AIMING FOR GOLD

Sakura Kokumai has her sights set on Tokyo 2020.

U.S. karate hopeful Sakura Kokumai was recently awarded the 2019 Female Athlete of the Year award from the U.S.A. National Karate-do Federation.

‘The Poston Experience’ Special Program to be held in Anaheim, Calif.

Kakehashi Alum Creates New Clothing Line, Akashi-Kama

Celebrating 90 Years
Dear Editor,

I and my family spent over three years in Tule Lake from its days as a relocation center then as a segregation center. When the U.S. Army administered the questionnaire to determine loyalty, my parents chose not to respond to controversial questions 27 and 28.

My father said that responding “Yes” to question 28 would result in losing his Japanese citizenship. Since at the time there were laws that forbid alien Japanese from becoming American citizens, he would become a man without a country.

I was too young to answer the questionnaire, which the Supreme Court declared after World War II that the U.S. Army had no authority to administer the questionnaire. In reality, there is no way to accurately determine loyalty by means of a questionnaire.

After WWII when a law was passed to make it possible for Japanese aliens to become citizens, my father was the first one in Stockton to apply for and become a citizen. I believe many who responded “No-No” had the courage to do so.

Sincerely,

Terry Ishihara

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Dear Editor,

This afternoon (July 22), it finally occurred to me that the JACL National Convention (July 31-Aug. 4), this issue will remain.

Council in Salt Lake City at this year’s National Convention, which proved enlightened and successful.

The Nikkei Nation of WWII (incarcerees and Nisei veterans) is highly respected and admired by the press, and its procedures of the Salt Lake City meeting, National JACL’s wartime policy and recommended procedures, reinforced this opinion.

One other thing I wish to mention is that it takes courage to deviate from the majority. I believe many who responded “No-No” had the courage to do so.

Onward!

Mas Hashimoto
Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL

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Coming from Phoenix via Los Angeles, Weisbly recently completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Southern California with a degree in History. His senior thesis explored numerical data and oral histories of Nisei soldiers with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

A longtime JACL member, Weisbly also served as the Youth Representative for the Arizona chapter and the inaugural Ted T. Namba fellow for the Pacific Southwest district.

After the completion of his new fellowship position, Weisbly wants to return to school to get his PhD in history.

Welcome Matthew!

— JACL National

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P.C.’s George Johnston Wins Prize From L.A. Press Club

The Los Angeles Press Club awarded the Pacific Citizen’s George Toshio Johnston a first-place trophy at its 61st SoCal Journalism Awards on June 29 in Los Angeles. The award was in the category Personality Profile for newspapers under circulation of 50,000 and was for a November 2018 Pacific Citizen story titled “Still Hovering: Ex-Door Gunner’s Vietnam Memoirs Never Far Away,” about Army veteran John Masaki, who served in Vietnam circa 1968 as a crew chief and door-gunner in a helicopter gunship.

Regarding the category-topping article, the judges’ comment read: “The piece is personal, factual and poignant. That combination makes for a powerful human interest personality profile. It represents thorough journalism.”


“The P.C. is thrilled to have George formally recognized for his story. He thought of the story concept for our Veteran’s Special Issue, and the end product resulted in a feature that truly resonated with our readers and garnered much word of mouth,” said P.C. Executive Editor Alison Haramoto.

“George was able to bring to light John’s heroism in serving his country during the war. The first-place journalism prize is Johnston’s second from the LAPC. In December 2017 at the 10th National Arts & Entertainment Journalism Awards, he won in the category Persona Profile, also eligible for the P.C. honor.”

See CLUB on page 4
A MOTHER’S TAKE

PRIDE AROUND THE WORLD

By Marsha Aizumi

L ast month, I had the wonderful opportunity of returning to Japan to speak on LGBTQ family acceptance. It was 12 days, three cities, six events and connecting with more than 1,200 people. To say it was impactful would be an understatement. There were so many moments that moved my heart. I can’t begin to list them all, so I will just give you the highlights:

TOKYO: Speaking at the University in Tsukuba and learning of the work they are doing was so inspiring. I spoke about the university Aiden attended and how his belief and support of him turned his life around. The university and its staff made Aiden believe that his life mattered. The moderator of the panel, Professor Kawano, followed my comments with a story about an LGBTQ student coming up to him and saying, “This university is killing me.”

Professor Kawano was so affected by this student’s words that he has taken it upon himself to write and publish guidelines supporting LGBTQ students. He also created a safe space sticker, so that students will know who they can turn to for help, as well as coordinated the event we spoke at that day.

And that student who once felt like the university was killing him is still alive today. One person, a professor, listened to him, and he found hope.

NAGOYA: At Showa High School, we spoke to more than 1,000 students, teachers, parents and staff. I was touched by the courage of a transgender middle school teacher who came out to her school and shared her story. I was also moved by a young transgender man who vulnerably spoke about how he and his mother found their way back to each other after being estranged for 10 years.

Later, I met the mother of that young transgender man. We couldn’t communicate directly because of our language differences, but somehow as we talked through a translator, there was a moment when we looked into each other’s eyes, and we spontaneously hugged one another.

We were two mothers who struggled in the beginning, but in the end, the love we have for our children helped us to overcome any obstacles that were put in our way.

It was a special moment. And as her transgender son looked on, all I could feel was how much pride and love he has for his mother.

SAPPORO: We ended our tour in the city where my husband’s father was raised. At the university, we spoke to more than 1,200 people. To say it was a sense of pride to all who were involved. I talked about doing a poster contest, organizing a diversity week and bringing in some LGBTQ speakers to share their stories to their school. They listened intently, and I believe that they will take these ideas back to their high school and implement one or two of them.

I applaud these young people who will be giving all students — whether LGBTQ+ or not — the message that being a positive voice makes a difference. I talked about doing a poster contest, organizing a diversity week and bringing in some LGBTQ speakers to share their stories to their school. They listened intently, and I believe that they will take these ideas back to their high school and implement one or two of them.

I spoke about how he and his mother found their way back to each other after being estranged for 10 years.

And that student who once felt like the university was killing him is still alive today. One person, a professor, listened to him, and he found hope.

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I applaud these young people who will be giving all students — whether LGBTQ+ or not — the message that being a positive voice makes a difference.

Then, the mother of that young transgender man came up to me and said, “I’ve been thinking about how much pride and love he has for his mother.”

So, I continue to work hard to bring greater awareness and knowledge to fight the fear and discrimination that still exists.

I shared how much I respect the people in Japan who are bringing to light this same hard work — many of the people in the audience were educators and leaders in their cities — and you could feel their hearts swell with pride.

June was Pride Month in Los Angeles, where I live. Pride Month to me is all about celebrating being proud of who you are, whether you are LGBTQ+, a parent or supporter of an LGBTQ+ person or just want people to be accepted and respected as they are.

I believe this trip to Japan helped people to be better allies, have dreams of raising greater LGBTQ+ awareness in the future and brought a sense of pride to all who were involved.

I certainly felt that way.

Marsha Aizumi is an advocate in the LGBTQ community and author of the book “Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance.”

LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

PASSING DOWN THE FAMILY HOME

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

I am in the middle of a three-part series on Nursing Home care. In my last article, “Getting Old Is Not for Sissies” (June 28–July 11, 2019), I suggested that families take advantage of the Nursing Home Reform Act (1987) and insist on participating on a personal care plan for their loved one in a nursing home. I truly appreciate the calls and emails of appreciation and encouragement that I’ve received and plan to follow-up with a second article on the illegal use of “psycho-tropic” drugs in nursing homes, as well as a third article dealing with illegal evictions. However, there’s something “timelier” I want to address in this article — how to pass down the family home.

Many Pacific Citizen readers have already sold their homes and moved into retirement homes or moved in with their adult children. Others have properly funded their homes into revocable living trusts to avoid probate court. Those homes will probably be sold upon the parent’s passing with a step-up in basis and forgiveness of gain.

However, there are quite a few Pacific Citizen readers who plan to pass down the family home to a child or grandchild who plans to continue to reside in the family home. To be sure, the child or grandchild who inherits the family home will want to continue to pay the least amount of property taxes as possible.

Under current law, i.e., Prop 58 (approved in 1986), parents are allowed to give their residential property to their heirs without triggering a tax reassessment. The intent of Prop 58 is to insulate children from absorbing a huge spike in property taxes and help them stay in the family home.

Under Prop 13, an existing homeowner might only be paying $1,500 per year in property taxes. The guy that bought the same house across the street is paying $10,000 per year in property taxes, i.e., assessed at market value. Under Prop 58, the existing Prop 13 property tax is passed down to the child.

California is the only state to offer this tax break. For more than 40 years in California, Proposition 13 has been untouched, i.e., a “Sacred Cow.” Politicians have feared their careers if they dared suggest changes to the measure that capped property taxes, took a scythe to government spending and spawned anti-tax initiatives across the country.

But times are changing. Many seniors, who were quite vocal 40 years ago, have either passed away or are not demonstrating or marching any longer. Younger state politicians believe that Prop 13 and Prop 58 rob communities of property taxes that fund vital public services for all residents, including seniors. In other words, these tax breaks may not be available for much longer.

Sen. Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo) introduced a new law that takes aim at Proposition 58.

“We need to close the legal loophole that has allowed some individuals to dodge thousands of dollars in property taxes while reaping rental income from homes they have inherited and do not use as their primary residence,” he told the San Francisco Chronicle in December 2018.

“We’re not touching Prop 13. We’re touching Prop 58. The goal is to get people to pay their fair share,” said Hill.

The proposed ballot measure would require people who inherit property in this way to move into the home within a year if they want the property tax break. The change would apply to certain places due to the laws of that state. And there are even places where one might not feel safe as an Asian person.

I talked about doing a poster contest, organizing a diversity week and bringing in some LGBTQ speakers to share their stories to their school. They listened intently, and I believe that they will take these ideas back to their high school and implement one or two of them.

Investigated these young people who will be giving all students — whether LGBTQ+ or not — the message that being a positive voice makes a difference.

But, changing the law now would be deeply unfair to the younger generation that has been forced to pay the highest Social Security and Medicare taxes in history and are saddled with student debt and stuck with lower-paying jobs than their parents.

“Just Budy, what can I do?” If you have a child or grandchild that you want to leave your home to, think about transferring your home and the existing Prop 13 tax rate to your child (or grandchild) now. If you act prior to any new laws, e.g., SCA 3, you will “dodge the thousands of dollars in property taxes” from going up.

But don’t sign and record a deed giving your home away. There are legal safeguards that need to be implemented so that you receive a Lifetime Right to Occupy. There are also ways of preserving the “step-up” in basis. It would be highly advisable to consult with an attorney and your CPA before you act.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney and the law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or judd@elderlaw.com. 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 in this article is the author’s own and does not constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.
JACL PSW DISTRICT COUNCIL HOLDS QUARTERLY MEETING AT UCI

Host SELANOCO JACL also makes its year-end plans.

By Patti Hirahara, P.C. Contributor

The JACL PSW District Council held its quarterly meeting, hosted by the SELANOCO JACL chapter, on July 14 at the Dr. Joseph White Room in the University of California Irvine’s Cross-Cultural Center in Irvine, Calif. The PSW District Council is comprised of 27 chapters and is led by Gov. Carol Kawamoto.

Since 1966, the SELANOCO JACL has been active in Southeast Los Angeles and North Orange County activities, and its main focus as a chapter is to reach out to younger audiences and promote the message of the JACL.

According to Ryan Yoshikawa, president of the SELANOCO JACL, “The new generations are more aware of the political landscape, and I want to help give them an avenue to become a larger voice in their own community with a strong organization, such as the JACL.”

When asking Yoshikawa what inspired him to become a board member and now chapter president, he said, “When I became a director of public relations for Tomo No Kai, a Japanese American cultural club at UCI in my senior year in 2017, I became the student liaison to the SELANOCO chapter. Through this, I was introduced to the fantastic board members and their hard work to maintain civil liberties for not just the Japanese American people, but also all citizens of the United States. The hard work and dedication of our board has motivated me to become the president of the chapter.

“They have an unwavering belief in the organization and the principles it was founded upon,” Yoshikawa continued. “I was honored that I could become president of the SELANOCO chapter and continue its legacy of civil justice into the next generation. I want to help inspire others my age and younger to become more involved and aware of the power they have and the community they are a part of.”

During the meeting, plans were discussed for upcoming events, including the biggest Selanoco JACL event in Orange County communities and make a difference not only in the Japanese American community but also national and world affairs.

Its participation in Rotary Clubs, PTA’s, Bar Associations, the Orange County Grand Jury, the Orange County Human Relations Commission and being active at the California State University, Fullerton, and University of California Irvine, campuses is a key to its long-term success.

T he SELANOCO JACL President Ryan Yoshikawa (right) welcomes delegates to the July 14 meeting at the University of California, Irvine, along with PSW District Council Gov. Carol Kawamoto (left) and former JACL National President and PSW Vice Gov. Gary Mayeda (center) working the video-conferencing system to communicate with JACL chapters who could not attend.

In addition, the SELANOCO JACL celebrated its 53rd anniversary on April 23, having been chartered on that day in 1966 with Henry Yamaga serving as the chapter’s first president. There were 101 charter members and five associate members who began the chapter; now the next generation of SELANOCO JACL members are continuing their legacy.

The SELANOCO chapter and its members have had a long history of involvement in the Southeast Los Angeles and North Orange County communities and have made a difference not only in the Japanese American community but also national and world affairs. Its participation in Rotary Clubs, PTA’s, Bar Associations, the Orange County Grand Jury, the Orange County Human Relations Commission and being active at the California State University, Fullerton, and University of California Irvine, campuses is a key to its long-term success.

The SELANOCO chapter is also working with Anaheim educational groups and the Poston Community Alliance to present a program at Anaheim High School on Aug. 24 entitled “The Poston Experience: Paving the Way for the Next Generations” and the City of Anaheim to present its new original exhibition “I AM AN AMERICAN: Japanese Incarceration in a Time of Fear” at the MUZEO Museum and Cultural Center from Aug. 25-Nov. 3 in Downtown Anaheim.

In 2018, Johnston also reported on a story about a license plate from Kansas that read “442 JAP.” The P.C. story was instrumental in having the Kansas Department of Revenue change its policy, proscribing use of the three-letter combination “JAP” in its license plates and recalling more than 700 extant plates containing that word.

Among JACL business covered at the PSW District Council meeting was the upcoming JACL National Convention, set to be held in Salt Lake City from July 31-Aug. 4; PSW District Youth Representative business; district committee reports; the PSW “90th Anniversary of JACL” celebration event on Oct. 26 at the Redondo Beach Marriott in Torrance, Calif.; PSW District Nominations Committee election; and the 79th Annual Nisei Week Foundation Pioneer Spirit Luncheon, where SELANOCO’s Ken Inouye and Yoshihiro Uchida will be among the honorees.

The UCI Tomo No Kai students added a special touch to the meeting by greeting guests at the parking structure and guiding them to the UCI Cross-Cultural Center.


The category Commentary Diversity/Gender for a piece that appeared in the Rafu Shimpo titled “Horsing Around Pays Off for Scott Oshita, Todd Minobe,” which focused on one of the members of an Academy Award-winning team that developed the animatronic horse puppet, which is a lifelike animatronic horse used in movies.

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A little extra... ...goes a long way!

Upgrade to a Premium JACL Membership today!

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- Millennium Club ($1,000)

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- Century Club Life (one-time payment of $5,000)

As a token of our gratitude, the first 100 members to upgrade will receive the gift of this 20” x 20” barbed wire icon art lithographic poster print, signed by artist Bob Matsutomo.

Upgraded members are also invited to attend the VIP Reception for the Sawaynara Banquet at the JACL National Convention.

Ready to upgrade your JACL membership? Call us at (415) 921-5225 or upgrade online at: www.jacl.org/member/
‘THE POSTON EXPERIENCE’

A special program highlighting the true experiences of Japanese pioneers from Anaheim, Calif., at the Poston, Ariz., incarceration camp during WWII will be held on Aug. 24.

By Patti Hirahara, P.C. Contributor

The history of the Japanese pioneers and their descendants in Anaheim, Calif., before World War II and their education at Anaheim High School has never been featured in a major educational event in Anaheim before, nor has the telling of their experience while at the Poston, Ariz., Japanese American incarceration camp where they were sent during World War II.

To preserve the legacy of these Japanese American students, the Anaheim Union High School District and Anaheim High School will present a special two-hour program entitled “The Poston Experience: Paving the Way for the Next Generations,” which will be held on Aug. 24 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Anaheim High School, located at 811 W. Lincoln Ave.

Supporting organizations for the event are the Anaheim Elementary School District, the Anaheim High School Alumni Assoc., SELANOCO JACL and the Poston Community Alliance.

Offering welcome remarks will be Anaheim Union High School District Superintendent Michael B. Matsuda, Anaheim High School Principal Roberto Saldivar and Ryan Yoshikawa, president of the SELANOCO JACL.

Janet Brown, field representative from U.S. Congressman J. Luis Correa’s Office of the 46th District, will also be in attendance.

The Japanese immigrated into Anaheim in the early 1900s, with Anaheim Union High School, as it was then called, being the center of North Orange County education for the Japanese community, not only for those who lived in Anaheim, but also others that lived in neighboring cities where students traveled many miles to go to school by bicycle or even walking.

Attendees now have the opportunity to relive this time in history and be part of a historic event where they will sit in the actual auditorium where the Anaheim High School student body assembled, in 1942, and was told by their principal, Dr. Paul H. Demaree, that their Japanese American friends had been forcibly sent to Japanese incarceration camps due to their ethnicity and would no longer attend the school for the foreseeable future because of the war. These Japanese American students used this opportunity to say goodbye.

The majority of the 30 Japanese and Japanese American students from the Anaheim Union High School Classes of 1942-45 were evacuated to a Japanese American incarceration camp in Poston, Ariz., and they were not able to complete their education at Anaheim or become part of their school’s graduating class. However, this oversight was corrected in 1997, when the Anaheim Union High School District bestowed diplomas to surviving graduates during Anaheim High School’s graduation commencement ceremony that year, more than 50 years later.

The Aug. 24 program will feature Orange County leaders who went to Poston during WWII, a special presentation about an Anaheim pioneer family represented by Anaheim High School Class of 1962 graduate Marlene Shigekawa, who will talk about the Shigekawa family and her work in preserving the legacy of the Poston, Ariz., camp where she was born, as well as vocal renditions of songs from that time from students of the Anaheim Elementary School District and the Anaheim High School Las Sirenas Women’s Choir.

In addition, there will also be a special panel discussion that will include Don Miyada; Marlene Shigekawa; Robert M. Wada; Tom Leatherman and Gania Demaree-Trotter, whose father was principal of Anaheim High School from 1941-54, as well as superintendent of the Anaheim Union High School District from 1941-58.

For further event information on “The Poston Experience: Paving the Way for the Next Generations,” please call (714) 392-2103 or visit the AUHSD Facebook page for updates @AnaheimUnion.
OLYMPICS: KOKUMAI IS U.S. KARATE’S BEST HOPE TO NOT LEAVE EMPTY-HANDED

The L.A. County-based karateka presses the pedal to the medal in hopes of competing next summer in Tokyo at the Summer Games.

By P.C. Staff

When she’s not in competition mode, Sakura Kokumai has a pleasant, friendly demeanor, and she looks like she could still be a college student.

But when Kokumai is wearing her karate gi and performing a kata, she becomes focused, fierce and formidable.

Art Ishii concurs. As chairman of the Nisei Week Nikkei Games and a rokudan karateka who is the senior instructor at Matsubayashi Shōrin Ryū of Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, Ishii said, “What stands out with Sakura is her ability to focus on what she’s doing. In discussions with her, I find her to be very disciplined, and she has her goals set. She has the discipline to do what it takes. “She is totally committed,” Ishii continued. “... I’ve seen world-class kata performed in many tournaments, and she clearly is in the top echelon of women’s kata.”

Sakura Kokumai specializes in female individual kata, in which she is judged for how well she performs a preset karate routine.

SAKURA KOKUMAI
AGE: 26
STYLE OF KARATE: Shito Ryu
KATA LIST: Chatan Yara Kushanku, Kukiren, Superinpe, Anan, Anan Dai
HOMEBASE: Los Angeles County

Sakura, 8, giving the “shaka” sign in Hawaii

Sakura, 8, giving the “shaka” sign in Hawaii

Sakura addresses students from Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu

Sakura Kokumai, 26, is the United States’ best hope to win a medal in karate next year in Tokyo at the Summer Games.

A young Sakura at age 8

Actress Tamlyn Tomita (right) with Sakura Kokumai at the San Fernando Valley Obon in July

Posing with a young fan at the Nikkei Games banquet on July 25

Sakura addresses students from Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu.

Sakura Kokumai (center) in Little Tokyo with instructors from Matsubayashi Shōrin Ryū

Sakura Kokumai and her brother, Alex

Visiting the Pacific Citizen office in Los Angeles
As such, the 26-year-old, Hawaii-born Kokumai also appears to be one of — if not the — United States’ best hope to win a medal in karate, which is making its Olympics debut at next year’s Summer Games in Tokyo.

According to Kokumai, the karate competition will be divided into two categories (subdivided by respective gender): kumite, where competitors in the same weight class actually throw hands and feet, and kata, where competitors are judged for how well they perform a preset form or series of movements traditionally used to train karateka in the fundamentals and practical applications for a particular hand, foot, elbow or knee strike.

“The category in which Kokumai hopes to compete is female individual kata,” Kokumai told the *Pacific Citizen* exclusively.

If she makes the cut, Kokumai will be just one of 10 women kata competitors from the entire world vying for a medal of gold, silver or bronze. (As the host nation, Japan automatically gets one of the 10 spots per gender.)

The points she referred to are called “Olympic points,” and competitors need to accrue as many as possible in the run-up to the Games. Even now, Kokumai is currently attending the Pan American Games in Lima, Peru, which run until Aug. 11.

Kokumai will be a favorite there, having in mid-July been named the 2019 Female Athlete of the Year at the USA Karate Nationals, after her eighth first-place finish in the category “Female Elite Kata.”

For Kokumai, currently ranked No. 1 in the U.S., the training and travel regimen between now and the beginning of the next Olympics on July 24, 2020, will be training and participating in World Karate Federation and USA National Karate-do Federation sanctioned Premier League tournaments and competitions at a rate of about one per month, traveling to spots around the world so that she can qualify. In fact, the Hawaii-born Sakura Kokumai said that she is the only member of her family — she also has a brother two years younger — to practice the martial art, which can trace its origins to Okinawa Prefecture, Southern China and India. Her motivation for studying karate, which translates to “empty hand,” has evolved over the years.

Kokumai told the *Pacific Citizen*: “Everything I learned in karate, I can apply it to life outside of the sport.”

But also because of her multicultural and bilingual upbringing, Kokumai attended college in Japan, first at Doshisha University, where she focused on linguistics and education, then to Waseda University for a master’s degree in international studies. She also, however, continued to practice karate along the way.

“It’s pretty scary not to have plans after the Olympics,” she continued, “but I obviously will be involved in karate. I won’t retire from that — ever.”
FORT SILL PROTESTS CONTINUE

Tsuru for Solidarity and Buddhist priests join together to voice opposition against the unjust detention of migrant youth.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LINDA MORRIS, TSURU FOR SOLIDARITY

FILM REVIEW: ‘THE FAR WELL’

Dual immersion and family are depicted in Lulu Wang’s wonderful telling of an immigrant family.

By Connie K. Ho, P.C. Contributor

With Warner Bros. Pictures’ “Crazy Rich Asians” premiering last year, ABC’s “Fresh Off the Boat” currently on television and Disney’s “Mulan” set to debut next year, there seems to be a rising tide for Asian American representation in Hollywood. Not since the telling of “The Joy Luck Club” in the 1990s has the stories of Asian American families appeared so frequently. The recent release of writer-director Lulu Wang’s story heralds another wonderful telling of an immigrant family.

“The Farewell” centers on Billi (played by Awkwafina), who lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., and her grandmother (Zhao Shuzhen), who lives in Changchun, China. They communicate regularly through a close relationship, and it devastates Billi when she finds out that her grandmother has been diagnosed with cancer and handed a death sentence.

Billi’s family has decided not to tell her grandmother the diagnosis, and they go about planning a return home to China under the guise of a wedding for a cousin, who is marrying a Japanese woman. Billi is asked not to attend the reunion, with her parents afraid that she will blow their cover. She decides to go anyway, and the narrative follows the family’s actions while she is there.

Wang’s story was first told as a segment on the radio show “This American Life,” and much of “The Farewell” dovetails with the piece; on the clip, Wang described how she came to China to spend time with her grandmother and how she was asked to keep the same ruse for her family’s sake.

Even though much of the film is in Chinese with subtitles, it is a Close the Camps chant, he said, “This is nothing. If you bring the children here, every one of us represents thousands and thousands of people back home. And we will come back. You haven’t seen anything yet.”

Tsuru for Solidarity members who participated in the rally with Ishii included Becca Asaki, Linda Morris, Lauren Sumida and Carl Takei. Williams was able to organize a Sangha Support Group comprised of 129 Buddhist priests and laypersons, guided by a seven-member steering committee.

Buddhist priests who were able to attend the Fort Sill rally included:
• Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams, committee chair and author of “American Sutra”
• Rev. William Briones, Los Angeles’ Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (Nishi Hongwanji)
• Rev. Ryuji Hayashi, Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin of Los Angeles
• Rev. Shumyo Kojima, Zenshuji Soto Mission
• Rev. Myozen Joan Amaral, Zen Center of North Shore
• Rev. Gyokoku Carlson, Dharma Rain Zen Center

More than 400 people from across the country converged on Lawton, Okla., on July 26 to participate in a second protest at Fort Sill, where the Trump Administration announced plans to incarcerate an estimated 1,400 asylum-seeking migrant children as early as next month.

Tsuru for Solidarity members and a delegation of Buddhist priests joined the protest rally. Many of the Japanese Americans and their supporters had participated in a similar protest rally in front of Fort Sill on June 22.

Protesters braved the more than 100-degree heat and closed down the street leading into Fort Sill. Unlike the heavy-handed tactics taken by the military police on June 22, there were no visible military police or Lawton police officers present at this protest.

Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams led the delegation of Buddhist priests. Following a Buddhist memorial service, Williams placed leis on a field artillery display in front of Fort Sill.

Before Mike Ishii, one of the co-founders of Tsuru for Solidarity — created by Japanese American survivors and descendants of former WWII prison camps for those of Japanese ancestry — led the group in a “Close the Camps” chant, he said, “This is nothing. If you bring the children here, every one of us represents thousands and thousands of people back home. And we will come back. You haven’t seen anything yet.”

Tsuru for Solidarity members who participated in the rally with Ishii included Becca Asaki, Linda Morris, Lauren Sumida and Carl Takei. Williams was able to organize a Sangha Support Group comprised of 129 Buddhist priests and laypersons, guided by a seven-member steering committee.

Buddhist priests who were able to attend the Fort Sill rally included:
• Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams, committee chair and author of “American Sutra”
• Rev. William Briones, Los Angeles’ Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (Nishi Hongwanji)
• Rev. Ryuji Hayashi, Koyasan Beikoku Betsuin of Los Angeles
• Rev. Shumyo Kojima, Zenshuji Soto Mission
• Rev. Myozen Joan Amaral, Zen Center of North Shore
• Rev. Gyokoku Carlson, Dharma Rain Zen Center

See FORT SILL on page 12
AKASHI-KAMA
Kakehashi Project alum Alec Nakashima designs his new sustainable clothing collection with direct inspiration from his memories of Japan.

By Allison Haramoto,
P.C. Executive Editor

To say that Alec Nakashima experienced a true “aha” moment in Japan is an understatement.

While on his first trip there in 2018 as a member of the Kakehashi Project — a program sponsored by the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by the JACL and the Japan International Coordination Center that allows young Asian Americans to travel to Japan to gain a greater understanding of Japanese culture and history — Nakashima was instantly drawn to the country’s beauty and cultural significance.

While on tour of Mount Bandai during a homestay near Fukushima with his host family, Nakashima, then a product manager for a Silicon Valley company, was inspired to take a huge leap of faith. The result? The idea for his original clothing line, Akashi-Kama, was born. Nakashima, who is a 27-year-old fourth/fifth generation Japanese American originally from Lodi, Calif., said, “This was all birthed from an idea I had on my incredible Kakehashi experience. After I got home, I kept looking for something that blended the beauty of the Japanese aesthetic with an American influence, a product uniquely paralleling my Japanese and American heritage.

“I had this desire to create something that blended that concept and design — a fusion of these two distinct worlds,” Nakashima continued. “But I couldn’t find anything that I was picturing in my mind, so I decided to design my own.”

Akashi-Kama launched online officially in May after Nakashima spent nearly 11-plus months coming up with designs, sourcing materials, taking production meetings and finding manufacturers to bring his sketches to life, each reflecting what being “JA” means to him. “‘Akashi’ comes from a place in Japan, but it also comes from a middle section of my last name, and ‘kama’ refers to color,” said Nakashima of his clothing line’s name. “I wanted it to be something that you’ve never had any mental association with, something that’s really unique.”

Having a product background and an entrepreneurial spirit helped him, but it really comes down to hard work, family support and faith in his product that spurred Nakashima onward. “I left my full-time job to consult part-time so that I could do Akashi-Kama. I really believed in it — the soul of it is so strong, our hardworking history inspired me to see it through. I had to teach myself to push through obstacles and indicators that told me to stop, but I knew this collection could make an impact if I saw it through,” Nakashima said.

Having found a garment manufacturer in Oakland, Calif., and a Japanese American-owned distributor that imports fabric from Japan in Torrance, Calif., Nakashima then had the help of his wife, Lacey, who is a marketing professional, to assist him in establishing Akashi-Kama’s website and social media presence.

The first collection of Akashi-Kama launched featuring Japanese Noragi jackets that are cut and tapered with a more modern American flair.

Featuring three colors — indigo, red and black — the Noragi designs, which are sized for both men and women in XS-L, also feature gold Akashi-stamped aglets.

“You would never find the gold ends on a traditional Japanese jacket. I thought it was a cool way to add my design and flair on it. It adds movement to the design and are meant to be worn untied,” said Nakashima.

And each item, from the stitching to the tags, has been designed in a sustainable way in the Bay Area and completely self-funded. “I’m really particular about the product quality. There were a lot of shortcuts we could of taken, ways to cut corners, but my vision from Day 1 was to be true to my heritage. I couldn’t give it any less,” Nakashima stated.

In addition to the Noragi jackets, the collection also features T-shirts and hoodies that feature a Mount Bandai logo.

The response since Akashi-Kama launched has been extremely positive. “We had a modest 125 Noragi jackets for our first run,” said Nakashima. “The incredible thing is that through the ability of marketing and community word of mouth, we’ve sold out of most of our stuff.”

Which is great news, as Akashi-Kama’s second collection is set to launch in early August. “What has been really cool for me to see is that we have people of all age ranges buying them,” said Nakashima. “It’s been eye-opening. Anyone can wear these designs. It’s timeless.”

So what does Nakashima’s family think about Akashi-Kama? “They are behind me 100 percent. They are entrepreneurs (Nakashima’s grandparents own Pacific Bowl in Stockton, Calif., and had a chain of grocery stores there), and they know this is my passion.”

Nakashima plans to continue for as long as possible. “I really want to keep telling our story through my designs. It’s my unique voice — I have to stay true to my experience as a Japanese American.”

For more information on Akashi-Kama, visit https://www.akashi-kama.com or visit Instagram @akashi_kama.
CALENDAR

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

NATIONAL

The 2019 JACL National Convention
Salt Lake City, UT
July 31-Aug. 4
Little America Hotel
500 Main St.
Get on! Join JACL at its annual National Convention in Salt Lake City! Registration is open! Don’t miss this opportunity to connect with JACL from across the country as the organization continues its civil rights advocacy mission.

PSW

Buddhist Temple of San Diego Obon
San Diego, CA
Aug. 3; 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Price: Entrance fee for Japanese Friendship Garden; free after 4 p.m.
Buddhist Temple of San Diego 2215 Pan American Road E
Price: Free
Buddhist Temple of San Diego

PNW

Oboen Festival 2019 at Oregon Buddhist Temple
Portland, OR
Aug. 3-9; 9-9 p.m.
Oregon Buddhist Temple
3720 S.E. 34th Ave.
Price: Free
Oregon Buddhist Temple

MDC

Japanese Obon Festival
St. Paul, MN
Aug. 18; 3-9 p.m.
Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Como Park
2225 Estabrook Dr.
Price: Adults, $5; Children/Seniors, $3; Free for children under 3.
Bonsai, martial arts, singing, dancing, drumming, delicious food and other aspects of Japanese culture will be featured at this family-friendly event, reminiscent of Japan’s annual Obon holiday.
The day will culminate at dusk with the lantern lighting. Six stone lanterns and floating paper lanterns will create a vision of peacefulness and harmony to commemorate the dead.

EDC

‘Prince Shotoku: The Secrets Within’
Cambridge, MA
Thru Aug. 11
Harvard Art Museum
32 Quincy St.
Don’t miss this rare opportunity to view the significant 13th-century Japanese sculpture icon “Prince Shotoku at Age Two.” The prince is regarded as the founder of Buddhism in Japan. At age 2, he was believed to have taken several steps forward, faced east and praised the Buddha. A sacred relic, the eyeball of the Buddha, then appeared between his hands. This sculpture — the oldest and finest of its kind — depicts that miraculous moment.

View photographs and narratives telling the remarkable story of the Japanese American men and women who trained as linguists at the MISLS at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling during World War II.
Info: Visit mhs.org/event/7726.

Chiharu Obata: An American Modern
Sacramento, CA
Thru Sept. 25
Crocker Art Museum
216 O St.
Price: Free for members; Adults $12; Students/Students/Military $8; Youth $6
Born in Japan, Chiharu Obata emigrated to the U.S. in 1903 and began a seven-decade career that saw him emerging as a leading figure in the Northern California art scene and as an influential educator. This exhibition offers more than 100 paintings, drawings, prints and personal items from the artist, many of which have never been on public display. They range from the artist’s early formal studies as a student in Japan to the California landscapes for which he is most recognized.

Toro Nagashi: Floating Lantern Ceremony
Fresno, CA
Aug. 10; 8-10 p.m.
Woodward Park Lake next to Japanese Garden
114 W. Audubon Dr.
Price: Lanterns, $25
First held in 1946, Toro Nagashi ("flowing lanterns") is a Japanese ceremony in which participants float glowing paper lanterns down a river to guide the spirit of the nonliving back to the afterlife after their visit during Obon. The cost to purchase a lantern is $25. Instead of a time of mourning, Toro Nagashi is meant to be more a joyful celebration.

CCDC

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Info: Call (210) 965-9050, ext. 104 or email info@jas-social.org.

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Quincy August 2019 Moon Festival
Boston, MA
Aug. 18; Noon-5 p.m.
Quincy Center Coddington St.
Price: Free
Join the City of Quincy at its August signature event, awarded Best Street Festival 2018. Come for an afternoon of food trucks, a craft beer garden, Asian cultural performances, music, arts and crafts, a kid’s zone with petting zoo and much more!

Royal Celebrations: Japanese Prints and Postcards
Boston, MA
Thru Sept. 15
Museum of Fine Arts
465 Huntington Ave.
As Japan welcomes a new emperor, the MFA offers an exhibit of prints, postcards and illustrated books from its collections that depict important events in the Japanese imperial family from 1868-present.

For MORE INFO:
pacificcitizen.org
(213) 620-1767

ADVERTISE HERE
Events in the calendar section are listed based on space availability. Place a Spotlight ad with photos of your event for maximum exposure.
MEMORIAM

Adachi, Michael, 75, Los Angeles, CA, May 5; he is survived by his longtime friend, Cathy Lewis; siblings, Kellene and Patrick; he is also survived by nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Aramaki, Dennis Nobuo, 75, Northridge, CA, April 28; he was predeceased by his wife, Nancy Akiko; he is survived by his children, Liane M. (Albert Bradford) and Eric; siblings, Kenneth T. (Kei Chai) and Ethel H. (Roy) Kubo; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Enoki, Fumiko, 85, Torrance, CA, May 7; he was predeceased by his husband, Rev. Toshihisa Enoki; she is survived by her son, Ralph (Momo); her brother, Harry Fujimoto; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Goodrich, Emiko, 94, Pleasant View, UT, May 23.

Hayashi, Clara, 89, Whittier, CA, June 12; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Tule Lake WRA Center in CA, where she met her future husband; she was predeceased by her husband, Ken; sons, Ken and Scott; daughters, Jon (Karlie) and Isabella Kajikawa; half-sisters, (Wayne) Phillips; sisters, Courtney Kajikawa (Brandon Oshiro) and Kristen Kajikawa; half-sisters, Allison and Isabella Kajikawa; stepbrother, Nick Wong; he is also survived by a nephew.

Kajikawa, Matthew Wataru, 35, Torrance, CA, May 22; he is survived by his father, Norman (Barbara) Kajikawa; mother, Diane (Wayne) Phillips; sisters, Courtney Kajikawa (Brandon Oshiro) and Kristen Kajikawa; half-sisters, Allison and Isabella Kajikawa; stepbrother, Nick Wong; he is also survived by a nephew.

Mikawa, Chiyoko (Fujimoto), 95, Los Angeles, CA, May 12; during WWII, she was incarcerated at the Gila River WRA Center in AZ; she was predeceased by her husband, Ben Mikawa; she is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Ogawa, Tayeko, 94, Sacramento, CA, April 23; she was predeceased by her husband, George; daughters, Gale Ogawa, Jeannie Ogawa and Nancy Lee (Stevy); she is also survived by many nieces and nephews and other relatives.

PLACE A TRIBUTE

In Memoriam

Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of $20/column inch.

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

Kubota Mortuary

Blue Mortuary

Greene & Goshorn

Fukui Mortuary

PLACE A TRIBUTE

‘In Memoriam’ is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis.

OBITUARIES

July 26-Aug. 15, 2019

11
REIMAGINE EVERYTHING
A CAREGIVER’S JOURNEY

By Scott Tanaka, MSW

I t was been some time since I have written an article for the Pacific Citizen, so it is good to be back! I am still in my role at the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of AARP Foundation, AARP and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. My efforts currently focus on increasing the diversity of stakeholders and coalition building for the Future of Nursing: “Campaign for Action,” a national initiative of those same organizations to transform health care through nursing and build healthier communities for everyone in America. I also support the campaign’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Committee, state Action Coalitions, consultants and advocacy efforts concerning building a culture of health and promoting health equity.

Last year, I had the honor of moderating a panel on preparing to care on behalf of AARP at the JACL National Convention in Philadelphia. It was an honor for me, as I got to speak as someone who is passionate about helping our older adults and someone who has worked as a social worker with family caregivers. The panel was titled “Caregiving at Any Age — A Multigenerational JA Perspective,” and it included Lindsey Anne Keiko Wong, a millennial, who, at her young age, has already served as a caregiver for both her uncle and her grandmother. She’s a Yonsei on her Japanese American side and a third-generation Chinese American who lives in Oakland, Calif. Wong spoke eloquently about accepting her role as a caregiver in her 20s and how she gave culturally-appropriate care for the JA and Chinese sides of her family.

Gil Asakawa, current JACL Mile High chapter president, published author and former Editorial Board chair of the Pacific Citizen, also joined Wong and shared about how earlier in the year, he and his brother moved their mother into a memory care center. He spoke about his mother’s deterioration over the years and the difficulties of placing his mom, who is an Issei from Hokkaido, in a place without any Japanese-speaking residents or staff, and how she lights up when he brings her familiar Japanese snacks such as osenbe or mochi manju.

The final two panelists, Heather Harada and Kevin Onishi, are employees of Keiro, an organization that focuses on improving the quality of life for older adults and their caregivers in the Japanese American and Japanese community in the Los Angeles, Orange County and Ventura County areas of Southern California. They spoke about Keiro’s services and the organization’s mission of serving older JAs, as well as the difficult decisions families have to make when a loved one needs to be placed in a facility, whether it’s at Sakura Gardens in Los Angeles or...