1992 at UCLA’s famed Royce Hall.

UCLA Kyodo Taiko is comprised entirely of UCLA students. The group has performed annually at local K-12 schools, Nikkei Week, Los Angeles Tofu Festival and the Lotus Festival in Los Angeles, the Intercollegiate Taiko Invitational, during halftime at UCLA basketball games, as well as the first annual USA Sumo Open, in addition to many other campus, community and private events.

UCLA Kyodo Taiko has also become a fertile training ground for those who wish to continue with taiko after their college careers end, as many Kyodo alumni have become members of professional taiko groups, including Nishikaze Taiko Ensemble, TaikoProject and Progressive Taiko (Prota).

In addition to the afternoon event, the Manzanar At Dusk program follows that same evening, from 5-8 p.m. at the Lone Pine High School gymnasium.

Manzanar At Dusk is co-sponsored by the Nikkei Student Unions at California State University, Long Beach, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of California, San Diego.

Through a creative presentation, small group discussions and an open mic session, Manzanar At Dusk participants will have the opportunity to learn about the experiences of those incarcerated in the camps. Participants will also be able to interact with former internees in attendance to hear their personal stories, to share their own experiences, and discuss the relevance of the concentration camp experience to present-day events and issues.

The Manzanar Committee has also announced that bus transportation to the Pilgrimage will be available from Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo and Gardena, Calif.

The Little Tokyo bus sponsored by the Manzanar Committee, will depart at 7 a.m., arriving at the pilgrimage at approximately 11:30 a.m. It will also take participants to the Visitor’s Center at the Manzanar National Historic Site following the afternoon program. The bus should arrive back in Los Angeles at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Reservations for the Little Tokyo bus will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, and seats are going very fast and are expected to sell out quickly. The nonrefundable fare is $40 per seat. $20 for students and seniors (65 or older). Complimentary fares are available for those who were incarcerated at any of the former American concentration camps or other confinement sites during World War II.

The bus from Gardena is sponsored by the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute. Information on their bus to the Manzanar Pilgrimage can be found on the GVJCI website (http://www.jci-gardena.org/upcoming-events.html) or by calling (310) 324-6611.

Anyone wishing to attend the Manzanar At Dusk program that evening should make their transportation arrangements.

Pilgrimage participants are advised to bring their own lunch, drinks and snacks, as there are no facilities to purchase food at the Manzanar National Historic Site (restaurants and fast-food outlets are located in Lone Pine and Independence, which are nearby). Water will be provided at the site.

Both the Manzanar Pilgrimage and the Manzanar At Dusk programs are free and open to the public.

The Manzanar Committee is dedicated to educating and raising public awareness about the incarceration and violation of civil rights of persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II and to the continuing struggle of all peoples when Constitutional rights are in danger.

A nonprofit organization that has sponsored the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage since 1969, along with other educational programs, the Manzanar Committee has also played a key role in the establishment and continued development of the Manzanar National Historic Site.

For more information, or to reserve a seat on the bus, call (323) 662-5102 or e-mail 48thpilgrimage@manzanarcommittee.org.

UCLA Kyodo Taiko performs at the 47th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage on April 30, 2016.

As the grand opening for the Topaz Museum will be on July 7-8, anyone celebrating the event can stay at the Salt Lake City Sheraton, where an evening banquet on July 7 will be held. Attendees will then travel to Delta, Utah, by bus on July 8. A full day of activities is being planned, including a commemorative program, tours of the Topaz site and, of course, visits to the newly installed exhibits at the Topaz Museum.

More information about registration will be sent out in a newsletter and on the Topaz Museum website. People will be able to register online or from the newsletter.

The museum exhibits recount the toll and complex history that “prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of leadership” wreaked on 11,000 of the 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry during World War II who were in Topaz.

Historical photographs, text and artifacts with a re-created barrack and a restored recreation hall will give visitors a glimpse of the horrific series of events that caused hardship and misery for those caught in the cross-fire of political expediency and prejudice.

The Topaz Museum Board received a grant from the National Park Service Japanese American Confinement Sites program to manufacture and install the exhibits. West Office Exhibition Design of Oakland has been working on the final exhibit since 1994.

The museum building was finished in 2014, and for two years, the gallery housed the art show “When Words Weren’t Enough,” which displayed artwork that were all painted at Topaz.

Installation of the exhibits and artifacts should be completed in April. The museum hours are from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., except for Sunday.
GEORGE TAKEI
STILL BOLDLY
TREKKING
TO NEW
FRONTIERS

More than 200 memorable items from the actor/activist are on display at JANM in a new exhibition.
When he was 68, actor/activist George Takei ignited a great, late career renaissance that led to greater visibility, more opportunities and increased fame when he came out of the closet.

Now, just weeks shy of 80, the “Star Trek” star has cleaned out that closet — and garage, attic and more — and is donating the content or “two very large trucks” worth of artifacts gathered over a lifetime on this Class M planet to share with the general public, mementos that might bring a smile even to the stoic visage of Mr. Spock.

The memorabilia is now on exhibit at Little Tokyo’s Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. “New Frontiers: The Many Lives of George Takei,” which opened to the public on March 12 and will run through Aug. 20, is the first of what JANM Board of Trustees Vice Chair Wendy Shiba said will be several upcoming exhibitions that will explore the lives and careers of Asian Americans “who have made their mark in entertainment and media.”

But self-aggrandizement and nostalgia definitely were not what Takei wanted when he was finally persuaded to have the record of his remarkable journey celebrated as the first such life and career to be put on display at JANM.

“This is something that I really didn’t expect,” said Takei in remarks during the exhibit’s media preview. “One of the things I was lobbying for was an exhibit on Asians and Asian Americans in the media. That has been the ... burden that we’ve had to carry.”

Takei, a member of JANM’s board of trustees and its chair emeritus, was referring to Hollywood’s history of warped depictions of Asians and its patriarchal characters, “except when they are ‘interesting, humanoid characters,” in which case they often get played by non-Asians.

Takei said he had lobbied the museum continuously for such an exhibit — and when former President and CEO Greg Kimura came around to the idea, Takei found that JANM had put him in the curious position of having chosen his life and career to be the first example.

Even more curious, Takei’s presence for the opening of “New Frontiers” was just a quick in-and-out trip to be there for the opening and see it himself for the first time. That was because he had been in New York City working on the Broadway revival of Stephen Sondheim and James Goldman’s “Pacific Overtures,” set to open this spring.

“I had to come back for this opening,” said the stentorian-voiced native Los Angeleno to the journalists assembled for the press preview, but not seem the entire production.

“New Frontiers” is the culmination of months of work by JANM’s staff and Jeff Yang, who as the curator helped to catalogue and categorize what JANM calls the “George and Brad Takei Collection.”

One of the distinctive features of the “New Frontiers” exhibition are the oversize comic book-style illustrations accompanying the various displays. Utilizing those illustrations was an idea by Yang, who years ago served as editor-in-chief of “Secret Identities: The Asian American Superhero Anthology” and its sequel, “Shattered: The Asian American Superhero Anthology.”

The musical “Allegiance,” which had a four-month run on Broadway in New York, was inspired by the personal experiences of George Takei, who also starred in and produced the show.

This past tense. “I’m still here. I’m not history yet. We have much further to go yet,” he said.

In other words, don’t be surprised if George Takei continues to live long and prosper as he seeks out new frontiers and boldly goes forward, be it on a Broadway stage, a Hollywood soundstage, a pickle line or in a starship’s captain’s chair.
'OUR STORY IS ONE WE CAN TELL ON OUR OWN'

A Yonsei reflects on her enlightening and empowering trip to Japan as a participant of the Kakehashi Project.

By Kristen Taketa, Contributor

I've told other people's stories as a newspaper journalist for five years. But the story that's been the hardest for me to reconcile is that of my own family.

My grandparents on one side were forced to live in Japanese internment camps during World War II. My grandmother on the other side lost her parents in the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Later, their children — my parents — were called names by their American classmates for the sake of their eyes.

As a fourth-generation Japanese American, or Yonsei, I listen to these stories, jot them down in a notebook and feel a tinge of guilt. I've never shone the kind of resilience my family did. I've never had to.

The responsibility of carrying on a family legacy shaped by war and race is one that many young Japanese Americans bear. We recognize that our families' Japanese identity is an undeniable part of our histories. But in reality, there's a lot we don't know about our heritage or our families' motherland.

In the past two weeks, I was given a chance to explore my Japanese heritage in a way I haven't before. I took part in the Kakehashi Project, which sends scores of Japanese and Asian Americans to Japan each year on a free trip to learn about the country's culture, foreign policy and people. The trip is administered by the Japanese American Citizens League and sponsored by the Japanese government.

The idea behind the investment is that we ate, such as chawanmushi (Japanese hot pot) or shabu shabu (Japanese hot pot). I met Kakehashi participants who don't have a drop of Japanese blood in them but were ready to use the knowledge gained from this trip to build bridges across Asian American communities.

There was something novel and empowering about being with other young Japanese Americans. I got to have conversations that I don't have with most people. Sometimes we lamented, for example, how we wish our parents forced us to attend Japanese language school on Saturday mornings.

We listed our favorite Japanese foods and complained how hard it is to find good sushi or ramen where we live, in places like Missouri and Idaho. We devised plans to return to Japan someday and analyzed what we would have to change about ourselves to blend in.

For most of us, the trip was our first glimpse at a motherland we had simultaneously known about all our lives and yet hardly knew at all. Many of our grandparents had been told to abandon the Japanese language, bury Japanese customs and assimilate into a country that would otherwise not welcome them. In a way, Kakehashi was about helping us reclaim that identity and understand what it means.

Over the course of the trip, we practiced our basic language skills with homestay families who own small rice farms in Kamogawa. We slept on the floor and gave thanks for each meal before eating. We learned from university students how to participate in a tea ceremony and practice calligraphy. We heard lectures about Japanese foreign policy, sustainable rice farming practices and the experiences of Nikkei, who own small rice farms in Kamogawa.

I've been working with Nikkei and our Kakehashi program booklet for two years. Even if we could get all of that perfect, our makeup, hair, clothes and even faces would still give us away.

But I don't think that's a problem. We were told on the trip that, as young Japanese Americans, we have unique perspectives that Japanese people lack. Our story is one we can tell on our own.

Excited by what I saw in Japan, I've retrieved my old Japanese language textbooks from the closet and am already searching online prices for flights back to Japan. I turn to Japan someday and analyzed what I could repay my ancestors for their struggles if I just learn how to speak Japanese properly or meet more people in Japan.

Strangers passing silently on crowded Tokyo streets stared at us when we talked and laughed loudly in a group. All the little mannerisms it takes to pass as Japanese — bowing, offering money with two hands and not one, the correct way of holding chopsticks — had to be taught to us through a webinar and our Kakehashi program booklet.

Even if we could get all of that perfect, our makeup, hair, clothes and even faces would still give us away.

Kristen Taketa traveled to Japan as a Kakehashi participant from March 13-21. She is currently the K-12 education reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch metropolitan daily newspaper in St. Louis, Mo.
NIKKEI IDENTITY AND THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE

A look at how to sustain J.A. identity in today's United States

By Rob Buscher, Contributor

In a community that spans multiple generations and includes a growing number of biracial and multicultural individuals, what does it mean to be Japanese American?

For most of the 20th century, JAs were a fairly monolithic community that followed the predominant immigration narrative of Issei, Nisei, etc. Since the incarcereation, however, there have been a multitude of experiences that grew out of that singular narrative.

For example, the folks who moved back West after camp compared to those who started a new life elsewhere. Or people who served in the U.S. military vs. No-boys. Others who did not go to camp at all because they were able to voluntarily evacuate before the forced removal, or who lived outside of Military Zone 1.

More different yet, what about the influx of Japanese war brides married to U.S. servicemen during the Occupation of Japan and their biracial children? Not to mention Issei who immigrated during the postwar era and beyond whom we’ve dubbed Shin-Nikkei.

With such diversity of perspective, can we truly define a quintessential JA identity that will continue to resonate as a shared experience in this community? The one thing that unites us all is our connection to Japan.

As a Yousei, it was extremely rare that my Issei Hibaachan lived until I was a college freshman. Despite her longevity, I did not grow up speaking Japanese, nor did I know much about our ancestral country of origin beyond what I had seen in Kenzaburo Oe's novels or Studio Ghibli anime.

I always wanted to speak Japanese, but my mother did not speak well enough to teach me, and we lived in a monocultural community lacking access to language resources.

After six weeks of immersive language study at the Kyoto Institute of Culture and Language, I spoke enough to live there comfortably for the next six months, and again while spending a summer researching my master's thesis.

A decade has passed since then, and though I’m out of practice speaking, I’m still able to comprehend a decent amount of conversational Japanese. More importantly, it has opened my mind to a world of linguistic nuance within the many Japanese films and television shows I watch, giving me a better understanding of the culture in general.

It is often said that by learning a second language, we gain another soul. I would say that learning Japanese perhaps awakened that which already resided within me, rekindling a protein in my mixed-Japanese ancestry and giving me confidence to claim my Japanese-ness.

The Japanese she learned was 1930s-era Hiroshima-ben, something that sounds rather foreign to most native Japanese speakers today. She never learned to read or write in Japanese, so we sometimes correspond in romaji. Language aside, learning Japanese helped me to better relate to Obaachan in ways her other grandchildren cannot.

At its core, language is inherently utilitarian. We are limited by expressing ourselves through the linguistic devices available in a given language.

Japanese forces once thought differently than English based on its grammar structure and other rules related to how one speaks. Learning another language to the point of fluency truly does change the way you think because it teaches you new modes of speaking to communicate your ideas. In this sense, to fully understand Japanese culture, you must at least have a basic understanding of Japanese language.

Another utilitarian aspect of language is that once a language is no longer used as the primary means of communication, people start to forget it — favoring their more widely used language, and arguably the thought processes inherent to it. Within the multitude of experiences that JAs have lived post-incarceration, there are also many reasons for discontinuing the use of the Japanese language.

Many stopped teaching their children Japanese because they lacked proficiency from white native speakers who called for their forced removal from Military Zone 2. Others being native born in the U.S. didn't have a firm enough grasp on the language to help themselves and their children teach it to their children.

In my Obaachan's case, her teacher sent home a note that her English development was slower than other students because she was speaking Japanese at home. It didn't stop her parents from speaking Japanese since it was the only language they both spoke fluently, but I believe it had an impact on her own use of Japanese.

Regardless of national origin, the 20th century U.S. immigration narrative favored assimilation over bilingualism. Consider the dominant culture of European descendant whites.

With the exception of a few small ethnic enclaves such as New York City's Little Italy and certain Scandinavian communities in the Great Lakes region — how many white Americans speak the language of their immigrant grandparents? Of the vast majority who do not, few very few have ever been asked incredulously: "Why not?"

What makes the situation different for JAs and other Asian Americans is that because we are perceived as foreign, people judge us when we cannot speak the language of our ancestors.

Having spoken with a number of elder Sansei about this issue, I understand that Japanese language ability, or lack thereof, can be a touchy subject. It’s been stigmatized as the language of the enemy for elder generations and inaccurately as a symbol of shame for the generations that have since lost touch with that aspect of their culture.

How much of one's culture is determined by the language they speak? Is it possible to reacquire the language of the immigrant generation when many of our Sansei parents no longer speak it? Would that in some ways make us more Japanese than our parents? In one sense, it might be our only hope for the continued survival of a Japanese American community.

If current trends in out-marriage rate from the JA community continue, we are almost guaranteed that nearly 100 percent of the

Gosei and certainly Rokusei will be multilingual, if not bilingual.

As our Japanese ancestry becomes less quantifiable with each successive generation, how can the JA community continue to exist if we lose our culture? While learning Japanese is not the only way to do so, it is, in my opinion, one of the easier methods of cultural retention and reclamation.

See NIKKEI on page 12

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2017 TOUR SCHEDULE

Japan Spring Countryside Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida). .......... Apr 14-24
Tokyo, Nagano, Sado Island, Nikaga, Sakata/Shonai, Yamagata, Aizu Wakamatsu, Ashikaga.

Ireland Holiday Tour (Elaine Ishida). .................. May 1-10
Dublin, Waterford, Blarney Stone, Killarney, Limerick, Galway, Kingscourt.
China-Yangtze River-Hong Kong Holiday Tour (Carol Hida). ....... May 14-29
Beijing, Yangtze River Cruise, Xian, Shanghai, Hong Kong.

Grande Parents/Grandchildren Japan Tour (Ernest Hida) WAITLIST Jun 26-Jul 5
Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto.

Yellowstone-Tetons National Parks Tour (Elaine Ishida). .......... Jul 7-14
Salt Lake City, Jackson Hole, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Park City.

Hokkaido Summer Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) .................. Jul 17-30
Lake Akan, Furano, Asahikawa, Wakkanai, Sapporo, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.

Rapid City, Mt. Rushmore, Custer State Park, Black Hills, South Dakota.

Japan Autumn Countryside Holiday Tour (Carol Hida). ........... Sep 6-14
Tokyo, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Matsue, Tamatsukuri Onsen, Hiroshima.

New Orleans & Deep South Holiday Tour (Elaine Ishida). ........... Nov 5-12
New Orleans, Natchez, Lafayette.

So. America Patagonia-Easter Island Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida). ... Nov 7-22
Buenos Aires, Ushuaia, Calafate/Perito Moreno Glacier, Paine National Park/Grey Glacier, Punta Arenas, Santiago, Easter Island.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL
312 E. 1st Street, Suite 330 * Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213)625-2232 * Email: americanholiday@att.net
Ernest or Carol Hida Elaine Ishida (Tel: 714-269-4534)

(CST #200326-10)
Come join the Contra Costa JACL at its event booth outling to see the Oakland A’s take on the Cleveland Indians. A festive lunch will be included with each ticket purchase. This is a great opportunity to enjoy some MLB baseball with friends and family.

Info: Contact Judy Nakase at calnpfady@oboglobal.net.

For more information, visit www.jacl-nwnp.org.

NCWNP Gala Banquet Danville, CA
April 22; 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Crow Canyon Country Club
711 Silver Lake Dr.
Registration: $88

The NCWNP of the JACL will hold its award banquet and celebration of JACL’s 80th Golden Anniversary. The district will award its past newsletter editors Joan Matsuko of the Contra Costa chapter and Dara Tom of the Berkeley Chapter, as well as Florin J. Anumoto and Andy Noguchi and the unsung heroes from local chapters, all of whom gave their time and energy into broadening the work and vision of JACL. The event’s guest speaker will be Dianne Fukunaga, co-producer of the director of the “Miracle Legacy Project,” a documentary film chronicling the life and career of Norman Mineta. A silent auction will also be featured.

Info: For more information, visit www.jacl-ncwnp.org.

Letters From the Camps:
San Francisco, CA
April 27; 6 p.m.
Presidio Officer’s Club
Merage Hall
50 Merage Ave.

In partnership with the Presidio Trust and Friends of Topaz, the California Historical Society presents Letters From the Camps: Voices of Dissent. This live reading of letters from the CHS collection, including those written by Fred Korematsu, Gorden Hirabayashi and Ieko Fujii. This program also coincides with the opening of the Presidio Trust’s E.O. 9066 exhibition.


Japanese Cultural Fair
Santa Cruz, CA
June 10; 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.

This exhibit features photos, diaries, oral histories, government documents, newspapers, a virtual tour and Honor Wall of those who were held at the camp from Dec. 16, 1941-Oct. 1, 1943. Exhibits vary: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday are 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursday is Noon-8 p.m.; closed Mondays.

Info: For more information, visit www.jannm.org or www.tunacanyon.org.

Cherry Blossom Festival
Monterey Park, CA
April 22-23; 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
Sat/Sun 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Barker Lake
300 S. McPherrin Ave.

Price: Free

This annual festival will feature various Asian food, dancing, taiko, martial arts demonstrations, tea ceremony, handmade crafts and much more. Proceeds benefit community organizations.


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June 10; 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Mission Plaza Park
103 Emmett St.

Price: Free

The purpose of this cultural fair is to provide an opportunity for the community to increase its awareness and understanding of the Japanese community in Santa Cruz County, as well as Japanese culture, both traditional and contemporary. Live entertainment featuring music, martial arts demonstrations, kimono workshops, ikebana displays and food will all be featured. This event promises to offer something for everyone.


Oakland A’s Baseball Game
Oakland, CA
July 16
Oakland Coliseum
7000 Coliseum Way
Price: $20 General admission; seniors receive 5% discount

Kendo Dojo and more. There will also be a Cabin Youth Festival that will provide much-needed funds for JCCNC youth programs.


PNW

‘Only the Oaks Remain:
The Story of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station’
Leschi Park, WA
Thru April 9

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Price: $20 General admission; seniors receive 5% discount
MEMORIAM

Fukuchi, Tak, 85, Kensington, CA, March 10; he is survived by his wife, Ruth; children, Matthew (Joyceline) and Catherine (John) Wong-Fukuchi; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 3.

Mizuki, John, 94, Cerritos, CA, Feb. 18; he is survived by his wife, Miyo; children, Paul (Rie), Steve (Naomi), Ruy (Susan) and Phnicla (John) Shati; gc: 7.

Nagai, Takako, 89, Westminster, CA, Feb. 25; she was predeceased by her husband, Dr. Williga Nagai.

Nakada, Glenn, 91, Solder, NY, Feb. 18; during WWII, he and his family were incarcerated at the WRA Center in Poston, AZ, by the U.S. government for wrongful detention of Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II, died on Sept. 23 in San Mateo, Calif. He was 75.

Nishimura, Yoshihiko, 75, Los Angeles, CA, she is survived by her husband, Kiyosh Nishihara; children, Ted Kiyotoshi (Eva), Shn Toshikazu (Brosa) and Kathy Miwa (Abe) Nishimura; siblings, Ritsuo Tamura and Meiko; nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 1.

Nomura, Teruko, 92, Westminster, CA, Feb. 4; she is survived by her husband, Yoshio; children, Emiko (Richard), Minoru (Rosie), Mitsuo (Robert) and Sachiko (David); two sisters, and many other relatives in the U.S. and Japan; gc: 7.

Nonoguchi, Hajime, 91, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 8; he was predeceased by his wife, Yuuki; he is survived by his children, Lesley Nonoguchi (John) Sornas, Tracy Nonoguchi and Kevin (Siu Lang); he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 6.

Ogawa, Harusue, 106, San Francisco, CA, Feb. 14; he is survived by his sons, Tats (Susan Karo) and George (Susan Sumiko); gc: 3.

Urasaki, Yuriko Lillie, 91, Fullerton, CA, Feb. 6; she was predeceased by her husband, Dr. Willie Nagai; she is survived by her children, Sandra Ewing and Stan Urasaki; gc: 5.

Watanabe, Tadashi, 89, Torrance, CA, March 2; he is survived by his wife, Hiyane; children, Aileen (Steve) Worrell, Susan and Alan (Cathy) Watanabe; he is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 1.

Yagi, Jean Yoneko, 86, Torrance, CA, Feb. 14; she was predeceased by her husband, Paul; she is survived by her daughters, Shileen (Masami) Funai, Paulene, Arlene Yagi, Marylin Matayoshi, Dianne (Danny) Umemoto, Joanne (Brian) Mitsu; gc: 1.

TRIBUTE

Frank Akira Iwama, a pioneering Asian American lawyer who successfully represented the Japanese American Citizens League in its effort to obtain redress from the United States government for wrongful detention of Japanese Americans in internment camps during World War II, died on Sept. 23 in San Mateo, Calif. He was 75.

Iwama, a lifelong resident of Los Angeles, was born in April 2, 1941, in Suisun Valley, Calif., the son of Japanese immigrants who owned the Iwama Market in Fairfield. Incarcerated with his family during World War II at the Gila River War Relocation Center, an internment camp for Japanese Americans, Frank spent his early life surrounded by armed guards. This inspired him to become a lawyer and dedicate his career to social justice.

After receiving a B.A. in business administration with great distinction from San Jose State University, Frank left law school with his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Southern California School of Law, where he was managing editor of the Santa Clara Law Review. He began his career as a state deputy attorney general with the California Department of Justice in Sacramento, where he acted as legal counsel to several state governmental agencies in criminal, civil, and administrative law matters. He entered private practice in 1977 and worked as a business and legal adviser to facilitate business relations between Japan and the State of California. He also served as an adviser on California trade issues for the Consul General of Japan in San Francisco and represented international Japanese clients including NEC and Daiwa Corp.

Frank was dedicated to championing greater diversity in the legal profession and encouraging minorities to pursue a career in law. He was the first Asian American elected to the California State Bar Board of governors. As co-founder of the California State Bar Foundation, dedicated to building a better justice system for all Californians, he served as a board director. He also co-founded the Asian Bar Association of Sacramento and served as president. He received numerous awards for his commitment to civil rights and community affairs and served as a board director for the Legal Aid Society of Northern California.

Frank’s death from heart failure followed four years of illness. He is survived by his wife, Mitsuko Iwama; son, Kenneth; daughter, Mia, and stepdaughters, Shirley and Georgia Archer.
By Ron Mori

Have you thought about turning what you love, what brings you joy and serves others into something that pays the bills? Probably many of us have thought about it but put it off for one reason or another. Perhaps when you were a kid, you sold lemonade, made homemade desserts or sold candy. You were probably nurturing your entrepreneurial spirit and passion then. We all agree that entrepreneurship takes time and work.

However, many small business owners will agree that when you’re passionate about what you do, it does not feel like work; you’re just doing what you’re supposed to.

On April 18 at 7 p.m. EST, AARP will host a webinar entitled “From Passion Into Profit” that will feature three inspiring small business owners who left the corporate world to pursue their passion.

Each of the panelists realized that by not pursuing their passion, they were not doing what they were placed here on earth to really do. To hear their stories, register now and learn what motivated them to take the leap of faith, as well as hear about the success and challenges of being your own boss. You will also be able to ask live questions.

Our panel of innovative and inspiring entrepreneurs is men’s clothing designer Alan Michael Humphrey, pet walkers and groomers Amy Reed and Leslie Barnett of Woofies and nail salon co-founders Marcus Johnson, owner of FLO Wine, and Laura Hageman.

The US Small Business Administration is the great new resource and an interesting case study in what a broad-based Japanese-language education program could look like.

The impact of Asian American entrepreneurship is clear and increasingly significant. Today, more than 1 million Asian American entrepreneurs generate $300 billion in sales, providing jobs for more than 2 million workers. As the U.S. faces difficult economic times, these contributions are a vital catalyst to economic recovery.

The FY-2014 budget proposal includes $42.6 million for the EDA’s grant program, which provides a critical source of funds for small businesses and communities that are burdened by natural disasters.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is also a good place to start. It provides assistance for businesses with sales over $50,000.

Getting a question for the panelists and want to hear more about how each owner got started? Register now at http://bit.ly/2mZkxF2. Can’t make this webinar? Register and a link will be sent to you when the webinar is complete. Click “Events” and choose Recorded Webinars from the Events tab.

JACL has become a de-facto meeting place for these types of exchanges, and I hope in time we can develop more programs that intentionally bring together the many diverse perspectives of our JA community.

Rob Buscher is a member of the JACL Philadelphia Board of Directors.

The attorney may ask why Shizuko wants to leave her home to Lola, as opposed to a distant relative or church, to gauge Shizuko’s state of mind. If the attorney determines that Shizuko made the decision to include Lola as a beneficiary on her own free will, the attorney would draft a CIR. If another person ever questioned or contested the gift to Lola in the future, the CIR would serve as evidence against the complaint.

A CIR is a great tool to use if you want to protect your caregiver’s interest in the future. As mentioned, caregiving is one of the toughest jobs there is. If you have a caregiver that you consider family and you want to show your appreciation by leaving him or her a gift without issue, consider speaking to an attorney to learn more about a Certificate of Independent Review.

NIKKEI >> continued from page 9

Amongst the Yansei and Gosei generations, I have met dozens of college-aged JAs studying Japanese as I did. The Kakehashi Project is a great new resource and an interesting case study in what a broad-based Japanese-language education program could look like.

Perhaps a more sustainable long-term solution is to foster better connections between the Shin-Nisei (American-born children of new Japanese immigrants) and Yansei or Gosei of a similar age group.

Many of the Shin-Nisei are growing up speaking Japanese at home, and the current trend of cultural reclamation amongst younger Nissei seems to be increasing, so perhaps we should be more focused on building these bridges within our own community.

To get you started, we’re giving you $50 for every new checking account plus 1% cashback on your auto loan up to $500.

Visit www.jacu.com for more details or call us toll free at 1-800-544-8828.

Ron Mori is co-president of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.