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A LEGACY INTERSECTS WITH PRESENT, FUTURE

Rose Ochi Square is dedicated in Little Tokyo at San Pedro, E. First streets.

By P.C. Staff

With the start of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month still fresh, a civil rights fighter for all was remembered on May 4 in Little Tokyo when Rose Ochi Square — the intersection of San Pedro and E. First streets — was dedicated.

The ceremony had been in the works since a Jan. 13 announcement by Los Angeles City Councilman Kevin de Leon following the Dec. 13, 2020, death of Rose Ochi, at 81. (See Pacific Citizen, Jan. 22- Feb. 4, 2021, issue.)

Born Takayo Matsui in 1938, she spent her early years not far from Rose Ochi Square on the other side of the Los Angeles River in the East Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights.

Her first name “Rose,” however, was acquired during World War II by a teacher after her Japanese American family and she were uprooted and incarcerated at the Rohwer War Relocation Center in Arkansas.

“Ochi” was added after her marriage to Thomas Ochi, who was present at the dedication.

“Her legacy is embedded in the history of our city, as well as our state and our nation,” said Councilman de Leon, who said Ochi’s early experiences, including having her mouth washed out with soap for speaking Japanese in school, molded her into becoming a fighter and activist.

As an adult, she would use higher education and a law degree to participate in the political system and undertake a host of tasks, serving at the municipal, state and national levels and pushing to make the site of California’s Manzanar WRA Center into the Manzanar National Historic Site “so that no American would ever forget what happened,” de Leon said. » See LEGACY on page 12

The sign designating the intersection of Little Tokyo’s San Pedro and E. First streets as Rose Ochi Square was unveiled.

Similar signs are to be installed on the remaining corners in the near future.

PHOTOS: PACIFIC CITIZEN

JACL WELCOMES NEW MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR TO NATIONAL STAFF

Bridget Keaveney succeeds Phillip Ozaki, who has been promoted to JACL’s development director.

JACL National is excited to introduce Bridget Keaveney as its membership coordinator; she succeeds Phillip Ozaki, who has been promoted to development director.

Keaveney, who began her duties on March 29, is based in the organization’s San Francisco headquarters.

Keaveney will be responsible for all membership duties including rosters, NMC meetings, managing the mbr@jacl.org inbox, renewals, credentials and membership campaigns. In addition, she will serve as the staff person on the National Convention Credentials committee and the liaison to the National Youth/Student Council.

“I feel incredibly honored to be part of such a venerable organization. I look forward to continuing my passion of bringing together different ideas and people from various communities and advocating for their rights. As someone who grew up in a small, rural town in Oregon, it’s important to me that I make a conscious effort to reach out to those who may need an organization like JACL in their lives,” said Keaveney.

“I believe that the position that I now hold at the JACL will allow me to pursue what I hope will be a lifelong career committed to social justice,” Ozaki, who is currently training Keaveney in her new duties, reflected. “We are delighted to hire Bridget, who has already hit the ground running as our membership guru. In just one month, she has reflected: “We are delighted to hire Bridget in her new duties, re"

“As the staff person on the National Convention Credentials committee and the liaison to the National Youth/Student Council, Bridget’s background brings new perspectives with chapter leadership. Bridget’s background brings new perspectives to our membership program needs. Together, we are trying to solve the challenging question, ‘How can we get more people like her involved with JACL?’”

» See STAFF on page 12

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PHOTOS: PACIFIC CITIZEN

The Pacific Citizen newspaper (ISSN: 0030-8579) is published periodically semi-monthly (except once in December and January) by the Japanese American Citizens League, Pacific Citizen, 123 Ellison S. Onizuka St., Suite 313, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Periodical postage paid at L.A., CA.

PHOTOS: PACIFIC CITIZEN

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The Pacific Citizen Newspaper is published by the Japanese American Citizens League. Pacific Citizen content is the opinion of the authors, and the opinions of columnists other than the Editorial Board expressed by columnists other than the Editorial Board do not necessarily reflect the views of the JACL or this publication. We reserve the right to edit articles. © 2021

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Periodicals paid at Los Angeles, Calif. and mailing office.
By David Inoue, JACL Executive Director

This August will be three years since the movie “Crazy Rich Asians” debuted bearing the hopes of the Asian American community. The sense was that success could open the door to Asian American representation in the movies, but failure could mean another 25 years until another majority-Asian cast movie would be made by a major studio, as had already been that many years since the “Joy Luck Club.” Fortunately, “Crazy Rich Asians” would go on to draw nearly $175 million domestically and $239 million worldwide. It seems, there would be a future for Asian representation in cinema.

This seemingly has been fulfilled with the recent Oscar awards. For 2019, though Korean, not Asian American, the film “Parasite” won best picture, director, original screenplay and, of course, international film. And the 2020 best director and picture awards went to Chloé Zhao and “Nomadland,” while Yuh-Jung Youn won best supporting actress for “Minari” amidst multiple nominations for both pictures.

Animation films such as “Raya and the Last Dragon” and “Abominable” also have featured the voices of numerous Asian American actors. The Marvel universe will bring us the “Eternals,” directed by Zhao and starring Riz Ahmed, Gemma Chan, and Iman Vellani will be appearing as the Pakistani superhero Ms. Marvel in her own Disney+ series, as well as a leading role in the upcoming film “The Marvels.”

On the smaller screen, while ABC’s “Fresh Off the Boat” has sunned, a bootload of other new shows have since joined it in presenting Asian leads, including “Never Have I Ever” (Netflix), “All The Boys” (Netflix), “Nora From Queens” (Comedy Central) and, most recently, a refresh of the “Kung Fu” (The CW), featuring a majority-Asian cast to atone for the ridiculousness of David Carradine as the lead in the original version.

This contrast of the original “Kung Fu” series and the new one makes me realize how different the planning and casting of these shows are. The planning and casting of the new one are expecting over 1,000 students to come to Greenwood Village. The article was outrageously inappropriate and offensive to be published in this daily.


From the Executive Director

WE CAN’T ALL BE ‘CRAZY RICH ASIANS,’ BUT WE DO BELONG

By David Inoue, JACL Executive Director

It’s been a tragic and depressing couple of months. Amidst the rising numbers of anti-Asian hate incidents, including harassment, verbal assaults and physical attacks, a March 16 mass shooting in Atlanta targeted Asian-owned spas, and six of eight murdered victims were Asian women.

The same day as the Atlanta shootings, the national group Stop AAPI Hate released a devastating report stating that the site logged almost 4,000 anti-Asian incidents from March 19, 2020-Feb. 28, 2021.

Also in April, a bipartisan group of Colorado’s congressional representatives and senators penned legislation to make Amache, the Japanese American wartime concentration camp in southeast Colorado, a National Park. There’s been a lot going on in the AAPI and JA communities! But we wait, there’s more! It went on to say that the area’s schools are expecting over 1,000 students from China and that the district was seeking Mandarin teachers to accommodate them. The piece also added that “area hotels are being set aside to house children who are exposed to compared to what I experienced at the same age.”

In literature, they have so many options for diverse stories and characters. The “Hardy Boys” books that I grew up reading are antiquated in multiple ways. My daughter is able to read the books from the Shubutani Siblings (Maia and Alex) and see a character who shares her first name. My son enjoys “Superman” comics just as much as I did, except he is able to read about Superman protecting a Chinese American family in “Superman Smashes the Klan” by Gene Luen Yang.

As we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, it is more apparent that Asians are increasingly and better represented in all facets of media, and, more importantly, Asian actors are being recognized for their contributions artistically.

In combatting anti-Asian attitudes and violence, in the long term, our focus is on changing the norm of Asian Americans as foreign. JACL focuses on this by highlighting the dangers of unbridled xenophobia and racism against the Japanese American community during World War II, resulting in one of the worst losses of constitutional rights by Americans in this country’s history.

We, therefore, do this by emphasizing and celebrating our representation in our pop culture. Our presence in popular TV shows or movies helps to normalize our presence and break the stereotypes that feed prejudice. The story of Asian immigration may still be shown in the movie “Minari,” or it could be the less “Asian” portrayal of Grace Park’s character in ABC’s “A Million Little Things.” The greater the number of roles occupied by Asian and Asian American actors, the more others will be exposed to the diversity of who we are and what we represent.

We don’t always have to be the hero; in fact, it’s good to see Asian faces as the villain, too — so long as those characters help to break down stereotypes and expand the diversity of who we are. After all, we’re not all “Crazy Rich Asians” either.

David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization’s Washington, D.C., office.

ANTI-ASIAN HATE ISN’T JUST IN THE FORM OF SHOOTINGS AND ATTACKS

By Gil Asakawa

SHOOTINGS AND ATTACKS

By Gil Asakawa

NIKKEI VOICE

The Villager’s inappropiate April Fool’s Joke edition was met with heavy outrage from AAPI organizations and across social media for its inappropriate and racist content.
The bestselling author of ‘Boys in the Boat’ puts the spotlight on the 442nd in a new book.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor, Digital & Social Media

With the May 11 release of Daniel James Brown’s book “Facing the Mountain: The True Story of Japanese American Heroes in World War II,” as its subtitle states, it’s possible that the Japanese American experience on battlefields (and in courtrooms) of that era is finally about to be illuminated in a big, big way.

That’s because the bestselling author — whose 2013 book “The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics” was a career-making smash hit that turned the Seattle-based Brown into a brand-name superstar — has already generated news that “Facing the Mountain” might become a multipart series, with Hawaii-born Japanese American director Destin Daniel Cretton, helmer of the upcoming Marvel Cinematic Universe installment “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” attached to direct.

But a series is in the future, and the future, as the world had to learn with the continuing, unforeseen global pandemic that began in 2020, doesn’t always go according to plan.

The book “Facing the Mountain” is here, now and new, and in the coming weeks and months, Brown and Densoh Executive Director Tom Ikeda will be in the spotlight to discuss Brown’s 540-page book (ISBN 9780525557401), published by Viking with a suggested retail price of $30, that began when the two met in 2015 in Seattle, when they were among the honorees at the annual Mayor’s Arts Awards.

Brown was there to receive one of the many accolades for “The Boys in the Boat,” while Ikeda was there to be honored for, at that time, Densoh’s two-decades of technology-driven efforts to digitally preserve and make accessible Japanese American history, whether digitized analog community newspapers like Pacific Citizen or video interviews of Japanese American community members.

It proved to be a fortuitous and serendipitous meeting. And, it helped that Brown, who grew up in the San Francisco Bay area, already had some second-hand knowledge of the Japanese American experience because of his father, who sold wholesale florist supplies to flower shops and nurseries.

Brown told the Pacific Citizen that his father was usually even-keeled but he could never forget one of the rare times when he saw his father get visibly angry and that was when he relayed what had happened to his many Japanese American friends and customers during the war.

“A lot of these folks came back to greenhouses that had been shattered and businesses that had been closed and land that had been taken out from under them,” Brown said. “You’d sort of have to know my father to appreciate how rare it was that he would get that angry. But it really stuck with me as a kid.”

Following the ceremony, Brown introduced himself to Ikeda after hearing him discuss Densoh and its mission. Ikeda, meanwhile, told the Pacific Citizen that he was familiar with Brown’s work, having read and enjoyed “The Boys in the Boat.”

Later, Brown went to Densoh.org and began listening to some of the oral histories and was drawn to what he had heard.

“They were stories about perseverance and resilience and ordinary people confronting difficult times and challenges and having to overcome them,” Brown said.

The seed that had been planted at the Mayor’s Arts Awards was sprouting — but it was still a long way from becoming a book.

“At that point, I don’t think it was really clear to him what exact story he was going to tell,” Ikeda said, “so I remember just sharing kind of a range of oral histories … and we would just have conversations back and forth, and he would say, ‘Oh, this is really interesting,’ and as he started getting more interested in the military service, I was feeding him stories both on the MIS as well as the 442 as well as the earlier 100th.”

Brown’s recollections dovetailed with Ikeda’s.

“The deeper I went, the more intrigued I became,” Brown said. “I started talking with Tom, and he and I spent about a year going back and forth talking about different scenarios and different possibilities for how this might be developed into a book.

“The challenge that we had, as we talked back and forth,” Brown continued, “was what would the story be because we’re talking something finite in terms of the book. You can’t tell the whole story of the Japanese American experience.

“Still, it was progress. Brown’s publisher, meantime, was chomping at the bit for a follow to “The Boys in the Boat.” But were they really interested in a book that focused on the experiences of some Japanese Americans during WWII? Did it have the crossover appeal it needed to approach the success of “The Boys in the Boat”?

“They didn’t seem to blink. I was wondering how that would go itself, for some sort of obvious reasons. Frankly, I think they were just glad to get a manuscript in hand,” Brown chuckled. “It had been many, many years that I had not been handing them anything. Actually, when they read the proposal for the book and sample chapters, they were all in right away.”

But before Brown could turn in a final draft last year, he needed to do more research. As welcome as it might seem to have to go to Hawaii and Italy to conduct research, for Brown, it was a necessity.

“Frankly, I think they feel that they know the story better than they really do,” Brown said.

Related to that, Brown said he was “kind of stunned” when he was talking with some of the people associated with the book’s publisher at “how little they knew about the story.”

“I think it’s partly an East Coast/West Coast thing,” Brown said. “I was absolutely flabbergasted, actually, at how little they knew about what had happened. I think most of them had some vague idea that Japanese Americans were incarcerated during the war, but boy, that was as far as their understanding went. I don’t know why it hasn’t penetrated more. I don’t really know the answer.

“My book isn’t going to change the world here, but one of the reasons I wanted to write this book was my previous book was very successful, so I knew I’d have a big platform for this book. … When I started digging into these stories and meeting these family members, I really put the spotlight on the 442nd in a new book.

The bestselling author of ‘Boys in the Boat’ puts the spotlight on the 442nd in a new book.

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Prologue

Following is the Prologue, written by Densho Executive Director Tom Ikeda, for Daniel James Brown’s “Facing the Mountain.” It has been reprinted with permission courtesy of its publisher, Viking, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House. Copyright © 2021 by Daniel James Brown.

“We made the sacrifices. It was a sense of ‘Hey, I earned this. It’s not that you owe me. It’s this — that we have earned this.’”

— Fred Shiosaki, Densho Executive Director

One of the many pleasures of writing a book like this is meeting the extraordinary people who have lived the story you are telling. Usually, you meet them only virtually, through the letters or diaries or video recordings they have left behind. Occasionally, if you are lucky, you get to meet them in person.

Such was the case on a typically splendid Hawaiian afternoon in 1935 when my friend Mariko Miho ushered me into the Maple Garden Restaurant in Honolulu’s McCully-Mo’ili’ili neighborhood. The place was loud with the clattering of dishes and lush with warm aromas arising from a buffet arrayed along one wall. Most of the people lined up at the buffet were there for the midweek, midday senior discount. We were there for the story and the American literature, took PE and shop classes, looked forward to their weekends. And as the holiday season approached in 1941, it seemed as if the whole world lay before them.

But within hours of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, all that changed. Within days, the FBI was banging on their doors, searching their homes, hauling their fathers away and friends and colleagues to internment. Within weeks, many of them would watch as their immigrant parents were forced to sell their homes for pennies on the dollar and shutter businesses that they had spent decades building. Within months, tens of thousands of them or their family members would be living in barracks behind barbed wire or have family members separated by the ocean.

For all their essential Americanness, the traumatic events of that December brought back into focus something they had always known: their place in American society remained tenuous. Millions of their countrymen were forced to accept an unfettered animosity born of decades of virulent anti-Asian rhetoric spewing forth from the press and from the mouths of politicians. Local ordinances regulated where they could and could not live. Labor unions routinely barred them from employment in many industries. Proprietors of businesses could, at will, ban them from entering their premises. Public facilities were sometimes closed to them. State laws prohibited their parents from owning real estate. In many states they were not free to marry across racial lines. Their children were sometimes closed to them. State laws prohibited their parents from owning real estate. In many states they were sometimes closed to them. Some parents were forced to sell their homes for pennies on the dollar and shutter businesses that they had spent decades building. Within months, tens of thousands of them or their family members would be living in barracks behind barbed wire or have family members separated by the ocean.

And they knew this too: their lives, their very identities, were inevitably bound to their roots. The values that their parents had bestowed on them — the manner in which they approached others, the standards by which they measured success, the obligations they imposed upon themselves, the ways in which they approached others, the standards by which they measured success, the obligations they imposed upon themselves — were not things they could or would willingly cast aside. They were, in fact, things they cherished.
and “The Boys in the Boat” looking ready to be directed by George Clooney.

But, as noted, that is all in the future. The book is now and Brown is hopeful that he achieved the book’s purpose — or as he put it: “I think contextualizing and putting this whole thing into human terms, terms that anybody can identify with, what it’s like to suddenly have your home taken away from you, and your business and your livelihood.

“That’s what I’m trying to do with the book — get people to open their hearts and look through a different set of eyes than they may have in the past and consider what it’s like to have these series of traumas inflicted on you and reflect on what that means with where we are today.”

Because many of them had relatives living in Japan, they had seen the storm clouds growing over the Pacific long before most other Americans had. And they knew immediately on that first Sunday in December 1941 that straddling two worlds now suddenly at war would challenge them in ways that would shake the foundations of their lives.

For those young men there was no obvious path forward, no simple right way or wrong way to proceed with their lives. Some of them would launch campaigns of conscientious resistance to the deprivation of their constitutional rights. Others — thousands of them — would serve, and some would die, on the battlefields of Europe, striving to prove their loyalty to their country. Scores of their mothers would dissolve into tears as they saw grim-faced officers coming in past barbed-wire fencing bearing shattering news. But by the end of their lives almost all of them — whether they fought in courtrooms or in foxholes — would be counted American heroes.

At its heart, this is the story of those young men — some of the bravest Americans who have ever lived, the Nisei warriors of World War II, and how they, through their actions, laid bare for all the world to see what exactly it means to be an American. But it’s also the story of their immigrant parents, the Issei, who like other immigrants before them — whether they came from Ireland or Italy, from North Africa or Latin America — faced suspicion and prejudice from the moment they arrived in America. It’s the story of how they set out to win their place in American society, working at menial jobs from dawn to dusk, quietly enduring discrimination and racial epithets, struggling to learn the language, building businesses, growing crops, knitting together families, nurturing their children, creating homes. It’s the story of wives and mothers and sisters who kept families together under extreme conditions. It’s the story of the first Americans since the Cherokee in 1838 to face wholesale forced removal from their homes, deprivation of their livelihoods, and mass incarceration.

But in the end it’s not a story of victims. Rather, it’s a story of victors, of people striving, resisting, rising up, standing on principle, laying down their lives, enduring, and prevailing. It celebrates some young Americans who decided they had no choice but to do what their sense of honor and loyalty told them was right, to cultivate their best selves, to embrace the demands of conscience, to leave their homes and families and sally forth into the fray, to confront and to conquer the mountain of troubles that lay suddenly in their paths.

“The man who should take nearly all of the credit for Senate passage of the redress bill is Sen. Sparky Matsunaga. He is the one who sponsored the bill and organized the vote on that in the Senate. If Sen. Matsunaga’s efforts were to be weighted at 10, mine would be one.”

--Senator Daniel Inouye

A Commemoration Of Sparky’s Legacy

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SAFETY IN THE TIME OF HATE AND THE CORONAVIRUS

For Japanese Americans, there is a shared history with different viewpoints on policing and safety. Law enforcement and community leaders all seek to answer the question, ‘What should community safety look like?’ amid rising anti-Asian racism and violence.

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

One life imprisoned can cause a ripple effect that spans generations. What happens when it is 120,000 people targeted by the government for imprisonment?

It causes collective, intergenerational trauma.

The World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans is a touchstone of pain and identity for a community that during that time in U.S. history was identified as such a threat to national security, its members needed to be surveilled, detained and imprisoned.

One shared experience refracted across generations can produce a variety of perceptions, especially in the debate about policing, imprisonment and public safety. Because of their shared WWII experience, some Japanese Americans argue that it is time to re-examine policing and America’s criminal justice system.

“I know the intergenerational harms that arresting people and incarcerating them causes,” said Carl Takei, a senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union. “And if we can build something different that’s more compassionate, then we should.”

In Arcadia, Calif., a suburb of Los Angeles, the city’s first Japanese American police chief raps on his desk at his office at the police department across the street.

Douglas Nakamura, a Nisei from Hawaii, was born in Tokyo and grew up in Guam before moving to Southern California to pursue education. Watching police TV shows drew Nakamura to a career in law enforcement.

“I believe that we should always study history so that we never repeat our mistakes,” said Nakamura, 56. “The Sansei police chief is talking about cancel culture, the modern-day form of ostracism and erasure, which police departments are facing in varying degrees. A March USA Today/IPSOS poll revealed an increase in trust (69 percent, up from 56 percent last summer) in local police and law enforcement to promote justice and equal treatment for people of all races.

“What if you erase everything from the past? What if you don’t take into consideration the mistakes? I mean, is there a possibility that we won’t be able to recall the mistakes that we’ve made as a community, as a society?” said Nakamura, who was appointed chief in January.

He was born in Tokyo and grew up in Guam before moving to Southern California to pursue education.

The controversy about the future of law enforcement is rife with pain and emotion. With the April 20 Derek Chauvin murder conviction fresh in memory, police officers across the U.S. fatally shot six people just 24 hours after jurors in Minneapolis handed in a guilty verdict, according to the Associated Press. The circumstances of the deaths vary widely. Some say they reflect an urgent need for radical changes to American policing.

In the Japanese American community, the debate takes on an added layer of tension between a community’s shared history and a collective desire for safety amid a surge in anti-Asian racism.

Both sides of the debate seek to answer a fundamental question: What should community safety look like?

The Police Chief: Change Is Necessary

To talk about the future of policing, one needs to examine what exists and what came before.

“I believe that we should always study history so that we never repeat our mistakes,” said Nakamura, 56.

The Sansei police chief is talking about cancel culture, the modern-day form of ostracism and erasure, which police departments are facing in varying degrees. A March USA Today/IPSOS poll revealed an increase in trust (69 percent, up from 56 percent last summer) in local police and law enforcement to promote justice and equal treatment for people of all races.

“What if you erase everything from the past? What if you don’t take into consideration the mistakes? I mean, is there a possibility that we won’t be able to recall the mistakes that we’ve made as a community, as a society?” said Nakamura, who was appointed chief in January.

He was born in Tokyo and grew up in Guam before moving to Southern California to pursue education. Watching police TV shows drew Nakamura to a career in law enforcement.

Something about the portrayal of police officers solving crime cases filled his head with aspirations.

Douglas Nakamura, a Nisei from Hawaii, always told his son, “Don’t live by the color of your skin. Let your work speak for you. Shut your mouth. Grind it out and do the best you can.”

During WWII while living on the island of Oahu, Douglas Nakamura watched other JAs get rounded up and incarcerated after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. His family was spared, but he thought it was important to teach his children about the desolate War Relocation Authority prison camps and the heroism of the WWII segregated JA units in the U.S. military.

Today, with almost three decades of experience in law enforcement, Nakamura’s office at the Arcadia Police Department is across the street from the jail.

The sound of taiko reverberated in front of Cook County Jail where Emily Harada played the yoko uchi.

PHOTOS: ALEC OZAWA

Members and allies of Chicago-based Nikkei Uprising (from left) Cori Nakamura Lin, JJ Ueunten and Chris Aldana rallied in front of Cook County Jail on April 11 to call for the abolition of the jail.
In the first quarter of 2021, anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 164 percent, according to a new report from the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino.

So, what does safety look like in the time of hate and coronavirus?

“My vision for a safe city is one that takes into consideration the perspective of the community,” said Nakamura. “If the community does not feel safe, then I think that there’s a disconnect.”

On April 22, the Senate overwhelmingly passed an anti-hate crime bill aimed at addressing the surge in anti-Asian racism and attacks. The bill, sponsored by Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Grace Meng (D-N.Y.), seeks to establish online reporting of hate crimes and create a new Justice Department position to review hate crimes during the pandemic. The bill now goes to the House.

Even as lawmakers seek to pass legislation, anti-Asian hate continues to spew on the streets.

In Monterey Park, Calif., Nadine Sachiko Hsu, 41, said a man recently shouted anti-Asian slurs at her friend’s mom.

“I luckily have not been a victim,” said Hsu, owner of Sachiko Studio, a professional family photography studio in Arcadia. “We’re concerned, upset, mad and in disbelief.”

In a pandemic, running a small business is a struggle. Coupled with the threat of racism, it can be untenable, Hsu, who identifies as Japanese, American and Caucasian, has a great-uncle who was incarcerated at Santa Anita and Manzanar. She supports stricter punishments for hate crimes and thinks policing is important to community safety.

“I haven’t heard anyone in the local police department come out and tell me they’re doing more to keep us safe or raising any awareness, which makes me feel uneasy,” said Hsu.

In San Jose’s Japantown, the economic effects of the pandemic on local businesses are visible. Some businesses either remain closed or can only operate limited hours. The historic area is home to many senior residents, who live in the area’s three housing facilities, and senior visitors, who frequent Japantown’s grocery store or senior center.

Japantown seniors feel unsafe because of the increase in elderly attacks, which are unrelated to anti-Asian hate, said Pam Yoshida, co-president of the Japantown Community Congress of San Jose and a member of the West Valley JACL.

“We have had a few situations with seniors being knocked down on the sidewalk by someone who was mentally ill and do not believe these were motivated by anti-Asian hate,” said Yoshida, a Sansei.

In response to the attacks, retired San Jose Police officer Rich Saito started a volunteer community foot patrol, Japantown Prepared, to help protect the area and its seniors. The volunteers, who live in the area’s three racially diverse and come from all over the Bay Area.

More police presence would help business owners feel safer, according to Pam Yoshida, co-president of the Japantown Community Congress of San Jose, West Valley JACL member and owner of Nikkei Traditions, a San Jose Japantown store.

In March, a gunman in Atlanta targeted and killed employees and patrons of spa businesses. Six of the eight victims of the mass shooting were of Asian descent. After news of the event shocked the nation, lawmakers in Seattle, Wash., held a virtual roundtable meeting with Asian American community leaders to talk about safety amid surging anti-Asian hate.

The Communities: We Need Protection

The Communities: We Need Protection

See SAFETY on page 12
By Ron Mori

In a year with a global pandemic significantly limiting social interaction, technology became more important than ever, especially for older adults.

New research from AARP found that more older adults (44 percent) view tech more positively as a way to stay connected than they did before Covid-19. In addition, 4 out of 5 adults age 50+ rely on technology to stay connected and in touch with family and friends.

Yet, the report also found that the greater adoption and reliance on technology is uneven, as 15 percent of adults 50+ do not have access to any type of internet, and 60 percent say the cost of high-speed internet is a problem.

“A technology enabled older adults to better weather the isolation of the pandemic — from ordering groceries to telehealth visits to connecting with loved ones,” said Alison Bryant, senior vp of research at AARP. “But it also exacerbated the divide. So much more is done online, and the 38 million disconnected older adults are being further left out.”

AARP 2021 Tech Trends Report Key Findings:

- Annual tech spending by the 50+ exponentially increased – from $394 to $1,144. The top three tech purchases were smartphones, smart TVs and earbuds/Bluetooth headsets.
- Using technology to connect with others across multiple forms of communication has increased since the onset of the pandemic. Many say they are using video chats (45 percent), texting (37 percent), emailing (26 percent) and phone (29 percent) more now than before the pandemic. As of 2019, about half had never used video chat, but by 2020, 70 percent have, with 1 in 3 using video chat weekly.
- Tech use among the 50+ increased significantly in wearable devices — from 17 percent to 27 percent.
- 50+ use of smartphones increased dramatically. For instance, use for ordering groceries grew from 6 percent to 24 percent; use for personal health increased from 28 percent to 40 percent for activities such as telehealth visits, ordering prescriptions or making appointments; use for health and fitness information increased 25 percent to 44 percent; and use for financial transactions increased from 37 percent to 53 percent.
- Half of the 50+ want to learn more about using tech (54 percent).
- Cost (38 percent), awareness/lack of knowledge (37 percent) and privacy concerns (34 percent) are the top self-reported barriers holding the 50+ back from adopting new technology.
- Privacy concerns continue to be a factor when it comes to tech, with 83 percent lacking confidence that what they do online remains private.
- Weekly use of streaming increased to 58 percent from 44 percent, a significant shift in how the 50+ consume entertainment.

AARP has a long history of providing personal technology resources including digital literacy initiatives, practical guidebooks and advocacy on technology issues for the 50+.

As part of our digital literacy work, OATS (Older Adults Technology Services) from AARP offers digital literacy courses, resources and events, which are a key part of the AARP Virtual Community Center, an online destination for AARP members and nonmembers alike.

OATS from AARP empowers older adults to overcome barriers to digital engagement by fostering skills and giving them the confidence they need to use technology and stay connected.

AARP has also long advocated for low-cost high-speed internet solutions for older adults and continued this work by recently supporting the new $3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program. This program is available to subsidize broadband service for eligible Americans during the pandemic. AARP is collaborating with the Federal Communications Commission to conduct education and outreach to let people know about the EBB program.

This program was established to help households struggling to pay for internet service during the pandemic and provides eligible households a monthly discount of up to $50 toward broadband service. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers if they contribute at least $10 but no more than $50 toward the purchase price.

More information about the program including eligibility is available at https://www.fcc.gov/broadband-benefit.

Ron Mori is a member of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.
DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PLEASE CHECK REGARDING THE STATUS OF EVENTS LISTED IN THIS ISSUE'S CALENDAR SECTION.

NATIONAL

Annual JACL National Convention
July 15-18
Virtual Event
Join JACL at its annual convention, which will be held virtually featuring a National Council meeting as well as breakout sessions and more! Be sure to visit JACL's website for complete convention information and announcements as they become available.

National APIA Day Against Bullying and Hate
May 18
Virtual Event
Price: Free
In 2019, Act to Change spearheaded the inaugural National APIA Day Against Bullying and Hate in honor of the birthday of Vincent Chin, whose murder in a hate crime in 1982 sparked a national uprising. This year’s signature event will feature “United We Stand,” as it’s more important now than ever that we stand up to xenophobia. Special guests include Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-III), Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Jeremy Lin, Simu Liu, Olivia Munn, Randall Park, Bowen Yang and many more.
Info: To register, visit https://acttochange.org.

Arkansas Asian Birchwood Film Society Screening
May 21; 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Virtual Event
Price: $25 Per Person or $50 Per Household (Includes Play Screening and Discussion)
Arkansas Asian Birchwood Film Society will host a special screening and discussion of the documentary film The Betrayed. This two-part documentary explores the world of Nanajima and the experiences of Japanese American women during World War II. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers, including Anne Ishii, publisher of the book that inspired the film, and Asian American filmmakers. Light refreshments will be served.
Info: For more information, visit www.arkansasasian.com.

‘Wher e Beauty Lies’ Exhibit
Thru Sept 19
Asian American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
Los Angeles, CA
Price: Museum Admission Fees
The Asia Museum is excited to announce its ‘Where Beauty Lies’ exhibit, which chronicles 130 years of Japanese American women’s contributions to beauty, culture, and politics in the U.S. The exhibit features a variety of different eras and traditions, from traditional Japanese beauty to contemporary Western beauty standards. Visitors can explore the evolution of beauty through photos, videos, and interactive displays.
Info: Visit www.janm.org for more information.

‘The Betrayed’ Benefit Screening and Discussion
Watsonville, CA
May 22; 1-3 p.m.
Virtual Event
Price: Free
A benefit screening of ‘The Betrayed’, a new short film directed by Chay Yew, will be held in Watsonville. The film explores the experiences of Japanese American women during World War II and their legacy in the United States. A discussion will follow, featuring cast members and members of the Watsonville community.
Info: To register, visit www.sonomamatsuri.org.

‘Question 27, Question 28’
May 26, 3-4 p.m.
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Join Berkeley JACL at its annual event recognizing the chapter’s scholarship recipients. Pioneer Award winners Mark Fujikawa and Leroy Morishita and Youth Leadership Award honoree Elizabeth Uno will be on hand to present scholarships, and attendees can request to have their names read aloud.
Info: RSVP with your name and email by May 19 to Ryan Matsuoka (ryan.matsuoka@outlook.com) and Ron Tanaka (ron_tanaka@yahoo.com) or call (925) 932-7947 to receive the Zoom link to the event.

ESC

Bringing Asian Cuisine to the American Table
Boston, MA
May 19; 3 p.m. EST
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Boston University’s Megan Elias will explore the diverse history of Asian and Pacific Food in the U.S. She’ll track how traditional ingredients have made their way into the American diet and detail the journeys of Asian American cookbooks that made their mark.
Info: Visit https://www.bu.edu/alumni/ for more information.

Building APIA Power
Boston, MA
May 24; 2 p.m. EST
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Boston University’s Megan Elias will explore the diverse history of Asian and Pacific Food in the U.S. She’ll track how traditional ingredients have made their way into the American diet and detail the journeys of Asian American cookbooks that made their mark.
Info: Visit https://www.bu.edu/alumni/ for more information.

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May 7, 2021

OBITUARIES

Hiirake, Isamu Sammy, 98, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 19; during WWII, his family was forcibly relocated to and incarcerated at the Manzanar WRA Center in CA; he was predeceased by his wife, Reiko; he is survived by his daughters, Eileen Hiirake and Dr. Kathleen (Dr. Kenneth) Sakamoto, sister, Yoko (Paul) Doi; sister-in-law, Kimiko Kochi; he is also survived by nieces and nephews.

Hirashima, Margie, 98, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 27, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Frank; she is survived by her son, Jeff (Elaine) Hirashima; gc: 2; ggc: 1.

Hongo-Namba, Lily Sadako, 95, Portland, OR, March 23; during WWII, she was incarcerated at the Minidoka WRA Center in ID, where she graduated from Hunt High School; she was predeceased by her first husband, Shigeru Hongo; and daughter, Wendy Peace; she is survived by her second husband, Mark; son, Dr. Gary S. Hongo (Jonna); sister-in-law, Kimiko Kochi; and many nieces, nephews, grand-nieces, and grand-nephews.

Inouye, Mac Mansaku., 97, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 27, 2020; Army veteran; he is also survived by nieces and nephews.

Izumigawa, Jim, 69, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 12; he is survived by his wife, Mariko (Christina), Tom (Gracie), Dickie (late husband Julius), George (Lisa); siblings, Cindy Nishimoto (late husband Julius), George (Christine), Tom (late wife Nadine); sisters-in-law, Naomi Iwamiya, Grace Watanabe (Sach), gc: 3.

Izumigawa, Frank, 72, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 5; retired Air Force veteran; he is survived by his sisters, Frances and Joyce; 2 nephews.

Nakayama, Eric Marcoux, Nicole Wickens and ChristopherMarcoux; gc: 3.

Yamaguchi, Eitetsu, 82, Los Angeles, CA, April 11; he is survived by his wife, Kayzo “Kay” Yamaguchi; daughters, Kelly Yamane and Corey Okazaki; step-gc: 4.

Onishi, Shigeru, 73, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 7; during WWII, he was incarcerated at the Rohwer WRA Center in AR; he is survived by his first wife, Mary Yamada; his second wife; Yukio; children, Aric, Kristen (Tom Kratky) and Bryan (Melissa); sister, Fusako Matsuura (Jean); brothers, Julie (Mary) Arino Matsuura and Jason Matsuura (Edel); brothers, Mel Matsuura (Haru) and Gene Matsuura (Jean); brother-in-law, Richard Mikami (Ann); sisters-in-law, Melko Inaba, Lynn Mikami and Shirley Mikami; gc: 2.

Miyamura, Shigeru, 73, Los Angeles, CA, April 25; he is survived by his wife, Kazuko “Kay” Yamaguchi; sisters, Fusako Matsuura (Jean); brothers, Julie (Mary) Arino Matsuura and Jason Matsuura (Edel); brothers, Mel Matsuura (Haru) and Gene Matsuura (Jean); brother-in-law, Richard Mikami (Ann); sisters-in-law, Melko Inaba, Lynn Mikami and Shirley Mikami; gc: 2.

Nakayama, Shigeru, 73, Sacramento, CA, Feb. 22; Army veteran; he was predeceased by his sister, Mitsuko (Hajime) Misaka; he is survived by his wife, Chieko Miyamura; brother, Jim, 69, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 25; he is survived by his wife, Yoko; siblings, Sally Tagawa and Dennis Nagashima; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins, nieces, nephews, and their children.

Nakayama, Yoko, 79, Alhambra, CA, Jan. 22; she is survived by her brother, Masami Nakayama; a niece and many relatives and friends.

Onishi, George Jogi, 88, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 27, 2020; Army veteran; he was predeceased by his wife, Velma Beverly Onishi; son, John Ahau Onishi; granddaughter, Kayla Kiana Elliott; he is survived by his children, Michael Jotaro Onishi, George “Butchie” Onishi (Josie), David Akuni Onishi and Kimberly Elliott (Tim); sisters, Violet Okuhata and Annette Pufahl; foster-sisters, Stephanie Pauling and Winifred Nagy; he is also survived by many cousins, nieces, nephews, and ohana; gc: 6; ggc: 2.

Onishi, Haruko, 83, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 7; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Rohwer WRA Center in AR; she was predeceased by her husband, Donell Manabu Tekawa; she is survived by her children, Brian (Kathy) Tekawa, Sharon (Ron) Hirata and Julie (Wes) Yee; sister, Yuri Nishioka; gc: 5; ggc: 8.

Takeda, Yoshimichi, 89, Kaneohe, HI, March 4.

Tekawa, Hideko, 87, Seatac, WA, March 5; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in AZ; she was predeceased by her husband, Donell Tekawa; she is survived by her children, Brian (Kathy) Tekawa, Sharon (Ron) Hirata and Julie (Wes) Yee; sister, Yuri Nishioka; gc: 5; ggc: 8.

Tsuyuki, Ricky Mutsumi, 64, San Gabriel, CA, Dec. 31, 2020; he is survived by his children, Alfred Y. (Michie), Theodoe (Keko), Makoto, Hitomi Tsuyuki and Christine M. Nagashima; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins, grand-nieces and grand-nephews. Donations in honor of Kevin: https://www.sparkthechangecolorado.org/mycva.
Ochi was also active in the nonprofit space, serving, among many other organizations, on the board of trustees of the L.A. County Bar Assn., being a founding member of the Japanese American Bar Assn., participating in JACL at the national level, including an unsuccessful bid to become JACL’s first woman president in 1986, an election that was decided by two votes.

Two years later, her efforts to help make Japanese American redress a reality came to fruition when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Reagan famously included Rose Ochi in his remarks before enacting the bill.

“Rose, Rosa, Ochi led a remarkable life, a life of distinction, of honor and grace, of dignity and of elegance. Our nation is better for her sacrifices and her contributions and the City of Angles is proud to call her a cherished daughter,” de Leon said, who then introduced another speaker, Darlene Kuba, who was one of the many younger people mentored over the years by Ochi.

“Today, we honor the accomplishments and contributions of a remarkable woman. Rose’s entire life was dedicated to ensuring equity and justice for all,” Kuba said. “She was a true example of how one person can make a difference.”

The next speaker received laughs from the crowd when he said, “Hi, I’m Tommy Ochi, frequently introduced as Mr. Rose Ochi. After 57 years of marriage, I think I know Rose very well. She would be surprised and extremely grateful for this honor. She never sought to have her accomplishments publicized. In fact, I read an article on redress that stated, ‘No one would know of her contributions since she rarely talked about it.’”

The duo de Leon, Kuba and Tommy Ochi then proceeded to remove the cloth that covered the new Rose Ochi Square sign, the first of four that will adorn each corner of the intersection.

Afterward, asked by the Pacific Citizen what his wife would have said were she alive to receive such an honor, Tommy Ochi laughingly replied, “She’d probably say, ‘You’ve got to be kidding!’” He reiterated how she didn’t like to talk about what she accomplished. “She liked to just do stuff.”

Before saying a few words for the occasion, lobbyist Darlene Kuba thanks L.A. City Councilman Kevin de Leon for helping to have the intersection of Pedro and E. First streets named Rose Ochi Square.

PHOTOS: PACIFIC CITIZEN

The Seattle Police department could increase patrol in the Chinatown International District, said a law enforcement official. Seattle JACL President Stanley Shikuma, who attended the meeting, wondered how increased police presence in one concentrated area would affect Asian Americans who live throughout the Seattle area.

“It doesn’t,” said Shikuma, a Sansei. “It gives the impression that you’re doing something, but it doesn’t really solve the problem.”

The answer, Shikuma said, can be found by addressing the root causes of the issues like homelessness, mental health issues and food insecurity.

Shikuma, 67, is part of a growing number of Asian Americans who are approaching the call for increased community safety through an abolitionist lens.

Abolition is a political vision of a restructured society where community safety comes by fulfilling people’s foundational needs. If a person steals, then the question arises: Is it because they are experiencing food or housing insecurity? Then abolitionists say we should direct resources and funds to meet these needs, not criminalize them.

On May 1, the Nikki Abolition Study Group held its first virtual session to explore the ideas of community safety. The study group is the collaborative effort of three Japanese American organizations: Tsuru For Solidarity, the New York Day of Remembrance Committee and Nikki Uprising in Chicago.

It is the first of six free monthly sessions focusing on community safety through an abolitionist framework. About 125 people across the U.S. attended, said Linda Morris, who co-facilitated the first session.

Suggested reading included Mariame Kaba’s article, “So You’re Thinking About Becoming an Abolitionist,” but being an abolitionist is not required to be a part of the study group. Facilitators asked that participants identify as Nikkei, in part, to provide a space for a community with a shared history of overpolicing, surveillance and mass incarceration to talk openly about safety.

“Why do we equate safety with policing and the carceral system?” said Morris, 31, a civil rights lawyer in New York. “That’s something that we’ve experienced in our history, and we know that policing can be a very harmful institution and tool of the state.”

The FBI arrested Lisa Doi’s great-grandfather Kazuichi Doi after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, indicating that he had been under surveillance for some time.

“Do I think the country was safer because my great-grandfather was arrested for being an active member of his Buddhist temple?” said Doi, Chicago JACL president and a community organizer with Tsuru For Solidarity. “No.”

During WWII, Morris’ grandparents were incarcerated at Manzanar, Jerome and Rohwer. Her family’s history provides a framework for closer self-examination.

Out of the isolation of the WRA camps emerged the narrative that the U.S. government wrongly imprisoned 120,000 innocent Japanese Americans, two-thirds of whom were American citizens. But community organizers like Morris want to challenge this narrative on two fronts by asking: When is incarceration OK? And what does innocence really mean?

“If we weren’t citizens, would it be OK then?” said Morris, who is Yonsei. “My great-grandparents weren’t citizens and were incarcerated, so was it OK then to incarcerate them? What was grounding our sense that we were good citizens, so we didn’t deserve it?”

Morris paused, then said pointedly, “We didn’t deserve it because we were human.”

Organizers say they are excited that the study group would provide space for tough conversations like these.

“Those points of tension and potential conflict are actually spaces that can be very generative and where we can begin to really come up with creative solutions and challenge our imagination,” said Morris.

Against a backdrop of increased violence and racism against Asian American, the study group’s focus on abolition contrasts with other community members’ call for increased policing.

It makes Shikuma wonder if the call for more policing is actually a reflex made out of habit.

“It’s a system that we inherited, so we just go along with it,” said Shikuma, who is a study group participant. “Some people get caught up in retribution and punishment.

Abolition Study Group

Join the Next Nikki Abolition Study Group

The conversation will focus on incarceration and the prison industrial complex.

DATE: June 12
TIME: 1-2:30 p.m. ET
10-11:30 a.m. PT