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Ebay Withdraws Manzanar Drawings Listing.

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COMMUNITY’S CHILD

Comic Artist Yumi Sakugawa on Racism, Identity and Art.

Yumi Sakugawa volunteered and performed for the Tuesday Night Café, a free arts and performance series in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF YUMI SAKUGAWA
Ebay WithdrawsListing for Manzanar Drawings

The artwork is removed on the sixth anniversary of the Rago auction, thanks to a coalition of community members and the artist’s family.

By JACS Consortium

I n a victory for Japanese Americans fighting the sale and commodification of World War II Japanese American concentration camp art and artifacts, eBay on April 7 withdrew the sale of 20 Manzanar drawings hours before they were to be sold.

Japanese American Olympian Racially Harassed; JACL Creates Anti-Hate Page

A s AAPs across the nation continue to be victims of racially motivated hate crimes, National JACL has created an Anti-Hate page on its website (www.jacl.org) that contains vital resource information.

The civil rights organization on its website stated, “JACL works to eradicate the use of negative stereotypes and misperceptions about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. To accomplish this, the JACL monitors and combats hate crimes and hate incidents including defamation and racial/ethnic profiling.”

On April 1, Japanese American Olympic Sakura Kokumai was racially harassed by an unidentified man while training at Grijalva park in Orange County, Calif., Kokumai will be representing the U.S. in karate at the upcoming Summer Games in Tokyo. The man began yelling at Kokumai as she recorded the exchange on her phone, frightened at the alarming tirade but remaining calm so as not to provoke him further. Throughout the heated exchange, bystanders did not offer help to the athlete. Only toward the end did a woman offer assistance — something Kokumai is still trying to process.

“This could of happened to anyone, if it wasn’t me, someone could of gotten hurt,” Kokumai wrote on Instagram. “We need to take care of each other. Why is it so hard to treat people with respect… . . I was angry, frustrated, confused, scared, but I was also heartbroken to see and experience how people could be so cold. . . . Please take care of each other. Please look out for one another.”

Kokumai, who was featured in the July 26-Aug. 15, 2019, issue of the PC., is widely regarded as America’s best hope to win a medal in karate, which is making its Olympics debut in July; at press time, she did not report the incident with police.

— P.C. Staff

LISTING REMOVED!

A community victory for Japanese Americans, as eBay removes the sale listing of 20 Manzanar drawings just hours before they were to be sold.

JACL MEMBER?

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

The PC’s mission is to ‘educate on the past Japanese American experience and preserve, promote and help the current and future AAPI communities.’

‘I’m glad to see the Pacific Citizen growing and evolving with its website, and especially LOVE the much easier-to-navigate digital archives. It’s a treasure trove for JAs to learn about our community’s history, and for scholars and journalists looking to connect the past with the present. Thanks for the improvements, P.C.’

— Gil Asakawa

HOW TO REACH US

Email: pc@ pacificcitizen.org

Crime: www.pacificcitizen.org

Tel: (213) 620-1767

Mail: 123 Ellison S. Onizuka St., Suite 313

Los Angeles, CA 90012

STAFF

Executive Editor: Allison Haramoto

Senior Editor: Digital & Social Media

George Johnston

Business Manager: Susan Yokoyama

Production Artist: Marie Samonte

Circulation: Eva Ting

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March 16 for Asian Americans: We know that as the day a single man went out in Atlanta and bought a handgun with just a cursory background check and no waiting period. He proceeded to use that gun to immediately shoot nine people, eight fatally, with the primary reason for targeting being a deep-seated hatred toward Asian women.

The same day in Phoenix, Ariz., five people were shot, four fatally. The next day, in Stockton, Calif., five people were shot in a drive-by shooting. And the next day in two separate shootings in Gresham, Ore., and New Orleans, La., eight people were shot. A week after the Atlanta shootings, in Boulder, Colo., 11 people were shot, 10 fatally. Through the end of March, there have been a total of 126 separate mass-shooting events of four or more victims, with a total of 148 deaths and 485 injured.

I would venture that most of us have only heard of a handful of these events. On March 14, 15 people were shot in Chicago, but only two fatalities. Not enough deaths to pass the ever higher and higher sensationalism threshold for national news coverage.

The 2018 Small Arms Survey conducted by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, estimated 393 million civilian-owned guns in the U.S., or 1.2 guns for every American man, woman and child.

The U.S. holds 46 percent of the total number of guns owned by civilians. Perhaps even more disturbing is that American civilians own more guns than the world’s military and police forces combined, which hold only 146 million guns total. Our own U.S. military and police forces are estimated to possess just over 5.5 million small arms combined.

I think back to the 1980s movie “Wall Street” and the famous line, “How many yachts can you water-ski behind? How much is enough?”

The question here perhaps to pose to Charlton Heston and the NRA, “How many guns can we pray from your hands?”

Here, the answer is actually no more than two. And yet, the NRA and the gun manufacturers tell us the answer to increasing gun violence is more guns. If everyone has a gun, we will all be safe.

Again, referencing back to the 80s, that strategy is chillingly reminiscent of the Cold War tactic of Mutually Assured Destruction. The result of that strategy was a ballooning deficit in the U.S. with escalating deficit spending and the ultimate bankruptcy of the Soviet Union.

Yes, we won the Cold War but only because the Soviets couldn’t spend as much as we did. The only winners were the defense contractors and arms manufacturers to arm themselves.

We must resist this false narrative that guns protect. The reality is that a gun in the home is more likely to end with tragic consequences.

The Department of Justice estimates that 60 percent of all gun deaths are suicides. While it is the mass shootings, and the mass-fatality ones, more specifically, that draw the attention, guns are much more dangerous in the house where they are kept.

Although thankfully rare, even more tragic are the narratives of children finding a gun and shooting a sibling or themselves. Pro-gun advocates will decry these incidents as rare and sensational, but the equal response is that the narrative of a gun actually being successfully used in self-defense is equally rare.

One might say the horse has already left the barn in that there are already so many guns out there. But that assumes there is just that one horse. In the case of gun sales, there are many more sales waiting to happen, and we can do something about that. In the case of the Atlanta shooting, the gun was purchased the day of the shooting under what are some of the most lax gun sale regulations in the country. Something as simple as a mandatory waiting period could very well mean there would be eight more people still alive today.

Expanding background checks and requiring responsible retail practices from gun sellers. Requiring gun owners to take responsibility for their firearms to secure them properly. These are just a few fundamental, common-sense laws that should be easy to pass. Gun rights advocates always talk about how they are law-abiding citizens. If that’s the case, they should have no fear of taking responsibility for their rights.

David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization’s Washington, D.C., office.
More than 200 concerned people gathered peacefully in the late afternoon on March 20 between the Friendship Knot and the Space Shuttle Challenger model on Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka Street.

They were there to follow a flower wreath carried circuitously through Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo to a rally site at Frances Hashimoto Plaza near the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center to be greeted by the thunderous drumming provided by East Los Angeles Taiko.

Atop the wreath was the number 118, which organizers Save Our Seniors assert was the number of residents who up to that point had died of Covid-19 during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic while residing at Kei-Ai eldercare facilities purchased by the for-profit Pacifica Cos. LLC in early 2016 from the nonprofit Keiro for $41 million.

The rally took place in the shadow of a mass killing in Atlanta, Ga., on March 16 that left eight people dead, with six of the victims women of Asian ancestry, leading many of the speakers to connect that massacre to the 118 deaths to a more subtle—but no-less-deadly form of anti-Asian violence, which has spiked alarmingly in the last 12 months.

David Monkawa, who served as the event’s master of ceremonies, explicitly made the connection.

“Pacific — I don’t know what they’re thinking, but they made a mistake. They’re picking on people that pursued justice for over 50 years. Over two generations, to people that never give up. Why the hell would you want to pick a fight with them? With us?” he asked, making reference to the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, and eliciting cheers from the crowd.

“We... do not understand why Pacifica volunteered to open the doors for Kei-Ai L.A., to be a designated Covid facility,” said Francine Imai of the recently formed Sakura ICF Family Council and one of the rally’s many speakers. “The elderly and Covid do not mix. Many of the residents were 80-100 years of age, which ended in the result of 118 total unnecessary deaths. The greedy-to-receive monetary compensation for Covid patients is unforgivable.

“Rally’s many speakers, “The elderly and Covid do not mix. Many of the residents were 80-100 years of age, which ended in the result of 118 total unnecessary deaths. The greedy-to-receive monetary compensation for Covid patients is unforgivable.”

One of the biggest concerns of SOS is that the approximately 64 residents of the Sakura ICF would, if and when discharged, be exposed to SARS-CoV-2, which has exacted an enormous toll nationwide on elderly people of all backgrounds.

Speaking on behalf of SOS was co-chair Traci Toshiyuki Imamura, whose 106-year-old grandmother died of Covid-19 while at the Kei-Ai L.A. Los Angeles Healthcare on Lincoln Park Avenue.

“We still have questions about the quality at the Kei-Ai L.A. nursing home... We want to know why did the owner-operator apply for L.A. County-designated status, which means they do take in Covid-positive patients as overflow patients from the hospitals? And why did L.A. County grant them this designation when Kei-Ai L.A. had substantiated violations in the past two years?” asked Imamura, on who then cited such red flags as multiple improper infection-control violations, inadequate supplies of personal protective equipment, and more.

“One question that haunts me: Why are there so many Covid deaths?”

Other speakers included Rev. Noriaki Ito (Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple), Rev. Ray Fukumoto (Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ja), Mark Maasoka (Nikkei Progressives), Taiji Miyawaka (Save Our Seniors), Miya Iwataki (Little Tokyo Historical Society), Tiffany Lam (Chinatown Community for Equitable Development), Carlos Montes (Centro Community Service Organization), Nancy Takayama (JACL PSW), James Ahn (Korean American Federation of L.A.) and Rev. Allison Mark (Faith United Methodist Church).

As a result of the meeting, the listing was removed under eBay’s Artifacts Policy, which regulates the sale of artifacts obtained from government or protected land. The company is also reaching out to the seller to attempt to facilitate the return of the drawings to the artist’s family, which as of press time, remains unresolved.

Members of the JASC will continue to work with eBay to apply the Artifacts Policy to other WWII Japanese American concentration camp artifacts that are listed for sale.

“Japanese Americans stand on the shoulders of those who’ve been fighting for the right to reclaim our material histories, such as Indigenous movements to protect sacred land, Black Lives Matter on monuments and international rethinking of artifacts hoarded by colonialists. The online auction platforms are one corner of the activity to sell those objects,” said Ukai. “Ebay’s delisting of the Manzanar drawings and saying they will work with us is a huge step, and we’re grateful for their action. Now, we turn to working with them on the details, such as identifying keywords for filtering.”

On the sixth anniversary of the Rago auction, which was stopped by online community mobilization, the legal actions of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and the Japanese American National Museum (permanently acquiring the collections), the April 7 victory came swiftly thanks to the coalition-building and community organizing work done in the past.

“The day we met with eBay was close to the six-year anniversary of when we launched the Facebook page Japanese American History Not for Sale on April 8, 2015,” said Ukai.

“It shows how we as a community are much more organized and united today. Fifty-nine organizations and 29 individuals signed the letter in one day, with JACL and JANM as leaders, working shoulder to shoulder with pilgrimage groups, JACL chapters, activist groups, museums and many others.”

Special acknowledgment to Brigham, Embrey, Ira, Kimiko Marr, Takei and Ukai for their organizing efforts, JANM for its leadership in the public awareness campaign and the broader community for its resounding support.

— Additional reporting by the P.C.
GO FOR BROKE STAMP TO BE RELEASED BY USPS ON JUNE 3

The first city of issue for the stamp will be Los Angeles, where Stamp Our Story began its campaign in 2005.

By Stamp Our Story Campaign

“The Always proud of your heritage.”
— Fusa Takahashi (93), Stamp Our Story Founder/Co-Chair and Go For Broke Veteran Widow

The Nisei Go For Broke Stamp features a photo of Hawaii Nisei soldier Shirouko “Whitey” Yamamoto.

PHOTO: USPS

The U.S. Postal Service has announced that the official release date of the “Go For Broke Japanese American Soldiers of World War II Forever Stamp” is June 3. The first city of issue for the stamp will be Los Angeles, California, where Takahashi and her friends started the stamp campaign in 2005. The little stamp with a big story cannot come soon enough for its supporters, especially in light of the rise in anti-Asian American violence and hate crimes.

The USPS is currently working with the Stamp Our Story Campaign and community partners that rallied for the stamp such as the Japanese American Veterans Association, Go For Broke National Education Center, Japanese American Citizens League, National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, Nisei Veterans Legacy and Friends of Minidoka, and many others. The goal is to collaborate and assist the USPS in its national rollout for the stamp.

be United States National Day of Service is being made, and special regional stamp dedications are being developed across the nation to commemorate the inspiring American legacy of the Go For Broke soldiers. Organizers seek to celebrate the release of the historic stamp, which is the first to feature the image of an Asian American soldier. The stamp is also one of only a few in a U.S. postal history to feature a historical Asian American Pacific Islander subject.

Stamp Our Story is the coalition of family and friends of the Nisei soldiers that backed the proposal for the Go For Broke Soldiers Stamp and includes the many organizations that have supported the cause. Due to public petitioning by Stamp Our Story, a multitude of lawmakers across the country from both sides of the aisle sent letters of support for the proposal to the Postmaster General, which included 91 congressional lawmakers, three governors, seven state assemblies and numerous mayors and local officials. The campaign even received the overseas support from French citizens and members of the community that were liberated from German forces by the Go For Broke Soldiers. Formerly called the “Nisei World War II Soldiers Stamp Campaign,” the effort was started in 2005 by three California Nisei women who each endured incarceration in U.S. detention camps during World War II: Takahashi (93) of Granite Bay, Calif.; Aiko O. King (93) of Camarillo, Calif.; and the late Chiz Ohira of Gardena, Calif.

Two of the women are widows of U.S. Army Go For Broke veterans of World War II. Takahashi’s husband, Kazuo, was a Military Intelligence Service veteran from San Francisco. Ohira’s husband, Ted, was a 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team veteran from Makaweli, Hawaii.

“in the past, our founders have each expressed a wish that their husbands bring people and organizations together to remember and honor what the Go For Broke Soldiers accomplished and be reminded of their American legacy that impacts us all today,” said Stamp Our Story Co-Chair Wayne Osako, who has helped organizing over 700 stamp campaign founders since 2006. “Organizations such as JAVA, GBFNEC, JACL, NJAFM and the many veterans family organizations have been friends of the campaign, and we are forever grateful. We would like to highlight that the perseverance of the veterans and the. . .”

Takahashi shared the following statement to supporters: “We thank all of you who have supported the stamp campaign over the past 15 years. It took the support from many, many organizations and individuals to make this stamp become a reality. We invite you to celebrate the stamp with us when it comes out. And remember to always be proud of your heritage. As Nisei, it’s what our parents taught us that made these soldiers give their best. Thank you!”

The USPS named the stamp after the “Go For Broke” motto of the U.S. Army’s 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, which now commonly refers to all of the American men and women of Japanese heritage who served in the war. Most served in the 100th/442nd RCT, Military Intelligence Service, 139th Engineer Construction Battalion, Women’s Army Corps (WAC), Cadet Nurse Corps and Army Nurse Corps.

Inaugural Class of FEMALE BSA EAGLE SCOUTS Recognized

Isabella Hom is among the few Nikkei’s to earn scouting’s highest rank.

Oy Scouts of America, now Scouts BSA, began forming troops for girls in 2019. In February, the first female Eagle Scouts were honored in an official national recognition ceremony, and among those lauded were Michigan’s Isabella Hom.

Hom, whose family is a longtime member of the Detroit JACL, became the first female Eagle Scout from Troop 1707G from Troy, Mich. She served as the bugler for the national BSA ceremony webcast “Be the Change.”

“Proud to represent the next generation of scouting. I learned the value of many skills — including organization and communication — which I will use in many aspects of my life,” said Hom of her achievement. “I am glad that girls now have the chance to participate in the same Boy Scout program that their brothers and fathers have experienced. For me, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout is the culmination of a considerable amount of hard work and dedication.”

Attaining the rank of Eagle is a feat few attain. According to Scouts BSA, all of scouts nationally who join the program, only 4 percent attain this rank, which requires 21 merit badges (13 of which are required for Eagle), a minimum of six months as a Life Scout and have completed a leadership community service project. “I was under a tight deadline to join the inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts — it meant finishing the rank of Eagle Scout in two years,” Hom told the Pacific Citizen. “Being a scout allowed me to experience leadership opportunities, work with many members of the troop and attain personal growth. I learned about servant leadership and had many chances to practice it in different roles, such as a Troop Guide, Bugler and Senior Patrol Leader. Those roles allowed me to embrace chances that I didn’t have in other youth groups.”

“Being in scouts can lead to enjoyable lifelong community service,” Hom continued. “Isabella’s grandparents have served almost two decades as National Park Service volunteers for the Manzanar National Historic Site. Like their grandparents, I hope that my children will continue to follow the scout slogan: ‘Do a Good Turn Daily.’”

— P.C. Staff

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HOM FAMILY

Isabella Hom from Troy, Mich., recently became an Eagle Scout as part of BSA Scouting’s inaugural female class.
COMMUNITY’S CHILD: COMIC ARTIST ON RACISM, IDENTITY AND ART

Before becoming a celebrated artist, Yumi Sakugawa cut her teeth in community work and laid bare her soul in the pages of this very newspaper.

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

Once there was a comic artist who filled the pages of books with drawings of humanoids going on earthly and outer space adventures. Sometimes, the humanoids were in the shape of bunnies or one-eyed beings navigating very human emotions and relationships. People found the artist’s drawings and writing very relatable, so they shared her work on social media and eventually bought her books and merchandise. The artist grew her brand to international acclaim.

What people do not see are the roots that link artist Yumi Sakugawa to the Asian American community. In Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo, Sakugawa cut her teeth in community work, hewed a place for herself in community theater and laid bare her soul in the pages of this very newspaper in a monthly column called “Memoirs of a Non-Geisha.”

When her community was in pain from rising anti-Asian sentiment and violence, Sakugawa, 36, did what came most naturally to her — she used art to amplify messages of healing and solidarity.

In a March 30 Instagram post, Sakugawa illustrated close-up images of faces — one stoic, the other crying — around a political theorist’s powerful words: “It is easy to feel helpless. But that doesn’t mean we are weak.” Helpless and strong aptly describe the tension of the Asian American soul in the weeks after a gunman in Atlanta targeted and killed Asian American women working at massage businesses. Since then, anti-Asian attacks continue to pop up across the nation to remind us all that we are descendants of a brutal American legacy.

“I feel the frustration of feeling like a silent minority,” said Sakugawa, who is Japanese Okinawan American.

Modern-day activism is more nuanced than it used to be, but preconceived notions of an activist needing to be loud and commanding continue to prevail. Sakugawa is not that. In fact, she is the absolute opposite. Her voice is soft and lilting and often breaks into a musical laugh. She seems infinitely more likely to offer warm hugs than firm handshakes, but Sakugawa is a fierce activist for the community she loves.

On the same weekend Americans took to the streets to rally against racialized violence, Sakugawa facilitated a donation-based virtual webinar for Asian Americans and allies to meditate and move through their emotions. Her webinar raised $1,650, which was donated to the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders community fund. The fund has raised more than $5 million through GoFundMe.org.

The artist is a self-described introvert. Marching in the streets with a bullhorn might not be her thing, but she wields a unique power. “There’s a quiet thunder. There is a quiet storm,” said Janet Lo, who facilitated the movement part of the webinar with Sakugawa.

The artist stays true to her values and makes an impact.

COMMUNITY ROOTS

A little under a decade ago, when Sakugawa was in her 20s, she already had a respectable following on Tumblr, a microblogging and social networking site. She was making self-published comics and zines. Then in 2012, she created a web comic about the depths of platonic love called “I Think I Am in Friend-Love With You” that went viral. It attracted the attention of a literary agent. In 2013, a book was born.

Since then, many milestones have come and gone, including more books on meditation and the American legacy. She created a comic zine “Never Forgets.” She has also done art shows and installations at museums. Her work also has been featured on Buzzfeed and The New Yorker.

“I think the projects and opportunities just keep coming, so I feel very fortunate,” said Sakugawa via Zoom from her Los Angeles home. She wears thick-rimmed glasses and sips from a can of La Croix while we catch up — and I mean it literally because the intimate phrase “catch up” can be casually dispersed to describe an interaction between strangers. We are not strangers. Before she became an acclaimed artist with loyal fans, Sakugawa and I worked together at the Pacific Citizen for one summer in 2004.

We must have had some intense water cooler conversations, but neither of us could remember. For both of us, that summer was the entry point into the Japanese American community, and we navigated it as outsiders.

Sakugawa is Shin-Nisei — or second generation — born to immigrant parents, Haruji and Fumie Sakugawa. I am Chinese American, also a daughter of immigrants.

In 2004, the P.C. office was in Monterey Park, a suburb of Los Angeles. I was a burgeoning journalist, recently hired as the assistant editor, and excited to apply my degrees in English and Asian American Studies. Sakugawa was a student at the University of California, Los Angeles, who came to work at our office through the Nikkei Community Internship, a program that places young Japanese Americans in paid internships with JA community organizations. On paper, we fit our roles perfectly, but in reality, it felt different.

“I mean it was just an interesting dynamic with that class because we did have some folks who were already well-connected in the community,” said Amy Phillips, the Pacific Citizen’s Los Angeles coordinator during Sakugawa’s tenure. “There is a sort of like a JA version of an old boys’ network.”

Sakugawa did not have the pedigree, or the shared family history of the World War II JA incarceration, but she wanted to understand how she fit into the community, said Phillips.
Four More JACL Women of Redress

Mary Tsukamoto - Florin
Gene Doi - Atlanta

Ruth Hashimoto - Alburquerque
Meriko Mori - Los Angeles

As a matter of general fact, Japanese American women made redress happen. Among much else, they were much more willing to lobby HR 442 face to face with Washington politicians than were Japanese American men. So it was with Meriko Mori, Mary Tsukamoto, Gene Doi & Ruth Hashimoto. A Commemoration

--- Grant Ujifusa
grantujifusa.org
Her search for a place permeated her writing. In the Oct. 1-14, 2004, *P.C.* issue, Sakugawa wrote: "While many Yonsei of my age have relatives who were in internment camps or fought alongside fellow Americans in World War II, I grew up learning about how my relatives had to take cover in bomb shelters in the countryside while firebombs rained down on them."

Similarly, at the beginning of my time at the *P.C.*, I always felt defined by what I was "not." Shortly after my hire, a longtime columnist in a JA newspaper pointed this out in one of his pieces: I was not Japanese American.

"I don’t know, I just feel like identity is fluid," said Sakugawa, reflecting with me. "There isn’t such a strong binary between those who fit in and those who don’t. It really is how you frame it. How you contextualize where you belong."

Her words got me thinking about "Your Illustrated Guide to Becoming One With the Universe," another Sakugawa hand-drawn book about the path to inner peace. Breathe, she urges in the book, and erase the boundaries that separate us from others, separate us from ourselves and "see the underlying energy that unites all of us." A burst of illustrated constellations surrounds the words.

Sakugawa wrote for the *P.C.* from 2004-10. She named her monthly column "Memoirs of a Non-Geisha" in 2006. A lot of her writing centered on the theme of being on the outside — including one column about the time she studied in Singapore, an Asian-majority country. Her Americanness made her stand out. It emanated from her pores and manifested itself even in her walking style.

Her writing for the *P.C.* represents a young soul vibrating and processing her place in the world, but her reflections are more centered and integrated. Now, her intent seems to be to use her art and platform to help the ravaged and the population of people, who like her, struggled to find a place in the universe.

"Always being seen as an outsider can bring harm," she said. "But then also, I think there is something really valuable about seeing the world through multiple perspectives instead of just one perspective. I think it is enriching. And I think it creates capacity for more empathy towards other people who may feel that they don’t belong or feel that they are not included in mainstream narratives."

Sakugawa was born and raised in Southern California's Orange County, where she attended summer Obon festivals and attended Japanese language school on Saturdays. In her spare time, she filled notebook after notebook with sketches — mostly of bunnies on adventures, a theme likely inspired by her own childhood pet black bunny, Emi.

"She was drawing and drawing whenever she had time," said Haruji Sakugawa, a retired chemist, about his daughter. In elementary school, teachers said Sakugawa’s attention would often drift into her own creative world. "I guess that she could not resist her imagination even in the classroom."

After graduating from UCLA with an art degree, Sakugawa went adrift. She waited tables at a sushi restaurant and then taught English in Japan for a year. She was terrible at both jobs, for sure.

"I was almost fired," she said about teaching English in Japan. "I think the only reason why I didn’t get fired was because they couldn’t find a replacement quickly enough."

In 2009, after returning home to Southern California, Sakugawa felt a need to be a part of something again. She had been involved in the Nikkei Student Union and an Asian American theater group in college, and she missed the enthusiasm and sense of belonging that a community group provided. To meet the need, she started volunteering for Tuesday Night Café, a free arts and performance series in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. Alongside other Asian American artists, Sakugawa worked behind the scenes to put to on live performances under the evening sky.

"The community will always be there for you," she wrote in the 2009 *P.C.* issue about the experience.

Ask any of her friends about Sakugawa’s skyrocketing popularity, and they will tell you it happened both gradually and meteorically. It is the paradox of success. A higher profile can obscure the years and years of work, the notebooks and notebooks filled with ideas and cosmic bunny drawings.

The Toronto Comic Arts Festival in 2014 invited Sakugawa to participate and showcase her work. Lo, a former UCLA classmate who is now a frequent participant in her virtual webinars, attended the event and observed fans continually approaching Sakugawa.

"It was crazy to just meet her fans. People just kept coming up and saying, ‘Oh, I just want her to sign this. I’m such a big fan of her Tumblr,’” said Lo. “And I think that was my first moment to be like, ‘Oh my God, my friend is published, and she has adoring fans!’ Is it OK to appropriate a saying if it is true? Here it is: You can take the girl out of the community, but you can’t take the community out of the girl."

Traci Kato-Kiriyama, an artist, community organizer and TNC director, watched Sakugawa transform from a volunteer to a well-known artist without losing her values.

"I think that my memories of the early Yumi haven’t changed much from my sort of understanding of Yumi now,” said Kato-Kiriyama. “She’s someone who just really sat really well in their own quirkiness.”

In the "before time" pandemic, Sakugawa continued her relationship with TNC as a performer. One of her favorites was an improvisational, multimedia performance about food memories. Dressed in white, she stood before the audience as a hungry ghost, gold glitter sparkling in the lights of the Aratani Courtyard.

The artist can chart her success through many milestones, including the first time she held her published book in her hand and the first time she saw her books displayed at Urban Outfitters, an upscale retail chain.

Her parents, of course, have a different benchmark for success.

“When Kinokuniya started carrying my books. It was like a reference point for them that was like, ‘Oh, this is like really amazing!’” said Sakugawa.

REPRESENTATION

Lately, Sakugawa’s artwork showcased on Instagram to more than 125,000 followers has centered on the theme of healing. Anthropomorphic clouds contemplate with soft gazes urging you to “pay attention to the sparks” in life. The illustrations are in black and white and seem to break down barriers — especially the limitations of the human body.

In one piece, a flower stalk wends through the profile of a body like a twisty straw until it blooms out of the mouth.

“Perfection is not needed when you are expressing your truth,” reads the caption.

Sakugawa is one of a very few well-known Asian American female artists. She has also struggled with her own mental health. With success comes pressure and a choice: Do you divorce the personal from the art, or do you lay your soul bare in every sketch and interview? Sakugawa chooses the latter.

“As I became more aware of what it means to be an Asian American artist, an Asian American woman artist, I realized that oh, I also really want people to see the human behind the art, behind the books, and see that I am a Japanese American woman. I am second generation. I am a daughter of immigrants. And even if my works aren’t always explicitly Asian American, that is a big part of who I am, and people should know that.”

In 2013, when millennial bloggers started turning their attention to ‘90s pop culture, a lot of the dialogue centered on “The Baby-Sitters Club,” a novel series about a group of teenage girls running a babysitting service. Sakugawa took notice. She voraciously consumed “The Baby-Sitters Club” as a preteen self-professed bookworm who worshipped at the altar of Claudia Kishi, the series’ only Japanese American junk-food-loving artistic character with her own storyline. In Kishi, Sakugawa saw reflections of herself. She also noticed voices like hers were not being represented in the conversations.

Lately, Sakugawa’s artwork calls for political activism and self-healing.
COVID-19 PUTS AMACHE CAMP’S NATIONAL PARK PURSUIT IN LIMBO

Already designated a National Historic Landmark, for Amache to become a unit of the National Park System, it would need to pass four additional tests during a site study.

By Associated Press

DENVER — At first, the trip unfolded as just an academic tracing of family history. John Tonai had for years heard the stories from his father, Mineo, about the Amache American concentration camp in southeastern Colorado, where the U.S. government transported thousands of Japanese Americans from California and held them behind barbed wire and guard posts for three years during World War II. The family lore became a constant soundtrack that, over time, receded to a kind of background noise — always heard, seldom absorbed.

But in 1990, as a master’s student at the University of Northern Colorado, Tonai actually visited the site just outside the town of Granada.

His father had described the exact location of the family barracks — Building #9, Apartment #10. Tonai approached a slight dip in what remained of the foundation, a subtle reminder of the doorway to another time.

Just stepping across that threshold proved a life-changing experience.

“When I did that,” recalled Tonai, “the stories came flooding back. You almost instantly have a picture of what your family went through.” His father used to talk about things like walking down a certain road at the camp, and now I could envisage him as a 13- to 16-year-old boy, actually doing it.”

Since Tonai’s experience decades ago, the Amache site has been curated and improved, largely under the leadership of the Amache Preservation Society, a local school project headed by John Hopper, a social studies teacher-turned-principal of Granada High School.

Hundreds of local students have found the single square mile of land a valuable historical resource, but it also has hosted years of pilgrimages for the former incarcerees and their families and drawn more than 20,000 visitors annually.

All of that has led Amache to another threshold. Supporters of the site have pushed to establish it as a unit of the National Park System, a designation that could literally put Amache on the map as a federally designated park.

Amache offers restorative opportunities. The work of the Amache Preservation Society has already helped restore a valuable historic and cultural marker. National Park designation would only add to the attraction, Hopper figures.

People come from a long distance to see Amache.”

That’s the outcome that would bring Hopper a sense of completion.

“When I retire, I want to feel good about it,” he said. “I want to walk away and let the next generation take it on.”

And that’s where Tanner Grassmick comes in. The 26-year-old social studies teacher grew up around Granada and, in his senior year, worked at Amache fixing signs, doing restoration, giving tours and then traveling to spread the word around the region. He even visited Japan, where he met a host family with whom he remains in touch.

His dedication to Amache now has the familiar echo of Hopper’s as he works the dark history of the site into his own teaching at Granada High School. That’s why Hopper already has tagged him as his successor.

Whether the National Park Service takes control of the site or not, there will always be a role for the area kids — even if it’s just managing the museum, which would remain a separate, local entity.

Grassmick feels like he’s up for the task of following in his teacher’s footsteps.

“I’ve met countless people from pilgrimages to Amache, and they’re such great people that I’d love to continue on with what Mr. Hopper has done and keep it going for them, too,” he said. “I definitely like to do it for a lifetime commitment.”

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Section 8 Waiting List Opening

Plummer Village Senior Community located in North Hills, CA is accepting applications for our affordable 1-bedroom apartment homes.

Applicants must be 62 years or older.
Applications may be requested by calling, writing or stopping by.

Plummer Village
15450 Plummer Street
North Hills, CA 91343
(818) 891-0646 TTY (510) 238-3254

Hours of operation are
Monday through Friday between 9:00am—5:00pm

All applicants must meet program guidelines
Honda, Fred Shotgun, 96, Los Angeles, CA, May 26, 2020; he was predeceased by his wife, Victoria Honda; he is survived by his children, Lynn, Gordon and Sharon Honda; siblings, Cheiko, Kazuko and Setsuo; he is also survived by nieces, nephews, cousins and other relatives.

Hoshibo, Toshiko, 99, Honolulu, HI, May 29, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Larry; she is survived by her children, Gerald (Gladiys) and Sharon Shiraki (Stanley, D.); siblings, Tomie Nakamura (Kenneth, D.), Minoru, Sueko Inouye (Fred, D.), Akira (Karen) and Sumie Dela Rosa (Florendo); gc: 3; ggc: 1.

Ishida, June Tomiko, 93, Hilo, HI, May 20, 2020; she is survived by her sons, Reginald (Dyanne) Ishida, David Ishida, Howard Ishida and Kenneth (Marcia) Ishida; she is also survived by many grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Katayama, Mark Akio, 74, July 6, 2020; he is survived by his siblings, James Katayama, Maxine Morisaki and Kenneth Katayama.

Kato, Mary, 92, Monterey Park, CA, July 11, 2020; she is survived by her children, Gail (Les) Huey, Sarah Santa Ana, Jay, Wade (Liz) and Paige (Kim); brother, Isamu Morimoto (May); sister-in-law, Barbara Morimoto; brother-in-law, Fred Yoshiwa (Ralph); gc: 8; ggc: 4.

Kotoku, Takao, 90, Captain Cook, HI, May 13, 2020; he is survived by his siblings, Allen (Fumie) Kotoku, Francis Kotoku, Gary Katoku, Sylvia Hayase and Evelyn (Harold) Tasaka; sister-in-law, Sachiko Kotoku; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Kiyoshiro, Mery, 95, Temple City, CA, July 11, 2020; he was predeceased by his brother, Masao; he is survived by his wife, Kikuko; sons, David (Lynne) and Edwin (Michelle); sister, Yoshiko; gc: 4.

Kaneto, Akiko, 87, San Gabriel, CA, May 28, 2020; a Korean War veteran, she was predeceased by her brother, Masao; he is survived by his wife, Kikuko; sons, David (Lynne) and Edwin (Michelle); sister, Yoshiko; gc: 4.

Katsumi, Takeko, 96, Los Angeles, CA, June 23, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Bruce Saka; son, Bruce Jun (KIA, Vietnam); and siblings, Matsushiro “Duke” Yamashiro, Joe Yamashiro and May Yamashita; she is survived by her children, Kimi Shipley and Yokuko Yamashiro; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Kuri, Francis Katoku, 92, Monterey Park, CA, June 4, 2020; he is survived by his children, Allen (Fumie) Katoku, Francis Katoku, Gary Katoku, Sylvia Hayase and Evelyn (Harold) Tasaka; sister-in-law, Barbara Morimoto; brother-in-law, Fred Yoshiwa (Ralph); gc: 8; ggc: 4.

Kurihara, Yuriko, 91, Torrance, CA, July 11, 2020; she is survived by her children, Walter (Carrie) Morita, Jennifer (Bruce) Kerr, Laura (Gary) Bethel and Judy (Mel) Kaneshiro; gc: 7; ggc: 6.

Nieda, Sam, 90, Altahamba, CA, May 28, 2020; a Korean War veteran, he was predeceased by his brother, Masao; he is survived by his wife, Kiiku; sons, David (Lynne) and Edwin (Michelle); sister, Yoshiko; gc: 4.

Nishihara, Akiko, 89, Los Angeles, CA, July 8, 2020; she is survived by her daughters, Diane (Donald) Guerrero and Judy (Craig) Ida; sister-in-law, Matsuye Kuhara; gc: 5; ggc: 1.

Okamoto, Grace Hisako, Rocklin, CA, Sept. 10, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Masato; siblings, Yoshio, Yoshinao, Saburo, Minoru, Henry, George, James, Hannah and Aiko; she is survived by her sons, Richard and John; daughter-in-law, Cary; brothers, John and Steven; gc: 1.

Okamoto, William Taro ‘Bill,’ 100, Torrance, CA, May 19, 2020, he is survived by his children, Carol (Robert) McClellan and Roy (Lori) Okamoto; brother, Jack Okamoto; sisters-in-law, Haruko Inatomi and Lillian Okamoto; gc: 2.

Okazaki, Yukie, 87, San Gabriel, CA, July 11, 2020; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Tule Lake WRA Center in CA; she was predeceased by her brother, George Masaihi Ni; she is survived by her husband, Sid; children, Ken (Zeena Lee) Okazaki and Julie (Rob) Komoto; siblings, Fusae Miyamoto, Fumie Yoshida, Terrie Masuda and Richard (Diana Nicholas) Ni; gc: 3.
Most of the bloggers writing about “The Baby-Sitters Club” and Kishi were white, so they didn’t really know what it was like to have a dynamic Asian American character like Kishi. So, Sakugawa created her own web comic about Kishi, a love letter to the “crazy, unique, extremely confident and must line me, a second-generation Japanese American.”

The Kishi web comic took off on the web and landed Sakugawa on the set of a short documentary “The Claudia Kishi Club.” In July, her web comic will also be featured in “We Are the Baby-Sitters Club,” an anthology of essays and artwork from grown-up readers.

Remember: There are many paths to activism.
Sakugawa has two pieces showcased in the Giant Robot April 3-21 Rakugaki 3 group exhibit — iterations of a celestial piece called “I Leave Shrines Everywhere I Go.” Both pieces sold out on the first day.

“Her work, to me, has a larger meaning because of who she is and what she does,” said Eric Nakamura, co-founder of Giant Robot and owner of the Giant Robot Store and GR2 Gallery. “Some people can paint a picture of a cat. It doesn’t matter who did it, it’s just a cat. I think her images, for me, tell a larger story and involves who she is and what she does.”

Sakugawa’s mental health deteriorated while teaching English in Japan. She didn’t have access to the same antidepressant medication she had been taking in the United States, and her struggles sent her in a downward spiral.

Her art often references mental health issues and depicts self-help strategies.

“I believe I have a personal responsibility to speak more candidly about mental health and to be upfront about struggles I’ve had with mental illness because I know that when more people speak up about it, more people feel seen,” said Sakugawa. “I think that’s one of the beautiful healing things about sharing art and sharing stories. When you share painful dark experiences, it paradoxically makes people feel less alone and more connected because then they can relate to the vulnerability instead of feeling like they have to pretend everything is OK.”

Sakugawa straightens her glasses and nods her head. It’s an important point to remember as the global pandemic drags on.

The artist has spoken her truth.

How do the approved vaccine options compare?

The three current COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the U.S. are Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

How effective are they?

All three vaccines more than meet the 50 percent effectiveness threshold required by the FDA.

### How many shots?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Shots Required</th>
<th>Days Apart</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pfizer-BioNTech</td>
<td>Two shots</td>
<td>21 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderna</td>
<td>Two shots</td>
<td>28 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson</td>
<td>One shot</td>
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### Potential side effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Side Effects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pfizer-BioNTech</td>
<td>Pain at injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills and fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderna</td>
<td>Pain at injection site, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, joint pain and chills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson</td>
<td>Pain at injection site, headache, fatigue and muscle pain</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

AARP is fighting to protect the health of Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders 50+ and their families by providing trusted information and resources surrounding COVID-19.

Learn more about COVID-19 vaccination at aarp.org/vaccineinfo