Rediscovering Familial Roots

How a trip to Amache turned into the experience of a lifetime for Athena Mari Asklipiadis and her mother, Susan.

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Journalist K. W. Lee’s Unique Tie to the P.C. as He Is Honored in Los Angeles.

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Film Takes Center Stage at the Upcoming JACL National Convention.

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Candidates for the 2018-20 JACL National Board
P.C.’S SPRING CAMPAIGN NEEDS YOUR HELP TO THRIVE

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE JACL’S YOUTH LEGACY PROGRAM

The Pacific Citizen’s Spring Campaign is still going strong! Donate today to support our very own Japanese American newspaper and for the future of our community newspaper.

Growing up in Los Angeles surrounded by a large Japanese American community, I was privileged to have easy access to the community. When I was younger, I thought the JACL was just an office in a building in Los Angeles. However, as I grew older, I learned that the JACL has a strong presence throughout the community and is dedicated to serving the needs of Japanese Americans.

The JACL Youth Legacy Program connects Asian American youth with the legacy of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II, as well as draws parallels to the hysteria that targeted Muslim Americans following 9/11. The project aims to address the search for personal identity experienced by many young Asian Americans who seek greater affirmation and understanding about their collective history. The program also aims to foster within the next generation the importance of historical preservation by connecting them to the Manzanar Concentration Camp, a National Park Service historic site that has significance to Asian Americans.

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The program also featured an invocation and benediction by Rev. Chris Doi, a reading of the Gold Star parents and veterans’ wives. Pictured (from left) are Post Chaplain Omar Doi, Post Commander Glen Akagi, Past Adjutant Warren Takenouchi, Rev. Chris Doi and San Mateo JACL President Steve Okamoto.

The program will take place Aug. 15-18 in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. One of three remaining Japantowns in the U.S. The program is open to Asian American youth between the ages of 18-25. Participants must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. All expenses to participate will be covered.

Program information and an application can be accessed via the JACL website. The application filing deadline is July 6.

For additional information, please contact Youth Legacy Program Coordinator Diane Matsuda at dmatsuda@jacl.org.

Thank you for your continued support of the P.C.!

Sincerely,
Julie Yoshinaga,
P.C. Editorial Board Member,
NYSC

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE HELD IN SAN BRUNO

Memorial Day observance, co-sponsored by VFW Golden Gate Nisei Memorial Post #9879 and the JACL NCWNP District Council, was held at Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, Calif., on May 28. The keynote speaker was San Mateo JACL President Steve Okamoto, who focused his remarks on the role of the Military Intelligence Service.
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RESISTANCE AND RECONCILIATION

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

With Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in the rearview mirror, one of the most interesting events was a community leader’s forum sponsored by the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. JACL participated in the forum with approximately 200 individuals from both the Washington, D.C., community and others around the country.

It is no secret that many of the policy positions JACL has taken are quite contrary to those of the White House, as is the case with most of the major Asian American civil rights organizations.

This was also on display earlier this year during the JACL-OCA Leadership Summit, held in Washington, D.C. At that event, we had a spirited discussion about issues such as family immigration, the Muslim travel ban and the census question on citizenship. JACL has submitted an amicus brief on the Muslim travel ban that is especially critical of the government’s position. Again, at the APAHM event, we used the opportunity to challenge the administration on its positions of family immigration and the Muslim travel ban.

Going into both events, it was clear on both sides that there was a disagreement, but we also made it clear that we were respectful of the other for what we each represent. I often hear people talk about how President Donald Trump has diminished the Office of the President; however, it is still the president’s office. We cannot ignore that fact. Similarly, JACL recognizes that JACL still represents the largest number of Asian American and Pacific Islander individuals in a member organization; that is a powerful position to have as well.

It is difficult to accept that we have to remain in this position of the policies of the current administration, but also seek reconciliation where possible to ensure that we maintain a respectful relationship to continue a dialogue so that we will be heard.

Within JACL, there is even a tension of whether we are a civil rights organization or a social organization. As I talk to membership, there is sometimes a divide over the fun social activities such as picnics, movie nights and potlucks, versus can we just tell people to get on board with the civil rights agenda or get out?

Ultimately, JACL is a civil rights organization. It is our fundamental role to use the experience of incarceration to educate others how we cannot, as a nation, afford to make that same mistake again. That is what makes us different from any other national member-based organization and will continue to be what gives us the moral authority to speak out on issues of injustice.

However, the social activities are also vitally important in this process. In fact, I see the loss of social interaction to be at the root of much of the dysfunction we now see in our national politics. It’s a lot harder to demonize the other side when you kids play on the same T-ball team. As the parent of two elementary-aged children, I don’t go into their school or sports practices wondering if the other parent is aligned with me politically. JACL chapters can be one of the community organizations at the local level that provides the fundamental social interactions that break down the barriers of politics, gender or race.

Thirty years ago, redress was possible in significant part because of the shared experience of many members of Congress having served together in the military. They had their deep divisions, but they also had certain shared experiences that helped to overcome their differences, or at least see the good in the other side’s positions.

JACL, both nationally and locally through our nearly 100 chapters, must continue the traditions of bringing communities together to promote awareness and reconciliation, but above all, mutual respect.

We must have the space for respectful disagreement within our membership. That does not mean we will stay from our fight for social justice and civil rights, but we can maintain that others may see what that means in policy differences, and allow them to feel comfortable to express those differences.

I hope you will join us in Philadelphia July 18-22 as we celebrate our shared community.

A MOTHER’S TAKE
COURAGE, COMPASSION AND CONNECTION

By Marsha Abuzim

Last month, I had an experience that both made me stop and evaluate what it means to come out and soar with gratitude to those who would stand up and support in a positive way.

It all began when a high school classmate sent an email to 15 classmates that lived in the same geographic area about people who were having health issues or were facing other challenges.

One of the individuals, Fred, on this email thread, sent a response back about how he appreciated being part of this high school class because, though we were different, there was a feeling of connection and inclusion.

I graduated from a conservative, predominantly white high school in Southern California.

At the time, I was the only Asian in my graduating class. I did not feel a lot of discrimination, but I did not feel a lot of connection either. I was just someone who was different and only experienced occasional derogatory reference to my Asian heritage. But it was enough to make me keep a low profile and study hard, so as not to make waves.

For some reason, after Fred sent this response talking about inclusion and connection, I felt like I wanted to “come out” to the people on this email thread in hopes of bringing more support for the LGBTQ community. I had hoped I would feel a greater connection to these individuals and also bring some awareness to my classmates. And so, I wrote that I had a transgender son and hoped that our class would be kind to LGBTQ individuals, since they knew someone who graduated with them had a transgender child.

One hour later, a person on this email thread asked to be deleted from future emails. Perhaps it was a coincidence that after numerous emails, they asked to be deleted after my response. But I don’t think that was the case. My heart sank, and my first thought was, “Why did I say that? Why did I say anything?”

I don’t really know these people after graduating so many years ago and have not even attended most of the class reunions. What was the point? I felt sick to my stomach.

Two hours later, I received an email from a dear friend. Fred was a lovely email of support and compassion. Fred said that he hoped I would come to a future reunion so we could truly come out. It was a roller-coaster ride that day, but it taught me so much.

My sipping heart began to open up, and I could feel tears form in my eyes. In the span of less than 24 hours, two people who I hardly knew gave me words of encouragement and love. Even as I write this, I want to cry. In that moment, I realized how much the point in coming out was for me.

Fred, Jerry and Linda see all of me, and I don’t have to hide who I am. I felt a connection to them that I never felt before, and it is based on honesty, integrity and compassion. When I go to a future reunion, they will be the first people I will seek out.

Then, I realized that this is what our LGBTQ children, family members and friends go through when they come out to those around them. The worry of being judged, the thoughts of “Did I make a mistake to come out?” and the cold, sick feeling that washes over them with the fear of rejection. I also realized the warmth and connection that can come with acceptance and understanding when someone sees all of you. And I was filled with pride in oneself for the courage it takes to come out. It was a roller-coaster ride that day, but I taught me so much.

So, here is my call to action for those who will take up the challenge. If you are an ally to the LGBTQ community, I hope you will “come out” and show your support. I now have talked this to before, but allies have the most powerful voices.

This week, I got an email from a mother who met with an old high school friend. This high school friend came out to her about her transgender son. She wrote to thank me and others for providing her resources, such as PFLAG San Gabriel Valley API, the book Aiden and the census question on citizenship. JACL, both nationally and locally through our nearly 100 chapters, must continue the traditions of bringing communities together to promote awareness and reconciliation, but above all, mutual respect.

We must have the space for respectful disagreement within our membership. That does not mean we will stay from our fight for social justice and civil rights, but we can maintain that others may see what that means in policy differences, and allow them to feel comfortable to express those differences.

I hope you will join us in Philadelphia July 18-22 as we celebrate our shared community.

PHOTO: ROBERT PETERSEN

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13 A GOOD Omen FOR K. W. LEE CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP

The nonprofit celebrates its namesake journalist’s 90th birthday and reunites Koreatown Weekly staff.

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor, Digital and Social Media

W hen the K. W. Lee Center for Leadership held its 13th annual fundraising dinner at Koreatown’s Oxford Palace Hotel on June 8 in Los Angeles, the nonprofit decided to find future inspiration by looking back.

Part of that entailed celebrating the nearly five-year run of Koreatown Weekly, which was founded by K. W. Lee, dubbed the “godfather of Korean American journalism,” whose career achievements inspired the center’s name. The dinner also reunited members of the Koreatown Weekly’s staff and marked Lee’s 90th birthday.

Why revisit the Koreatown Weekly in 2018, which folded in 1984? Looking back on the newspaper, California State University, Northridge, journalism professor Taelynn Kim said Koreatown Weekly’s mission was “to raise community consciousness” and noted how in 1981 a proposal by the City of Los Angeles to convert a city-owned parking lot in Koreatown into a homeless shelter came about without any input from local residents and business owners, implying that the existence of a news outlet like Koreatown Weekly might have precluded such a unilateral act by the city.

“Of course, we have Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to share our voices and information, but our community doesn’t have an English voice. They don’t get a seat at the table,” Kim said.

As an investigative journalist working for the Sacramento Union, Lee is best known for a five-year run of the paper, which worked with fellow Sacramento Union staffer Steve Chanecka, managing editor/business manager, and Randy Hagihara, news editor/photographer, to produce issue after issue using a most-unusual method they called “1.5 Journalism.”

On a weekly basis, Lee and Chanecka drove nearly 800 miles from Los Angeles to Sacramento and back to produce Koreatown Weekly, doing prep in Los Angeles and composing and printing the paper in Sacramento. But for that first issue, Lee and Chanecka used the equipment graciously provided by the Pacific Citizen and its then-editor Harry Honda.

The evening reunited Lee, Chanecka, Hagihara and staffers Sophia Kim and David S. Kim, with each sharing memories of the Koreatown Weekly era. Chanecka started the paper in a memory lane, recalling how over lunch at the China Moon restaurant in Sacramento, Lee said he wanted to start an English-language newspaper for Korean Americans across the nation.

Chanecka related the first night of production at the Pacific Citizen with “Harry Honda guiding us on a single Compugraphic (computer photo typsetter) and how they didn’t finish until about 3 a.m. After that, they realized they would have to change how they produced the paper.

Hagihara, who would later work for the Los Angeles Times, looked back fondly at his experience, remembering details like trapping more than 30 mice over the years at the Koreatown Weekly’s office space near Los Angeles’ Koreatown, as well as the numerous trips made in the company car — a Ford Pinto station wagon — used to trek back and forth between L.A. and Sacramento.

“To me, working with Lee and Chanecka was the most fun I ever had in journalism, and I was lucky enough to realize it at the time,” Hagihara said.

Sophia Kim remembered meeting Hagihara when he came to report on the Center for the Pacific Asian Family, where she was working at the time, for Koreatown Weekly, Intrigued, she got the address for the office. She drew laughs when she said, “I just knocked on that door the next day — and I got hired because he [K.W.] hires anybody off the street!”

>> See LEADERSHIP on page 12

A TALE OF TWO Lees

F or a slaying he didn’t commit, Chol Soo Lee went to prison. While imprisoned, he killed a fellow inmate, claiming self-defense. He would spend nearly 10 years total in prison, five of those years on death row.

A group of young pan-Asian American community activists convinced that Chol Soo Lee had been wrongfully tried and convicted for the gang-related slaying of Yip Yee Tak in Chinatown, found that no reporters at either of San Francisco’s daily newspapers were interested in pursuing the case. They later learned of a Korean American investigative reporter who lived nearly 100 miles away in Sacramento who was interested. His name was Kyung Won Lee.

One of those community activists was Ranko Yamada. According to a note written by Chol Soo Lee and sent to K. W. Lee, Yamada had been trying to help Chol Soo since his 1973 arrest, which she had read about in the newspapers. According to Yamada, the June 8 dinner was the first time she and K. W. Lee had seen each other in person in 40 years.

Yamada had actually known Chol Soo Lee prior to his arrest, but he was using the name “Charles” at the time. When she read the news reports, she thought Charles and Chol Soo might have been the same person, which she later corroborated. She remembered a friendly young man, something about the news reports that said he had committed the Chinatown murder just didn’t seem right.

Back then, it seemed that no one else cared about his plight, and K. W. would later write that it was Yamada who began the Save Chol Soo Lee committee and that the effort by Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans and Korean Americans to free Chol Soo Lee was one of the first acts of pan-Asian American cooperation.

On his own, K. W. Lee began researching Chol Soo Lee’s case, even visiting him in prison for an interview. Part of that research would entail driving to San Francisco, where he would meet many of those in the nascent drive to free Chol Soo Lee.

Inspired by their commitment and intrigued by the seemingly obvious problems with Chol Soo Lee’s arrest and conviction, K. W. Lee launched a series of investigative articles — eventually totaling nearly 100 — questioning everything about the Chol Soo Lee case, from why a Korean who spoke no Chinese and limited English was arrested in the first place to egregious mistakes made by a police department and judicial system under political pressure to quickly arrest and imprison someone — anyone — for a crime that could affect perceptions of whether it was safe for tourists to visit the City by the Bay.

“Until he came out with that series of articles, there was quite a bit of suspicion and many questions about supporting someone who was being charged with murder,” Yamada told the Pacific Citizen. “If not for those articles, that support would not have been generated.”

K. W.’s articles and the community activism were instrumental in getting Chol Soo Lee (no relation to K. W. Lee) a retrial and acquittal nearly 10 years after the Chinatown slaying. But he remained in prison for murdering fellow inmate Morrison Needham. Lee’s attorneys plea-bargained the conviction to second-degree murder, and he was freed after being credited for time served.

Freedom did not, however, free Chol Soo Lee from battling the trauma of having done hard time behind bars. Even as he counseled young people to stay on the straight and narrow, he struggled with drug abuse and other problems and would again land in prison for 18 months on drug-related charges.

In 1989, the Chol Soo Lee saga was the inspiration for the movie “True Believer,” starring James Woods, Robert Downey Jr. and Yuji Okumoto. Absent from the movie was anything about Asian American activists or an investigative reporter who brought the issue to light.

K. W. Lee was presented with the Asian American Journalists Association’s Excellence in Print Journalism award in 1987 at the first AAJA National Convention. He was also inducted into the Journalism History Gallery at Washington, D.C. ’s Newseum in 1997.

Chol Soo Lee died in 2014 at age 62.
Film Takes Center Stage at the 2018 JACL Convention

Documentary films ‘highlight a multitude of perspectives from within the Japanese American experience.’

By Rob Buscher, Member, JACL Philadelphia Board of Directors

This year at the 2018 JACL National Convention, attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy half a dozen compelling documentary film titles that highlight a multitude of perspectives from within the Japanese American experience. Presented in partnership with Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival, the East Coast’s premier festival specializing in Asian American and Pacific Islander content, the film program seeks to address aspects of the Japanese American story that are often neglected.

“Relocation, Arkansas” is one film that exemplifies this diversity within the saga of wartime incarceration, which was shot primarily in the Deep South. Although life in Arkansas’ Jerome and Rohwer camps was similar in many ways to those in the Western Internment region, the stories of the few families who stayed behind in Arkansas after the camps closed provide a wholly different perspective on the incarceration. Director Vivienne &hiffer’s 2016 film chronicles the efforts of aging Japanese Americans who lived through the lastJA service during World War II. Much of the information surrounding their service was previously classified under the Defense Secrets Act, but as information becomes declassified, many of these veterans are beginning to share their stories in their twilight years. The translation work and other tasks completed by Japanese American MIS soldiers was crucial to the U.S. victory over Japan, yet many of these stories have gone untold and will be part of the program this year.

“Resistance at Tule Lake” tells a very different kind of story about the wartime experience, seen through the lens of camp survivors who actively resisted the loyalty questionnaire during their incarceration ordeal. In stark contrast to the “model minority” myth that has oftentimes been thrust upon the JA community, the film comprehensively documents the large-scale protests, hunger strike and eventual declaration of martial law that resulted in a prison stockade being built within the existing prison camp to isolate the instigators of the resistance movement. This film is highly impactful, in that it shows the absolute worst of the incarceration experience, including documented cases where inmates were tortured by U.S. soldiers and the mass coercion of resisters to renounce their U.S. citizenship, which led to thousands of deportations following the end of WWII. When PAFF first presented this film to the Philadelphia audience last November, JACL Philadelphia chapter member Ed Kobayashi shared his family’s experience at Tule Lake, including photos of his father, C.Y. Kobayashi, who was detained in the stockade and separated from his family as punishment for his role in the resistance movement.

Director Konrad Aderer is expected to be in attendance at the convention, where he will participate in a post-film Q&A and discussion with Tule Lake incarceration survivors. Offering yet another perspective on incarceration is director Marlene Shigekawa’s film “For the Sake of the Children,” which focuses primarily on the unique challenges faced by mothers who either gave birth in camp or otherwise raised young children during the incarceration.

Largely centered around the Poston camp, the film addresses a complex interplay of culture, racial prejudice, history and intergenerational differences as it explores the legacy of incarceration.

The hot feature in this program is titled “And Then They Came for Us,” a 2017 film from experienced documentarian Abby Ginzberg, whose 2011 short “The Barber of Birmingham” was nominated for an Academy Award. Ginzberg’s latest project retells the story of incarceration from the framework of contemporary discourse around the Medal of Honor, drawing parallels between our communities’ respective experiences.

Narated in part by George Takei, this film presents a direct call to action for individuals and organizations to oppose legislation made on grounds of ethic or religious discrimination. In addition to the feature documentary titles, a collection of short films will be presented as a thematic program called “Legacies of Camp,” a version of which premiered at the 2017 PAFF. Short film titles will be announced at a later date but are anticipated to address a wide array of subjects spanning immigrant experiences, wartime incarceration, reintegration and assimilation after camp, as well as intergenerational traumas experienced by descendents of the incarceration survivors.

While the full feature version of the film is still making its way through the festival circuit, JACL will also be presenting a short excerpt from director Diane Fukunaga’s documentary homage “An American Story: Norman Mineta and His Legacy.” Having recently premiered at the Center for Asian Americans Media Festival in San Francisco, the film is the first to tell the life story of former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mineta, which includes an emphasis on his role in the Redress Movement.

See FILM on page 12
The primary challenging issue I see facing JACL is fundraising. This has and will continue to be something that will affect all aspects of JACL. Without the appropriate funding, JACL cannot hire adequate staff to assist the Executive Director or manage programs such as college outreach, fellowships and internships, membership retention, social justice and voting rights. Funding is required to adequately compensate our hard-working and dedicated staff. It is important that JACL is addressing the many issues where our voice can be heard.

Everyone can help with fundraising — it can be as simple as increasing your membership level within the organization or giving gifts to memorialize present and future generations. I have been a Millennium Club member since joining the National Board as Governor from the EDC. Therefore, I understand there is a significant amount of sacrifice in time and money to be working for a volunteer organization like JACL.

I graduated from Goucher College, the former sister school of Johns Hopkins University, where I received a bachelor of arts degree in communications. Since graduating from college, I have had many life experiences by working with a law firm and receiving my paralegal certification and earning my Maryland Real Estate license.

I had the experience of working as an eldercare caregiver to my grandmother. However, to understand how I could better help my grandmother, I took a two-year course at Johns Hopkins University and received my Elder Care certification. I have grown to empathize with Nikkei who are caring for their parents or grandparents.

Taking care of the elderly creates additional responsibilities and greater burdens for many of our JACL families.

Please state your definition of leadership and your perception of the role of the JACL National Board.

My name is Jeffrey Moy, and I am running for National President. I am currently Senior Program Manager for Culture of Health Leaders, an opportunity for people across the country to form new partnerships to build healthier communities.

I have managed programs for several nonprofit organizations, received a master of public administration from Baruch College and a bachelor of arts in philosophy and psychology from the University of Southern California.

In my time with JACL, I’ve been fortunate to work with many amazing members across the country. But I’ve also found myself wondering why so many of my friends and colleagues have left the organization and what we could have done to retain such amazing leaders. Perhaps it’s due to changes in their lives, or burnout, or frustration; there are plenty of good reasons. But JACL is something special: a family of fierce advocates brought together by a shared heritage, fighting against future injustices. Unfortunately, I think that special quality has become all too easy to forget.

It’s time for us to come together and renew our purpose. We want to bring in new members to our network to be inclusive of non-Japanese American identities — we are not limited by the boundaries of our own community.

We need to dig deep and find new solutions so that JACL can thrive as we move forward. With the right team in place, we can approach JACL with renewed excitement and energy and see what all of us are capable of. We are privileged to be a part of this incredible community. Thank you for all that you do for JACL, and I am looking forward to our continued success.

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on fundraising. Not only were these the platform initiatives I ran on, but more importantly the goals, which will define my term as VP for Planning and Development. Despite our past accomplishments in these areas to date, I believe there is always room for improvement. So, as I prepare to continue to serve the membership in this role, I look forward to focusing on and improving our grant and scholarship programming and fundraising efforts as an organization.

In doing so, I believe my experience serving on the National Board as well as my personal and professional experiences will greatly aide in contributing toward the success of the organization during the 2018-2020 biennium.

How would you implement the JACL’s Strategic Plan in your elected office?
I will provide leadership in executing the JACLS Strategic Plan in several major ways. First, I will push for programming at the National Board level that is vital to grow awareness of our organization, issues and mission throughout the communities we work and live. JACL programs, including scholarships and grants, create the means of providing education on advocacy, leadership, social justice and community preservation. Second, I will support the fundraising and budget allocation efforts to allow the JACL programs to flourish and succeed. Without the proper funding of these crucial programs, we will set them up to fail.

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR ONE THOUSAND CLUB, MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES
Haruka Roudebush, San Francisco Chapter

I am Haruka Roudebush, and I am running for Vice President of One Thousand Club, Membership and Services. I work as the program manager at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California in San Francisco’s Japantown, where I administer ongoing classes and activities, as well as plan and coordinate cultural, educational and recreational workshops, activities and events. My involvement in the community and my childhood in San Francisco were born in Tokyo, Japan, and I immigrated to San Francisco at the age of 2. I became a naturalized U.S. citizen at 12. I grew up in the Bay Area in Lafayette, Calif., and received my bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in Japanese studies from UC San Diego. My previous career was as a paralegal for a civil rights law firm working on California state prison reform and prisoner rights advocacy, and I appreciate that the JACL continues to provide me with means to engage in both the Japanese American community and with civil rights issues and policy.

A challenge JACL faces is the struggle to remain visible and effective as an advocacy organization while contending with generational change and leadership succession. I believe the JACL can continue being an exciting and effective organization to be part of, so long as we take actions that are impactful, develop skills and leadership experience of our younger members and can market our organization as one that is a dynamic and exciting cause to sustain and an authoritative voice for our community that commands respect.

As the JACL’s current VP of Membership, I was appointed mid-term and believe I can accomplish my plan of action if given an additional term to see it through. From technical improvements to activating our members, I intend to stem the long-running trend of declining membership and reinvigorate the ranks of our organization. I understand that people are members for a multitude of reasons, but I understand even better that strong memberships are built on a sense of pride and achievement through the organization, and even more importantly, the social bonds and cherished connections developed through the JACL.

How would you implement the JACL’s Strategic Plan in your elected office?

The Strategic Plan provides several points to form strategies for membership retention and recruitment around. If elected for an additional term, I intend to continue working on the goals set forth for membership, which incorporate priorities set forth in the Strategic Plan, including continuing to support the establishment and growth of the Young Professionals Caucus. I believe that effective membership engagement is crucial to any future growth in JACL membership and will require us to implement other areas of the Strategic Plan beyond just the section specifically pertaining to membership, including visible advocacy, social and community enrichment and outreach and partnerships with other communities and new constituencies.

NATIONAL SECRETARY/TREASURER
James Kirihara, Twin Cities Chapter

Hello, my name is James Kirihara, and I am running for National Secretary/Treasurer. I am a fourth-generation Japanese American, and my family has been involved in the JACL Twin Cities (Minnesota) chapter for decades after my grandparents were interned at the Topaz internment camp in Utah and the Tule Lake internment camp in California. JACL has been a presence throughout much of my life, from local JACL meetings and potluck dinners during my childhood, to scholarship support during my college education and my involvement as Treasurer of the National Youth Student Council (NYISC) during the early part of my career. I would be honored to give back to the organization by serving as National Secretary/Treasurer and believe I have sufficient qualifications to successfully serve in the role.

I have worked professionally for over 10 years, first as a public accountant at KPMG and then as a management consultant at Accenture. I completed my bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting at the University of Notre Dame and recently completed a master’s degree in Business Administration at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management.

As Secretary/Treasurer, I would prioritize fiscal responsibility for the organization to ensure we can continue to support key programs and initiatives in the short term as well as the long term. I believe it is crucial for the organization to continue to reassess sustainable sources of funding for the future and maintain budget discipline and agility to quickly react to ever-changing circumstances and unpredictability. I will advocate for reshaping the organization to align with its strategic priorities in contrast to doing things for the sake of tradition or “because it is the way it has always been done.” Thank you for your consideration and support.

How would you assist in or actively participate in raising funds for JACL?

Given the nature of the role of Secretary/Treasurer, fundraising would be a key focus area for me to ensure the organization can meet its obligations and support its programs and initiatives. I would promote regular reviews of actual fundraising efforts and outcomes vs. plans to identify potential shortfalls that may require board attention to resolve in current budgets and spending. Additionally, I would actively promote fundraising efforts both within JACL membership, as well as through outside supporters and partners. I believe having additional corporate/individual sponsors would be beneficial for fundraising, as well as diversifying the funding sources so that we are not overly dependent on one or a handful of companies.

NATIONAL YOUTH/STUDENT COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
Kota Mizutani, Washington, D.C. Chapter

Ask what single factor has contributed most to my life, and I will always give the same answer: the JACL. From offering leadership opportunities to support my journey through Brown University to providing the guidance and resources needed to pursue a career as a Congressional staffer on API issues, the JACL has consistently contributed to my personal, academic and professional life. My own experiences as a lifelong beneficiary of the JACL’s mentorship and leadership summits have left a lasting impact on my life.

For the upcoming JACL convention, I would like to help continue the work of the Youth/Student Council to support the JACL’s mission and provide the resources needed to support our leaders of tomorrow. I would oversee NYISC programs that develop and support the cultivation of young leaders in our communities through training summits, the creation of new avenues for youth engagement and by supporting youth chapters. I would like to instill in each youth member the same passion and commitment that I felt growing up in the JACL.

Articulate the current ideological differences between youth and older members and how you would address them.

I have been fortunate enough to grow up in a family of older members who have played a significant role in my life. My own experiences as a lifelong beneficiary of the JACL’s mentorship and leadership summits have left a lasting impact on my life. My family members have taught me the importance of community, service and leadership. As a young leader, I believe it is crucial to continue engaging with older members to ensure that our organization remains relevant to them.

To address these differences, I would like to continue to support ongoing NYISC programs that develop stronger intergenerational understanding by highlighting the mutually beneficial relationship possible between younger and older members. Programs like the National Convention Youth Leader Mentorship program, for example, help younger members learn from the experiences and expertise of older mentors, while providing opportunities for mentees to educate older mentors on contemporary issues.

NATIONAL YOUTH/STUDENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE
No applications submitted.
By Athena Mari Asklipiadis

My mother, Susan (Yahiro) Asklipiadis, was just 1 1/2 years old when she was interned at Camp Amache in Granada, Colo., in 1942. Because her childhood recollections were limited due to her young age, hearing about camp through the stories of her siblings, who were 10 or more years older, was something I began to appreciate more and more over the years.

I would hear how fun it was for my aunts to sneak out to a dance or movie — something their strict minister father was very opposed to. But besides the good times, I would also hear about the lack of privacy in the shared restrooms and the harsh winters or how sand would fly into their barrack and peel their legs during walks when the wind was strong.

Their storytelling was a mashup of the good and the bad, but overall, my family mostly saw their internment as just a part of life, something unavoidable. It wasn't until my twenties, though, that I began to take careful mental notes and realize how my family's experiences were a very unique part of U.S. history.

My now late Uncle Stephen, who had quite the memory, would illustrate his childhood recollections with vivid detail, something I have really begun to miss recently.

He would talk enthusiastically about working for pennies doing farm work, playing sports and how his ride to the Merced Assembly Center when first relocating was so exciting because it was his first time taking a train.

He told me he was even the envy of a young naive non-Japanese classmate who told him “he sure was lucky” to be able to ride a train.

The past few years though, I started hearing these types of camp stories less and less. Whether it was because of the passing of older family members or because of the fading memories of my still-living relatives, I feel like time and opportunity are now escaping us very quickly.

It is sad to think our family history at Camp Amache could certainly be lost forever unless we younger generations take it upon ourselves to preserve it now while we still can.

When my uncle passed away, I came across old Amache reunion shirts and programs when going through his things. One such program had this quote by Amache internee and family friend George Y. Hirano, who said, “Barbed wire, barracks and towers — gone. Now... only friendships live on and on.”

This place was as difficult as it was, clearly an important part of understanding the fabric of my family. But somehow, many of the details remained between the internees, a secret of sorts.

I had often heard that other people had gone on pilgrimages to places like Manzanar or Tule Lake over the years, but no one in my immediate family had been on a pilgrimage to Amache yet. Some didn’t even know there were Amache pilgrimages until I used good old' Google and discovered amache.org and the amazing resources available made possible by the Amache Preservation Society.

After doing some hours of online research, I began to immediately feel a sense of sadness. How could the government just pluck Americans out of their comfortable lives and leave them in a deserted field in the middle of nowhere like that? I really cannot imagine the depths of pain and anger adult internees must have felt.

When finally entering Amache, it was such an eerie experience. It was like stepping out of a time machine. The original guard tower, water tower and a recreation hall were all brought back in their original locations, in addition to a barrack replica built recently to exact scale and design. These fixtures evoked so many bittersweet feelings for me.

I was really excited to finally see this part of my history, but it starkly juxtaposed my thoughts of anger that the internees were imprisoned here against their will. I immediately thought about how it was for my family seeing this scenery daily and having to call this place home for three years — the same skies, the same dirt, the same trees, but for them, behind barbed wire fences with an

Susan (Yahiro) Asklipiadis stands by the original guard tower.

The Yahiro family: Rev. George Yahiro, Hatsu, daughter Esther, daughter Eunice (back) carrying Susan and son Andrew
At the last row of graves, we found a man doing the same. I figured he looked around the age of a possible internee, so I asked, “Were you interned here?” He answered yes, and my mom said she was, too. The man asked, “Which block were you?” And my mom answered, “12-E.” To our surprise, he said he was also from 12-E.

His name was Jim Fukui, and it turned out he knew my mother’s siblings, and he even remembered my late Uncle Stephen, who was close in age. What were the odds that the first internee we would meet was someone from the same block? And then to hear his recollection of his family members was so touching. It instantly reconfirmed why I made the trek out to Granada.

Listening to first-hand stories and understanding how camp life was like from people who actually knew my family is something I could not have easily found without attending this pilgrimage.

It was so emotional to think that we were standing on the grounds where over 75 years prior, my mom was just a kid unaware of the significance of their circumstances at the time, but now many years later, fully knowing the weight of that experience on their families and that they would actually become a part of America’s dark WWII history.

After the memorial gathering ended, we made our way to Granada High School for a much-needed light-hearted potluck lunch organized by the school’s Amache Club. It was a larger crowd than was at the cemetery site.

Former internees and locals socialized over plates filled with sandwiches, maki sushi, potato salad, BBQ chicken wings and spam musubi as they sipped Japanese Ramune soda.

Lunch guests included U.S. Senators and a representative from the office of the Consulate General of Japan, Denver, all of whom spoke about being dedicated to the preservation of Amache and the importance that history not repeat itself.

The most poignant point of the lunch program was when Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) announced that Bill 2870 was in its first stage of the legislation process, which could potentially turn Amache into a national park. It made my mom and I incredibly touched to see how many wonderful people there were in the state of Colorado who were all working together to make sure the people of Amache and their experiences would never be forgotten.

The event concluded with the presentation of scholarships by the Japanese Association of Colorado to graduating seniors of Granada High who were in the Amache Club.

Following the lunch, my mother ran into another gentleman from block 12-E, Richard Hatak, who she discovered was the older brother of her preschool camp friend. He traveled from the Chicago area for this pilgrimage. It was really my mom to reconnect with old family friends, many of whom had not been in contact since their camp days.

While my mom was reminiscing, I was busy making new friends. During the lunch program, the emcee asked how many in the audience were from the Yonei generation, and I along with a few others raised our hand. I was so heartwarming to see other young people supporting their family legacy by attending the pilgrimage.

The event also encouraged people to meet like Kimiko Marr of the aptly named film company Hapa Yonei Productions. She and her team are planning to shoot an internment documentary.

Being a fellow filmmaker, and also a hapa Yonsei myself, I had to meet her. I was so excited to hear about her goal in filming all 10 camps and telling these important stories.

Meeting people like her and John Tonai (Min Tonai’s son, a photographer also documenting the Amache Club), it is always touching to know that many of these Amache supporters are non-Japanese locals who feel strongly about honoring the Japanese American community and its history. These allies and our relationships with them are truly the best gift born out of such a segregated, racist past.

It is also reminiscent of the good stories from my family about the various groups like the Quakers or other noninterned folks who supported and showed love to our community during its most fragile time.

The war did bring out the worst in a lot of Americans, but it also brought out the best in many as well. The trip also taught me how vital visiting your family’s camp is — a definite must for any Japanese American to understand where you come from. But just as important, it is extremely beneficial for non-Japanese Americans to learn about this part of history as well.

I encourage everyone to take the time to talk to your obachan if she is still living or your Japanese American neighbor who lived in an internment camp and write those stories down. As young JAs, I truly believe it is our duty to do our part in recording these personal histories so we may never forget and so it is also never repeated.

Athena Mari Askilipadi, a hapa Japanese L.A. native, is the founder of Mixed Marrow, a filmmaker and a diversity advocate.

The Amache water tower today

Min Tonai pays tribute to the lives lost at Amache.

Dr. Bonnie Clark with Minoru Imamura at the site of his barrack

The Amache Club

Former Amache 12-E residents meet again: Jim Fukui and Susan (Yahiro) Askilipadi.

unknown release date.
JACL National Convention
Philadelphia, PA
July 18-22
Sheraton Downtown
201 N. 17th St.
Join JACL at its National Convention themed “Redress, Resistance and Reconciliation.” JACL will look back on the success of redress in this, the 30th anniversary of the passing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Don’t miss this opportunity to support JACL and help further its mission of ensuring civil rights for all.

NCWNP
Eighth Annual Northern California Soy and Tofu Festival
San Francisco, CA
June 30; 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
The Event Center at Saint Mary’s Cathedral
1101 Gough St. (at Garey Boulevard)
Price: $5 for Adults; Free for Children 10 and Under
There will be a free revolving shuttle to and from the Japantown Peace Plaza to the Event Center, so come on down and enjoy a day of great food, entertainment and fun! Proceeds will benefit the Nichi Bei Foundation.

Mldori Kai Arts & Crafts Boutique Mountain View, CA
Sept. 8; 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Mountain View Buddhist Temple Gym
55 S. Shoreline Blvd.
Price: Free
Don’t miss this excellent opportunity to get a head-start on Christmas. There will also be food to purchase, as well as entertainment and prize drawings. All proceeds will benefit community nonprofit organizations.
Info: Visit www.mlndori.com or call Phyllis Osaki at (925) 596-1770.

PNW
‘A Dragon Lives Here’ — Part 4
Seattle, WA
Currently on exhibit
719 S. King St.
Price: $7 General museum admission for adults
Created in partnership with the Bruce Lee Foundation, this exhibit, Part 4 in a series, honours the grand, artistic creations. The area showcases 20 different types of saké, as well as learn about all things saké from saké education stations. All proceeds from this event will benefit the JCCNC.

PSW
‘What We Carried: Fragments & Memories from Iraq & Syria’
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Aug. 5
Japanese American National Museum
1001 Central Ave.
This exhibition of photographs by Jim Lommasson captures cherished personal objects brought to the U.S. by Iraqi and Syrian refugees who successfully resettled in the States. This traveling exhibition’s theme echoes one found in discussions of the JA incarceration experience during WWII.
Info: Visit Jannm.org.

2018 Minidoka Pilgrimage
Twin Falls, ID
July 5-8
Registration is now open for event address, lodging information and more.
This is a great opportunity to learn, share memories and ask questions about the Minidoka experience. Consider participating as a way to bring your family together and reconnect with friends. Several trip packages are available that include lodging and transportation options.
For online registration, visit http://minidokapilgrimage2018.bpt.me/.

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For online registration, visit http://minidokapilgrimage2018.bpt.me/.

MDC
‘Restoring America’s Promise’
Minneapolis, MN
June 30; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Christensen Center at Augsburg College
Marshall Room
720 22nd Ave. South
Price: Free; Participants must register. Light breakfast and lunch included.
Michi Maki, president and CEO of Go for Broke National Education Center, will present a special program designed for young people that tells the story of the World War II Japanese American experience. Twin Cities JACL hopes that future generations will continue to educate the public in order to ensure that such injustices never happen again. All are welcome to attend.
Registration deadline is June 27.
Info: To register, email, call 612-775-2579, or email tmsuchy@ncjcc.org.

EDC
Philadelphia Chinese Lantern Festival
Philadelphia, PA
Thru June 30
Franklin Square
200 N. Sixth St.
Price: Free
The Philadelphia Chinese Lantern Festival returns for its third year of illuminating Franklin Square with grand, artistic creations. The area will come alive with 15,000 LED lights across 23 different displays featuring 1,500 works of art.

Last Defense: The Genius of Japanese Melji Metalwork
Worcester, MA
Thru Sept. 2
Worcester Art Museum
55 Salisbury St.
This exhibition focuses on the genius and versatility of metalworkers during the transitional period of the Meiji Restoration.

Japanese House Gallery Exhibit
Home
Boston, MA
Thru Sept. 30
Boston Children’s Museum
308 Congress St.
This exhibit explores the meanings and influence of home from the perspective of Japanese students. It also showcases artwork created by the students of the Art Thinking Project team at Tokoh University and Design in Japan.

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL
2018 TOUR SCHEDULE
Hokkaido Sunday Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) WAITLIST ...• ... June 7-19
Lake Akan, Furano, Asahikawa, Wakkani, Rishiri Island, Sapporo, Noboribetsu, Lake Toya, Hakodate.
Pacific Coastal Holiday Cruise (Elaine Ishida) ...• ... Sep 19-26
Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Shizuoka, Nagoya, Gifu, Hiroshima, Kyoto.
New England Autumn Holiday Tour (Carol Hida) ...• ... Oct 12-19
Boston, New York, Portland, Maple Sugar Farm, Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream Factory, Washington Cog Railway.
Costa Rica Holiday Tour (Carol Hida) ...• ... Nov 7-15
San Jose, La Fortuna, Monteverde, Punta Arenas, Rain/Cloud Forest, Volcano National Parks, Hotsprings, Coffee Plantation.
Okinawa Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) ...• ... Nov 7-16
Naha, Onna, Island of Ishigaki, Ishirone & Taketomi.

2019 TOUR SCHEDULE (PARTIAL-TENTATIVE)
JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR ...• ... April
CHARLESTON-SAVANNAH-ST AUGUSTINE TOUR ...• ... April
SOUTH AMERICA JAPANESE HERITAGE HOLIDAY TOUR ...• ... May
ICELAND EXPLORER HOLIDAY TOUR ...• ... June
GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR ...• ... June
For more information and reservations, please contact:
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312 E. 1st Street, Suite 240 • Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213)625-2232 • Email: americanholiday@att.net
(CST #200326-10)
IN MEMORIAM

Ando, Michael, 28, Milwaukie, OR, March 8; he is survived by his parents, Kevin and Tammy Ando; he is also survived by his grandparents, numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Hirayama, Isao, 83, Los Angeles, CA, March 18; he is survived by his wife, Lyn Hirayama; daughter, Leina Takashi; Haru Shiba and Masa Neishi; she is survived by her daughter, Jill (Ken-Iwata); nieces and nephews.

Hirooka, Junian, 86, Monterey Park, CA, March 11; she is survived by her husband, George; children, Alami Noguchi; he is also survived by his parents, Reiko Inouye; Mabel, 92, San Ramon, CA, March 29; he was preceded in death by his parents, Takeshi Inouye, and Wayne Kealalio; grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Inouye, Mabel, 92, San Jose, CA, Jan. 19; she was preceded in death by her husband, Takeshi Inouye, and Wayne Kealalio; grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Iseri, Roy, 81, Campbell, CA, March 29; he was preceded in death by his siblings, Shoji Iseri, Masami Iseri, Tayeko Iseri and Yvonne S. Kobata; he is survived by his siblings, Meriko Ishigaki, Mieko Morikawa, James Iseri (Irene), Walter Iseri and Wayne Iseri; he is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Ito, Kazuko, 83, Oxnard, CA, Jan. 4; she is survived by her husband, Ritsuc; at death; Susan (Tim Van Loon) Ito, Joyce (Glenn) Ichimotono, Nancy Yamamoto; she is also survived by many other relatives; gc: 2.

Iwata, Izetta 12’ Cahau­nani, 79, Honolulu, HI, Feb. 26; she is survived by her husband, Richard Iwata; children, Nori, (Paul) LaSage, Dale (Grigg) Aipa, Tracey (Lane) Hiro, Joey (Robert) Miller and Ryan (Jane) Iwa­ta; siblings, Odetta Fuji­mori and Wayne Kealalio; gc: 12.

John, Brian and Shawn; three sisters; gc: 9.

Masanori, 76, Fountain Valley, CA, Jan. 10; he is survived by his wife, Linda Reko; son, Tony Kenichi (Ken); brother, Carl (Sandra) Nobuyuki; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 2.

Noguchi, Danko, 67, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 17; he is survived by his son, Noboru (Corinne); sister, Akemi Noguchi; he is also survived by other relatives.

Segawa, Ben Satoshi, 87, Bonita, CA, Jan. 28; he was predeceased by his first wife, Keiko Katharine Tasaka; he is also survived by his wife, Grace Miko (Matsumoto) Karagi; children, Mike (Susan), Jim, Patti and Cheryl (Parvaze); sisters, Gale Hamamoto; brothers-in-law, Miles Ueda and David; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Yano, Alva, 84, Berke­ley, CA, March 13; during WWII his family and he were incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in AZ; he is survived by his wife, Fleur; son, Robert; sister, Grace Beut; he is also sur­vived by other family; gc: 2.

OAHIDA, Dorothy Y., 94, Orange, CA, March 4; she is survived by her children, Bob (Miranda), Jim (Ginny), Gary (Patty) and Cheryl (Parvaze); gc: 10; gc: 1.

Otomo, John, 78, Park Ridge, IL, March 5; he was predeceased by his son, David; he is survived by his wife, Ellen; children, Daniel, Susan (Jim) Ardizzone and Julia Otomo; stepchildren, Matthew (Melissa) Atwood and Eric Atwood; gc: 1.

Place a Tribute
‘In Memoriam’ is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of $50/column inch.

CONTACT:
Editorial: Office@pacificcitizen.org or call (213) 620-1767 ext. 104

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LEADERSHIP >> continued from page 4

David S. Kim noted that while he didn’t continue to pursue journalism, Lee “instilled in me his passion for activism and public service and community service.”

Lee, Chaseeka, Hagihara, Sophia Kim and David Contrenos. The resolution was followed by In Khang Hyun Jeong Shim singing “Arirang.”

One aspect of the convention, nondelegate members and guests will find plenty to do during the annual Memorial Day ceremony and grave visitation at Arlington National Cemetery’s columbarium on May 27.

Among the speakers were Kim Minh Thai, a retired Texas teacher and activist, who spoke of her uncle, Saburo Tanamachi, a 442nd veteran who was one of the first individuals of Japanese descent interred at ANC 70 years ago. The program culminated in the acknowledgment of veterans and active service members who were present at the ceremony, as well as a playing of “Taps” and a gravesite visitation with flowers. Thank you to everyone who made this event a special day.

— Mackenzie Hirai, JACL Norman Y. Mineta Fellow

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800-544-8828 www.jaclu.com

D.C. JACL and JAVA HOLD ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE

The Washington, D.C., JACL and the Japanese American Veterans Assn., presented the 70th annual Memorial Day ceremony and grave visitation at Arlington National Cemetery’s columbarium on May 27.

Chanecka, Hagihara, & Philadelphia Kim and Michelle Amano and Mackenzie Hirai.

A 1988 issue of the Pacific Citizen showing K.W. Lee and Harry Honda.

FILM >> continued from page 5

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the convention film program is the premiere panel discussion that will be held on the afternoon of July 19. In an effort to better contextualize the role of Japanese Americans in the film and media industry, both historically and today, these leading artist-activists will share their experiences on the frontlines of Hollywood.

Confirmed panelists include documentary filmmaker and Nikkei Democracy Project member Tadashi Nakamura (“Mule Murals,” “Jake Shimabakuro: Life on Four Strings”), Japanese-Canadian actor-producer Peter Shinkoda (best known for his role as Nobu in Marvel’s “ Daredevil” series) and Japanese-born actress Mayumi Yoshida (“The Man in the High Castle”).

Considering that these programs are just one aspect of the convention, nondelegate members and guests will find plenty to do in Philadelphia this July. Screening times for each film will be announced at a later date and will be shows between July 19 and July 21 at the convention hotel.

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75th Anniversary

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D.C. JACL and JAVA HOLD ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE

The Washington, D.C., JACL and the Japanese American Veterans Assn., presented the 70th annual Memorial Day ceremony and grave visitation at Arlington National Cemetery’s columbarium on May 27.

Chanecka, Hagihara, & Philadelphia Kim and Michelle Amano and Mackenzie Hirai.

A 1988 issue of the Pacific Citizen showing K.W. Lee and Harry Honda.

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Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the convention film program is the premiere panel discussion that will be held on the afternoon of July 19. In an effort to better contextualize the role of Japanese Americans in the film and media industry, both historically and today, these leading artist-activists will share their experiences on the frontlines of Hollywood.

Confirmed panelists include documentary filmmaker and Nikkei Democracy Project member Tadashi Nakamura (“Mule Murals,” “Jake Shimabakuro: Life on Four Strings”), Japanese-Canadian actor-producer Peter Shinkoda (best known for his role as Nobu in Marvel’s “Daredevil” series) and Japanese-born actress Mayumi Yoshida (“The Man in the High Castle”).

Considering that these programs are just one aspect of the convention, nondelegate members and guests will find plenty to do in Philadelphia this July. Screening times for each film will be announced at a later date and will be shown between July 19 and July 21 at the convention hotel.

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