75-YEAR ROUND TRIP

Pilgrims travel to Topaz, Utah, on a special journey that offers healing and, more importantly, hope.

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WWII baseball relic now on display in Cooperstown, N.Y.

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Judy K. Sakaki becomes president of Sonoma State University.
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A JA’S VIEW OF TRUMP AND JAPAN

By Gil Asakawa

Many Japanese Americans I know don’t pay much attention to Japan, which I think is a pity. I believe JAs should keep up with news from Japan, and travel to Japan. A lot.

However, most JAs I know closely follow the news of Donald Trump’s presidency and what he’s doing in the U.S.

JAs — and others — have been concerned enough about our president that this year’s Day of Remembrance events across the U.S. were packed with much larger audiences than in past years. That’s because Executive Order 9066 led to the incarceration of 120,000 people of Japanese descent in American concentration camps.

Now with President Donald Trump signing a blizzard of executive orders, including two that are controversial and currently on-hold, one temporarily banning travel to the U.S. from seven Muslim-majority countries and another that threatens to punish “sanctuary cities,” also blocked by a federal judge, E.O. 9066 has a much heavier symbolic weight.

But JAs should also keep an eye on what he does and how he thinks about Asia and, in particular, Japan.

His grasp of foreign relations is by all accounts his weakest point. By intoning “America First” as the theme for his campaign and now administration, Trump is purposefully turning his back on the rest of the world.

Trump alarmed anyone with an interest in Japan, for instance, by suggesting during the campaign that Japan and South Korea might be better off developing their own nuclear weapons — a suggestion that’s anathema to the Japanese.

He repeatedly growled about how Japan wasn’t paying its share of the U.S. military’s presence in the country. He repeatedly criticized the Trans Pacific Partnership, or TPP, as a terrible trade pact. This opposition to the TPP has already manifested itself — though to be fair, Hillary Clinton also said she’d veto it if she became president — and Trump has backed out of the deal.

Trump symbolically embraced Taiwan’s independence by having a friendly phone call with the country’s leader, then later seemed to back down and vow in front of China’s President Xi Jinping and reaffirm the “One China Policy” that has been part of U.S. foreign policy for decades. He has also said repeatedly that China is a currency manipulator.

So, Trump’s brief reign as president has already resulted in a lot more awareness of the Japanese American experience. Thanks, prez!

In fact, the classic catchphrase, “May the Force be with you.” In celebration of this (unofficial) holiday, I’d like to focus on another, “May the Fourth be with you” — a pun on “Star Wars” most iconic stars.

On Dec. 27, 2016, the world mourned the loss of Carrie Fisher, who played Princess Leia in the “Star Wars” series. She succumbed to a heart attack at the young age of 60. Just one day earlier, her mother, famous actress Debbie Reynolds, passed away after suffering a massive stroke.

According to news reports, Fisher’s estate — comprised of real property, financial accounts, ownership interests in companies, jewelry, artwork, publicity rights, film residuals, automobiles, etc. — is valued somewhere between $5 million and $25 million. Reynolds’ estate was much larger, valued somewhere between $60 million and $85 million.

Neither woman was married, but they did have children. Reynolds had two kids, Carrie Fisher and Todd Fisher. Fisher had one daughter, actress Billie Catherine Lourd.

It appears that both Reynolds and Fisher had living trusts set up. Because information regarding trusts is private, it’s difficult to know exactly who the beneficiaries of each estate are. For the purposes of this article, let’s assume that each trust was written in a “standard” manner.

That would mean that the beneficiaries of Reynolds’ trust were her children. Since Fisher predeceased her mother, her share of Reynolds’ estate would probably go to her daughter, Lourd. Lourd was likely the beneficiary of Fisher’s living trust as well. That means that in a matter of two days, Lourd became the beneficiary of up to $70 million.

The case of Fisher and Reynolds may not seem relatable; most of us do not have tens of millions of dollars to bequeath to our children. However, it does serve as an important (albeit exaggerated) reminder of the issues that may arise with our estates.

These days, you never know what could happen. A drunk driver could crash into your car, or you could suffer a heart attack at an early age. If you pass away unexpectedly, your children could suddenly come into a small fortune. If they are minors (or even in their 20s), then they may not be in a position to adequately and responsibly manage the wealth they have inherited.

Take Lourd, Fisher’s daughter, for example. She likely inherited 100 percent of her mother’s estate ($5 million—$25 million) as well as Fisher’s half of Reynolds’ estate ($30 million—$42 million). That’s a lot of money for a 24-year-old adult to handle.

If you own a home valued at $500,000, miscellaneous bank accounts totaling $100,000 and a life insurance policy for $50,000, then your children could be looking at splitting a $650,000 estate. What can you do to ensure that your children don’t blow the money all at once?

One option is to insert provisions into your living trust that instruct the Trustee to distribute trust funds to a beneficiary at a later date (and hopefully more mature and responsible) age. You can state how and when a beneficiary will receive portions of their inheritance. For example, “Beneficiaries will receive 25 percent at age 25, 25 percent at age 30 and the remaining 50 percent at age 35.”

Alternately, you can give the Trustee broad discretion to dispense assets based on the beneficiary’s needs, particularly taking into consideration the beneficiary’s education, health, maintenance and support. The beneficiary could, for example, use his or her inheritance to pay for college tuition but not to buy a brand-new Ferrari.

Having these types of provisions prevent reckless, “spendthrift” behavior and give you peace of mind knowing that the beneficiary’s inheritance can be stretched over time and be put to good use. Of course, each person’s individual needs and situations vary, so to determine what type of provisions suit you best, feel free to consult with an attorney.

Fisher and Reynolds left lasting impressions on the world, and their legacies as actresses, businesswomen and mothers have continued even though they are gone. From an Estate Planning perspective, if there is one thing we can learn from their unexpected deaths, it’s that your children’s inheritance can be safeguarded with the right provisions in place.

Finally, for those of you who are not “Star Wars” fans, feel free to join the “Dark Side” each May 5, which has come to be called “Revenge of the Fifth” — a play on “Star Wars: Episode III — Revenge of the Sith.” Happy celebrating!

Staci Yamashita-Ildin, Esq., is an Estate Planning attorney at Elder Law Services of California. She can be contacted at (310) 348-2995. The opinions expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or JACL. The information presented does not constitute legal advice and should not be treated as such.
WOODEN HOME PLATE FROM JAPANESE AMERICAN CONCENTRATION CAMP ON DISPLAY IN BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

The relic preserves an important WWII story and sheds light on a rich and hidden prewar legacy of Japanese American baseball.

The Nisei Baseball Research Project, a nonprofit organization founded to preserve the history of Japanese American baseball, is pleased to announce that the wooden home plate from the World War II Japanese American Concentration Camp at Gila River, Ariz., is now on display at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

In partnership with the NBRP and the Arizona Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, the National Baseball Hall of Fame added the wartime relic to its second-floor exhibit “The Game.” The addition of the wooden home plate coincides with the May observance of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and 2017’s remembrance of the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, which led to the forced removal and incarceration of some 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry during WWII.

According to a recent Hall of Fame article titled “A Field of Dreams in an Arizona Desert,” the home plate serves as an important symbol of hope for people of all nationalities.

“This wooden home plate was much more than a corner of a dusty baseball diamond or the shape that helped define a batter’s strike zone,” said Hall of Fame senior curator Tom Shieber. “It was (and is) a vibrant symbol of hope for those who were denied their freedom and an expression of what it meant to be an American for those who were stripped of their civil rights. It is an important artifact in the history of our country, not just the history of our National Pastime.”

According to Hall of Fame officials, as “visitors learn about the home plate, with all of its rusty nails and splintered pieces of wood, so, too, will they understand the legacy of Kenichi Zenimura, the man who created a fountain of hope in the Pima Indian desert of Arizona.”

Zenimura is recognized by historians as the “father of Japanese American baseball.”

“Japanese Americans kept the All-American pastime alive behind barbed wire, despite the fact that their civil liberties were being violated by the country that they loved,” said Kerry Yo Nakagawa, NBRP founder and project director. “Long before WWII, Japanese Americans embraced the game of baseball, not only to display their sense of belonging in America, but because of their love for the game itself.”

“Japanese Americans played in leagues of their own due to bigotry of the time, and they also competed against barnstorming major league players and teams from the Pacific Coast League, Negro Leagues and Japan,” Nakagawa continued. “They not only held their own — in many cases, they were the victors.”

Japanese Americans also played a key role as international baseball ambassadors, helping to build a bridge to the Pacific.

“If African Americans integrated the game of baseball, then Japanese Americans internationalized it,” said Bill Staples Jr., author of “Kenichi Zenimura, Japanese American Baseball Pioneer.” Between 1900 and 1940, Japanese Americans did more than any other group to help export the American style of play to Asia with numerous goodwill tours to Japan, China, and Korea. And when Nihon teams weren’t directly involved in tours, they helped facilitate the tours behind the scenes, as was the case with the Negro League Philadelphia Royal Giants, who toured Asia in 1927, and the major league tours of 1931 and 1934. These American ambassadors planted the seeds so that professional baseball in Japan could begin in 1936.

“Timing is key in the game of baseball,” said Staples. “Players like Masa-nori Murakami, Hideo Nomo, Ichiro, Hideki Matsui and Masahiro Tanaka were born at the right time. They all are indebted to the Japanese American pioneers who helped elevate the level of play in Japan before the war by building baseball’s bridge to the Pacific. Hopefully, the wooden home plate will spark a greater appreciation for the prewar impact and legacy of Japanese American baseball pioneers.”

“Since the inception of the NBRP, our mission has been to have the National Baseball Hall of Fame consider a permanent exhibition for Japanese Americans,” said Nakagawa. “All great journeys in the game of baseball begin at home plate. Hopefully, Zenimura’s wooden home plate is just the beginning for Cooperstown to recognize, honor and celebrate the important legacy of Asian Americans in our National Pastime, much like the All-American Girls, Latinos and the Negro Leagues.”

For more information about the Nisei Baseball Research Project, visit www.niseibaseball.com.

In commemoration of the 45th anniversary of Okinawa’s reversion as a Japanese prefecture from American jurisdiction on May 15, 1972, the Okinawa Association of America was presented with a certificate of recognition during an event at the consul general of Japan’s residence in Los Angeles on May 12.

Akira Chiba, consul general of Japan in Los Angeles (left) and California Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) (right), who was born in Okinawa, presented the anniversary certificate of recognition to Okinawa Association of America President Edward Kamiya.

The small gathering also featured Okinawan cuisine and beverages, as well as dance and song performances.

Okinawa Association of America Receives Recognition

FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF ITS 2017 STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

Kaitlin Wong of Belmont, Calif., wins a $1,000 scholarship.

The international nonprofit organization Facing History and Ourselves announced May 1 the 10 student winners of its 2017 Facing History Together Student Essay Contest. Among the finalists was Kaitlin Wong of Belmont, Calif., who was awarded a $1,000 Upstander Award scholarship for her essay submission, “Chances.”

The contest is an annual event that invites students from across the U.S., Canada and United Kingdom to provide their perspectives on a topic that helps shape their world.

This year’s contest, “Making Choices in Today’s World,” asked students to reflect on a powerful quote from the late Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate, and write an essay on choices they have made thus far and how their future choices will ultimately have a great impact on their lives and those around them.

Wong, a junior at Carlmont High School in Belmont, entered the contest after learning about it through the Making Caring Common Youth Advisory Board, which she has been a member since October.

Her essay submission was personal, as it detailed her grandmother’s incarceration in Rohwer, Ark., during World War II and the hardships her family faced in the years following as a result of Executive Order 9066.

“I heard about the essay contest and decided to write about my grandmother’s story because I believe that it is important that we learn more about our history in order to improve upon the future,” said Wong. “I believe in the importance of sharing the stories from the past because they allow us to reflect and learn from the mistakes, the triumphs and everything in between. Writing has given me the opportunity to do this, and I hope I can continue to represent and learn more about the Japanese American community.”

On Feb. 19, 2017, Wong and her sisters, along with their grandmother, attended the 75th Day of Remembrance ceremony in San Jose’s Japantown, where they participated in a march into the San Jose Buddhist Church, where the ceremony was held, all while shouting, “Never again!”

>> See CONTEST on page 9
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY
OF PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S SIGNING OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066

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The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is the oldest and largest Asian American
civil rights organization in the United States. The JACL is a national organization whose
mission is to secure and maintain the civil rights of Japanese Americans and all others
who are victimized by injustice and bigotry. The JACL also works to promote cultural,
educational, and social values and preserve the heritage and legacy of the Japanese
American community.
Judy K. Sakaki is officially sworn in as the president of Sonoma State University, becoming the first female Japanese American to lead a four-year institution.

By Kristen Takeau, Contributer

The newly invested president of Sonoma State University still remembers the look on her father’s face when she told him she knew about the internment camps.

Judy Sakaki, a third-generation Japanese American, or Sansei, was attending middle school in Oakland, Calif., when it happened. She was eating dinner with her parents when she brought up that somebody at school had said that Japanese Americans went to camp. She had thought that meant they went to summer camp. She had no idea that “camp” was where her family had been incarcerated with no say.

“It was something my family did not really talk about,” Sakaki said.

When Sakaki brought it up, her mother shushed her. A certain look came over her father’s face. They all finished dinner without mentioning it again.

Decades have passed since that tense dinner, and in an investiture ceremony themed “Dance With Change,” held April 20 at the Rohnert Park campus, Sakaki was officially sworn in as Sonoma State’s president and the U.S. first Japanese American female president of a four-year university.

When Sakaki learned that she would be the first Japanese American female university president, she said she thought it was a milestone that should’ve happened years ago. It’s one that should’ve happened for many other communities, not just Japanese Americans, she said.

“That was actually quite surprising to me because it seems like in this day and age, we should be past firsts,” Sakaki said.

The university is marking Sakaki’s investiture with her own exhibit about her life, an exhibit that will remain open in the university library through the summer.

Entitled “I am because . . . Dr. Judy K. Sakaki’s Journey to the SSU Presidency,” the exhibit highlights her journey to the presidency, her family history and her identity as a Sansei. The exhibit also includes artifacts from her family history, including a suitcase one of her grandparents carried in their emigration across the Pacific.

Sakaki’s investiture happens to come during the year of the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, which uprooted about 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry from their homes, businesses and neighborhoods and confined them to remote internment camps for the duration of World War II.

The exhibit is meant not just to showcase Sakaki’s life but also showcase another success story of a descendant of immigrants during a time of political turmoil, as well as uneasiness about the future for immigrants.

“I think the experience of Japanese Americans is important because it helps educate others, especially in the climate we’re in, to value immigrants,” Sakaki said. “We are a society of immigrants. We’ve all come to where we are from different places, and I feel it was important to share my story, particularly in this time.

“I am because of my grandparents’ immigration,” Sakaki continued. “I am because of my parents’ and grandparents’ internment. I am because of growing up in Oakland.”

Among the many mentors who encouraged Sakaki throughout her career is Patrick Hayashi, associate president emeritus, University of California, Office of the President. Hayashi’s remarks are featured in the exhibit, and they acknowledge Sakaki’s efforts to successfully grant honorary degrees from the University of California to Japanese Americans who were interned during World War II.

In 2009, while working as a senior administrator for the University of California, she led a taskforce that issued honorary degrees to about 700 Japanese Americans who had been unable to complete their University of California education because they were sent to the internment camps. According to Sonoma State, those honorary degrees were the first the University of California had issued in almost four decades.

‘Power of One Person’

Sakaki doesn’t believe she would’ve gotten to where she is now if it hadn’t been for just one person. When she was in school, there was no good reason for her, she said, to believe she would become a university president, or an astrophysicist, an engineer or a surgeon. Neither of her parents attended college because they had been sent to the internment camps instead. Her own high school teacher didn’t encourage her to aim for college. So, at first, Sakaki didn’t.

That all changed when she happened to cross paths with a college outreach counselor, who told Sakaki she should aim higher for a college education. Sakaki believes that one person helped change the trajectory of her life.

“That’s a lesson she said she hopes to impart to others through her presidency, and it’s a story that she believes resonates especially with first-generation college students like herself.

“Everyone wants to realize that anything is possible,” she said. “I didn’t grow up thinking I was going to be a university president, but there were others who reached out and helped me, and I want others to know that it’s possible.”

Japanese American Heritage

In every city she’s lived in throughout her career, Sakaki said she has made sure to renew her membership with the local Japanese American Citizens League chapter. She’s been a member for years, just like her parents and her grandparents, who were always members of JACL.

It’s just one of the ways Sakaki has clung onto her Japanese American identity, which she says has informed her style of leadership and her priorities as a university administrator. The values of gaman and gambatte, which mean “perseverance without complaint,” learned from her family still guide her leadership today, she said.

When she was younger, Sakaki attended Japanese language school on Saturdays and Sunday school at a Buddhist church, though she doesn’t remember as much Japanese nowadays. She also played taiko and made sure that her two children played taiko to learn and practice discipline.

Taiko players performed at Sakaki’s investiture ceremony, which also included a Buddhist offering of gratitude, a Miwok Native American blessing and a keynote address, “The Power and Promise of Higher Education,” given by one of her mentors, Michael V. Drake, president of Ohio State University.

Ensuring Access for Minority Students

Sakaki was chosen to be Sonoma State’s new president in January 2016, continuing an educational career that has been entirely spent within California’s public university systems.

At the time of her appointment, Sakaki was working on issues of student access at the University of California, Office of the President. Some of her work there included testifying before state legislature committees about financial aid and gender equity in university athletics and student mental health, according to Sonoma State’s website.

She has also worked as a university administrator at the University of California, Davis, and at Fresno State.

Some of her goals as Sonoma State’s president include ensuring affordable access for first-generation and minority students. Since her appointment on July 1 of last year, Sakaki has helped Sonoma State achieve eligibility status as a Hispanic Serving Institution, according to Sonoma State’s website.

She is also working to create support centers for undocumented students and transfer students, according to the university’s website.

In addition, Sakaki said she wants to increase Sonoma State’s visibility in the community, particularly among minority students. Sonoma State, founded in 1910, has a student body of about 9,400 people.

“I think we’re a little bit of a hidden gem, and don’t think as many people know about it as they could,” Sakaki said.

During her tenure there, Sakaki aims to use her voice and the “power of one” to truly make a difference at the university.
TOPAZ BUS MAKES A 75-YEAR ROUND TRIP

Pilgrims turn a painful time in history into a trip that brings about a renewed sense of hope and appreciation for a home that fully welcomes them back.

By Nancy Ukai, Contributor

Tom Saito of Berkeley, Calif., has become known for the “Topaz Bus” pilgrimages he started leading in 2002. He charters a bus and escorts Northern California pilgrims back to the Sevier Desert in Utah for a several-day, 1,500-mile round trip to revisit family memories and evacuate community history.

But this year’s pilgrimage, which took place April 22-26, was Saito’s sixth, and it was a special journey that even he couldn’t have foreseen.

Perhaps it was the fact that 2017 is the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, with commemorative events being held across the country. Maybe it was because the Topaz Museum has announced its grand opening for July in Delta, Utah. It also could be that he was bringing back to Utah a wooden box that was packed as Topaz was closing in 1945 and hadn’t been opened since.

This year’s pilgrimage took 32 Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei family members and friends to the deserted remains of the WRA concentration camp. Recalling when shades had to be pulled down on the trains transporting thousands of innocent people to the permanent camps following the onset of World War II, passengers this time freely lifted and toasted to the deserted remains of the WRA concentration camps.

The pilgrims, some going to Topaz for the first time, ranged in age from 42 years-old to 92.

The “menu of the desert” included kamaboko, teryaki chicken, fresh pineapple, cold tofu, umeboshi, fine sake, spam musubi and potato chips. Part of the feast was held in memory of ancestors who, held under government custody, could not enjoy longed-for homemade delicacies.

The pilgrims also spent a day and a half at the Topaz site. They walked the sun-hardened grounds and held a Japanese feast in memory of ancestors who, as they were being “Never Again” T-shirts stood at the memorial and raised their fists in remembrance.

Four people on the Topaz bus also were on the military buses that left the church in 1942. Ruth Ichinaga, who was 7 years old; Kazuko Iwahashi, 12; Richard Takao Furuzawa, five months; and Richard Sekiguchi, 9 years old.

“I do remember standing on the sidewalk with luggage and my parents,” said Sekiguchi to a local TV reporter.

In remembrance of this city history, the First Church held a commemorative reading of art and artifact display that evening. The Berkeley Historical Society also announced the unveiling of a metal plaque recording the 1942 exile, and the Berkeley chapter of the JACL co-sponsored with the University of California, Berkeley, and other groups a lecture on campus.

Fifteen members of Northern California JACLs took part in the Topaz pilgrimage. Four people on the Topaz bus also were on the military buses that left the church in 1942. Ruth Ichinaga, who was 7 years old; Kazuko Iwahashi, 12; Richard Takao Furuzawa, five months; and Richard Sekiguchi, 9 years old.

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Fifteen members of Northern California JACLs took part in the Topaz pilgrimage: Geri and John Hinda (San Francisco), Rose Hironaka (Sacramento), Kazuko Iwahashi and Nancy Ukai (Berkeley), Kimiko Marr (Watsonville-Santa Cruz), Ruth Ichinaga, Alice Ninoymiya, Flora Ninoymiya, Richard Sekiguchi and Ben Takeshita (Contra Costa) and Satoshi Ina, Marielle Tsukamoto and Christine and Stan Umeda (Fiorini).

As the dusty bus rolled up to the church sidewalk upon its return home, emotion and tears welled up inside the bus. Through the windows, pilgrims could see the smiling faces of strangers holding signs. All held placards that read, “Welcome Back.”

Rev. Molly Baskette of First Church, Rev. Kevin Oni of Sycamore Church and Rev. Candice Shibata of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple led the group that assembled at the meetings. Church member Milton Fuji said that it was a moving day.

“It’s an amazing 75-year round trip,” he said.

When Furuzawa got off the bus, he reminded a local reporter for the East Bay Times that detention centers are being built to hold undocumented immigrants.

“That could be the start of an internment camp,” he said, adding, “I’m watering it down a bit, by using the term ‘internment.’ If you look at the definition, it’s really a concentration camp.”

All 32 Topaz pilgrimage 2017 participants
TOPAZ MYSTERY BOX FINALLY REVEALED

It's a mattress!” announced Ken Okabayashi of Elk Grove, Calif., to a curious crowd of 150 in Delta, Utah, as the contents of the Topaz mystery box were finally revealed on April 24 during a Nikkei bus pilgrimage to Topaz.

The weathered wooden box, packed at the Topaz concentration camp more than 70 years ago and had never been opened. Until now. The 50-pound cotton mattress inside the box was once a plush bedding item, which sparked surprise, laughter and reflection by those in attendance.

“This family acquired a real mattress and what they were going to send home was this wonderful piece of comfort that somehow they got,” said Satsuki Ina, who moderated the event, which was held in the town’s community center.

“At least it’s not a hay mattress,” said Ben Takeshita of Richmond, Calif. He recalled arriving at the Tanforan Race Track, located south of San Francisco, in April 1942 and being given hay to stuff inside a cotton bag. Ever since that time, Takeshita has had hay fever. “I wonder if my hay fever came from that period…”

The box had been entrusted to a fellow camp mate after the war for safekeeping in Berkeley, Calif. But it was never reclaimed, and the box was eventually passed on to Toru Saito, 79, who spent four years of his childhood at Topaz.

After 38 years of storing it, Saito decided it was time for an unsealing.

Suspense built in the town center, located 17 miles from Topaz, as Kiyoshi Ina of Concord, Calif., who was born at Topaz, sawed through the nails with a Ryobi hand tool and lifted the top planks.

Kiyoshi Ina was among 32 camp survivors and family members who were on a five-day bus pilgrimage to Topaz from the San Francisco Bay Area, the sixth such trip led by Saito.

Fifty pounds of cotton makes for a thick, nearly five-inch-deep mattress, and it immediately evoked memories for Topaz survivors.

Saito said that the mattress conjured up for him scenes from John Steinbeck’s “Grapes of Wrath,” in which trucks and cars headed West during the Dust Bowl with “mattresses on the roofs of the cars because that was the only possession they had.”

He said, “Maybe people were expecting all kinds of gold jewelry or whatever… but when you really think about it, a mattress is what you sleep on. It is what rejuernes your body for the next day.”

Satsuki Ina, a psychotherapist from the Bay Area, told the gathering that she had talked to a man who was drafted out of the camps to fight in Europe. He realized that the body bags used for dead soldiers were what the American Japanese camp inmates had been given to stuff with straw for beds.

This represented “the makeshift temporary life,” she said, of not knowing how long those interned were going to be in the camps and the “cruel and unusual” circumstances of their World War II confinement.

The Topaz mattress will be on display at the MIS Historic Learning Center in San Francisco until July 2, according to Rosalyn Tonai, executive director of the National Japanese American Historical Society.

The Topaz mystery box made its return to Utah.
JACL ARIZONA CELEBRATES SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Pictured (from left) are Arizona JACL Sara Hutchings Clardy Scholarship Award winners Madison Quan, Trevor Quan and Sara Jay.

The Arizona Chapter of the JACL held its 56th annual Sara Hutchings Clardy Scholarship Awards Graduates’ Luncheon on April 30, where Donna Chism, chapter president, and Judge Brian Itakura, master of ceremonies, welcomed more than 100 guests to celebrate the students for their academic excellence and positive impact in the community.

Recognized in the high school award categories were Sara Jay from Cactus Shadows High School and Madison and Trevor Quan from Sandra Day O’Connor High School.

Each student received a $1,000 scholarship, named in honor of Sara Hutchings Clardy (1894-1962), a distinguished educator and longtime friend of the Japanese American community in Arizona.

Special recognition was also given to the following graduates within the JACL Arizona community: Kelsey Ishimatsu Jacobson, California Polytechnical State University; Lauren Kawashima, elementary school; Bryan Namah, University of Washington; and Brad Okuma, University of Arizona.

In addition to the scholarship and graduate recognition, the 2017 Gold Saguaro Tribute Award was presented posthumously to Dr. Ted Nonaka (1957-2016) for his many hours and tireless efforts devoted to the JACL and greater Arizona community.

Michael Tsang, minister’s assistant at Arizona Buddhist Temple, delivered the invocation and benediction, and the luncheon’s keynote speaker was Bill Staples Jr., author of “Kenichi Zenmura: Japanese American Baseball Pioneer.”

Planning committee members included Darin Amano, Denise Fuso, Kaie Masuiishi, Lauren Namah, Michele Namah, Joyce Shiot, Bonnie Sumida and Seko Webina.

The Arizona JACL thanks the following sponsors for their support of the event: Toyota Financial Services, Arizona State University, Arizona Public Service, Arizona Asian Chamber of Commerce, Arizona Asian American Bar Association, Jordan and Jennifer Sumida, First Arizona Title, and Movement Mortgage.

For more information, contact the Arizona JACL at ArizonaJACL@gmail.com.

CONTEST >> continued from page 4

I was very excited when I heard that I had won the after-school writing contest. I had written a story about a girl who was always sad because her parents were always busy working. I had always felt bad for her, and I knew how much it hurt her to see her parents working so hard.

The contest had been held at my school, and I had submitted my story to the judges. I had been wondering if I would win, but I had never expected to.

When I found out that I had won, I was overjoyed. I had always been a bookworm, and I loved reading and writing stories.

I was so proud of my story, and I was happy that I had won. I had always wanted to be a writer, and I knew that this was a step in the right direction.

I knew that I had to keep working hard, and I was determined to become a successful writer. I was grateful for the opportunity to have my story published, and I hoped that it would inspire others to follow their dreams.

I wanted to thank all of the judges for their hard work and dedication. I was honored to have my story selected for the contest, and I was grateful for the chance to share my words with others.

I knew that there were many writers who were struggling to get their work published, and I hoped that my story would be an inspiration to them. I believed that anyone could create something beautiful, and I wanted to encourage others to do just that.

I wanted to thank my parents for their support and encouragement. They had always been there for me, and I knew that I could not have done this without them.

I also wanted to thank my friends and family for their encouragement. They had always been there for me, and I knew that I could not have done this without them.

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**NCWNP**

Howard Iketomo — The Last Show Apts., CA
June 2-4; Fri., Noon-2 p.m.; Sat. and Sun., Noon-5 p.m.
Cabrillo College Library Building
6500 Sequel Dr.

Paintings and drawings spanning 30-40 years by artist Howard Iketomo will be displayed and sold for the very last time. Iketomo, a former decades-long art instructor at Cabrillo College, was recently moved to a memory care facility in Southern California. Proceeds from the sale will go toward Iketomo’s care. The family wishes to find permanent homes for all of his artwork.


**EDC**

Twin Cities JACL Afternoon at ‘365 Days/365 Plays!’
June 11, 1-6 p.m. (Show runs from May 26–June 11)
St. Paul, MN
Penumbra Theater
270 N. Kent St.
Price: $30 each (regular price $25; seniors/students $18)
Full Circle Theater, Four Rivers Cultural Center

This year, Four Rivers Cultural Center presents the Twin Cities JACL Afternoon at Penumbra Theater’s ‘365 Days/365 Plays!’

**PSW**

‘Looking Back, Seeing Ahead’ With Special Guest Steve Cavallone
Independence, CA
May 27; opening reception 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Manzanar National Historic Site
5001 Hwy. 395

This exhibit will be featured at Manzanar National Historic Site to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Manzanar Relocation Centers. Artist Steve Cavallone will be at this event reception, which highlights his watercolor portraits of Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II. Light refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

Info: Visit www.nps.gov/manz.

Henry Madden Library
5340 N. Interstate Ave.
Price: General admission $10; students/seniors $5 (limited seating; reservations encouraged)

The immigrant journey of the Japanese in Oregon is paved with stories of perseverance and courage. This one-hour performance features original readings of little-known stories of the return of Japanese Americans to Oregon after their incarceration during World War II. "The Surge of Social Change" exhibit coincides with this activity, which is part of the 2017 Vanport Mosaic Festival.


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**MDC**

West Covina Buddhist Temple Obon
West Covina, CA
June 24; 1-9 p.m.
East San Gabriel Japanese Community Center
1233 W. Puente Ave.

This year’s Obon promises to be a day filled with food, games, raffles, Bon Odori dancing and cultural exhibits. Come and taste delicious chicken teriyaki, sushi, somen, gyozas, chow mein, Asian chicken curry, udon, sushi, curry, shave ice, corn, and many more. Plus, a Farmer’s Market of fresh produce will be available, in addition to children’s games and bonsai exhibits and entertainment performances.


**ICDC**

Internment: Oregon Exhibit
Okanogan, OR
June 2-July 27
Four Rivers Cultural Center
675 S.W. Fifth Ave.
Price: Free

This traveling exhibit explores how Oregonians participated in the decision to incarcerate Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants during World War II. The inaugural exhibit shows the opinions leading up to the incarceration, 1941–42, with letters, resolutions, blueprints, photos and archival documents from across Oregon. Malheur County was the site of the first Japanese American farm labor camps. A number of documents from Oregon can also be seen in the exhibit.

Info: Call (541) 899-8119.

**PNW**

Gambatte Be Strong: Stories of Japanese American Displacement and Resilience in Portland
Portland, OR
May 27 and 28; 2 p.m. Sat. and Sun.

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center

**JCCNC**

Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California

**JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Development Manager
Membership Manager
Sr. Bookkeeper/Accountant

Come and join the JCCNC, where you’re not just an employee... but an important part of our team! Come and join the JCCNC, where you’re not just an employee... but an important part of our team!

Creative, Committed, Dependable. Team Player, Positive and Outgoing. Is this you? Then you can dominate our website: jccnc.org. No phone calls, please. If you’re interested in helping to preserve and promote culture and community, please email or forward a cover letter and resume to jobs@jccnc.org. Jobs description are available on our website: jccnc.org. No phone calls, please.

How would you like to wake up every day knowing that your hard work makes a difference and people appreciate your dedication? That’s what it’s like to work at the JCCNC!

These are all full-time positions with benefits. Involvement with the JA community and understanding of JA culture, traditions and heritage is a definite plus.

If you’re interested in helping to preserve and promote culture and community, please email or forward a cover letter and resume to jobs@jccnc.org. Jobs description are available on our website: jccnc.org. No phone calls, please.
IN MEMORIAM

Aoyagi, Daniel H., 94, Kaiser, HI, April 11; he is survived by his wife, Chiko; sons, Tanko (Denise) and Nathan (Carolyn); sister, Ethel McKillop; gc: 4; ggc: 6.

Asato, Jean, 84, San Jose, CA, April 15; during WWII, her family and she were interned at the Rohwer WRA Center in Ark.; she predeceased by her husband, Yoshinori Asato; son, Steven, and daughter, Tamii "Yoshi" Asato. She is survived by her daughter and siblings, Betty Kanapili, Bob Yamato and Junichi Yamato.

Chow, Wan Yee, 97, San Francisco, April 26; she was predeceased by her husband, Harry, she is survived by her children, Emory (Janice) Chow, Carol (Marvin) Sakamoto, Emily (Manny) Mahon, Helen (Gerald) Chan and Eugene (Nancy) Chow; she is also survived by nieces and nephews, gc: 6; gggc: 2.

Hashiokea, Henry K., 98, Los Angeles, April 3; he is survived by his children, Gary (Marie), Carol (John), George (Mrs. Ruth), Peter (Mrs. Mary), and Mark (Mrs. Betty); brother, George Hashiokea; sister, Mrs. Marjorie Shigematsu; gc: 7; gggc: 3.

Imamoto, Nobuko June, 91, North Hollywood, CA, April 4; she was predeceased by her husband, James; she is survived by her children, Tomiko (James) Yamashita, Nancy (Nobu), and Wendy (Paul) Brown; brother, Kozo Imamoto; sister, Haruko Hashimoto; gc: 3; gggc: 1.

Kawabe, Shunsuke, 81, Los Angeles, April 4; he is survived by his children, Shunji (Sue) Kawabe, Sherry (John) Kawabe, and James (Nanako) Kawabe; brother, Minoru Kawabe; sister, Fumiko Yamauchi; gc: 3; gggc: 2.

Kurose, Franke, 84, San Jose, CA, April 5; he was predeceased by his wife, Gaye; he is survived by his children, Don (Deborah), Jan (Bonita), and Bruce (Lea); brother, Bill (Maureen); sister, Dorothy Kurose; gc: 3; gggc: 3.

Kumuro, Matsumoto, 83, North Hollywood, CA, April 10; he was predeceased by his wife, Emily; he is survived by his children, Masao (Dorothy), Mary (Don), and Susan; brother, Koharu Tanaka; sister, Takako Tanaka; gc: 1; gggc: 1.

Kusama, Minoru, 94, San Francisco, April 13; he is survived by his wife, Mariko; children, Mark (Carol), and Michael (Kim); brother, Kiyoshi Kusama; sister, Shigeko Date; gc: 3; gggc: 3.

Lau, Donald Yee, 87, Gardena, CA, May 7; he is survived by his wife, Mary; children, Craig (Rene), and Sandra (Ron); brother, Lawrence; sister, Elizabeth; gc: 2; gggc: 1.

Miyake, Mitsue, 94, Torrance, CA, April 22; she is survived by her children, Craig (Sue), and Karen (Shawn); brother, Richard; sister, Yoko; gc: 4; gggc: 1.

Muramoto, William M., 82, Garden Grove, CA, April 10; he is survived by his children, Philip and Barbara Okabayashi.

Nishizu, Trudes Tsuyako 95, Monterey Park, CA, April 27; she is survived by her husband, John; children, Steven (Mark), Norman (Tracy) Nishizu, Gay (Mark) Rutherford and Joyce (David) Tanimoto; sister, Sumiko Abe; she is also survived by many nephews and nieces and other relatives; gc: 9.

Tsuha, Judy Hisako, 89, Gardena, CA, March 21; she was predeceased by her husband, Ralph, and daughter, Irene Takahashi. She is survived by her daughters, Evelyn Tsuha and Millie (Reif); gc: 2; gggc: 1.

Wakiji, George M., 88, Arleta, CA, May 7; he is survived by his wife, Betty; daughter, Dana (Tom); sister, Takeko; he is also survived by nieces and a nephew.

Yanari, Edna, 94, Palos Verdes Estates, CA, March 15, during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain WRA Center; she is survived by her husband, Yoshio, children, Yoko and Carl (Doris); gc: 2.

Yasaki, Edward K., 87, Cupertino, CA, Jan. 29, during WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at the Granada WRA Center (Camp Amache) in Colo.; he is survived by his wife, Michi Ruth; sisters, Grace Harada; he is also survived by many nephews and nieces.

PLACE A TRIBUTE

In Memoriam is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with texts and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of $20 per inch.

Contact: busmg@pacificcitizen.org or call (213) 620-1670

TRIBUTE

George Wakiji passed away peacefully Sunday, May 7, in his apartment at Niihi Senior Gardens in Arleta, Calif. George was a man of many interests and talents, including his love of jazz music. After being drafted in November of 1960, he served in the U.S. Army in the Korea theater of Operation. In December of 1962, he attended UCLA and California State University Los Angeles, getting bachelor’s degrees in pre-social welfare and journalism. During his time at UCLA, George participated in Project India, which sparked a lifelong love of travel. George visited many countries, including Japan, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Jordan, Israel, England, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, India, Morocco, Tunisia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Guatemala, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, plus other places such as Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

George started his career at TWA (Trans World Airlines) in Los Angeles as a cargo handler, reservations sales agent and international sales agent, then transferred to New York City, where he was an international sales agent, supervisor and sales trainer. George moved to Chicago to work as a public relations executive, then as principal for Suzuki. Wakiji & Associates, an advertising, public relations and marketing firm. Between jobs he worked as a bartender at Kamehachi restaurant. In 1972, George later served as public information officer with the U.S. Bureau of Public Affairs. In 1975, George joined the U.S. Peace Corps as a country director for the Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific. He returned to the United States in 1990 and completed his term with the Peace Corps as a minority recruit specialist in Washington, D.C. George then served as public information officer with the U.S. Department of Labor in the Employment and Training Administration. He retired from government service in March of 1995 to become executive director of the formerly named National Japanese American Memorial Foundation. After retirement from JAMF, George worked part-time for FEFMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and went on assignments to Maine, Oklahoma, Florida and Texas during disasters. He also worked at Kohn’s and Cranes & Sales of America, Virginia Beach, Va. From the time he married his first wife, George spent time speaking to elementary, high school and college students in Virginia and Maryland about the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. Since 2000, George served as a part-time proctor for final exams at Pepperdine University School of Law.

George is survived by his wife, Betty; daughter, Dana (Tom); sister, Takeko; nieces-Hisako, Miskeo, Kathleen, Vivian, Eleanor and Geraldine, nephew, Ken.

Friends and family members celebrated George’s life on May 15 at Fukui Mortuary, 707 East Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

SUMAKO ‘SUE' NISHINAKA

High school she actually graduated from was the UCLA, and then after graduating from UCLA, she worked for the Peace Corps and then became a Peace Corps volunteer for the Peace Corps. She was a Peace Corps volunteer for 27 years and then returned to the Peace Corps. She completed a master’s program in Los Angeles and applied that skill in helping her children to go to graduate school. She raised her hand that last time and passed into God’s hands. She was the widow of Masami “John” Nishinaka. They had three children together in San Pedro. She was born in Los Angeles, CA where she was the oldest child and daughter of Goro and Kane Nishinaka. Sue was also a trained pianist and also played the organ. She probably knew 100s of gospel songs and classical pieces by heart.

Since accepted Jesus Christ in her youth. Following the war she looked for a church, driving all the way to Los Angeles to Evergreen Baptist Church, Baptist Church and then became a founding member of Ocean View Baptist Church in Costa Mesa. Sue was a trained pastry chef and also played the piano. Sue worked at various jobs including selling Christmas cards to friends and family alike, assisting in Toyo Imanaka’s tailoring shop and then eventually retired from the U.S. Customs Service as an import specialist in 1990.

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Author-educator Lane Hirabayashi was the keynote speaker at Mile High JACL’s Day of Remembrance event, which drew a standing-room-only crowd.

Abe’s outreach to Trump, and the nuclear threat, seems to have helped heal the enmity between the two countries. Trump has reaffirmed the close relationship between the U.S. and Japan as it evolves during the Trump presidency. But we should be careful not to project our own experiences onto someone else’s.

The struggles of Pacific Islanders and especially Native Hawaiians are incredibly different from our own, yet I have found a good deal of similarities in how to respect their culture.

Native Hawaiians faced an intentional erasure of their cultural identity for much of their history under the dominion of the U.S. — first as a territory and now as a state. From the beginning of U.S. colonization, Hawaiian language and customs were forbidden, and the linear succession of indigenous oral traditions was broken.

Their language was on the brink of extinction, and since the cultural reclamation movements of the 1960s and ‘70s, Hawaiian language and culture has begun returning to public and charter schools.

We are still a long way from seeing Hawaiian language back in popular usage, but Native Hawaiian customs and traditions such as music, dance, art and food are being reintegrated into society that was unthinkable even a couple decades ago.

Although the future of an ethnically Native Hawaiian people remains bleak, Hawaiian culture will live on in future generations who inhabit their islands. I’d like to end this piece with a Hawaiian proverb: “A hana pa ka ‘ike kana ho’okahi” — All knowledge is not taught in one school.

As we ask others to learn about the legacy of Japanese Americans, let’s do a better job of educating ourselves. We could learn a lot from our Hawaiian cousins.

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

Early Japanese Hawaiian sugarcane workers

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