Ito spent nearly 50 years in the animation industry.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF WILLIE ITO

One man’s relentless drive to bring a bird named Maggie from page to screen.
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR 51ST JACL NATIONAL CONVENTION

‘Communities Forged Under Fire!’ will be held virtually July 15-18.

By JACL National

Join JACL at its 51st National Convention on July 15-18. The virtual event, themed “Communities Forged Under Fire!” represents the long legacy of not only the Japanese American community’s struggles throughout history but also the shared struggles of many marginalized communities from immigration and colonization to the fight for civil rights and beyond.

Among this year’s convention highlights:

• Enjoy the most affordable convention ever (free to $35)
• Full access to four days of programming
• Expanded workshop and mixer opportunities
• Attend from anywhere!

In addition to the National Convention, this year’s virtual JACL National Convention will feature a slate of programming and events, including special guests Maia and Alex Shibutani (pictured at top left). Photos: Courtesy of JACL National.

Visit www.jacl.org to register. JACL members receive a convention discount at $25. For more information, go to www.jacl.org/member or email mbr@jacl.org.

Prices increase by $10 on June 18.

PAUL GOODMAN UNDERGOES BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT

Following is an update on Paul Goodman, who was first featured in the Pacific Citizen’s Feb. 19-March 4, 2021, issue. Goodman, a 29-year-old filmmaker from Orange County, Calif., was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia four years ago. An update on his condition was posted on May 21 by his mother, Bonnie Goodman.

“Some of you may remember a few months ago, there was a big push here to find a perfect match for my son, Paul Daisuke Goodman, who relapsed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia late last year. Although a perfect match was never found, he was able to move forward with his bone marrow transplant on March 12 with his sister, Laurie, as his 5/10 half-match donor,” Bonnie Goodman wrote.

“I’m happy to share with you that Paul is Day +70 and doing well. As expected with transplant, it’s been a tough road, but he’s getting a little bit stronger every day.

“Thanks to everyone who attended a drive, requested a mail-in swab kit and/or shared Paul’s story to their friends and family,” she continued.

“The Asian community continues to be very underrepresented in the BeTheMatch registry, so please continue to encourage your friends to join.”

See GOODMAN on page 8

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I have participated in several social media discussions where the majority of the participants were Black. The topic was the Asian and Black relationships. It was clearly and emphatically stated that there was an animosity in the Black communities against Asians. There were clear and angry statements about this Asian Hate Bill.

The anger focused on the fact that this bill passed quickly, but violence against Blacks has not been adequately addressed. This added to the hostilities against Asians by the Black participants. They said things like we Asians deserved the Black on Asian violent attacks, and that we should expect these attacks.

You (JACL) should look at the attacks on Asians — the majority have been Blacks attacking Asians. This is a serious problem that you are not addressing. Being Politically Correct and ignoring this issue is adequate addressed. This added to the hostilities against Asians by the Black participants. They said things like we Asians deserved the Black on Asian violent attacks, and that we should expect these attacks. You (JACL) should look at the attacks on Asians — the majority have been Blacks attacking Asians. This is a serious problem that you are not addressing. Being Politically Correct and ignoring this issue is adequate.

Sincerely,

Glenn Asakawa
San Diego, Calif.

I’m glad to see the Pacific Citizen growing and evolving with its website, and especially LOVE the much easier-going with its website, and especially LOVE the much easier-

PACIFIC CITIZEN 2021 SPRING CAMPAIGN

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

*Your donations will help build and preserve a cohesive library of the Pacific Citizen to educate future generations.*

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JOIN US IN COMMUNITY AT
THE 2021 JACL VIRTUAL
CONVENTION

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

June is the month for weddings. June is also LGBT Pride month, when we celebrate the achievements and contributions of LGBT individuals to our country, but also stand in solidarity with an LGBT community just as JACL did 27 years ago when it became one of the first national civil rights organizations to endorse gay marriage.

Double those years to 54, and that is how long ago the Loving v. Virginia case was decided, with the Supreme Court unanimously striking down anti-miscegenation laws. At that trial, JACL was represented by Bill Marutani, the only outside party permitted to speak at the hearing in favor of the Richard and Mildred Loving.

JACL has had a strong history of partnering with other communities in the face of discrimination. We ourselves have faced similar fire and understand the importance of solidarity. It is in this spirit that we have selected the theme of “Communities Forged Under Fire” for this year’s convention.

It is unfortunate that a part of our history is the duress under which we often find ourselves, whether it was the xenophobia of the late 1800s that drove laws such as the Chinese Exclusion Act or naturalization laws that targeted Asians, or the sanitization of the racial history of the U.S. that exists today against our same Asian communities due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The very reason we celebrate LGBT Pride month in June is that we are remembering the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York, and the events in which members of the gay community resisted their arrest for being who they are. The transgender community is under fire today with attacks on children participating in sports or even using the restrooms at school.

This past year, we have experienced the renewed sting of anti-Asian hate ranging from the petty catcalls of derogatory slurs to the deadly violence of the Atlanta and Indianapolis shootings.

This happens against the backdrop of the forced stay of political brutality against African Americans. While slavery ended over 150 years ago, Jim Crow laws over 50 years ago, Black men, women, and children still remain “under fire” by education, finance and justice systems that systematically disadvantage them because of the color of their skin.

The Covid pandemic has further highlighted many of the inequities that exist in society, placing our communities further under fire. Hate crimes are not specific to one group. Unfortunately, those who act in hate against one group often do the same to others.

This year’s convention will be an opportunity to recognize the shared experiences of our separate yet overlapping communities of how each has been forged through the experiences of hundreds of years of history, or the recent experiences of this past year.

I started this column mentioning the topic of marriage, and I can’t resist bringing in a reference to “The Princess Bride.” In that movie, the priest proclaims, “Mawage (marriage) is not bwwings us toged-der,” and though marriage rights are so fundamental to what JACL has believed in protecting, it is that solidarity in supporting the institutions and the communities that it can create, that we will come together in July.

Please join us at the 2021 Virtual JACL National Convention as we recognize this rich though sometimes difficult history — a part of our American history that has made us who we are as a nation.

Although we may belong to different communities, many of them overlap and interact. But most of all, we work together in solidarity and for a greater American experience for all.

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

YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

‘WHAT ARE YOU?’

By Noah Kurima

‘What are you?’ It is such a straightforward question. But for many Japanese Americans in my generation, the answer is not simple. After 16 years in this world, an online course has opened my eyes to the history of my family and helped me finally understand myself. Whether enrolling in this course or attending a JACL convention, I find myself answering a question that is both simple and complex: My identity.

I possess the fortitude to face all obstacles. I now have faith in myself. I am also Korean — a proud citizen of the JACL San Diego chapter. I am a founder member of the Junior chapter of the JACL San Diego chapter. He hopes to study international relations and international policy in college.

As a college-level course, I spend five to eight hours a week (sometimes more!) to absorb the material, complete assignments and contribute to ongoing online discussions.

Although a lot of hours on top of regular schoolwork, I highly recommend RSP, even after the pandemic is over! I have been able to meet and become friends with 28 brilliant classmates from across the U.S. and across demographics. I imagine I will keep in touch with them over the following decades as our lives and careers intertwine.

We have learned from some of Stanford’s and the nation’s most prestigious scholars. Our own professor, Naomi Funahashi, brings passion to each class — and patience when our classmate, Ben, only wants to talk about boba! Under her leadership, we have developed a close-knit and fun community.

Our lessons on Japan began with the sun goddess Amaterasu emerging from her cave and wrapped up with a unit on the triple disasters of 2011 and the future of Japan. In between, we heard stories from an actual Buddhist monk, dissected a 1932 Yasujirō Ozu silent film and heard from George Takei on his family’s experiences during World War II. He was gracious enough to send signed copies of his new book to each member of the class!

One unexpected outcome from the course was increased dialogue with my parents over dinner about our family history. Sometimes, we enlisted the help of my grandparents and other relatives to fill in blind spots. A few of the stories absolutely blew my mind.

My maternal great-grandparents immigrated from Korea to Japan in the 1930s. After WWII, the former Japanese colony was divided. The North had charismatic leaders and effective propaganda in Japan, and my great-grandparents affiliated themselves with North Korea — as most zainichi (Koreans in Japan) did at the time. However, those returning to North Korea were never heard from again, and the zainichi began to realize they were being deceived.

In the 1960s, my great-grandfather was visiting relatives in South Korea when he was kidnapped by the Korean CIA. He was not heard from for three days. He was released and returned to Japan but never stepped foot on Korean soil again. He never spoke about those 72 hours to anyone, and the family has never spoke of it.

Like most of you, I am connected to WWII incarceration — my grandparents were both taken to Jerome, Ark. My great-uncle, Herb Kurima, was a well-known pitcher in Nikkei baseball and had a physically and mentally disabled brother. Toyoki ate only Japanese food, spoke only Japanese and needed constant attention from his mother. The U.S. government would not allow Toyoki to accompany the family and denied requests from his brother to take him inland. Toyoki was institutionalized while my family was sent to Fresno. Toyoki passed away within weeks.

I now understand so much about Japanese society and its issues. But I am most thankful to the RSP for triggering those evening talks with my parents.

I not only learned about the unimaginable adversities my great-grandparents had to face on both sides of the world — but also their resilience. I now have faith in myself. I possess the fortitude to persevere and overcome the challenges in my own life. It’s in my blood!

And now I know what I am. I am Japanese American, fourth generation through my grandmother, fifth through my grandfather, second through my mom (a weighted average of 3.25). And though she was born and raised in Japan, I am also Korean — a proud zainichi from both the South and the North.

Programs such as RSP can inspire a more comprehen-
BERKELEY JACL HONORS FUTURE LEADERS AND ACCOMPLISHED PIONEERS

The chapter pays tribute to its Scholarship, Pioneer and Youth Leadership Awards winners.

By Berkeley JACL Chapter

The Berkeley JACL chapter celebrated leaders of the future and honored accomplished Japanese American pioneers during its May 23 award event via Zoom. Scholarships were awarded to five high school seniors to recognize their academic achievements, community involvement, school activities, work history, JACL involvement, written essay, letter of recommendation and group interview.

This year’s honorees are:

• Christy Ko (Oakland Tech High School) will attend the University of Southern California as a computer science major. She was also named the recipient of the Bea Kono Memorial Scholarship.

• Kyle Kuwahara (Berkeley High School) will attend the University of California, Berkeley, as a computer science major. He is the recipient of the Terry Yamashita Memorial Scholarship.

• Scott Kuwahara (Berkeley High School) will attend the University of California, Santa Cruz, as a game development major. He was awarded the Carolyn Miyakawa Adams Scholarship.

• Lucille Taylor (El Cerrito High School) will attend the University of Hawaii (Manoa) as an undeclared major. She is the recipient of the George/Yoshimi Nakamura Memorial Scholarship.

• Amanda Tsutakawa (Camboro High School in North Carolina) will attend Northwestern University as an Asian American Studies major. She is the recipient of the Dan/Kathleen Date Memorial Scholarship. Additionally, the chapter awarded scholarships to four college undergraduates who are attending accredited institutions of higher learning located in Alameda or Contra Costa Counties. This year’s recipients are:
  • Annika Masaki (UC Berkeley) majoring in public health
  • Ellie Matsuno (UC Berkeley) majoring in civil engineering
  • Bryce Nakahara (UC Berkeley) majoring in biology and business
  • Allison Nakao (Diablo Valley College) majoring in library technologies

During the event, the chapter recognized its memorial scholarship donors: the Beatrice Kono family (George Kono), the Terry Yamashita family (Reiko Nabeto), the Dan/Kathleen Date family (Gail Yamamoto) and the George/Yoshimi Nakamura family (Ken, Mari, Cubby Nakamura). Carolyn Miyakawa Adams was also honored for her years of support to the scholarship program. The 2021 members of the scholarship committee are Chair Ron Tanaka, Mark Fujikawa, Vera Kawamura, Karen Kyio Lowhurst, Ryan Matsuda, Neal Ouye, Al Satake and Sharron Sue.

Recognized for their active commitment to the Berkeley JACL were Mark Fujikawa and Leroy Morishita, who were presented the chapter’s Pioneer Award. This award honored Fujikawa (optometrist) and Morishita (retired President of Cal State University East Bay) for their dedicated service to the chapter. The purpose of the award is to honor those with the vision, compassion and energy to lay a foundation for building a strong Japanese American community and nurturing future leaders.

In addition, Beth Uno was presented the chapter’s Youth Leadership Award to recognize her role in organizing and implementing key youth activities and developing programs to fulfill the growing need for youth leaders with the desire, vision and skills to make a positive difference consistent with the chapter’s mission. Congratulations to all of this year’s honorees.

NCWNP District Holds 2021 Gala Recognition Awards and Celebration

All proceeds from the virtual event will be donated to the Greg Marutani Memorial Fund.

By Nikki Hikari

The Northern California Western Nevada Pacific District held its biennial district gala virtually this year due to Covid-19 constraints. Thanks to the 2021 Gala Committee, consisting of NCWNP District Governor Carol Kawase, Janice Lusczczak, Thaya Mune-Craig, Debbi Hatanaka Endow and Nikki Hikari, it was very successful.

Those who attended enjoyed 90 minutes of lively talks, beautiful koto music and slide shows of past galas, current Chapter Daruma Award honorees, Youth Daruma Award honorees, the District Award of Excellence honoree, four Sapphire pin awardees and a closing photo montage from all of its active chapters.

Led by Kawase and emcee Jana Katsuyama, news reporter for Bay Area KTVU Channel 2, the awards show ran smoothly thanks to Zoom tech specialist Elise Fujimoto.

The gala began with the Raising of the Colors by Boy Scouts from Troop 58 of San Francisco Konko Church, who also led the Pledge of Allegiance. It was so nice to have the boys on live! NCWNP galas raise funds to be donated to a specific recipient and project. This year’s beneficiary is the Greg Marutani Memorial Fund. Donations will go directly to the JACL Teacher Education Fund in memory of Marutani for teacher training and classroom materials to promote educational learning about civil rights and the Japanese American incarceration experience.

The keynote speakers were Sharon Ishii-Jordan of the Omaha chapter and Carol Kawamoto from San Diego JACL. Both spoke eloquently about the JACL Teacher Education Program’s history and purpose, as well as elaborated on their own experiences working with the committee with Marutani, including field trips taking teachers to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site.

The gala was graced throughout the evening with Marutani, including field trips taking teachers to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site. The gala was graced throughout the evening with Marutani, including field trips taking teachers to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site. The gala was graced throughout the evening with Marutani, including field trips taking teachers to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site. The gala was graced throughout the evening with Marutani, including field trips taking teachers to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site.

This year’s Berkeley JACL chapter honorees are (top row, from left) Mark Fujikawa, Leroy Morishita, Annika Masaki, Ellie Matsuno, Bryce Nakahara, Allison Nakao and (bottom row, from left) Beth Uno, Christy Ko, Kyle Kuwahara, Scott Kuwahara, Lucille Taylor and Amanda Tsutakawa.

This year’s NCWNP honorees included (top row, from left) Yukino Torrey, Arileen Mataga, Jim Duff and Valerie Yasukochi, Hugh Metcalf, Dan Okada and (bottom row, from left) Christine Umeda, Donna Komure-Toyama, Marielle Tsukamoto, Dick Sasaki and (far right) Thaya Mune-Craig and Jim Craig. Also pictured is NCWNP Governor Carol Kawase (second from right).

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I n 2018, when Keith Kawamoto saw a Kansas license plate containing the letters J-A-P, he could not believe his eyes (Pacific Citizen, Sept. 7-27, 2018). In 2021, while listening to Tim Conway Jr. on Los Angeles radio station KFI-AM, he could not believe his ears.

Kawamoto was at home on May 3 listening to Conway — “I’m a fan,” he told the Pacific Citizen regarding the longtime L.A.-market talk radio fixture — but was taken aback during a comedic bit in which Conway pretended to interview someone of Japanese ancestry, complete with a mockery of a Japanese accent not unlike a Yellowface Mickey Rooney in the 1961 movie “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” with some added verbal flourishes. (The audio of the bit is available on YouTube at tinyurl.com/2pchu55. Related to that, the May 3 podcast feed of the Tim Conway Jr. show was absent.)

That someone was Yuko Sakamoto, the wife of sportscaster Vic “The Brick” Jacobs. The topic was the upcoming Tokyo Summer Olympic Games, which were postponed for a year because of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

With Japan still planning to hold the Games this summer, despite domestic and international misgivings, Conway purportedly was going to interview Jacobs’ wife on that topic in the bit. Although Jacobs is someone in the public eye and is therefore fair game for fans of radio — with or without an Asian accent — this time around it was his executive producer, Sheron Bellio as Sakamoto the butt of the joke, give her a dubious Japanese accent and consistently call her “Yoko” instead of Yuko.

Kawamoto, a member of the Venice-West L.A. chapter of the JACL, was not amused by the race-baiting attempt at humor. Just as in 2018 with the Kansas license plates, he decided to take action. After bringing up the KFI incident with his JACL chapter, it was suggested that Kawamoto contact Media Action Network for Asian Americans, which he did. Kawamoto also told the P.C. that he wrote a complaint letter to the Federal Communications Commission regarding the incident. Even the dialogue from the adults, whose voices had a particular quality that could change quickly. Even the dialogue from the adults, Castuera pointed out, came from the interviews that were conducted with people from the different communities. “They were all hired because they were themselves,” Ito added.

“City of Ghosts” came about when Netflix became interested in a short episode. Ito had made titled “Welcome to My Life” with Cartoon Network. But it was tied up at CN, so when Netflix asked her whether she had any other ideas, she drew inspiration from people she, as an Asian kid, could relate to Ito’s vision. “I don’t have the generational roots that Elizabeth does, but it put me in touch with different perspectives, people who were immigrants themselves or have roots that go back generations,” Castuera said, referring to the “Tovanaag” episode.

Those threads and sensibility came together for the show, as evidenced by episode titles like “Koreatown,” “Bob & Nancy” and “Koreatown” creator Elizabeth Ito

By P.C. Staff

Ito Draws on Memories for ‘CITY OF GHOSTS’
The Netflix cartoon combines kids, apparitions and a new view of L.A.

O n one of the delights of 2021 for fans of both animation and residents of Los Angeles was the six-part streaming series “City of Ghosts.”

Created by an animation industry veteran and a Los Angeles-based local, Elizabeth Ito, “City of Ghosts” checks many boxes: love letter to overlooked L.A. neighborhoods, the supernatural, precocious-yet-innocent kid detectives of the Ghost Club and photorealistic backdrops populated by stylized, nonphotorealistic characters.

Netflix dropped “City of Ghosts” in early March, with both critics and viewers responding positively to the gentle and inclusive vision of Ito, who also co-wrote and directed episodes. Her team included another Japanese American, Ako Castuera (they met while working on “Adventure Time”), as well as other Asian American animation talent.

Two constants throughout: ghosts and kids. Fortunately, they aren’t the frightening types of ghosts, but the type that want to teach and share their stories. And the kids? They sound like real kids and not trained actors because that’s what a standard American dialect — is neither a public figure nor a sportscaster.

Nevertheless, Conway, with assistance from his executive producer, Sheron Bellio as Sakamoto, decided it was OK to make Sakamoto the butt of the joke, give her a dubious Japanese accent and consistently call her “Yoko” instead of Yuko.

Kawamoto, a member of the Venice-West L.A. chapter of the JACL, was not amused by the race-baiting attempt at humor. Just as in 2018 with the Kansas license plates, he decided to take action. After bringing up the KFI incident with his JACL chapter, it was suggested that Kawamoto contact Media Action Network for Asian Americans, which he did. Kawamoto also told the P.C. that he wrote a complaint letter to the Federal Communications Commission regarding the incident. Even the dialogue from the adults, whose voices had a particular quality that could change quickly. Even the dialogue from the adults, Castuera pointed out, came from the interviews that were conducted with people from the different communities. “They were all hired because they were themselves,” Ito added.

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Those threads and sensibility came together for the show, as evidenced by episode titles like “Koreatown,” “Venice” and “Leimert Park,” as well as neighborhoods like Boyle Heights and locations like the Bob Baker Marionette Theater, all giveaways that “City of Ghosts” takes a different tack at depicting L.A.

“In “City of Ghosts,” the City of Angels and its denizens are characters, and in a city that is so big, so sprawling and so diverse, there might be no end to the stories that could be told. “I’ve appreciated everybody’s reaction to the show,” Ito said. “No matter whether there are more [episodes] or not, I’m really proud of what me and the whole crew made, so I’m really happy for everybody who worked on it, to see how much people love it, how much people love hearing their voices and how excited it makes people. So, I’m glad to have made something so meaningful for all of these communities that I’m now friends with.”
A cartoonist, a bird and a passion project

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

At first glance, this sounds like a story about a retiree keeping busy, but it's so much more. This story spans the world, includes wars, as well as one man's relentless drive to bring a bird named Maggie from page to screen.

At 8 years old, Willie and his family were incarcerated at Topaz. Here, Ito points at a family photo displayed at the Topaz Museum.

“I’m still at it,” says Willie Ito, 86, about the new projects he is working on in his so-called “retirement.”

PHOTO: LYNDA LIN GRIGSBY

Ito has an incredible collection of Disney memorabilia.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WILLIE ITO

A PASSION PROJECT

At center is a drawing of a young Japanese American boy, a bird and the title of Ito’s latest passion project, “Hello Maggie!”

A STORY ONLY SURVIVORS COULD TELL

Everyone in Ito’s inner circle who spoke with said the same thing: He’s busier now in retirement than he ever was working for Disney, Warner Bros, Sanrio or Hanna Barbera.

It’s the gift of time after the pandemic stripped away in-person appearances at comic book conventions and speaking engagements that so often crowd a legend’s personal calendar.

Retirement and pandemic-induced solitude gave Ito the opportunity to reflect on his experiences, said his 62-year-old son, Vincent Ito. “I think now he has been able to really focus on telling his story.”

In 1999, Ito’s buddy, Shigeru Yabu, approached him with an idea for a children’s book based on his own experiences as a boy incarcerated at Heart Mountain during World War II. In his family barrack, Yabu raised a magpie chick named Maggie that eventually learned to wolf whistle when women walked by and say, “Ohayo” (“good morning” in

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

“The artwork was his life,” Marc Ito says about his cartoonist dad, pictured here in his early studio days with fellow artists Jerry Eisenberg and Dick Bickenbach.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

Before the pandemic, Ito often traveled for in-person appearances at conventions.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

One of the perks of Ito’s extraordinary career in animation is collecting awards, including the Inkpot Award from Comic-Con.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

“Hello Maggie!”

SHIGERU YABU (LEFT) wrote the story “Hello Maggie” and Ito illustrated. Both promoted and sold the books.

HELLO MAGGIE!

Ito drew iconic cartoon characters for Disney, Hanna Barbera and Looney Toons.

Marika background

YABU FAMILY ILLUSTRATION AT HEART MOUNTAIN

YABU FAMILY ILLUSTRATION AT HEART MOUNTAIN

At first glance, this sounds like a story about a retiree keeping busy, but it’s so much more. This story spans the world, includes wars, as well as one man’s relentless drive to bring a bird named Maggie from page to screen.

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

The moment of awe is about to begin.

On the other side of the door, Willie Ito stands, cane in hand, ready. It’s a moment that faithfully repeats when a new visitor steps over the threshold of his home. It might start with a little gasp or a slow exhalation and then end in a stroll through the living room with dilated eyes twinking above his mask. Of course, with a pandemic still in existence, it’s been a while since someone new has entered his Monterey Park, Calif., home. Dressed in an olive floral-print shirt, Ito, 86, exudes a man with nothing but time now.

In Ito’s house, the mouse is king. Incarnations of the famous rodent in different poses live on the shelves like altars for newcomers to worship.

“Take a look around,” he says, with eyes twinkling above his mask. Of course, with a pandemic still in existence, it’s been a while since someone new has entered his Monterey Park, Calif., home. Dressed in an olive floral-print shirt, Ito, 86, exudes a man with nothing but time now.

Except after closer inspection, his shirt is covered in a Mickey Mouse motif. His blue hat is embroidered with the Disney name. If the mouse is king, Ito is the ambassador.

The ambassador needs no introduction in the animation world. He spent nearly 50 years in the industry as a cartoonist — many with Disney — starting in 1954 when a count of Asian American faces in the industry couldn’t even make a full set of tally marks. In animation circles, everyone knows Ito for the characters he created and the doors he opened for other Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the industry.

Last year, Eric Bauza, a Filipino-Canadian voice actor, was named the voice of Bugs Bunny, the wise-cracking, iconic animated character that Ito also sketched during his time at Warner Bros. Ito was the first Asian American to draw Bugs Bunny.

Now, a self-proclaimed Filipino kid is voicing the rabbit. The through line isn’t lost on Bauza, 41, who wondered out loud in a December episode of the “They Call Us Bruce” podcast what Ito thinks of the trail he blazed.

“Willie is a living legend,” Bauza tweeted on May 27. “Without his hard work, I wouldn’t be where I am now.”

This story is not about the bunny or the mouse or the countless characters Ito sketched to life during the golden era of American animation. This story is about the second act of his career — his so-called retirement that has become a period of creative renaissance. It’s about a magpie bird and how Ito is working to bring one of his most personal projects from book to screen.

“The meeting is about to begin,” said Ito, pointing to a chair on a sunny day in late May. On his computer screen are a series of faces from all over the world gathered for their twice-weekly virtual production meeting. The screen flashes, and suddenly, we are transported to the behind-the-scenes world of animation magic.

At center is a drawing of a young Japanese American boy, a bird and the title of Ito’s latest passion project, “Hello Maggie!”

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WILLIE ITO

“I’m still at it,” says Willie Ito, 86, about the new projects he is working on in his so-called “retirement.”

PHOTO: LYNDA LIN GRIGSBY

Ito has an incredible collection of Disney memorabilia.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF WILLIE ITO

A PASSION PROJECT

At center is a drawing of a young Japanese American boy, a bird and the title of Ito’s latest passion project, “Hello Maggie!”

A STORY ONLY SURVIVORS COULD TELL

Everyone in Ito’s inner circle who spoke with said the same thing: He’s busier now in retirement than he ever was working for Disney, Warner Bros, Sanrio or Hanna Barbera.

It’s the gift of time after the pandemic stripped away in-person appearances at comic book conventions and speaking engagements that so often crowd a legend’s personal calendar.

Retirement and pandemic-induced solitude gave Ito the opportunity to reflect on his experiences, said his 62-year-old son, Vincent Ito. “I think now he has been able to really focus on telling his story.”

In 1999, Ito’s buddy, Shigeru Yabu, approached him with an idea for a children’s book based on his own experiences as a boy incarcerated at Heart Mountain during World War II. In his family barrack, Yabu raised a magpie chick named Maggie that eventually learned to wolf whistle when women walked by and say, “Ohayo” (“good morning” in

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

“The artwork was his life,” Marc Ito says about his cartoonist dad, pictured here in his early studio days with fellow artists Jerry Eisenberg and Dick Bickenbach.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

Before the pandemic, Ito often traveled for in-person appearances at conventions.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

One of the perks of Ito’s extraordinary career in animation is collecting awards, including the Inkpot Award from Comic-Con.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MARC ITO

“Hello Maggie!”

SHIGERU YABU (LEFT) wrote the story “Hello Maggie” and Ito illustrated. Both promoted and sold the books.

HELLO MAGGIE!

Ito drew iconic cartoon characters for Disney, Hanna Barbera and Looney Toons.
Japanese). Maggie symbolized one boy’s pain, joy and loss from the incarceration experience. Yabu had the story. He needed an illustrator. "I wanted somebody that was from the internment camps," said Yabu, 88. "It didn’t matter what camp. I just wanted somebody that understood what a guard tower, barbed-wire fence and mess hall looked like."

Ito tells the story of Yabu’s proposal in a style that sounds like an excerpt from an old Hollywood script.

"We were in the Cherry Blossom Festival, you know, waving our stupid hands at people," said Yabu, a Nisei Ventura County JACL member. Then they would set up space to sell the books. "Anyway, basically, we struggled." "Hustling," a modern-day term co-opted here, describes the men’s relentless drive to get the "Hello Maggie!" book in as many homes as possible.

Slowly, the books sold out. To get a copy now, one has to buy a used one off Amazon for $70.98 or wait for Ito to finish the revised edition with four additional pages about the heroics of the Japanese American units in the military during WWII.

"I just need to get off of my butt and start drawing," Ito joked.

After all, he has another project that’s coming up for his attention.

MAGGIE THE CARTOON

Bringing "Hello Maggie!" from page to screen sounds like a series of events that came together with the help of a global pandemic and the connective power of an animation legend.

Many describe the same scenario: on how they joined the production team. It starts with a question: "Do you know Willie Ito? He has this idea for a cartoon."

Ito is always hustling. Two years ago, Ito was on a whirlwind trip to Florence, Italy, to pick up an award from Nemo Academy, an animation studio. Between receiving the award and viewing Michelangelo’s David, Ito noticed a copier of "Hello Maggie!" on Nemo Academy founder Luca Chiariotti’s bookshelf.

It started out as a joke, Ito said. Ha. Ha. Wouldn’t it be nice if you and your students make a cartoon version of "Hello Maggie!"? Can you imagine that? What would a project like that take?

When the laughter subsided, the "Hello Maggie!" cartoon short film project was greenlighted in February before coronavirus shut down the U.S. Preproduction started last May. What the pandemic takes away, it gives back in time.

The "Hello Maggie!" short film project needed a director, so Chiariotti called on Tony Tarantini, a professor of animation, arts and design from Sheridan College in Toronto, Canada.

"Do you know Willie Ito? He has an idea."

"What am I going to do, you know, in the spring of 2020 now anyway, so why not take on this project?" said Tarantini in the virtual production meeting. "But it turned out to be more than a spring thing."

It’s been a year’s thing, to be exact. Preproduction for "Hello Maggie!" is humming along in a style Ito jokingly calls "the only real way to animate." — 2-D animation of a young Shig delighting over a stack of hand-drawn pancakes and digitally painted scenery of Heart Mountain, so breathtakingly beautiful and stark.

Bringing "Hello Maggie!" from page to screen is an international affair. Two separate production teams made up of students from Sheridan College and Nemo Academy oversee visuals with Tarantini as director and Ito as creative producer and co-director. Sandro Cleuzio is the animation supervisor.

Ito and Tarantini envision an animated short. 14 minutes, with fast-paced dedication to historical accuracy. "Hello Maggie!" is a heart-warming story about a little boy and his pet bird, but it is also about historic events — a mass incarceration that continues to see intergenerational trauma trickle down.

"The reason why I want to be somehow what historically correct is that I want to give the audience, a sense that this really happened. It’s not just cartoon characters," said Tarantini.

The production team had several virtual meetings just to go over the details of the Heart Mountain guard tower, so it looks accurate. They brought on other former incarcerees, including Yabu, to vouch for the depiction of the camp.

In a virtual production meeting, mostly listened until a scene of the Heart Mountain camp popped up on screen. In the distance, someone had included telephone poles. Yabu could be quiet no longer.

"Could I make one correction?" he said. "In camp, we didn’t have any telephone poles or wires. No one had any telephones. How hard would it be to erase?"

The telephone poles in the scene vanished.

"I love to be able to think that maybe the people that were at Heart Mountain will look at that and feel a heal. Wow! You know that really feels like that was the place," said Tarantini.

FUNDING MAGGIE

In so many ways, bringing "Hello Maggie!" to life is a passion project for the production team. The student artists are receiving stipends from their colleges for their work, but other members are volunteering their time and talent.

To continue the project, the team needs more funding.

The debate over how to get the money to finish the project plays out in the production meeting. Tarantini says they need a person to join the team to spearhead the fundraising effort and crowdsource funding. At home, Ito shakes his head. He wants to look for big funders.

Later, Ito leans in and says, "One of the guys really helping to push this whole thing is David."

There’s the thing about being a legend. An Emmy Award-winning news anchor from one of the largest news markets in the country can casually be referenced on a first-name basis. The David here is David Ono, co-anchor of ABC7 Eyewitness News in Los Angeles, who Ito says has been championing his "Hello Maggie!" projects.

This year’s Heart Mountain pilgrimage on July 24-25 will be a series of virtual events with limited in-person meetings for board members and VIPs. Ito was set to attend ("David wants me to go with them.") with a goal to fundraise for "Hello Maggie!" the cartoon, but now he’s not sure. It’s not a problem of will, it’s a problem of logistic and aging bodies. Getting to the pilgrimage site in Wyoming means he must take two different planes and carry large portfolios of artwork on an airplane that had surgery for arthritis before the pandemic.

"I may have to pass," said Ito about the Heart Mountain pilgrimage.

"And at the moment, I’ve got George who might be interested in doing the voiceover or narration for the film, you know."

Is there a question that the George in reference here is George Takei of “Star Trek” fame?

WILLIE THE PERSON

Willie Katsutoshi Ito Jr. was born in San Francisco, Calif. in 1934. Most of his official documents cite him as Willie or Will, never William. He has four children with his wife, Rosemary, who died in 2017 after 64 years of marriage.

He has always been driven. said his son Marc Ito, 63. “The artwork was his life.”

Growing up, the Ito kids knew their dad drew cartoons for a living, said Marc Ito, pictured here with Willie Ito. "The realization that their dad was an animation legend came later."

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Growing up, the Ito kids knew their dad drew cartoons for a living. He worked late nights at the big studios and in his own studio affectionately called his “man cave” in the backyard. On Saturday mornings, the kids would watch cartoons and see Ito’s name in the credits, but to them, he was a regular dad, who would take the boys to drag races at the Pomona Fairgrounds.

Growing up with a dad like Ito was like living in Disneyland, said his 51-year-old daughter, Sabrina Kilsgaard.

“We always had the fun birthday parties because my dad would bring all the old classic Disney movies home and put them on the projector screen and, you know, draw for my friends,” she said.

There is a picture of Ito from the late 1970s standing proudly amid his formidable collection of Disney memorabilia in his man

» See PROJECT on page 12
Florin JACL Announces 2021 Scholarship Winners
The chapter recognizes the achievements of four outstanding high school students.

By Florin JACL Chapter

The Florin JACL chapter is pleased to announce its 2021 scholarship winners, all of whom are outstanding seniors attending Sacramento-area high schools. The recipients were chosen during a Zoom social program on May 16, which was held in lieu of the chapter’s annual in-person Ice Cream Social and Scholarship Presentation. The 2021 Bring Your Own Ice Cream social, which was led by the chapter’s Josh Kaizuka, recognized the achievements of Devon Akiyama, Cara Ishisaka, Ryan Seo and Anna Kubokawa Vogtmann. In addition, the chapter also welcomed special guests Brandon Miyazaki, Kim No-guchi, Kaitlyn Toyama and Beth Uno, four past scholarship winners who reflected upon their achievements and current aspirations.

This year’s winners were each judged on achievements in academic and scholastic honors, extracurricular activities including leadership positions, community service, work history, Japanese cultural activities and JACL involvements as shown on their written application, letter of recommendation and personal interview.

The 2021 scholarship awardees are:

- **DEVIN AKIYAMA**, the son of George and Merri Akiyama, attends West Campus High School in Sacramento. In addition to scholastic achievement awards, he was “key” to the establishment and management of Key Clubs (Kiwanis) in high schools throughout the greater Sacramento area. He also was founder and president of the campus Model United Nations Club and a member of the California Scholarship Federation SF National Honor Society and MESA (Math, Engineering, Science and Achievement) clubs. At Florin Buddhist Church, he received two Tamazo Tanigawa Awards, the Sangha Award for Boys Scouts, attended the Nihon Gakko summer program and was an active member of the Junior YBA. He also attended Jan Ken Po Gakko for Grades 1-6, from which he developed an interest in the Japanese incarceration experience. As a Boy Scout, he received his Eagle Scout award by honoring with gratitude his grandfather, Ichiro Akiyama, and his years of the Florin Buddhist Church. His project to repair and repaint the aging outdoor kitchen was accomplished during Covid-19 restrictions. Akiyama plans to attend the University of California, Berkeley, and major in business with a minor in history. He hopes to take a management role in the field of business and continue his service to the Asian Pacific Islander community.

- **CARA ISHISAKA** is the daughter of Denis and Lesly Ishisaka and younger sister of former Florin JACL scholarship winners Mika and Brian Ishisaka. She graduated with four years of Japanese language from the Humanities and International Studies Program at C. K. McClatchy High School in Sacramento. In 2019, Ishisaka re-instituted, co-founded and became vp of the Asian Pacific Islander Student Alliance to recognize and celebrate Asian Pacific cultural identities and issues. She also was team captain for CKM’s JV basketball team and is a member of the California Scholar Federation. As a Girl Scout, she recently received her Gold Award, setting up an electronic book catalog to help the Sacramento Betsuin library. In addition, she is a fourth-year first-grade Dharma School TA at the Buddhist church of Sacramento and co-president of the Jr. YBA, she attended the Jan Ken Po Gakko cultural summer school for six years and has been active at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento in Boys Scouts, church basketball, sixth-grade Dharma School TA and helping in numerous ways with church events and facilities improvement. In addition, Seo has been affiliated with the Lodi JACL Templars baseball team helps with field work and umpiring games at the North Natomas Little Leagues. Seo has decided to attend Sacramento City College and later transfer to a four-year university as an economics/finance major.

- **ANNA KUBOKAWA VOGTMANN**, the daughter of Russell and Keri Kubokawa Vogtmann, graduates from Vista Del Lago High School in Folsom. A 12-year Girl Scout, she received her Gold Award for her research and development of a music memory program for Oakmont of Folsom, a memory care facility, where she developed a brochure highlighting music and memory and distributed 350 of them to several other memory care facilities to encourage the use of musical activities. Vogtmann stays busy with Girl Scouts, works as a server at a local retirement home, is the captain and leading runner of her school’s track and field team and has committed to the University of California, Irvine, on a track and field scholarship. Vogtmann plans to major in international studies with ambitions to someday work internationally, focusing on children and elderly needs.

- **RYAN SEO**, the son of Derek and Audrey Seo, is a graduate from In- derkum High School in Natomas. As the grandson of Akio and Ruth Seo, he often attended and helped at the Florin JACL Nikkei Dogs Scholarship Fundraiser & Bingo Night and at Time of Remembrance events at the California Museum. He also participated in the Jan Ken Po Gakko cultural summer school for six years and has been active at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento in Boys Scouts, church basketball, sixth-grade Dharma School TA and helping in numerous ways with church events and facilities improvement. In addition, Seo has been affiliated with the Lodi JACL Templars baseball team helps with field work and umpiring games at the North Natomas Little Leagues. Seo has decided to attend Sacramento City College and later transfer to a four-year university as an economics/finance major.

Goodman continued from page 2

Drive-thru registration events to find a matching donor for Paul Goodman, which took place throughout California, Hawaii, Texas and Washington, were facilitated by recruiters from the nonprofit organization Asians for Miracle Marrow Matches (A3M), along with friends and family members. What started as a quiet and private battle soon exploded into a massive community undertaking.

“I can’t say enough how grateful we are to our friends, family and the Japanese community and entire Asian community as well as the Hafu (Hapa) community,” Bonnie Goodman told the Pacific Citizen.

For more information, contact Asians for Miracle Marrow Matches at http://www.a3mhope.org/.
BIPARTISAN MAJORITY OPPOSES SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE CUTS TO REDUCE DEFICIT

By Ron Mori

A new AARP survey finds that 85 percent of Americans age 50+ oppose cutting Social Security and Medicare to reduce the federal budget deficit. The poll shows overwhelming opposition from both Republicans (88 percent) and Democrats (87 percent) on cutting Social Security benefits to pay down the deficit. Similarly high proportions of Republicans (86 percent) and Democrats (87 percent) strongly oppose cuts to Medicare.

“Older Americans overwhelmingly oppose cutting Social Security and Medicare to reduce the deficit. Proposals like the TRUST Act would give a handful of lawmakers the power to propose cuts behind closed doors with fast-track legislative consideration with minimum transparency and oversight from voters,” said Nancy LeaMond, AARP executive vp and chief advocacy and engagement officer. “On behalf of AARP’s nearly 38 million members, we call for full and open debate that ensures public input on protecting the future of our earned benefits. All members of Congress should be held accountable for any action on Social Security and Medicare.”

Under the Time to Rescue United States’ Trusts Act — or TRUST Act, for short — all it would take for Congress would be for seven members of one of these rescue committees to support a proposed bill. Under the act, lawmakers would be unable to make any changes to a TRUST Act bill once it went to the U.S. House of Representatives or the Senate. Social Security and Medicare were particularly important during the coronavirus pandemic, with Social Security being a stable source of income for more than 34 million older households and Medicare providing critical health care coverage to more than 62 million enrollees, according to AARP research.

The TRUST Act was first introduced in 2019 but has not become law. AARP is urging Americans to make their voices heard in support of Social Security and Medicare.

To date, nearly a quarter million people have sent messages to federal lawmakers demanding they oppose the TRUST Act — legislation that would create a 12-member committee that could fast-track cuts targeting Social Security and Medicare.

The history of these types of efforts show that they are flawed from their inception, create further polarization and violate the trust of the American people since they do not provide open and accountable deliberation.

Elected officials should instead focus on meeting the health and retirement income needs of all Americans. AARP continues to urge Americans to make their voices heard in support of both Medicare and Social Security, and so far, nearly 250,000 individuals have sent messages to their federal lawmakers demanding that they oppose the latest TRUST Act.

Additional survey findings:

- People age 65 and older (89 percent) are slightly more likely than those age 50-64 (81 percent) to strongly oppose reducing Medicare benefits to reduce the deficit.
- People age 65 and older (87 percent) are slightly more likely than those age 50-64 (83 percent) to strongly oppose reducing Social Security benefits to reduce the deficit.

This nationwide poll of 1,016 adults ages 50 and older utilized NORC’s AmeriSpeak® Omnibus, a monthly multiclient survey. Interviews were conducted in English online (90 percent) and by phone (10 percent) from April 22-26, 2021, and included three AARP questions on federal budget deficits.

Data are weighted to the latest Current Population Survey benchmarks developed by the U.S. Census Bureau and are balanced by gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, region and AARP membership. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.33 percent with a design effect of 1.99.

Ron Mori is a member of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.

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1. **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 information and announcements as they become available. 


2. **Virtual Event**

"If Only We Dare" — From the Horada Story to Ending Asian Hate

More than 12,000 Japanese American activists were punished for segregation and others were sent to their homes in 1942 and sent to the only one of the 10 WRA Segregation Centers. The museum’s latest exhibit examines the complicated history, culture, industry, psychology and politics of beauty from the Asian American perspective. Personal stories, reflections, art and artifacts represent a diversity of identities and experiences all showcase the ideas of what beauty truly means.


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**NCWNP**

- **June 26**
  - Virtual Event
    - **Price:** Free

  "Not Yo Butterfly" Book Launch Celebration
  
  Berkeley, CA
  
  June 26; 3 p.m. PDT
  
  Price: Free

  Tuna Canyon marketplace: Virtual Shopping Experience

  Thu June 22

  Help support the Tuna Canyon Detention Station through this virtual shopping experience that features numerous vendors and hundreds of handcrafted items including jewelry, greeting cards, household goods, pet items, sticklers, food, face masks, unique gift items, artwork, anime and various accessories, with 10 percent of proceeds benefiting the Tuna Canyon. Help support this historical location and shop from amazing local artisans as well.

  Info: Visit www.tunacanyonmarketplace.com

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**PSW**

- **June 11-13**

This year’s Amache Pilgrimage will feature Kimberly Harada, Takada Rooks, Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA) and UC Davis’ Dr. Carolee Tran along with introductions by Al Zetinka, city manager for the City of Riverside, and moderator Dr. Robyn G. Peterson, director of the Museum of Riverside.

Info: To register, visit https://tinyurl.com/EndAPIHate.

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**PNW**

- **June 14; 3:50 p.m.

Oregon Japanese American WWII Veterans’ Stamp Dedication

Olympia, WA

Price: Free

Join the Oregon Nisei Veterans, Mary Yamaguchi Fund, The Oregon Historical Society, Portland JACL and the Japanese American Museum of Oregon at this virtual dedication event that will unveil the U.S. Postal Service stamp honoring Nisei veterans of World War II. The program will include former Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski as honorary chair. Tributes will also include four generations of Japanese Americans and feature vignettes of Oregon Nisei military service portrayed by Oregon Asian Americans.

Info: Visit vimeo.com/534729986.

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**EDC**

- **July 31**

"Where Beauty Lies" Exhibit Seattle, WA

Thru Sep 19

Wing Luke Asian Museum

719 S. King St.

Price: Museum Admission Fees

What defines beauty? The museum’s latest exhibit examines the complicated history, culture, industry, psychology and politics of beauty from the Asian American perspective. Personal stories, reflections, art and artifacts represent a diversity of identities and experiences all showcase the ideas of what beauty truly means.

Honkawa, Yukinori, 98, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 11; survived by son, Tom (Suzanne Iwamura) Honkawa; brother, Yoshisharu (May) Honkawa; also survived by many nieces, nephews and relatives.

Kobayashi, Kendal, 20, Corvallis, OR, April 5.

Kobayashi, Ruth Chizuko, 92, Torrance, CA, Feb. 10; she was predeceased by her husband, George Hiroshi Kobayashi; she is survived by her children, Dani, J. D. and Kipp; daughter-in-law, Marta; gc: 2.

Kobayashi, Yumi, 69, Hillsborough, CA, April 5.

Kubota, Miyeko, 98, Fresno, CA, Jan. 6; during WWII, she was in-carcerated at the Heart Mountain WRA Center in WY; she was pre-deceased by her husband, James Kubota; and sisters, Shizu Horii and Delmar Gotta; she is survived by her children, Russell, Debbie, Marshall and Barton; gc: 8; ggc: 6.

Kubota, Lawrence Yukio, 80, Garden Grove, CA, Feb. 21; he is survived by his sister, Dianne Hamano and his family; he is also survived by many relatives.

Kuge, Melba, 82, Torrance, CA, Jan. 17; and Kuge, Vernon Kinogo, 86, Torrance, CA, Feb. 23; they are survived by their children, Kenneth Gregory Kuge and Carole Lynn (Derek Masato) Kawamura; gc: 3.

Kurihara, Kei, 86, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 22, 2020; an Air Force veteran; he was predeceased by his wife, Hatsue; he is survived by his sons, Clifford Kurihara and Dale Kurihara; siblings, Paul (Sara) Kurihara and Shirley Harada; he is also survived by many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Kurihara, Patrick, 71, Orosi, CA, Nov. 9, 2020; he is survived by his wife, Pattie Kurihara; sons, Jason, Tom and Michael; sister, Ellen Laines (Donald); and 2 nephews.

Kuwata, Patsy, 86, Torrance, CA, Jan. 6; she was predeceased by her husband, Frank Kuwata; son, Dean Kuwata; and sister, June Shishido; she is survived by her children, Kevin Kuwata; siblings, James Akiyama, Carol Akiyama and Amy Sagawa; she is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Miyamura, Masaru, 85, Patterson, CA, Nov. 20, 2021; he is survived by his wife, Aurora; children, Rudy, Michael, Martha (Jeryn), Nancy (Lorin) and Laura (Steven); sister, Hideko Murakami; sisters-in-law, Sally and Saeko; gc: 9; ggc: 10.

Morita, Fusako, 94, Gardena, CA, Dec. 25, 2020; she is survived by her children, Ann Shima (Mike) and Barry Morita (Diane); gc: 4.

Morita, Hatsumi, 93, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 19, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Katsumoto Morita, daughter, Margaret Haruye Abo, and son, Ken Kenji Morita; she is survived by her children, Don Shigeru (Linda) Morita and Barbara Michiko (Ken) Masuyama; she is also survived by many gc and ggc and nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Nishiya, Mary T., 92, Denver, CO, Dec. 4, 2020; she was pre-deceased by her husband, Massey Nishiya; and siblings, Ken and Fumi; she is survived by her daughter, Julie Cleary (Andy); siblings, Dr. Harry Hatasa (Sada-ko), Lorena Kawamura, Sam (Pat) Hatasa, Stanley Hatasa and Sharon Hatasa; gc: 2; ggc: 1.

Nishiya, Soichiro ‘Swiss,’ 90, Pasadena, CA, Jan. 17; he was predeceased by his wife, Elizabeth “Bette” Nishiya; he is survived by his children, Kirk Nishiya (JoAnne) and Michele Nishiya Estenshade (Andrew); gc: 4.

Nomura, Florence, 99, Sierra Madre, CA, Jan. 11; she was predeceased by his wife, Sho; and son, Robert; she is survived by her children, Ann, Nancy, Lynn and Tim; gc: 5; ggc: 3.

Oyama, Mieko, 94, Montebello, CA, Jan. 4; she is survived by her husband, William; children, Joy (Paul) Middo and Ken (Vanessa) Oyama; brother, James (Yuri) Se- gawa; gc: 5.


Yamamoto, Lawrence Toshi-michi, 91, San Francisco, CA, March 18; during WWII, he was incarcerated at the Gila River WRA Center in AZ; he was predeceased by his son, Kenichi Yamamoto; Leo Ya- mamoto; he is survived by his wife, Judith; daughters, Orni and Ruth; siblings, Chitose (Chib) Yasumoto and and Stanley Yamamoto; gc: 1.

Yamamoto, Sueko, 91, Las Vegas, NV, March 14; she was predeceased by her husband, Milton Yukio Yamamoto; and son, Milton Yukio Yamamoto Jr.; she is survived by her children, Lani Donnelly, Mona Kato and Randy Yamamoto; gc: 6; ggc: 6.

Yamane, Felipa, 92, San Diego, CA, March 19; she is survived by her husband, Bernabe J. Yamane; children, Joseph Yamane, Jesus Yamane, Renato Yamane, Antonio Yamane and Grace Yamane.

Yamashita, Hisaye Judy, 82, Visalia, CA, Feb. 27; during WWII, she was incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in AZ; she was predeceased by her sisters, Suzuko Sue Matsuda, Setsuko Betty Hasebe, Shizue Sue Yamashita and Tas-tuko Nancy Yamashita; she is sur-vived by her siblings, Aiko Hasebe, Seiji Yamashita and June Yasuda.

Yamazaki, James, 104, White Salmon, WA, March 5; Army veteran, WWII, battalion surgeon for the 590th Artillery Battalion in the 106th Infantry Division who was captured at Battle of the Bulge, marched and bombed while transported in trains, hundreds of miles, to POW camps; he was predeceased by his wife, Aki (Harashiki) Yamazaki; son, Neil; grandson, Masami; he is survived by his children, Paul (Sara), Kath- arine and Caroline (Brad) Roberts; gc: 5; ggc: 7.
cave. The stuff was more expansive then, covering walls, tables and the floor. He’s been a collector all his life. The very first piece he acquired was a coin bank shaped like Dopey, one of the dwarves from the 1937 Disney animated “Snow White” movie that famously inspired young Ito to become a cartoonist. He got the bank when he was 5 years old. It’s yellow and unimpressive compared to other pieces in his collection, but it is Ito’s most-prized possession.

At 8, he was forced to leave the Dopey bank behind when his family was forcibly removed from their San Francisco home and incarcerated at Topaz. Japanese Americans were instructed to only bring what they could carry, so a coin bank could not be justified as an essential item, no matter the sentimental value. During the war, a family friend took care of their house, said Ito. When his family returned to San Francisco, Ito ran to his room. There was his bank, right where he left it on top of his dresser. Considering that at one time in his life everything was taken away, it makes sense that Ito now likes to surround himself with things he loves. Today, the bank sits among other collectibles and tchotchkes near him when he attends virtual production meetings. His oldest collectible sits next to his newest, a golden lifetime achievement trophy from the Annie Awards, the Oscars of the animation industry, which he received on April 16.

Adults need an excuse to become a kid again, and in cartoons, Ito gets to keep the perspective of an 8-year-old. He and Yabu were children during WWII, collateral of wartime hysteria. Kids process big, scary life events differently than adults. Maybe they break them down to focus on joy over trauma. In that way, it’s easy to see why Maggie, the cute black bird with the expressive face, has become iconic to Yabu and Ito and the Japanese American community. It’s also easy to see why Ito continues hustling well into his retirement. Looking at him today with his ubiquitous Mickey Mouse attire, it’s easy to see the little boy who, inspired by animation magic, doodled from behind barbed wire in the margins of Sears catalogues to copy the lines and curves of the Disney characters he loved. He’s still that little kid, except this time, he is trying to create his own characters and tell his own story.

To sign up for “Hello Maggie!” fundraising news, send an email with your name and mailing address to hellomaggiefilm@yahoo.com.

Fully Vaccinated?
What the CDC Says You Should and Shouldn't Do Now

How do I know if I am fully vaccinated?
A person is fully vaccinated two weeks after you have received the second dose of the two-shot Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine or a single dose of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

New recommendations for fully vaccinated
It is acceptable for fully vaccinated individuals to visit your children, grandchildren or friends within a single household who are at low risk for a severe case of coronavirus without wearing a mask or needing to social distance. Fully vaccinated individuals may also visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without masking or social distancing. Quarantining or getting tested after contact with someone who has COVID-19 is not necessary, as long as no symptoms are exhibited.

What should I do after being fully vaccinated?
Do continue precautions that have been in place during most of the pandemic. When fully vaccinated people are visiting unvaccinated people from more than one household and/or are around people who are at high risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19, they should:
- Wear a well-fitted mask
- Stay at least 6 feet from people they do not live with
- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Follow guidance issued by individual employers

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

Scan here to download free COVID-19 vaccine handbook