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Best wishes during this holiday season from the Ventura County Chapter!

Ventura County

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Seasons Greetings
June Kondo and Reiko Kondo

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Happy New Year!
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from the San Diego JACL

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Happy Holidays
Gordon & Rei
Okabayashi

Happy Holidays!
Happy Holidays!
Happy Holidays!
Happy Holidays!
Happy Holidays!

Happy Holidays
Happy Holidays
Happy Holidays
Happy Holidays
Happy Holidays

Best Wishes to everyone
in the New Year
Good luck throughout
May your days be merry &
bright this holiday season
and throughout 2023.
May your days be merry &
bright this holiday season
and throughout 2023.
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Merry Christmas

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Michiko Yoshimura,
James and Yoshib Butler

Season’s Greetings
FROM CONGRESSMAN MARK TAKANO
Thank you for all that you do. Let’s make 2023 a great year!

PAID FOR BY MARK TAKANO FOR CONGRESS

SELANOCO

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and Family

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Tao Family
Alan, Alice & Kenny

Merry Christmas
Happy New Year!
Happy Holidays
Happy New Year
Merry Christmas

from Betty and Ken Yamashico

from Todd Hasegawa

from Frank & Joan Kawase

Brea, CA

Merry Christmas
Happy New Year!

from Todd Hasegawa
and Family

from Frank & Joan Kawase

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

From
Tomoe Kai

Merry Christmas
Happy New Year!

Frank & Joan Kawase

Brea, CA

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

From
Tomoe Kai
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR ............................

Together again! Well . . . as much as we can be, which for now is a huge step forward after enduring nearly three years of being apart from family, friends, coworkers and pretty much the world. Although it’s definitely going to take some adjustments on everyone’s part to figure out what we’re comfortable with, establishing our new “normal” is something that I believe everyone is more than ready to try. “Nice to see you!” It sure feels great to say that again! As such, visibility remains a key component at the heart of this year’s Holiday Issue theme, “Together Again,” as the Pacific Citizen worked tirelessly in 2022 to spotlight stories that otherwise might have gone unnoticed due to the pandemic bubble from which we’re only now being able to emerge.

Highlights of 2022 included wartime artifacts and a 1947 list of JACL East Bay chapter members that were found in the crawl space of an Oakland home, a Santa Clara County judge’s efforts to travel across the country to gain the signatures of people affected by the World War II incarceration on 48-star flags to keep the lessons of the Japanese American experience alive, welcoming Amache into the National Park Service as a National Historic Site, USC righting a wrong by conferring honorary degrees to Nisei Trojans whose education was halted by EO 9066, AAPI storytellers carrying on Vincent Chin’s legacy 40 years following his death and highlighting “Defining Courage,” which captured more than 20 years of stories focused on the contributions by Nisei soldiers who served during WWII.

These stories show us that no matter our challenges, together we’ll continue to bring AAPI stories into the spotlight and ensure they’re part of the national discussion. Today more than ever, the Pacific Citizen is committed to forging ahead and making connections vital to ensuring our community’s long-term sustainability. As we approach year 100, let’s work as one to accomplish our mission. Together again, let’s be unstoppable.

— Allison Haramoto, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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JACL CHAPTER AD INDEX

Alaska .............................................. 19
Arizona ............................................. 4
Berkeley ......................................... 14, 15, 18, 19
Boise Valley ..................................... 34
Chicago ......................................... 44, 45
Contra Costa ................................. 26
Dayton ........................................... 39
Detroit ........................................... 20
Eden Township .............................. 22
Fresno ........................................... 20
GLA ............................................... 46
Hoosier .......................................... 23
Houston ......................................... 38
Livingston-Merced ......................... 20
Lodi .............................................. 26
Marysville ..................................... 34
Mile High ....................................... 39, 40
Mount Olympus ............................ 46
Monterey Peninsula ....................... 20
New England .............................. 46
New Mexico ................................ 38
Olympia ......................................... 23
Philadelphia ............................... 46
Pocatello-Blackfoot ...................... 38
Portland ........................................ 27
Puysalul Valley ............................. 46
Riverside ...................................... 4
Salinas Valley ............................... 23
San Diego .................................... 3, 20
San Fernando Valley .................... 6, 7, 10, 11
San Jose ...................................... 23
Santa Barbara .............................. 3, 23
Seabrook ...................................... 22
Seattle ................................ .......... 23
SELANOCO .................................. 4
Silicon Valley .............................. 34

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Founded in 1929, JACL is the nation’s oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization with a 10,000-member membership base. JACL has 112 chapters nationwide and a Washington, D.C., office and a national headquarters in San Francisco. JACL’s mission is to secure and uphold the human and civil rights of Japanese Americans and all Americans while preserving our cultural heritage and values.

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JACL NY/SC
By P.C. Staff
A BOND THICKER THAN BLOOD
By Nancy Ukai
41 A BOND THICKER THAN BLOOD
By Patti Hirahara
47 THE HEALING POWER OF CONNECTION
By Remarks
84 BUILDING CONNECTIONS TOGETHER
By JACL NUSC
SEASON’S GREETINGS

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Holiday 2022 | PACIFIC CITIZEN | 07
FAMILIAR AS MOM’S HOME COOKING

Author Gil Asakawa traces the paths Japanese food took to be loved in America.

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor

Of the three books Denver-based journalist Gil Asakawa has written — 1991’s “The Toy Book” (with his pal, Leland Rucker) and 2015’s “Being Japanese American: A Sourcebook for Nikkei, Hapa … and Their Friends” — it’s likely safe to say that his new one is closest to his heart.

“That’s because the foodophile’s stomach is heart-adjacent. ‘Tabemasho! Let’s Eat!: A Tasty History of Japanese Food in America’ (p-ISBN 978-1-61172-068-6; SRP $18.95), published in August by Stone Bridge Press, is Asakawa’s informative and chatty exploration-cum-memoir of the sundry Japanese foods he grew up with, mixed with his memories of first encounters with those victuals and his historical research on how many of those foods originated, with some actually reaching these shores to become as American as pizza pie.

“I really had a lot of fun writing it,” Asakawa told the Pacific Citizen, for which he has in the past served on its Editorial Board, including more than one stint as P.C. board chair. “I think it’s fascinating and important to cover, not just kind of the tradition in the history of Japanese food in Japan, but how it adapted to suit the tastes of Americans and follow how it became popular and why it became popular,” Asakawa continued. For instance, he gives credit to the restaurant chain Benihana, which, as he puts it, “is what made Japanese food safe for Middle America.”

Speaking of menus, one of the items Asakawa used in his research for “Tabemasho!” was a 1952 menu from Los Angeles restaurant Imperial Gardens that provides a snapshot of what Japanese food used to mean to people in America. The restaurant’s menu “only featured three kinds of food,” said Asakawa. “Sukiyaki, teriyaki and tempura. Those three were the mains.”

“I did a lot of research, and I learned a lot of stuff to write ‘Tabemasho!’” Asakawa said. “I was surprised at how much I didn’t know about the food that I love.” In other words, even if you’ve grown up around it, there is still something about Asakawa’s deep dive into learning about Japanese food that you probably did not know.

Part of Asakawa’s journey into Nihonshoku includes “foreign” foods like ramen and curry — arguably even tonkatsu — that have become part of the modern menu of foods Japanese people eat nowadays. “One of the things that I’ve learned about Japanese food in general is that a lot of the things that we think of as Japanese food didn’t originate in Japan and are not necessarily traditional in the historical sense,” Asakawa pointed out. For example, curry is so popular in Japan that many people there eat it at least once a week. But Japanese curry is not like curry from India. The Japanese “took it from the British and then adapted it for the Japanese palate.”

Ironically, Asakawa noted that in Denver, “It’s hard to find a Japanese restaurant that will serve sukiyaki anymore — but that used to be the standard.” In “Tabemasho!” Asakawa once a former music critic for Denver’s alt-weekly Westword, relays that the erstwhile popularity of sukiyaki the dish is why the 1963 No. 1 pop hit in America, “Sukiyaki,” aka “Ue o Muite Arukō,” got its name.
In “Tabemasho!” Asakawa also gives ink to hugely popular Japanese American dishes — spam musubi, the California roll (with avocado as an ingredient) and mochi ice cream, for example — that might be difficult to find on any menu in Japan. Yet, those are examples of what were in actuality fusion cuisine (before that became a label) borne of the necessity of using local ingredients, whatever was available or plain old Yankee ingenuity.

Part of Asakawa’s fascination with Japanese food also comes from being old enough to remember when Japanese food was a punchline. Seaweed?! Yuck! Sushi? With raw fish?! Eew! Today, when supermarkets selling prepackaged sushi are ubiquitous, some young people might find that hard to believe. But Asakawa remembers how in the 1985 movie “The Breakfast Club,” the character played by Molly Ringwald was mocked by Judd Nelson’s character for bringing sushi for lunch. (That just might be par for the course, however, since the movie’s writer-director was John Hughes, who was also repugnantly responsible for Long Duk Dong in 1984’s “Sixteen Candles.”)

Fast-forward to the end of the 1980s, though, and Asakawa notes that “Michael J. Fox was on the cover of Esquire magazine eating a plate of sushi.” The image of Japanese food — for the majority of white Americans, at least — was changing. But Fox and Esquire can only claim partial credit for the changing perception of Japanese food in America. Another factor: instant ramen. Originally developed in the 1950s by Momofuku Ando, an immigrant from Taiwan, instant ramen, followed in the 1970s by Cup Noodle, were hits in Japan. “Because it was so damn cheap,” both versions, especially the square noodle brick version, would also find footing in the U.S. with hungry and impoverished college students — no doubt still true — “even though it wasn’t the world’s greatest ramen.” It may have, however, been the unintentional gateway to seeking out better ramen. For the past few years on these shores, ramen restaurants, many of which are U.S. outposts of Japan-based chains, have been getting rated and reviewed by “ramen connoisseurs” on social media sites.

Combined with the continued soft power appeal of Hello Kitty, manga and anime, the popularity of Japanese baseball players like Shohei Ohtani and progression of acceptance through the decades of Japanese foods from sukiyaki to sushi to ramen, Asakawa’s timing for “Tabemasho!” is a recipe for success.

As for what Japanese food item might be next to find American fans, Asakawa knows it would be foolhardy to hazard a guess, though he thinks yakisoba might have a chance to cross over. For Asakawa, it’s far easier to predict the foods that will probably never stand a chance of crossing over, for a variety of reasons. Horse and whale, for instance. Natto — mucilaginous and funky fermented soybeans — remains another unlikely candidate. For Calpis, as it’s known in Japan, to stand a chance in the U.S. market, the beverage had to be rebranded as Calpico. One of his personal favorites is karintō, which he says has a striking resemblance to what you’d find in your cat’s litterbox. (Despite that imagery, karintō’s coloring and sweetness come from a brown sugar coating, which gives it its dark color. Appearances can be deceiving, after all.)

Asakawa just hopes that anyone who reads “Tabemasho!” finishes with a couple of outcomes. “I hope it makes them hungry,” he said. “And I hope it makes them want to try different kinds of Japanese food.”
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Holiday 2022 | PACIFIC CITIZEN | 11
TOGETHER AGAIN, AND IT’S TIME TO TAKE SOME RISKS

By David Inoue, JACL Executive Director

A fter nearly two years largely in isolation or with modified meeting arrangements for many of us due to Covid, this past year has marked a time when we finally crept out to experience the world in this new reality of cautiously getting together again. We had to relearn faces partially obscured by masks, often with new hairstyles or even colors from what we remembered from perhaps as long as three years ago.

It was in this context that we held our first in-person National Convention in over three years. We are especially grateful for the grace afforded by Caesars/Bally’s in Las Vegas, as we held over our contract from 2020 without any adverse penalties, we had only two known cases of Covid postconvention, and our testing procedures caught one case before the attendee would have had the opportunity to transmit Covid to anyone else. Contrast this with our Leadership Summit a few months prior, when we had several positive cases of Covid in a much smaller group of people.

We’ve learned about how to reduce our risk, but still unable to totally eliminate it, which is where we generally stand today. Perhaps the risks are even greater with RSV and the flu adding to the caseloads in hospitals and decimating attendance numbers at schools.

And yet, we’re all finding our own levels of acceptable risk. Some are assuming full risk by going maskless and unvaccinated. Others choose to take all precautions, remaining masked, with KN95- or N95-level masks in addition to remaining up to date on vaccines. I can attest that even with all the precautions taken with masking and vaccination, Covid infection is still a possibility, and yet I have continued to travel, including several opportunities to once again meet with JACL members and attend chapter events. While the risk due to Covid is very real, as we do get together again, there is another risk that often impacts us even more — that of truly coming together.

The pandemic lulled us into the comfort of interacting with one another while wearing our comfortable sweatpants, virtual zoom backgrounds and, as one lawyer famously found out, cat stickers, which superimposed a cat’s face over his own. As we return to in-person events, many of us are relearning how to interact with one another.

I see it especially in younger children, forced into learning online when the real learning from being in school is how to interact with one another. Teachers talk of behavioral issues on the rise and difficulties for some children to socialize with one another. Some of these developmental delays will resolve themselves with the plasticity of child development, but some may persist and have everlasting repercussions from the emotional trauma of the pandemic.

But even for adults, the social distancing, or more appropriately called social isolation, can make it more challenging to get back out into the public, especially in group settings. For those who were already introverted, getting back out again is even more difficult.

At convention this year, I kept hearing over and over how wonderful it was for people to see each other again, and yet this was a smaller convention than normal. It meant we could spend a little more time catching up with our closest friends, whom we hadn’t seen for years.

But what are our prospects for expanding who we engage with? When we say we are getting together again, with whom are we actually gathering? This is where I call on JACL chapters and members to start taking some risks.

It has become too easy in our social media bubbles to only associate with those we most closely share similar thoughts and identities. Masking probably makes this even more pronounced. Simply walking on the street, it’s harder to offer a smile to someone passing by.

I know the past few years have been especially polarizing, as people dug in with opposing political perspectives, but as the cult of personality for former President Donald Trump fades, there may also be opportunities to take a chance on rekindling some of those past relationships that fell to the wayside and perhaps can be repaired.

So, as we begin to gather, how can we expand our circle to include those who might benefit from being part of our JACL community? I heard the great news the other day that the Houston chapter held its first in-person meeting and elections since the pandemic and brought in over 30 new members, mostly youth and young adults.

The leadership of their new board should be applauded for the efforts they made to grow their membership so significantly, a lot of it through direct outreach on college campuses and through personal and community connections.

Even as we take the risks of coming together again as a part of this new reality of fluctuating Covid infection rates, compounded by the flu and other communicable diseases, let’s also take the added risk of reaching out to one another, expand our circle and grow the JACL so that we can bring more people together again.

PS: Just as I finished writing this, I received a notification of Covid exposure, likely from a very special event I attended that I would never have wanted to miss. Without taking some of these risks now, we won’t be able to live and live fully.

David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization’s Washington, D.C., office.
By Michael Tanaka, JACL Daniel K. Inouye Policy Fellow

I was raised to view my family’s incarceration history during World War II with a lens of apathy, something that happened years ago from which we’ve moved on. For most of my life, I accepted this. Growing up, whenever I told someone I identified as “Japanese American,” I would be treated either as a “perpetual foreigner” or a “white-washed” Asian. Not once did I actually question what it meant to be Japanese American, and for most of my life, I accepted this, too. It wasn’t until I realized my family wasn’t apathetic at all to our history — apathy was just a cover for shame, residing in a self-destructive cycle that has lasted generations — that I found meaning at the intersection of my identity and family history of incarceration.

In October, I had the gracious opportunity, with the help of Jordan Tachibana, a judicial intern for the Superior Court of Santa Clarita, to contribute my family’s names on the American flag for me. My family was separated between Gila River and Manzanar. My dad’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s dad fought for Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s side was in

Japanese American incarceration during WWII. I signed the flag in front of the Supreme Court, as Jordan is traveling throughout the East Coast and getting signatures on the flag by folks who had a family incarceration history and served in WWII.

My family was incarcerated in Manzanar and Gila River. My dad’s grandpa was taken by the FBI, and then my grandpa’s family was separated between Gila River and Manzanar. My mom’s side was in Manzanar, too. My mom’s dad fought for the MIS while his family was in Manzanar. Commemorating my grandparents names on the American flag for me was more than paying my respects once more, it was preserving our profoundly complex and historical relationship to our country. It was honoring the resilience of my ancestors in the face of adversity and systemic racism. They sacrificed everything to free my rights; it’s now up to me to free my mind.

Michael Tanaka is the Daniel K. Inouye Policy Fellow. He is based in Washington, D.C.
Berkeley

Happy Holidays!

Rich, Irene, Beth, Richy, & Shannon Uno
Sacramento, CA

Wishing everyone a happy new year

Berkley Buddhist Temple
berkeleybuddhisttemple.org

In Memory of Two long time SF Giants fans
GAE & RANDY OUYE

Mom & Dad, thanks for making me a lifelong fan.
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Love, Kai

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or James A. Duff, Jr.
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Aimee Tirauchi
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Stewart, Mindi, Saira, Ross and Simon
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from
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Oakland, CA 94605

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Happy Holiday Season
Jean Nakazono
El Cerrito, CA

Happy Holidays
from the
TSUETAKI’S
Tracy, Jane, Aki, Amanda
and Bachan Hidaka

Holiday Greetings
Reiko Nabeto
El Cerrito, CA

Holiday Greetings
from
Gerry, Joy,
Doug & Wendy
SEKIMURA

In Memory of
Waichi & Jane Ouye
Loved & sacrificed for their children,
grandchildren & great grandchildren

Thank you JACL!
Roger J. Ota, D.D.S.
Telephone (510)841-0862
2020 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94709

Holiday Greetings to All
Ken, Ann, Suzu & Lee
Yabusaki
Hawai, Hawaii

HOLIDAY HAPPINESS
TO ALL
Alice Wakida
Lance, Mina, Brandon Wakida
Scott, Sheila, Spencer, Mallory Wakida
Erin, Bill, Kenneth and
Kira Rice

Season’s Greetings
from the
Hi Lo Golf Club

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023
Hiraga-Stephens Family

GOOD HEALTH, PEACE,
& HARMONY
Lou Minamoto

Season’s Greetings
from
Kat The Cat

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM
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2020 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94709

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Vera & Eric
Kawamura

In Memory of Sachi Kaneko
1917-2014
“I Left My Heart in San Francisco”

2023 Happy Holidays!!
Leo & Evee Terauchi
Roderick & Reiko Terauchi
El Cerrito, California

Best wishes from
The Kimura Family

Season’s Greetings
from
SEKIMURA’s
Tracy, Jane, Alex, Amanda
and Bachan Hidaka

Best Wishes
Carolyn Miyakawa Adams
John and Lynn Adams
Alyssa, Briana and
Cameron Adams

Peace and Best Wishes
Charles & Carla Stedwell

2023 SEASON’S GREETINGS
Ron & Carol Tanaka
Lafayette, California

Emily Murase, Neal Taniguchi,
Junko & Izumi
Wish everybody the very
best this Holiday Season!
emily@emilymurase.com
nealtaniguchi@gmail.com

The Berkeley Lions Club
Serving the Berkeley Community
Since 1919
This Holiday Season, Stories of Connection Truly Show Us What Life is Really About.

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

I balked when Pacific Citizen Executive Editor Allison Haramoto invited me to write for this year’s Holiday Issue. What could I possibly say? A decade ago, I served as this newspaper’s assistant editor, and after a hiatus, joyfully started writing here again last year. I have filled pages with community news that I hope have enriched your lives. At the end of the year, I feel deeply that the Holiday Issue belongs to you, the readers. Because you read my writing in many other issues, I wanted to cede my space for your words. With help from JACL staffers, I put out a call for pitches with the prompt, “What does home mean to you?” The responses were overwhelming, thoughtful and touching. Each writer worked with tells a deeply personal story about their lives and the people they love. Each story touches on connection, even in times apart. Isn’t that what the holidays — and life — is about? But enough from me already. I hope you enjoy these three reader-submitted essays as much as I did.

— L.L.G.

Your Words Bring Us Together

By KatieAnn Nguyen

The night is cold as silent silhouettes make their way across the ripples of the Mekong River. Fear rattles my grandparents’ nerves. They pray that they’ll reach Thailand before the soldiers catch them. The Vietnam War tore their village in Laos apart. Before they were my grandparents, they were Blia Vang and Xe Vue Thao, two parents hoping for a life without war, without soldiers guarding the roads at night, and without the sound of bullets ricocheting through the air.

Coming to the United States, my grandparents brought with them their dreams — one was to simply be happy. As they began to grow their family, the meaning of together began to take on new meaning.

For my grandparents and their eight children, it meant long car trips to Yosemite, watching Bob Ross paint on their small TV, crushing roaches in their cramped apartment at night. To be together was that feeling of simply being in each other’s company.

When I was born, my parents raised me surrounded with that feeling. I grew up in the smells of my grandparents’ home, herbal medicine and rice cooking in the pot, the noise of small feet on tile floor and cans being crushed for recycling. My grandparents calling me Aang because they couldn’t pronounce my English name. Being together meant visits to their house filled with screams of cousins, laughter of uncles and aunts, the smell of boiled chicken cooking on the stove. My grandparents taught me the importance of family, even though I didn’t speak Hmong, and they didn’t speak English.

In that comfort of one another, I learned what it meant to be together. It was more than just an embrace. It was the anticipation of visiting them again the next weekend, the replaying of our memories together and the folklore tales they’d try to tell me in fragments of English.

But when my grandmother passed away in 2016, and then my grandfather in 2021, I found myself wondering what being together meant when they were no longer here. It was during this time of grief that my mother told me the story of when my grandparents came to America.

When they arrived in Thailand, they were lucky enough to enter a refugee camp and be sent to the United States. When she told me this story, I saw reflections of my grandparents’ hopes and dreams. It was more than just a better life in America they were sacrificing everything for, it was a new beginning.

Their story is one of many, a story of immigration for a better life. But to me, it is more than just a story, it is my beginning. Those hardships were passed on to me, those dreams of white-picket-fenced houses, those hopes for a better tomorrow. For them, it was immigrating to the United States, but for me, it was continuing that story, that legacy of our beginning. It was keeping that hope they carried with them across the Mekong River alive.

When I graduated from West County High School in Sebastopol, Calif., last year and began my first year at Dominican University of California, I felt that hope resonating in me. Over these last years without them, I’ve learned what it means to be together even when they’re not here.

It means the beginning they gave their children — and me — their hope for a better life. Every milestone I have reached, I felt as if it was an extension of that hope. For the first time, it felt as if we were together again, connected with that dream of a better future that they began.

KatieAnn Nguyen is a second-generation Hmong-Vietnamese American from California who is a member of the Sonoma County JACL. She is a 17-year-old freshman biology major at Dominican University of California with dreams of becoming a pediatrician.

(Left) KatieAnn Nguyen, as a baby, in the arms of her parents. (Right) Nguyen’s grandparents escaped Thailand to come to the United States. They are pictured here with their daughters. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF KATIEANN NGUYEN

Hope Carried Across the Mekong

By KatieAnn Nguyen

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TOGETHER ALWAYS THROUGH Food and Traditions
By Joyce Endo

It’s an annual tradition in our family to cook all day on Dec. 31 and past midnight to welcome the new year. We celebrate Oshogatsu, or the Japanese New Year. It is truly a labor of love to cover a table with traditional dishes to share with friends. We make special traditional dishes and display them in platters and containers from Japan. I look forward to this time every year, not just for the special home-cooked meal, but also the bonding time.

My parents, Bill and June Endo, became JACL members shortly after we moved to our home in San Francisco, my hometown. As a child, I remember seeing the Pacific Citizen in the mail growing up and reading all the community news.

For the duration of World War II, my mom lived in Japan, while my dad moved to Utah. They did not talk about this time, except about the good memories. When a mutual friend introduced my parents after the war, it was love at first sight!

She and my dad always encouraged me to follow my dreams with piano, violin and ballet. They also encouraged me to connect to my heritage. I’ve always admired the contestants. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would have the same opportunity. My mom, a seamstress, designed my gown. It was such a joyous experience.

Now for Oshogatsu, I’ve taken over the cooking. I do my best to replicate my mom’s cooking, but it doesn’t taste quite the same. I think the missing link is her loving touch.

During the redress movement, Grace testified at the Chicago CWRIC hearings. Later, my parents gave a thoughtful and well-researched presentation about the incarceration to the residents of their retirement community. Many in the audience were hearing about it for the first time.

Before Grace and Eugene died in 2019 and 2020, at almost 94 and 98 years old, respectively, they lived 15 minutes from me in suburban Chicago. Regrettably, the pandemic prevented us from visiting our father for the last six months of his life.

The biographies, still a work-in-progress, bring me together again with my parents. The manuscripts have also brought me closer to the grandparents I never met – a Baptist pastor and a farmer/hotel proprietor.

It has been said that life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. The value of being together again is not measured by the number of hours we are together, but by our appreciation of the relationships that make us all stronger.

Florida-based Kathryn Kimura Mlsna is a member of the Southeast JACL. She has five beautiful granddaughters and is a wife, mother and grandmother. She spent 30 years working as a lawyer and businessperson for nonprofit organizations and a large restaurant chain. She served as the alumni association’s president at Northwestern University from 2014-16, and she still serves as a volunteer on several boards there.

Moments THAT TAKE OUR BREATHS AWAY
By Kathryn Kimura Mlsna

Being together again gives me the strength to make a difference in the world. My relationships remind me of who I am. They reflect my values, goals and dreams. As a Sansei, my relationships with my ancestors, family and extended family make me proud of my Japanese heritage.

I am researching and writing my family’s historical biographies, so their legacy of courage, strength and perseverance will be passed down. What began as a half-day task to convert my father’s 75-page autobiography, “The Orphaned Generation,” from a typewritten manuscript to a Word document became a full-time, three-year project that grew to include six extensively researched manuscripts with hundreds of pages.

In the spring of 2020, as the pandemic changed our world, I started working on the biographies. They are a gift that reconnects me to my past. My story began in 1950 when my parents met through a mutual friend at the Chicago JACL.

My mother, Grace Watanabe Kimura, left Poston for Texas to complete her high school and college education in business management. My father, Eugene Tatsuru Kimura, left Camp Harmony/
Greetings from the Berkeley Chapter
Honoring our Longest Serving Board Member
Tak Shirasawa
July 28, 1927 - June 23, 2022

Happy Holidays from the Berkeley JACL Board of Directors!

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In Loving Memory of
Bill & Dorothy Fujita
and Karrie our sweet doggie

Best wishes for a happy & healthy 2023
Jason, Amy, Katelyn, Alton & Revin

Congratulations to our son,
Nick Sandford, Eagle Scout, Senior Patrol Leader and
Order of the Arrow,

We are proud of you!
Mom and Dad

In Memory of Anna Yamamoto
A wonderful Mother, Grandmother, Wife, and Friend

In Memory of
Roy and Joan Doi

In memory of
Kimiko & Roy Matsumoto

Happy Holidays
Best wishes for the New Year!

Peggy Takahashi, Alan Lamont, Sami Lamont

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jfiner@sbcglobal.net
DRE# 00265518

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In Memory of
Anna Yamamoto
A wonderful Mother,
Grandmother, Wife, and Friend
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JOIN US as we celebrate 120 years of community journalism in 2023!

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Happy 2023
Year of the Rabbit

SEASON’S GREETINGS
Robert & Marcia Chung and Family

Happy New Year
Robert and Jane Shintaku
Paul and Jieae
Jonathan, Vivian, Daniel
Jeff, Kimberly, Julianna, Jaden

Happy Holidays
Bobbi Hanada
bhanada@aol.com

Happy Holidays
FRESNO CHAPTER, JACL

May the New Year ring in Hope, Health and Happiness to all!

Happy Holidays
Randy Aoki

Happy Holidays
Charliee Kiyono
FRESNO JACL

Happy Holidays
Bobbi Hanada
bhanada@aol.com

Season’sGreetings!
from
CCDC

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Happy Holidays from the Livingston-Merced Chapter

Monterey Peninsula

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Japanese American Citizen League of the Monterey Peninsula
Happy Holidays

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Telephone (831) 384-3323

Happy Holidays to Family & Friends
Alan Amano, Linda Kada

Congratulations
Larry Oda, National JACL President
Happy Holidays 2022
Kazuko Matsuyama & Aiko Matsuyama

Snake River

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
from members & friends of
SNAKE RIVER CHAPTER
Ontario, Oregon
Board Members
Mike & Ann
Mary Ann Murata
Sheri Kitamura
Janet Konishi
Teresa Federsoll
Howard Nakamura
Morgan Britton Youngstrom
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Snake River

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PACIFIC CITIZEN 20 | Holiday 2022
THE OVERLAPPING STORIES OF REPARATORY JUSTICE
Panel talks up reparations for African Americans and Japanese Latin Americans.

By P.C. Staff

Workshop Session 3’s title said it all: “Reparatory Justice: The Fight for HR 40 and Japanese Latin American Redress,” aptly encapsulating its topic.

The panel, held in August at the JACL National Convention in Las Vegas, discussed the history and status quo of decades-long efforts to obtain reparations for the descendants of people forcibly brought from Africa to become slaves beginning in the 17th century to what would become the United States of America, as well as people of Japanese ancestry from 13 Latin American countries (most from Peru) who, in the 20th century, were forcibly brought to the U.S. during World War II. Moderated by Lisa Doi, president of the Chicago JACL chapter, on the panel comprised of Grace Shimizu, director of both the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project and Campaign for Justice: Redress NOW for Japanese Americans; Kenniss Henry, representing the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations (N’COBRA) and the Reparations Legislative Coalition; and Traci Kato-Kiriyama, representing the National Nikkei Reparations Coalition and the Reparations Legislative Coalition.

Following introductions, the panel began with what Shimizu described as a “JLA (Japanese Latin American) 101” informational video, which conveyed how more than 2,000 Japanese emigrants to Latin American nations and their families were, after the outbreak of WWII, rounded up and shipped to the United States so they could be used in trade for Americans captured by Japan. (Most of the JLA’s were detained at the internment camp in Crystal City, Texas.)


The video ended with an appeal to sign a petition linked on its website to urge the Biden administration to comply with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights’ verdict. After the video’s conclusion, Shimizu, tying together the movements to pass HR 40, which aims to form a commission to study African American reparations and reparations for Japanese Americans, said, “I’d like to focus on key points that I hope you will take away with you, the main one being the importance of struggles for reparatory justice, both the struggle to pass and implement HR 40 and the struggle for JLA reparations, especially at this historical juncture in the United States, where we the people of the U.S. are embroiled in the fight against racism, white supremacist authoritarianism and for a multiracial, multietnic, gender-inclusive democracy.”

Up next was Henry, who relayed some of the history and evolution of N’COBRA’s push behind HR 40, which traces its roots to 1989. The goal of HR 40 is, in Henry’s words, to create a “commission to study reparations and to craft remedies for the violations that are identified.”

It’s a roadmap that was established by Sens. Spark Matsunaga and Daniel Inouye. In 1979, the two Hawaii Democrats introduced Senate Bill 1647 to establish a commission to study the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans and Aleuts.

That bill was signed into law on July 31, 1980, by President Jimmy Carter, and it authorized the formation of the Commission on Wartime Internment and Resettlement of Civilians, which was essential for the eventual passage of HR 442, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, signed by President Ronald Reagan on Aug. 10, 1988.

The success of Japanese American redress resulted in an apology from the federal government and a $20,000 check to the approximately 60,000 still-living Japanese Americans who were affected by President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066, signed on Feb. 19, 1942.

“Reparations is more than a paycheck,” Henry said. “For me, reparations means that this country will finally acknowledge that they stole my ancestors, they sold my ancestors, and that they had my ancestors endure centuries of pernicious history and even today, the current day vestiges.”

Speaking later in the program, Henry added: “No amount of reparations can take away 400-plus years of atrocities.”

Speaking next was Kato-Kiriyama, who read an excerpt from her book, “Navigating With(out) Instruments.”

“Our Sansei generation had to find out who they were in order to move forward. And they uncovered history and unlocked harm. We are not the moral authority on mass incarceration, mass removal or collective infliction of oppression onto one community,” Kato-Kiriyama read.

“We are linked to a larger cycle of struggle and also a struggle that is happening in our communities. We have stood up to white supremacy time and again. Let our lessons learned from redress and reparations for Japanese Americans serve to remind us that we were once told it was impossible, that it would never happen, that it was part of what happens at a time of war, or that the camps were not even that bad, or it was necessary and good for us. . . . Let us not only support reparations because we once won a battle for redress, [but also] let us do it because it is the right thing to do.”

Later in the panel, Henry urged the audience to visit N’COBRA’s legacy website oncobra.org to study the history of HR 40, and its new website (officialnacobraonline.org) to learn about its status quo.

She also urged people to call the White House’s 202-456-1111 line to ask President Joe Biden to support HR 40 by issuing an executive order to “stand up” HR 40.

The video of the panel discussion can be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=g3Q2nrjv5sc.

JACL Celebrates the Passage of the Marriage Act and Advocates for the Advancement of the Equality Act

By JACL National

Washington, D.C. — JACL joins the majority of Americans in applauding the passage of HR 8404, the Respect for Marriage Act. With strong bipartisan support, the Respect for Marriage Act not only repeals the antiquated and homophobic Defense of Marriage Act of 1996 but offers important federal protections and recognition to same-sex and interracial couples.

The bill “defines and includes sex, sexual orientation and gender identity among the prohibited categories of discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation and gender identity among the prohibited categories of discrimination or segregation.”

With 2022 coming to a close and 2023 fast approaching, it is critical that the JACL provides resounding support to our partner LGBTQIA+ organizations in the fight for basic human rights.

Said JACL Executive Director David Inoue: “JACL has a long history of support for marriage equality as an amicus participant in the Loving v. Virginia case through which the courts struck down anti-miscegenation laws and as one of the first national organizations to voice its support for gay marriage, a right also since affirmed by the court. However, we recognize the tenuous state of these rights dependent upon court protection from still-existing laws that with a change in court position could return to force. The RMA is a major step toward ensuring that the right to marry whoever one wants is a protected American right, respected by all states.”
Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Prosperous and Joyful New Year from The Japanese American Citizens League Sonoma County Chapter

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On behalf of the Seabrook JACL, we extend our sincere best wishes & holiday greetings to the Pacific Citizen and fellow JACL members. May 2023 be a year filled with peace and prosperity! Happy New Year!
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From All Our Members

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Welcoming Our Stories

AMERICA’S MUSEUM PRESERVES THE JAPANESE AMERICAN LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

By Patti Hirahara, Contributor

When we think of museums in America, the Smithsonian Institution is always first on everyone’s list, especially since its museums are located in our nation’s capital of Washington, D.C. For me, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History is one of the most popular since it has told the history of life, here in America, for 58 years.

As the nation’s flagship history museum and home of historic collections of America’s past and future, they are uniquely positioned to explore and share history and the democracy of the people that has made America great. Helping to lead the museum’s efforts is Dr. Anthea M. Hartig, Elizabeth MacMillan director of the National Museum of American History.

Prior to her appointment at the Smithsonian, Hartig transformed the California Historical Society in her seven years as its leader, making it a vibrant, relevant organization for the San Francisco Bay area and the entire state. She launched its Digital Library, oversaw the production of more than 20 exhibitions and created partnerships with over 250 organizations, notably the City and County of San Francisco, LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes in Los Angeles and the California State Library and Department of Education. As a public historian, professor, author and city planner, Hartig is dedicated to making history accessible and relevant.

According to former Secretary of the Smithsonian David Skorton, “Anthea’s record as a leader and coalition builder, as well as a student and champion of history, combine to make her an ideal choice to lead one of our most-revered museums. As we turn the page on a new chapter of the National Museum of American History, we are fortunate to welcome a director whose bold leadership is perfectly suited for the time in which we live and the museum’s increasingly inclusive and innovative programming,” he stated in 2018.

I had the opportunity to interview Hartig last July at her office in Washington, D.C., exclusively for the Pacific Citizen. As we continue to navigate through the pandemic, it’s more important than ever to share our stories and educate others — together.

Patti Hirahara for the Pacific Citizen: When did you become the Elizabeth MacMillan director of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History?

Dr. Anthea M. Hartig: I was named the first woman director of the museum in December 2018, and the appointment became effective on Feb. 18, 2019. I oversee more than 250 employees, a budget of nearly $40 million and a collection that includes 1.8 million objects and over three shelf-miles of archival collections. Prior to my appointment, I was executive director and CEO of the California Historical Society.

P.C.: Prior to coming to the National Museum of American History, what projects or persons influenced you in the Asian American Pacific Islander communities?

Hartig: My work with AAPI communities remains one of the most important through-lines of my 30-plus-year public history career. From identifying the last building in Cucamonga’s Chinatown to my enduring advocacy for the National Herald Mark Harada House in Riverside (California), listing of the Minidoka Camp in Idaho on the “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” list to my work with heroes Irene Hirano Inouye and Sen. Norman Mineta, I remain honored to be an ally and fierce defender of Asian American Pacific Islanders and, in particular, Nikkei heritage and history.

P.C.: What was the first program you participated in as director?

Hartig: Wonderfully, that would be the Day of Remembrance 2019. On my first day in the museum, I was honored to attend and participate in the museum’s annual Day of Remembrance program. That day, we commemorated the 77th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 with our “Memory, Faith and Music” program on Feb. 19, 2019, at our Warner Bros. Theater. (The National Museum of American History has been hosting these events since 2011. The evening featured a live 25-minute multimedia performance by award-winning singer-songwriter Kaoru Ishibashi — professionally known as Kishi Bashi, as well as a presentation by University of Southern California Professor Duncan Ryuken Williams, author of “American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War.”) To round out the event, Kishi Bashi and Williams joined Noriko Sanefuji, museum specialist, and Dr. Peter Manseau, curator of religion, for a panel discussion to explore the memory, faith and music in the Japanese American incarceration camps during WWII.

P.C.: How long has this event been in existence, and why do you hold it each year?

Hartig: Every year, we are committed to marking this occasion at the Smithsonian as an important element of the Asian and Pacific Islander experience in the United States. We are devoted to telling the complex and inclusive story of our nation’s past: triumphs and tragedies, achievements and failures and stories of rebirth and renewal. Embracing the past, no matter how terrible or imperfect, will help us make sense of the present and work together to shape a more compassionate future.

Events like the Day of Remembrance allow us to talk about the roles of museums and public history as tools of social justice. Exploring history helps people understand that today’s world is not inevitable, but the result of a myriad of choices and actions made by individuals and communities. Here, we will explore how community activists are advancing discussions about history, accountability and injustice in our past, present and future.

This event also highlights the heroism of the more than 33,000 Japanese Americans of the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team who fought in WWII.

P.C.: How many visitors do you have each year in-person and online?

Hartig: As a result of the (Covid-19) pandemic, the museum itself had roughly 4 million in-person visitors and more than 10 million online visits. We also have an engaged following on social media and vigorous readership of our two blog platforms: “O Say Can You See” and “Smithsonian Voices.” We reach a potential audience of some 5 billion through print, TV, radio and digital outlets.

P.C.: I understand the museum has a Japanese American collection, which preserves the Japanese American legacy in the United States. Can you explain when the collection was created, its significance and what it contains?

traced the history of Japanese American confinement, from immigration in the late 19th century to court cases and redress that came more than 40 years after the WWII incarceration camps closed in 1946.

Items in our collection detail life in the incarceration camps, as well as the rich history of people of Japanese ancestry in America. Some notable items include classification cards identifying Japanese Americans as “enemy aliens,” suitcases used by people forcibly removed to incarceration camps, objects and photographs representing life in the camps and military materials related to Japanese Americans serving in the U.S. military abroad.

Highlights of the collection include a Medal of Honor belonging to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team’s Joe M. Nishimoto, as well as the Nisei Congressional Gold Medal awarded to the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service to honor Japanese Americans who served in WWII. The Nisei Congressional Gold Medal is currently on loan and is being displayed at the National Museum of the U.S. Army.

Some websites that highlight what has been done in this area are https://americanhistory.si.edu/topics/asian-pacific-american-history and http://cgm.smithsonian.org.

P.C.: Are you accepting of any artifact, document or photograph donations to your Japanese American History Collection?

Hartig: Yes, we are always eager to hear from the community. We are not able to collect everything that is being offered, but we always appreciate the conversation.

P.C.: If a person should have something they would like to donate for consideration, what is the process involved, and who should they contact?

Hartig: The best way to get in touch with us is to send an email to inquiry@si.edu with a photo(s) and a brief description of the items you have, and then the appropriate curator will get in touch with you.

P.C.: The museum has had two exhibitions that have told the story of Japanese Americans during WWII. Can you explain what they were and when the exhibitions were held?

Hartig: Our most recent exhibition was “Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II,” which was on view at the Albert H. Small Documents Gallery beginning Feb. 17, 2017, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066, and it closed on July 31, 2019. It currently has a co-produced SITES traveling exhibit, SITES stands for the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and is the world’s largest traveling exhibition service. SITES offers exhibitions to museums, libraries, science centers, historical societies, community centers, botanical gardens, schools and other institutions across the nation.

Some of the artifacts from our Japanese American and Asian American history collections are also included in several of the museum’s exhibitions, including Girlhood: It’s Complicated, American Enterprise, America on the Move, Price of Freedom and Many Voices, One Nation. The exhibition ran for nearly 17 years, with the National Museum of American History being the first to put the Japanese American incarceration on public view to tell the story.

P.C.: President Joe Biden just signed into law what would lead to the creation of the National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture. How do you feel your museum helped to show interest in this area with your past exhibitions and Japanese American History collection?

Hartig: This community is an important part of American history, and the museum has, for more than 30 years, tried to include Japanese American history in its conversation. We have worked to highlight underrepresented communities and stories, but we know there is always more to do to continue to tell the story. As more museums are added to the Smithsonian, the National Museum of American History is eager to collaborate to amplify the stories of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders for future generations.

P.C.: How have you assured that the National Museum of American History will be able to continue to expand its Japanese American collection, exhibits and programming for future generations?

Hartig: The National Museum of American History relies on private financial support to host its annual Day of Remembrance events, as well as to continue to document and share the history of the Japanese American experience.

For example, in 2022, the museum’s Day of Remembrance programming was made possible by the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, the Japanese American Citizens League’s D.C. chapter and the Asian American Foundation.

The museum established its Japanese American History Endowment in 2015, which allows donors to make gifts toward the museum’s preservation efforts, in perpetuity.

The endowment provides reliable annual funding, ensuring we can fulfill our continued commitment to Japanese American history. We invite donors to help us grow this vital resource that will make possible future Japanese American exhibitions, programs, collecting efforts and the retention of curatorial expertise.

P.C.: Are there any plans for future Japanese American exhibitions at the National Museum of American History?

Hartig: “Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II,” the traveling exhibit, is booked through April 2023. It examines the history and experiences of Japanese Americans during and after World War II including immigration, prejudice, civil rights and heroism through photographs, personal stories and objects from those imprisoned at the camps.

We are also partnering with SITES on a new traveling exhibition called “Japanese War Brides: Across a Wide Divide,” which will explore the lives of more than 45,000 Japanese women who immigrated to the United States in the aftermath of WWII.

This group’s immigration would alter the fabric of U.S. society, challenging foreign policy and immigration laws, race relations and, ultimately, reshape communities across the nation.

“Japanese War Brides” will illuminate an unknown American immigration story and offer space to rethink how we hate, why we love and what it means to be American in 2024.

“We will also be presenting our annual “Day of Remembrance” event and are actively planning for 2023. We hope to continue to work together with the Japanese American community to be your steward to preserve the Japanese American legacy here in this country.

We want to be able to tell your stories to future generations, so Japanese Americans will never be forgotten. This is something that is very important to me as I work here at the National Museum of American History.
Contra Costa

Hau ola Makahiki Hou
Aloha; Gerry Iesugi, Erin, Steve & Chris

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26 | PACIFIC CITIZEN | Holiday 2022
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We miss you both and are thinking of you this holiday season.

Love, Linda, Jerry, Jim and Peggy

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FORMER TV NEWSMAN FRED KATAYAMA SIGNS OFF FROM JOURNALISM
AS USJC’S EXECUTIVE VP, HE’S TAKEN HIS PASSION AND MADE IT HAPPEN.

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor
(Note: This article is the result of three conversations over many months with Fred Katayama, a former TV journalist who is now executive vp of the U.S.-Japan Council. The conversations occurred before he formally began working for the USJC, a few months into the job and after the USJC conference was held in late October.)

Fred Katayama’s past 10-plus months have been a time of transition and activity. On Valentine’s Day in February, the award-winning veteran broadcast journalist, whose face, name and voice became familiar to watchers of CNN and Reuters Television, left his chosen profession after nearly 40 years.

In a way, it was surprising even to Katayama himself. “I never dreamed any occupation outside of journalism. I had a single-minded, razor-sharp focus. This is the only thing I ever wanted to do from the time I was a kid,” he told The Pacific Citizen.

This former journalist’s new job? Executive vp at the U.S.-Japan Council. “It’s a whole new ballgame for me,” Katayama said, despite being a founding board member of USJC.

Indeed, because between Day 1 in his new role and Oct. 27-28, he went from leaving where the men’s room was to helping with the planning and prosecution of the USJC’s first in-person conference — in Japan, no less — since pre-Covid times in 2019 in Los Angeles, the last time the USJC held an in-person conference.

If joining USJC is, as Katayama put it, his “second act,” it’s necessary to look to the time of his life before he mapped out the route he took to begin his first act of becoming a journalist: growing up in the Los Angeles suburb of Monterey Park, Calif., the eldest son of June and Hideo Katayama.

Like many people when they are young, Katayama went through what he describes as an identity crisis. Whether it was burnout from that seven-day-a-week Maryknoll regimen, adolescent angst or a personal form of rumspringa, it converged such that he was able to see the newsroom to call the station, offering to cover them for the Pacific Citizen.

“That interest in journalism, his connection to Honda and timing of the Commission on Wartime Location and Internment of Civilians hearings in New York City was a great way to seek justice for people who were mistreated,” he said. “The reason I went into journalism was, I was very interested about the redress-reparations drive,” said Katayama. “The internment really made me interested in seeking justice. And I thought journalism was a great way to seek justice for people who were mistreated.

“This former journal's work as a journalist before moving on to become the executive vice president of the U.S.-Japan Council.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FRED KATAYAMA

That interest in journalism, his connection to Honda and timing of the Commission on Wartime Location and Internment of Civilians hearings in New York City converged such that he was able to cover them for the Pacific Citizen.

“I just went, wrote it and sent it to them in the mail, and they published it,” Katayama said. “And other things that I would write, I would just send them to the Kajima Building, when the parking structure ramp of the Kajima Building, when the parking structure ramp of

VIP in the motorcade. He ran after her car when it went up the parking structure ramp of the Kajima Building, when the Sumitomo Bank was a tenant.

“She hears these thumping footsteps and sees this little kid with programs running after her. So then, she says, ‘What do you want?’ Totally out of breath, totally out of breath. ‘Your autograph.’

“She says, ‘Oh, OK.’ Gets the car to pull over, and then she says, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ And I said, ‘I want to do your job. Do what you’re doing.’ ‘No kidding?’ ‘Yeah, I want to be a journalist.’”

Katayama remembers her questioning his sincerity, asking him if he didn’t really instead want to be a doctor, lawyer, accountant or engineer — the “usual professions” Asian American kids’ parents steered them toward. He told her, “All my life, I want to be a journalist.”

Toyota told him if he ever wanted to see the newsroom to call the station, offering to cover them for the Pacific Citizen. “He was always sitting outside on the bench doing it,” he recalled. “And I wanted nothing to do with Japan, nothing at all, or Japanese Americans, even though I went to Maryknoll school and spent seven days a week with them, even though my closest friends are still Japanese Americans.

A couple of things, however, would redirect him to embrace his Japanese American and Asian American heritage. It was during college that Katayama, as he put it, “discovered Japan.” Instead of becoming economics major, he became an East Asian Studies major. That, combined with his master’s degree in journalism with a focus on business journalism would later pay off in his future career.

Before that, however, Katayama had a fateful encounter with a now-legendary local TV news anchor who not only opened his eyes to the world of a professional newsroom but also urged him to embrace his identity. That TV journalist’s name was Tatsuo Honda.

Prior to that, he also remembered seeing on the local ABC affiliate something new: a Japanese American TV news anchor. His name was Ken Kashiwahara. Until then, the only other person of Japanese ancestry he had seen on TV was George Takei, aka Mr. Sulu of Star Trek." Hoping for a second sighting of Kashiwahara, Katayama began watching every newscast hoping “to see this guy pop up.”

“Pretty soon I got so into news, it didn’t matter whether he was on or not. I was just watching every day,” Katayama said. “CBS, NBC and ABC — all of them, but especially ABC at the time.”

Sometime later, it was a meeting with Toyota that Katayama remembers as a life-changing experience. It happened when he was a Boy Scout selling Nisei Week programs in Little Tokyo, when Toyota was a VIP in the motorcade. He ran after her car when it went up the parking structure ramp of the Kajima Building, when the Sumitomo Bank was a tenant.

“She hears these thumping footsteps and sees this little kid with programs running after her. So then, she says, ‘What do you want?’ Totally out of breath, totally out of breath. ‘Your autograph.’

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Toyota told him if he ever wanted to see the newsroom to call the station, offering to cover them for the Pacific Citizen. “He was always sitting outside on the bench doing it,” he recalled. “And I wanted nothing to do with Japan, nothing at all, or Japanese Americans, even though I went to Maryknoll school and spent seven days a week with them, even though my closest friends are still Japanese Americans.

A couple of things, however, would redirect him to embrace his Japanese American and Asian American heritage. It was during college that Katayama, as he put it, “discovered Japan.” Instead of becoming economics major, he became an East Asian Studies major. That, combined with his master’s degree in journalism with a focus on business journalism would later pay off in his future career.

Before that, however, Katayama had a fateful encounter with a now-legendary local TV news anchor who not only opened his eyes to the world of a professional newsroom but also urged him to embrace his identity. That TV journalist’s name was Tatsuo Honda.

Prior to that, he also remembered seeing on the local ABC affiliate something new: a Japanese American TV news anchor. His name was Ken Kashiwahara. Until then, the only other person of Japanese ancestry he had seen on TV was George Takei, aka Mr. Sulu of Star Trek.” Hoping for a second sighting of Kashiwahara, Katayama began watching every newscast hoping “to see this guy pop up.”

“Pretty soon I got so into news, it didn’t matter whether he was on or not. I was just watching every day,” Katayama said. “CBS, NBC and ABC — all of them, but especially ABC at the time.”

Sometime later, it was a meeting with Toyota that Katayama remembers as a life-changing experience. It happened when he was a Boy Scout selling Nisei Week programs in Little Tokyo, when Toyota was a VIP in the motorcade. He ran after her car when it went up the parking structure ramp of the Kajima Building, when the Sumitomo Bank was a tenant.

“She hears these thumping footsteps and sees this little kid with programs running after her. So then, she says, ‘What do you want?’ Totally out of breath, totally out of breath. ‘Your autograph.’

“She says, ‘Oh, OK.’ Gets the car to pull over, and then she says, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ And I said, ‘I want to do your job. Do what you’re doing.’ ‘No kidding?’ ‘Yeah, I want to be a journalist.’”

Katayama remembers her questioning his sincerity, asking him if he didn’t really instead want to be a doctor, lawyer, accountant or engineer — the “usual professions” Asian American kids’ parents steered them toward. He told her, “All my life, I want to be a journalist.”

Toyota told him if he ever wanted to see the newsroom to call the station, offering to cover them for the Pacific Citizen.
give him a private tour.

“So that’s what I did. And when I went to the newsroom, I felt like a seminarian who has confirmed his calling. The energy of that newsroom — I said, ‘This is definitely what I want to do.’”

Interestingly, according to Katayama, Toyota not only transmitted the journalism bug to him, she foreshadowed her own eventual departure from the field — and may also have implanted the idea that he, too, might someday leave journalism behind.

“At that time when I visited the newsroom, she told me about that. She said, ‘I’m not going to be here that long because at one point, I’m going to switch — I’m taking courses at UCLA now. I’m really into Asian American Studies. And you should think of yourself not just as a Japanese American, think of yourself as Pan Asian. I guess the term Asian American that Yoji Ikioha had coined was not as standardized yet. She said, ‘Think Pan Asian.’ Then a few years later, she founded that Asian American Journalists Association. So — oh, that’s what she’s talking about.”

As for his identity crisis problem, Katayama thanks Toyota. “She’s the one who got me out of it,” he said. And, of course, Toyota left TV news years ago for UCLA, where she is an associate researcher at the Asian American Studies Center and has served as an adjunct professor in anthropology and Asian American Studies.

Katayama credits another woman for his path to the U.S.-Japan Council: Irene Hirano-Inouye, a legend in her own right, having been involved in the founding of both the Japanese American National Museum and USJC.

As a New Yorker, Katayama was already on the board of the Japan Society of New York when Hirano-Inouye sought him out. He remembers her telling him that she was “thinking about forming this organization” that would become the USJC. She asked him: “Can you help me out?”

As it turned out, the concept of USJC was already something on which he was presold.

After meeting with other nonprofits to learn how they were structured, he remembered attending a meeting in 2008 where a select group of Japanese Americans worked on writing a vision statement for the nascent organization. Among those present at the meeting was Hirano-Inouye’s husband.

“I’ll never forget what Sen. Dan Inouye said that day. He said, ‘You know, when you think about it, Japanese and the Japanese American communities we live in are more or less the same cities — Honolulu, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Chicago, Washington, D.C., New York. But how well do we really know each other?’

“We get together at annual dinner, Japanese companies often pitching in with a lot of money. We shake their hands, may play in a golf tournament, then we don’t see them for another year. We don’t socialize with them. We don’t really know them. Wouldn’t it be great if we got together and got to know each other more? And together, we could also do something for U.S.-Japan relations. And that was for me like the lightbulb moment.”

When the USJC became an official nonprofit entity in 2009, Katayama said, “It grew much bigger. I was jazzed and more jazzed and pumped up. I thought there’s definitely what I want to do, involved with Japan. And if not Japan, Asia.”

Katayama’s second act, transitioning from journalism to being in charge of development at USJC, started to come together about a year ago.

“I served on the board until my term came up,” he said. “And then when this opportunity came, at first I didn’t think about it. I knew someone had left, but then a fellow board member reached out to me and said, ‘Hey, have you thought about it?’ I didn’t even answer him right away.

“But when Katayama’s wife, Kaoriko Kuge, also a TV news journalist, told him he should consider it, he did. He had lunch with Suzanne Basalla, who he had known for years, from before she became the USJC CEO and president after Inouye-Hirano resigned from that role due to health reasons, problem. For example, Focus Fridays, where we decided no meetings on Fridays, when we get a lot of work done. But I think if there’s a difference in terms of attitudes toward the job, I felt that for the first time, I can focus on my passion 24/7.

“For me, it’s meaningful to be in a quantitatively very weak world of numbers because I’m in development. How are we doing? How are we tracking against our goals? In journalism, we really didn’t do that.”

Katayama does allow, however, that when news broke of the July 8 assassination of former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, his journalistic instincts returned to the fore.

“I dropped everything that I was doing,” he said. In a role reversal, though, he was no longer the person on camera and instead worked with the USJC’s communications manager. “My old station called me and said, ‘Hey, Fred. We heard this news about Prime Minister Abe. Can I interview you?’ And I said, ‘No. Thanks for your interest, but I’m not the face of the organization. Suzanne Basalla is our CEO, so she should be on camera. And I will arrange it, so she will as long as she accepts. So, we got her on my old station at KIRO, Channel 7, in Seattle. She also appeared on KING TV, Lori Matsukawa’s old station.”

It’s now been almost two months since the USJC conference — the theme for which was “The Great Reconnect: Strengthening Alliances, Partnerships and Communities” — took place at the Carousel Tower Hotel in Tokyo.

In addition to the usual holiday season hubbub, Katayama is busy trying to meet fundraising targets before the year’s end. He is also busy now with other responsibilities, but in retrospect, pleased that the conference was a success.

“I think there was almost nearly a fourth, it was not more, of the people there under the age of 40. Sam Matsukawa, he’s one of my former U.S.-Japan or Japanese American organization that you know of that had a big powwow where we had that percentage of people under the age of 40. That’s a lot of momentum and energy and idealistic vibes there.

“And you see them, Japanese Americans, engaged with their Japanese counterparts, all in the name of a common goal of strengthening U.S.-Japan relations through the people-to-people level. Then you say, ‘Wow, this is all worth it.’”

It would appear that for Katayama, leaving behind what once was his life’s passion has worked out — “my life,” he said. “My wife is from Japan, my son is a dual citizen and I’m an American. And this unites all of us — a Japanese American-founded and Japanese American-led organization is now more diverse. It’s not just Japanese Americans and Japanese. It’s other Americans too. And I think that has also become more diverse. And to do this, to turn my passion into my profession — my passion was my profession. I’m really lucky, Journalism, that’s all I ever dreamed of. But along the way, in college, I discovered Japan, and now I’m able to turn this passion into my second act.”
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Tad and Carolyn Ishihara

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Allan, Janice, Eric, Reiko, Takahashi

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Before World War II, there were more than 80 Japanese American communities across the country, according to the Nichi Bei Foundation. Yet, due to the wartime incarceration, only three Japantowns remain: Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, San Jose Japantown and San Francisco Japantown, the nation’s oldest and largest.

San Francisco Japantown survived not only the wartime incarceration but also devastating redevelopment policies of the late 1960s and early 1970s that, in the name of urban renewal, forcibly dispersed Japanese American residents and businesses to other neighborhoods. And yet, Japantown has persisted.

In 2013, the city and county of San Francisco designated Japantown as its first Cultural District, which now numbers 10, including African American Arts, SoMa Pilipinas and the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District.

The next big shock to San Francisco Japantown was the Covid pandemic that resulted in temporary shutdowns, empty stores and permanent closures. But now after nearly three years of pandemic-related challenges, San Francisco Japantown is back.

Stores are busy, the Peace Plaza is filled with people and restaurants are packed. It is a testament to the hard-working people of Japantown that the community has rebounded so successfully. The resilience of Japantown is captured in its intrepid small businesses.

Soko Hardware, the oldest business in San Francisco Japantown, continues to thrive despite pandemic challenges. Masayasu and Naka Ashizawa immigrated from Japan in the 1920s and opened the first hardware store in Japantown in 1925.

Their son, Masao Ashizawa, and his wife, Agnes, became the store’s second-generation business owners, followed by third-generation Philip and Eunice Ashizawa, whom you can find at the store today.

Son David, daughter Lauren and nephew Aaron Katekaru have lended a hand or continue to help out at the beloved hardware store that also features a diverse mix of Japanese and Japanese-themed home goods.

Soko Hardware has operated continuously since 1925, with the exception of WWII, when the family was incarcerated at Topaz, Utah. In 2019, the City and County of San Francisco Office of Small Business designated Soko Hardware a Legacy Business and placed it on a registry for special recognition and benefits.
Located at 1698 Post St. in the heart of Japantown, Soko Hardware relies on international tourism for 10 percent-15 percent of its overall business. During the pandemic, international tourism went to zero, but Soko Hardware remained open as an essential business.

“We were able to secure a Paycheck Protection Program from the bank fairly easily and kept all five of our employees on,” stated Philip Ashizawa.

The historic family owned business continues to offer an eclectic mix of items, from the practical — Kitazawa seeds for Japanese vegetables — to the unique — Japanese tansu cabinet knobs and hinges — to the fanciful — Kokeshi dolls and maneki neko cats.

In recent months, Philip Ashizawa has seen local tourism pick up. Many more international visitors, particularly from Europe and Asia, have been coming to the store in search of Japanese washi art paper, specialty vases from Japan and elegant platters and tea sets.

Looking to the future, Philip and Eunice Ashizawa said: “We hope everyone in San Francisco Japantown will have a prosperous New Year. We look forward to a 2023 Cherry Blossom Festival in full swing.”

Resiliency Fund” distributed $5,000 grants to 80 Japantown small businesses, including Kissako.

“We started the fund in May 2020 with the goal of raising $500,000 for small business support and Covid response,” explained Grace Horikiri, executive director of the JCBFD. “We never imagined that we would reach this goal within a month.”

She added, “There was an outpouring of support for Japantown. A single donor contributed $10,000 with a matching challenge, and the challenge was met in a matter of a couple of weeks!”

In addition to $400,000 in direct grants to Japantown merchants, the “Heart of Japantown Resiliency Fund” purchased $20,000 in personal protective equipment to distribute to local businesses and provided technical assistance to business owners seeking to take advantage of government loan and grant programs.

“A number of business owners needed language support to complete Small Business Administration forms,” said Horikiri. “Of those who received assistance from the JCBFD with their applications, 100 percent received some sort of funding.”

In November 2020, JCBFD also partnered with the Department of Public Health to organize Covid testing at Peace Plaza in the heart of Japan-town. The gift certificate program provided an infusion of cash when we badly needed it.”

Thanks to programs like the “Heart of Japantown Resiliency Fund” and the “Gambaro Campaign,” businesses like Kissako survived the pandemic. Today, Kissako’s made-to-order onigiri, including the original spicy spam onigiri, has become a fan favorite.

“I’m just amazed at the fan base for our onigiri,” exclaimed Matsuno. “Customers come from all over the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento and even out-of-state from as far away as Seattle and Vancouver, Canada.”

Currently, Japantown is also witnessing a steady increase in new business ventures.

• The Chameleon Vintage clothing shop has arrived at the Japan Center Mall with a selection of popular T-shirts, jeans and other clothing from a past era.

• Jina Bakes incorporates Korean and Japanese flavors into unique baked goods that attract a long line of hungry customers.

• Anime fans will find treasures at the Flying Raizin, the “ultimate anime store.”

• Outside of the Japan Center Mall, Chika & Sake (1700 Laguna St.) offers curated sake by master sommelier Chika Ohta.

In the new year, Japantown will see additional new businesses, including an izakaya pub, new boba tea purveyors and a variety of pop-up shops, including one by the Japantown Community Benefit District.

Thanks to well-designed support programs for small businesses, San Francisco Japantown remains a cultural gem not only for San Francisco, the State of California and the country, but also the world. All are welcome back to come explore, enjoy a delectable bite to eat, purchase unique items and support this longstanding historical district.

Emily Murase is privileged to work in San Francisco Japantown as executive director of the Japantown Task Force. She hopes that readers will plan a visit to Japantown, early and often, in 2023.
PNWDC

Have the Merriest of Holidays and a Safe and Prosperous New Year from the Pacific Northwest District Council

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best wishes to stay healthy and safe

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Greetings from the Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL Chapter

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From your Friends in the Intermountain District Council

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Visit the Pacific Citizen Archives!
Browse the JACL from its beginning. Read historical news and stories of the Japanese Americans and Asian Americans since 1929.

Marysville

Best Wishes from Marysville JACL

34 | PACIFIC CITIZEN | Holiday 2022.
By Gil Asakawa

It's been a long, sometimes lonely three years since Covid-19 arrived in the world and changed all of our lives. For many of us, this holiday season might be the first since the pandemic shutdowns when we'll be traveling to visit family once again — and dining with them. If we're lucky, we live not far from our parents and grandparents and have been able to drive over for Sunday dinners or pick up takeout to enjoy with them this whole time. But if we live far — if we live across the country, for instance — and have to fly home for the holidays, well, we know how that's gone.

After a family trip to Japan in October 2019, I didn't step on a plane until this year. It still feels a little disconcerting to go through an airport and board a flight, especially when I'm sipping my paltry soda water or maybe yakiniku beef on the hibachi on the back porch.

We never lived around relatives because we were covered with food brought potluck-style by all the guests, both traditional Japanese and extended family, we spent time in the morning thinking, and have a small celebration.

We'll order this excellent Osechi Ryori set again, made mochi. And Japanese American stuff like multilayered Jell-O, which I just love.

Last year, we ordered Osechi Ryori from a local Japanese bakery and café, and it was great — three stacked boxes of compartments filled with a variety of traditional Oshogatsu items. We supplied our own mochi and Jell-O.

We ordered Oshi-gatsu from a local Japanese bakery and café, and it was great — three stacked boxes of compartments filled with a variety of traditional Oshogatsu items. We supplied our own mochi and Jell-O. We'll order this excellent Osechi Ryori set again, I think, and have a small celebration.

And before the big New Year's feast with extended family, we spent time in the morning with Erin's folks, and her mom made Ozoni, the traditional New Year's soup with dashi and mochi. I grew up with a different soup because my mom grew up in a small town in Nemuro, and for New Year's, she always made Oshiruko or Zenzai, which is basically anko, the sweet red bean paste served thin as a soup, with mochi added in. It was like slurping candy, so, of course, I always loved that.

These traditions live on in our community, and this year, thanks to Covid receding (though remember, it's still around!) we can enjoy them again with our loved ones.

Happy Holidays, everyone, and have a wonderful, loving New Year celebration with friends and family . . . together again!

Gil Asakawa is the author of "Tabemasho! Let's Eat! A Tasty History of Japanese Food in America." (Stone Bridge Press).
Douglas Nelson arrived in Laramie, Wyo., in the fall of 1968, fresh from graduating from the University of Illinois and marrying his wife, Linda. He started studying history as a graduate student and teaching assistant at the University of Wyoming. He didn’t know that he would soon discover a topic that would change the direction of the rest of his life.

By the time he graduated from Wyoming, Nelson had written a master’s thesis that would eventually be adapted into a book released in 1976 — “Heart Mountain: The History of an American Concentration Camp.”

That book has now been republished by the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation with new photographs, a foreword by Sec. Norman Mineta and Sen. Alan Simpson, as well as a new chapter about the foundation’s creation.

“I am proudest of the fact that, despite all the euphemisms that were used by our government to describe the World War II treatment of the Japanese Americans,” Nelson said in an interview with the Pacific Citizen, “I tried to be forthright about its illegality and tragic impact on the lives of those unjustly uprooted and imprisoned.”

As he started his research, Nelson discovered a few local sources of valuable information. The Cody Enterprise and Powell Tribune newspapers had archives that detailed much of the local reaction to the camp, while the Heart Mountain Sentinel provided news about the happenings inside the barbed wire. These sources gave Nelson the basics of Heart Mountain history.

Guided By His Adviser

The first step toward the book coming to fruition came when Nelson met his faculty adviser, Roger Daniels, who was then a scholar studying the Japanese American experience and incarceration. Before joining the Wyoming faculty, Daniels had received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles, and written extensively about Japanese Americans.

He suggested that Nelson visit the site of the former camp at Heart Mountain to see what was there. What Nelson discovered was that there were few signs that 25 years earlier a camp that was then Wyoming’s third-largest city spread out along the road between Cody and Powell, Wyo. All the barracks had been sold for $1 and carted away.

No former incarcerees lived in the area; all had moved away as soon as they could after being released from camp. Few local residents seemed inclined to talk about the prison camp that had been in their midst.

There was certainly no interest in building a museum at the site to commemorate what had happened there during WWII.

“A Major Discovery

“When the book was released in 1976, I knew it told an important story, but I had no expectations of it having impact on much of anything,” Nelson said, “I wasn’t even sure that many people would read it, so I was surprised when it sold quickly and was favorably reviewed. But then I was stunned when the book became a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. I knew then that there was a profound interest in the largely untold story of the incarceration.”

Reaction to the book was immediate and glowing.


By Ray Locker, Contributor

Nelson then tapped into Wyoming government records to track how the state coped with the camp’s presence and how officials either welcomed the Japanese American incarcerees or gave into the prevailing racism that led to continued discrimination.

He discovered that state lawmakers sought to ban the incarcerees from fishing in the state’s waters and wanted to prevent any Japanese Americans from remaining in Wyoming after the war had ended.

Nelson’s major discovery, however, was the case of the 85 young men incarcerated at Heart Mountain who resisted the military draft, were arrested, convicted and sent to federal prison. The story of the Heart Mountain draft resisters had been hidden for 25 years behind the shame of family members, government obstruction and a community-wide derision against those who fought for their rights.

“Probably the most unexpected part of my research into Heart Mountain was the discovery of the widespread resistance to [War Relocation Authority] policies and to the government’s decision to draft Nisei men out of the camp,” Nelson said. “The little that had been written about Heart Mountain suggested that it was ‘a happy camp,’ where incarcerees worked to make the best of their situation, and almost no notice was given to the significant and principled resistance and the deep conflict that emerged within the Nisei population at Heart Mountain.”

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Enduring Influence

Reaction to the book was immediate and glowing.

Nelson, wrote historian John Modell in the
Nelson was instrumental in creating the Mineta-Simpson Institute, the Heart Mountain affiliate named for Norman Mineta, the former Heart Mountain incarceree, House and Cabinet member, and Alan Simpson, the Republican former Senator from Wyoming. Mineta and Simpson met as Boy Scouts in 1943 inside the barbed wire at Heart Mountain and went on to careers in public service noted for their commitment to bipartisanship and principled disagreement.

Nelson’s book was published under the auspices of the Mineta-Simpson Institute.

“As part of the Mineta-Simpson Institute’s vision, many books have been associated with the growth of our institution,” Higuchi said. “Heart Mountain” is at the forefront of those books, along with “Light One Candle,” which was republished by Heart Mountain last February.

The foundation is also working on a graphic novel about Mineta and Simpson.

Aura Sunada Newlin, Heart Mountain’s interim executive director, said the foundation decided to republish Nelson’s hard-to-find work because it provides an excellent introduction/overview to the Japanese American incarceration history.

“The book will go to support the foundation’s work. Nelson’s work on the resisters inspired other scholars and created a new generation of activists among the former incarcerated,” Newlin added. “At the same time, it also serves as an accessible starting point for people who want to know more about this important and tragic chapter in our history.”

Nelson said. Along with being sold at the Heart Mountain store, the book will be part of the curriculum for Heart Mountain’s upcoming workshops for educators sponsored by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

“I hope my book will provide a helpful and accessible starting point for people who want to know more about this important and tragic chapter in our history,” Nelson said.


Expanding Its Reach

The relatively remote location of Heart Mountain makes it difficult to attract as many visitors as the foundation would like. That’s why its leaders believe it’s important to publish books that tell the camp’s story.

“I hope the book enriches the experience of people who visit our museum and provides a way of learning about what happened at Heart Mountain for those who can’t come there.”

Sen. Alan Simpson (left) with Douglas Nelson at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center in May

American Historical Review, “attacks the stereotype of the docile Japanese American patriot eagerly marching to war.”

Nelson’s work on the resisters inspired other scholars and created a new generation of activists among the former incarcerated.

Harumi “Bacon” Sakatani was 13 when he was sent to Heart Mountain. After the war, he returned to California, attended college and served in the Korean War. He knew or talked little about his wartime incarceration.

In 1982, Sakatani was asked to organize the first planned reunion of Heart Mountain incarceree. He went to the library to research the incarceration and discovered Nelson’s book. Sakatani said that experience changed his entire view of the incarceration and inspired 40 years of continued activism.

“I went to the library and looked up in the books about the camp, and boy, I was just amazed at what was written about the camps” in Nelson’s book and others. Sakatani told an interviewer with Densho in 2010. “I didn’t know anything about all the illegibilities and all of that about the camps, and, and so I guess that was the start of my research on the camp.”

Sakatani arranged speaking engagements that also featured leaders of the draft resistance movement, including Frank Emi, one of the leaders of the anti-draft Fair Play Committee.

“There is now a vast body of research and writing about the incarceration. Heart Mountain, I hope, still provides a good starting point for those interested.”

Leading Heart Mountain

Nelson was recruited to join the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation in its early years and was instrumental in raising the money needed to build its award-winning interpretive center and museum.

As the foundation’s vice chair, he has worked steadily to help shape the foundation’s mission and raise money, tapping into the network of nonprofit leaders he worked with for decades as the president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Along with HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi, Nelson was instrumental in creating the Mineta-Simpson Institute, the Heart Mountain affiliate named for Norman Mineta, the former Heart Mountain incarceree, House and Cabinet member, and Alan Simpson, the Republican former Senator from Wyoming. Mineta and Simpson met as Boy Scouts in 1943 inside the barbed wire at Heart Mountain and went on to careers in public service noted for their commitment to bipartisanship and principled disagreement.

Nelson’s book was published under the auspices of the Mineta-Simpson Institute.

“As part of the Mineta-Simpson Institute’s vision, many books have been associated with the growth of our institution,” Higuchi said. “Heart Mountain” is at the forefront of those books, along with “Light One Candle,” which was republished by Heart Mountain last February.

The foundation is also working on a graphic novel about Mineta and Simpson.

Aura Sunada Newlin, Heart Mountain’s interim executive director, said the foundation decided to republish Nelson’s hard-to-find work because it provides an excellent introduction/overview to the Japanese American incarceration history.

“For those who are new to this history and want to learn more, this is a key resource,” she said. Newlin added that all proceeds from the sale of the book will go to support the foundation’s work.

Expanding Its Reach

The relatively remote location of Heart Mountain makes it difficult to attract as many visitors as the foundation would like. That’s why its leaders believe it’s important to publish books that tell the camp’s story.

“I hope the book enriches the experience of people who visit our museum and provides a way of learning about what happened at Heart Mountain for those who can’t come there.”

Sen. Alan Simpson and Alan Simpson, the Hon. Norman Y. Mineta, JANM President and CEO Ann Burroughs and Consul General of Japan Hiroto Hirakoba.

PHOTO: DON TANGULIG

Former Heart Mountain incarceree Bacon Sakatani, shown here at a Heart Mountain Pilgrimage, said he was inspired by Nelson’s book to learn more about the Japanese American incarceration.

PHOTOS: RAY LOCKER


“It provides a helpful and accessible starting point for people who want to know more about this important and tragic chapter in our history,” Nelson said.


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PHOTO: DON TANGULIG


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Pocatello-Blackfoot Chapter
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AND
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AND A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

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Joe Hayashi
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Dylan Mori

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Gill’s new book, “Tabemasho! Let’s Eat! A Tasty History of Japanese Food in America,” is now available in bookstores and online.

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A BOND Thicker THAN BLOOD

An unknown story of generosity and compassion creates an opportunity for two Utah families to be together again 77 years later.

By Patti Hirahara, Contributor

The story began 77 years ago in a Japanese American incarceration camp in Heart Mountain, Wyo., when Niroku and Shitsuyo Uyematsu were told that they had to leave with their family of four children: Norio, Meriko, Harry and Juno.

Given $25 each and a one-way train ticket to anywhere they wanted to go may have felt exciting for some, but for the Uyematsu family, this was devastating news since they had nowhere to go, much like many other Japanese American families after the end of World War II.

Having left a five-acre berry farm in March 1942, which was ready for harvest, in Campbell, Calif., the farm had two homes, a big two-car garage, a packing shed and all their farm equipment. Due to the signing of Executive Order 9066, they had to leave, with only what they could carry, to go to the Pomona Assembly Center in Southern California. The Uyematsu’s were forced to sell their farm to an Oklahoma fruit picker for $500, and Niroku and Shitsuyo Uyematsu never returned to live in California after the war ended.

According to eldest son Norio Uyematsu, "Even though they lost everything, my parents never complained once about their loss."

Uyematsu continued, "While in the camp, we were surrounded by barbed-wire fences and guard towers with searchlights, manned by United States Army soldiers armed with machine guns, rifles and pistols. It is ironic, since we were not the enemy and American citizens, to be forced to live in camps on American soil."

The State of Utah’s situation, during WWII, was unique since individuals of Japanese descent living in Utah did not have to relocate and could continue to live and work there. Utah had a Japanese American incarceration camp at Topaz, which was located near Delta, Utah, and the state was also a location where Japanese families could relocate, during and after WWII, since it was out of the designated war zone set in place by the War Relocation Authority.

Needing to move again in November 1945 by order of the U.S. Government, the Uyematsu’s heard about a man named Earl Garrett Anderson, who was a compassionate and generous individual that gave Japanese families a second chance to live and work on his more than 1,000 acres of farmland in Brigham City, Corinne, Deweyville, Honeyville and Perry, which were all located in Box Elder County, Utah.

Anderson was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and his story of helping the Japanese was largely unknown — until only recently.

“The opportunity to work for Earl Anderson was a dream come true for my family to live and work on his farm,” Norio Uyematsu recalled. "He converted a building on 6th East in Brigham City and made it into a six-room apartment with each having its own kitchen and bedroom. Other Japanese families who lived and worked on the Anderson Farms were the Fukuchi’s, Hattori’s, Ikegami’s, Inouye’s, Kanashiro’s, Kawamoto’s and the Sumida’s.”

On Veterans Day 2022 at the Korean War Memorial in Fullerton, Calif., Congressman Lou Correa, U.S. Representative for California’s 46th Congressional District, presented Korean War Veteran Norio Uyematsu, who enlisted from Brigham City, Utah, with his personal copy of the U.S. House of Representatives’ “Congressional Record,” which was recorded on Nov. 16.
Earl Anderson worked very hard to help the people in his community. He created his produce business that helped the Japanese American community, both locally and for those that needed help outside of the State of Utah. He died at the age of 62.

Earl Anderson had been an active community leader in the Box Elder County community and was a prominent fruit grower, produce shipper and broker. He was also active in the Brigham City Kiwanis Club and was involved on many Box Elder Chamber of Commerce committees over the years.

He served as president of the Box Elder Fish and Game Protective Assn. for two terms, was president of the Utah Wildlife Federation and the Brigham Gun Club and also was one of the men who was instrumental in successfully lobbying for the establishment of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, which was signed into law by President Calvin Coolidge in 1928.

According to a news article in the Box Elder News Journal on April 27, 1928, it said that “with the U.S. Government’s appropration, the State of Utah would have the largest single bird refuge and public shooting grounds in the United States.”

According to Ladd Anderson, Earl Anderson’s grandson whose father was Earl’s second son Steve, “In the 1920s, Earl envisioned a way for local growers to combine their harvests into volumes that could justify a packing and shipping operation; a cooperative whereby local growers could combine their product for sale at larger markets. Anderson [Farms] would buy local produce at a fair price, sometimes advancing cash to help growers secure their crops. The company would then inspect, sort, package and ship the product by trains and trucks to markets usually in the Midwest.”

“During the harvest seasons, the packaging plants in Brigham City ran around the clock to ensure that time-sensitive harvests were packaged and shipped to arrive and ripen in time to sell.

“Anderson Produce Company, North Farms and the Anderson Farms were consistently the largest employers in the region;” Ladd Anderson continued. “I learned from others and my father, Steve, that Earl G. Anderson was a community leader, business innovator and a brilliant ‘large-scale’ thinker. I was only 5 years old when Grandpa Earl died, but I will always remember that he was a very big guy who was never without a cigar and had a big, hearty laugh. The most telling summary of the impact of his life was by a speaker at his funeral whose introductory remark was, ‘The tallest tree in the forest has fallen.’

The Anderson and Uyematsu family bond was unique, since they considered each other more like family rather than strangers who met during an unfortunate circumstance.

“When Earl Anderson passed away in 1952, it was a sad day for my family. My younger brother, Harry, was a pallbearer, and my father, Niroku, was an honorary pallbearer,” Norio Uyematsu said.

“Most of the Japanese families who were released from the incarceration camps that lived and worked for the Andersons had made enough money to go back to California, while my family stayed and made Brigham City, Utah, our permanent home,” he continued.

Earl Anderson with his sons, Robert and Steve Anderson

Earl Anderson with his sons, Robert and Steve Anderson

Life for Japanese Americans in Brigham City was not always easy.

“In thinking about Earl Anderson all these years, he had a lot of guts to do what he did for the Japanese. In talking with his granddaughter, Jill, she told me that her grandfather did what he wanted to do and didn’t think about the consequences since he did what he thought was right and didn’t care what others thought. There was hostility that lingered against the Japanese, living in America, after the end of WWII, and it was not the time, nor place, to help the Japanese community. Earl Anderson believed in us and wanted to help, which has always impressed me to this day,” said Norio Uyematsu.

Many people in Brigham City were hostile against the Japanese families who were released from the camps during that time.

“When I was a teenager in Brigham City, I remember going to the Capitol Theater to see a movie,” Norio Uyematsu remembered. “Since I was of Japanese descent, I was not allowed to sit in the center section and was only allowed to sit in the left or right sections of the theater, which made me feel unwelcomed. But once the Brigham City community got to know us, the people of Brigham City finally accepted the Japanese families released from the concentration camps and allowed us to live and work in their community.”

Once Earl Anderson passed away, his sons, Robert and Steve Anderson, continued with the operation of the farm and the Anderson Produce packing shed business. Norio Uyematsu had fond memories of his time on the Anderson farm, and with the death of his wife, Rose, in 2020, he wanted to bring meaning to the rest of his life. Therefore, he started making a bucket list of things he wanted to do before he died.

No. 1 on his list was to tell the story of Earl Anderson and his sons, Robert and Steve, and to publicly thank the Anderson family for what they did for the Uyematsu’s in 1945.

Norio Uyematsu went to Brigham City, last September, to visit his brother, Harry, and participate in Brigham City’s annual “Peach Days” celebration. He had hoped during that trip to meet members of Earl Anderson’s family,
Mrs. Uyematsu – that was it. Our family loved the ‘Huey’ or ‘Mrs. Huey,’ but for me, it was Mr. or tive order, Dad could call the Uyematsu parents and Mr. Uyematsu. Incidentally and by execu-
from my dad, Steve, were, ‘Go ask Huey,’ or Mr. Uyematsu was almost always there, and it
I suppose since I was there during the summers,
it never occurred to me that the acreage below
he continued. “The understanding I was given was
white-framed farmhouse surrounded by tall trees,”
East Brigham City, the Anderson family owned a
opportunity to help, so we did.”
help, and the Andersons had the means and
just came with the farm! For the Earl Anderson
that the Uyematsu’s were always there, like they
when the Uyematsu’s were not part of our lives.
As a young boy, I suppose I would have guessed
in Brigham City, Utah.
In 1952, my family was able to save enough
money to buy a four-acre parcel of land with a
home in Brigham City. My parents grew and sold
strawberries and boysenberries. My father worked
home in Brigham City. My parents grew and sold
Meriko and Juno Uyematsu graduated from Box Elder
High School, as well as Harry Uyematsu and
Shiitsuyo Uyematsu made their permanent home,
and buried in the Brigham City Cemetery.
but how have things changed in Brigham City
for the Japanese American community since the
early days?
Over a 77-year period, Norio, Meriko, Harry
and Juno Uyematsu graduated from Box Elder
High School, as well as Harry Uyematsu and
his wife Kathy’s children and their great-
grandchildren. The Uyematsu’s are now five
generations strong living in Brigham City.
Norio, Meriko and Juno went to live in Cali-
ifornia, while brother Harry remained in Brigham City
with their parents.
And Harry Uyematsu’s daughter, Darla,
married the grandson of Robert “Bob” Anderson,
and his wish came true by being able to meet his
descendants.
Since Norio Uyematsu was a member of the
Salt Lake City JACL, his first opportunity to tell
the Earl Anderson story was at the chapter’s
special meeting on Sept. 14. He was joined by
Steve Anderson’s children, Ladd and Brek
Anderson, and Brek’s son, Cory.
“It was a wonderful opportunity to get together
again after all these years,” Norio Uyematsu said,
and it was apparent that history was in the making
as the stories were being told about the Uyemat-
su’s and the Anderson’s that evening at the JACL
event at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple.
Ladd Anderson shared some stories about the
Uyematsu family that night.
“When the Andersons farmed their own pro-
duce, it was on one of those farms where I first
recall Mr. and Mrs. Uyematsu and family,” Ladd
Anderson said. “Fact is, I don’t remember a time
when the Uyematsu’s were not part of our lives.
As a young boy, I suppose I would have guessed
that the Uyematsu’s were always there, like they
just came with the farm! For the Earl Anderson
family, the Uyematsu’s were people that needed
help, and the Andersons had the means and
opportunity to help, so we did.”
“Just inside the east boundary on acreage in
East Brigham City, the Anderson family owned a
white-framed farmhouse surrounded by tall trees,”
he continued. “The understanding I was given was
that the house was Mr. and Mrs. Uyematsu’s, and
it never occurred to me that the acreage below
the house was other than the Uyematsu farm.
I suppose since I was there during the summers,
Mr. Uyematsu was almost always there, and it
seemed to me that my dad, Steve, talked to
Mr. Uyematsu like it was his farm.”
“My dad was so proud and confident of Mr.
Uyematsu’s art and expertise since the individual
fruits that were produced looked like they were
formed in a factory. Whenever a decision, ques-
tion or concern came up about the row crops
even other stuff, some standing responses
from my dad, Steve, were, ‘Go ask Huey,’ or
‘Get Huey.’ Such was the trust between my dad
and Mr. Uyematsu. Incidentally and by execu-
tive order, Dad could call the Uyematsu parents ‘Huey’ or ‘Mrs. Huey,’ but for me, it was Mr. or
Mrs. Uyematsu – that was it. Our family loved the
Uyematsu’s, and it was an honor and pleasure to
share some of these memories with you all,”
Ladd Anderson concluded.
Norio Uyematsu enjoyed hearing Ladd Anderson’s stories, and he added to the conversation with some of his own thoughts.
“My father was the one who showed everyone
how to prune fruit trees to produce quality fruits. I
recall, the same as Ladd, that my father was
never given any orders or directions on what to
do on the Anderson Farm and was allowed to run
the Anderson’s Farms just like it was his own,”
his son, Cory, recalled Mr. and Mrs. Uyematsu and family,” Ladd Anderson concluded.
“Each year, my mom held a picnic and invited
the Anderson family to join,” Norio Uyematsu
continued. “I have only one picture of one of
those picnics, but I wrote the names on the photo
so that memory was spoiled by my wanting to
show who was who.
In 1952, my family was able to save enough
museum director Alana Blumenthal, “The Brigham City Museum is
planning for its first exhibition on the Japanese Pioneers of Brigham City, Box Elder County
and surrounding communities in Utah in 2025. With this exhibition, the museum will be creating
its own Japanese American History Collection and will be working in collaboration with the
University of Utah, Utah State University and the Brigham City Library to formulate exhibition
materials.”
Today, at 91 years old, going on 92, Norio Uyematsu shows no signs of slowing down,
and 2022 has been a good year for making
things happen.
“Since I am the oldest in my family, I now
feel a big responsibility to carry on the legacy of
my parents and tell the story of Earl Anderson.
It has been a homecoming of sorts to talk to the
Anderson descendants and to become a family
once again,” he concluded. “It has truly been a
good year.”
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Happy Holidays
Miyako Kadogawa
Nakazawa Family

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From the GLA Chapter

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From New England

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In memory of Mount Olympus members
May Akiyama, Ken and Dawn Nodzu
Akiyama, Guzman, Higashi, Misaka, Nodzu, Okawa and Watanabe Families

New England

Happy Holidays
From the GLA Chapter

Seasons Greetings
In memory of Mount Olympus members
May Akiyama, Ken and Dawn Nodzu
Akiyama, Guzman, Higashi, Misaka, Nodzu, Okawa and Watanabe Families

Mt Olympus
By Marsha Aizumi

Brene Brown, best-selling author and researcher, says that we are wired for connection. And Dr. Vivek Murthy, the 19th and 21st surgeon general of the U.S., talks about the importance of human connection in his recent book, “Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World.” In his book, Dr. Murthy explains, “While loneliness engenders despair and ever more isolation, togetherness raises optimism and creativity. When people feel they belong to one another, their lives are stronger, richer and more joyful.” I think the past two-and-a-half years have shown us what isolation and loneliness can do to our world.

Brown shares her thoughts about loneliness: “Loneliness kills people. It is a huge predictor of mental health, physical health and early death.” And so, being together again and meeting with family and friends lifts up our mental health, physical health and longevity.

But even when we are with people, we can feel lonely, isolated or afraid, especially for those in the LGBTQ+ community. I know the idea of being able to gather for the holidays is something many of us have missed the past two seasons.

However, I also know that many LGBTQ+ individuals are dreading the idea that they have to be with family, watching what they say, how they dress or act, enduring the constant barrage of questions about why they do not have a girlfriend or boyfriend or are not married. I know I have done this in the past, but I wasn’t aware of how this made LGBTQ+ individuals feel who were not out to everyone. Today, I am much wiser.

After Aiden transitioned to be his true self, the one comment I often heard, especially from family members, was how different he was. Previously, he was a quiet, withdrawn person; family members, was how different he was.

If your LGBTQ+ friend or family member is nervous about the holidays, you can be their Go-To Ally. Being available to them to talk through concerns and feel support can be helpful. Please listen to your LGBTQ+ loved ones. Don’t comment or try to explain away their anxiety. When Aiden was coming out to the family, I thought everyone would be accepting, but he said you never know. We made a plan to leave the gathering if he felt judged or rejected. Thankfully, that did not happen.

- LGBTQ+ individuals need to keep healthy boundaries, so if things are not comfortable for them, please support them if they need to leave early.

When I looked up the synonyms for “together,” these are some of the words I found: calm, cool, wise, in sync, in harmony, adaptable, united, all together.

I also discovered that there was a large number of synonyms. One site listed over 100! But in the end, if a person was all together, there was a sense of this individual being calm, cool, wise and well-balanced.

And if a group was together, they were in harmony, in sync, united and adaptable.

So, my hope for this holiday season is that we gather as individuals who bring a sense of peace, fun and relaxation and for the group as a whole be patiently flexible with each other, in harmony, united in love, acceptance and openness.

The holidays for me are so important. Being together and celebrating with family traditions and making new ones is a memory that I carry throughout the year.

Aiden and Mary know I love paper, so every year, I get a new journal. From the kids, Papa gets a photo mug, which he has over 20 years of precious memories watching the kids grow up. And last year, we started a new tradition in which each of our children picks five ornaments off our Christmas tree to decorate their tree in the home they are building and life they are creating for their own families.

It is so fun to have them gathered around the tree eyeing which ornaments they will take to add to their collection at home. I am proud of how they are respectful of each other, asking, “Does anyone want this ornament?” Or how I love to see that the ornaments they take are not always the most beautiful and expensive, but have deep meaning, like simple ornaments made in elementary school.

May these holidays be a blessing, a warmth and a gift that you carry in your heart the whole year through. And may the word “together” take on a new meaning, as we truly understand how important being with others, sharing with others and giving to others can be.

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

JACL’s National Youth/Student Council is comprised of students and young professional leaders who represent their peers on the district and national levels of JACL. Together, it supports and empowers young leaders to create positive changes in their schools, workplaces and communities. They are the voices making a difference for our today and tomorrow.

As 2022 continued to see many challenges, there are glimmers of hope as we welcome in 2023. Being able to once again hold in-person retreats and meetings, in addition to welcoming new faces and allies, did much to bolster the NY/SC’s ability to build upon community and set its sights on achieving many goals, including its new upcoming “Back to School” campaign.

NY/SC’s new executive board reflected upon what it is most looking forward to accomplishing in 2023.

Sheera Tamura, National Youth Representative

“As I complete my fourth and final year on the JACL NY/SC, I would be remiss in failing to recognize the diverse array of projects that our executive board was able to accomplish throughout this past year. From successfully executing two in-person retreats to onboarding a predominantly new youth board, the success of the NY/SC has been nothing short of transformational.

“Throughout this next year, I am ecstatic to launch a brand-new ‘Back to School’ campaign that will allow our youth representatives to connect with Japanese student groups of all ages. I am very humbled and ecstatic for the year we have ahead, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work in community with a team of innovative young leaders.”

Sheera Tamura (she/her) was elected National Youth Representative at the JACL National Convention in August. A recent graduate of Seattle University in social work, Tamura is pursuing a master’s degree in social work at the University of Washington. A fourth-generation Japanese and Chinese American, she has worked with refugee high school students and English-learning immigrants. She is committed to intersectional activism and advocacy.

Mika Chan, National Youth Chair

“Throughout the fall quarter, the NY/SC has worked diligently to create programming that will increase engagement among the JACL’s youth membership base while also highlighting our mission to support and uplift the community.

“With initiatives such as our ‘Back to School’ campaign, district youth summits and Day of Remembrance events, I’m excited for our work come to fruition and see how we can strengthen and forge new and existing relationships with youth members.

“The NY/SC has been shown so much support and encouragement from the community, so I’m hopeful we can further amplify the JACL as an organization, its youth constituents and the greater Japanese American and AAPI community.”

Mika Chan (she/her) was elected National Youth Chair at the JACL National Convention in August. As a fourth-generation Japanese and Chinese American who grew up in San Francisco Japantown, Chan is passionate about sustaining Japanese American communities. She currently works as an account representative at Amazon in its Seattle office and serves as co-chair of Tsuru for Solidarity’s Education and Policy Advocacy committee.

Lana Kobayashi, PSW Youth Representative

“As the newly appointed PSW youth representative, I look forward to expanding the youth membership and creating personal connections with the youth members of my district. Through outreach programs to college and high school students, to establishing a youth district board, I hope to promote our JA culture while preserving our history. I am lucky to be surrounded by a group of supportive, like-minded peers, and I cannot wait to see what we all accomplish in 2023!”

Lana Kobayashi (she/her), a Shin-Nisei, also serves as the San Fernando Valley youth representative. She has interned for the Japanese American Bar Assn. and the Japanese American National Museum. A public affairs major at the University of California, Los Angeles, Kobayashi discovered her passion for social justice after taking Asian American Studies classes.
Lyra Paez, CCDC Youth Representative

“In 2023, I am most looking forward to furthering connections with the youth. After experiencing the Fall Retreat alongside other members of the NY/SC, I realized how empowering it is to be among like-minded individuals who are each passionate about preserving the connection between the JA community and culture. Through youth summits and our new ‘Back to School’ campaign, I’m excited to do my part in creating more opportunities for youth connection and community involvement.”

Born in Sapporo, Japan, Lyra Paez (she/her) is a Nisei raised in the Central Valley and studies at the College of the Sequoias. As part of the Central Valley Japanese School, she volunteered at local Obon festivals and joined the JACL Tulare chapter. A first-time youth representative, she is excited to serve the Japanese American community in California’s Central Valley.

Ayako Tischler, MDC Youth Representative

“In fall of 2022, NY/SC had the wonderful opportunity to meet each other in San Francisco and share our interests, communities and plans that we hope to amplify over the coming years together. In 2023, I am most looking forward to taking these ideas and excitement and translating them into opportunities to connect with youth across our districts. The NY/SC is fortunate to have the resources and the collective energy to create programming unique to our members. I can’t wait to see what we accomplish together!”

A Shin-Nisei raised in the Midwest, Ayako Tischler (she/her) became involved in the Tadaima Virtual Community Pilgrimage. With a degree in environmental studies and economics from the University of Michigan, she currently works in environmental consulting and advocates for communities experiencing environmental injustice.

Cameron Sueoka, IDC Youth Representative

“In 2023, I am looking forward to furthering my connections with the youth in the Japanese American community. I had an amazing time in San Francisco meeting my new friends and peers. I am hoping to use what I learned there to help me achieve my goals of motivating the youth in my community to be engaged and active in the JACL community. One area I really want to focus on is bringing awareness to the Topaz Museum to keep the story alive. I’m looking forward to another great year and our next retreat!”

Cameron Sueoka (he/him) serves as youth representative of the JACL Salt Lake chapter. A senior at the University of Utah majoring in finance, Sueoka is the co-founder of the Asian American Collegiate Alliance, which is dedicated to bringing together Asian American students throughout the state. He also plays taiko drums for the Salt Lake and Ogden Buddhist churches.

KC Mukai, NCWNP Youth Representative

“Although I was sad to see the members of the last NY/SC board step off, I am more than thrilled to be working with the amazing group of individuals in this next cohort of JACL youth leaders. Rare is it to find a group of highly motivated youth dedicated to their community from across the United States, and it’s an honor to be able to learn and grow with them.

“I am looking forward to an ambitious year of programming alongside the amazing individuals on the NCWNP District Youth Board: Bruce Arag, Halle Sousa, Cecelia Shimizu, Jackson Sousa and Emily Yoshii. Some of our upcoming programs include our ‘Advocacy 101’ workshop in collaboration with Tsuru for Solidarity’s Education & Advocacy Committee, an Intergenerational Potluck in San Francisco Japantown, our district’s annual gala in April, a light fundraiser and so much more! I am so grateful for the members of NY/SC and DYB for their work and support, and I am so excited for what is to come!”

Yonsei KC Mukai (she/her) is a third-generation JACLer originally from the Central Valley. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2021 and currently works on campus as a development associate. A past participant in the Nikkei Community Internship, Mukai is active in the JACL Berkeley chapter and Tsuru for Solidarity.

Sarah Remy Kageyama, IDC Youth Representative

“As a new youth rep, I am honored to be able to represent the Eastern District Council on JACL’s NY/SC, and I look forward to work-
Can you name the number of living professors in the field of Asian American Studies with more than 50 years of full-time employment? Whether you needed just one hand or possibly two, a name that must be on the list is that of Dennis Masaaki Ogawa, Ph.D., professor of intercultural communication, part of the University of Hawaii at Manoa’s American Studies Department. After 53 years, his storied career came to an end when he resigned on Sept. 1.

Or did it?

On Sept. 25, Ogawa, 79, received a letter from UHM President David Lassner letting him know that the university had conferred upon him the title of professor emeritus “...in recognition of the dedicated and honorable service you have rendered.”

The letter continued: “On behalf of the Board of Regents and members of the UHM, I join them in applauding you and thanking you for your distinguished service. Your contributions to your discipline and to UHM have enriched the lives of your students, fellow faculty members and helped to build the reputation of UHM as a world-class university.”

Lassner added: “While you may have retired from active service to UHM, you continue to be one of UHM’s potentially most valuable resources, for you possess the wisdom and experience from your many years of service. I hope that when asked, you will serve on special task forces, panels, projects and committees that support and sustain our campus. With your continued support and active engagement, we can continue to help UHM become an even greater university that can better serve the needs of the State, its students, faculty and staff.”

“On behalf of the University of Hawaii and the communities we serve, we greatly appreciate your dedicated efforts and exceptional contributions. Please accept the title of Professor Emeritus with our deepest gratitude.”

Asked if it was a paying gig, Ogawa laughed loudly and said, “You asked the right question!” While he didn’t offer an answer, the letter did note that he will continue to receive “electronic mail, library and parking privileges.”

Since retirement doesn’t mean an end to activity — more on this further in the article, but Ogawa has yet another book in the works, naturally — those privileges may prove useful.

Still in the process of clearing out his old office space (which he inherited from the late Stuart Gerry Brown, who had served as a presidential campaign adviser for both Robert Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson), he had this to say about his career trajectory: “I was very, very lucky that American Studies was established at the University of Hawaii.

“They had great professors, and I had helped create the Ethnic Studies program at the University of Hawaii, but that’s a process that’s step-by-step. So, when I resigned as the director of Ethnic Studies, American Studies wanted me to join them. And I felt really blessed to be with the professors there because it’s interdisciplinary.

“Luck or hard work or some of both, Ogawa’s reputation of UHM as a world-class university.”

Dennis Ogawa grins amidst several leis during the 2016 ceremony at which he received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon medal.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA

Consul General Yasushi Misawa of Japan (left) helps UHM Professor Dennis Ogawa display the certificate that accompanied the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon medal he received in 2016 for his “contribution to the development of Japanese studies in the United States of America and promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.”

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA

UHM’s Dennis Ogawa Honored With Professor Emeritus Status

Despite his Sept. 1 resignation, University of Hawaii at Manoa Regents can’t let him go.

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor
Brian Niiya, Densho’s content director and editor of the Densho Encyclopedia, has known Ogawa for years when Niiya worked at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, of which he said Ogawa was “a huge supporter.”

Niiya credits Ogawa for saving the photo archive of the Nippu Jiji, a Hawaii-based Japanese community newspaper that shuttered in the 1980s. Because of the era in which it existed, it’s a trove of reporting on Hawaii’s Issei community.

“According to legend, Dennis actually literally pulled the photos out of a dumpster as they were shutting down,” said Niiya, adding that the collection, now housed at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, had work performed by several different entities — JCCCH, Densho, Japan’s National Museum of Japanese History — to preserve and digitize the collection. As Niiya put it, if Ogawa “hadn’t stepped in and literally saved them, they’d be gone.”

“He had the foresight to recognize, ‘Hey, you know — there’s some significance to these, we should probably try to preserve them.’ That’s very significant. . . . The important thing is, it’s been preserved, it’s accessible for future generations.”

The preceding anecdote makes complete sense because, as Ogawa tells it, one of his priorities has been to preserve the stories of the Issei.

“A lot of the work I did and the research and the courses I taught, when all is said and done, I was devoted to the founding Issei generation because they’re the ancestral anchors,” Ogawa said. “It was because of their vision that there are now Japanese Americans.”

Ogawa says that he’s been accused of being “corny” for his perspective, especially when compared with issues like “the injustice of systemic racism.” Ogawa says he knows those other issues are important and he is, of course, supportive of studying them — but, he adds, “there’s a lot more.”

Another of Ogawa’s areas of output over the years has been the many books he has written and co-written. Again, he says he is guilty as charged for those book titles, which he says he has (again) been criticized for as being “corny” or “goofy.” “Who You? Hawaii Issei,” “Jan Ken Po: The World of Hawaii’s Japanese Americans,” “California Hotel and Casino: Hawaii’s Home Away from Home,” “Ellison S. Onizuka: A Remembrance” and “An Unlikely Revolutionary: Matsuo Takabuki and the Making of Modern Hawaii” were among Ogawa’s titles.

For Ogawa, this mythical No. 1 Sansei was the late Jan Inouye, who was among the astronauts killed in the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger disaster.

“The one who I would like to thank in every session I’ve taught about him is the late Jan Inouye,” Ogawa said. “He had the foresight to recognize, ‘Hey, you know, we need to work, we might as well learn to be entrepreneurs, we might as well learn to be entrepreneurs, we might as well learn to be entrepreneurs.’ Ogawa said. “You’ve got to have the guts, you’ve got to be able to know how you deal with your money. And I was lucky, I had a better education than Stanford or any of these other kinds of business schools and all that because I was mentored by Matsuo Takabuki. Takabuki is the genius of all time.” (Now you might really want to read Ogawa’s book on Takabuki.)

One thing to keep in mind regarding Ogawa’s retirement is that because of his more than five decades as a university professor, his own impact on Hawaii is remarkable.

“He’s had an enormous impact as a teacher,” Niiya believes, “because he’s been teaching this class over 50 years. It’s a big class, a couple hundred people, and if you just do the math, you realize he’s taught thousands, like tens of thousands of students, including members of the state legislature, people who are in all these leadership positions in Hawaii. In this way, I think he’s had an enormous influence. He talks about not just having the children of old students showing up in his classes, but their grandchildren and grandchildren because Hawaii is the way it is, it’s people with real power in running the state, whether in the legislature and the governor’s office and corporate offices and the legal sphere — half of them have taken his class.”

From that perspective, it’s no wonder that the buyouts at UHM were interesting in keeping Ogawa tethered to the university in some capacity after his retirement. And that aforementioned book Ogawa will begin working on soon? Like some of his other titles, this one, too, might be considered corny — as if he cares. But it’s fitting because he wants to call it “Omakase,” as in a multicourse dinner menu chosen by a restaurant’s master chef.

It remains to be seen what Ogawa will be serving up as “Omakase.” He wants it to be different. He wants to tell stories and impart hard-won knowledge and wisdom. It’ll be his choice of what he thinks the audience wants and needs, even if they don’t know.

Hopefully, the book will contain some of the stories he told that didn’t make it into this article, like interacting with legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden or being a teacher to a young Naruhito, now the emperor of Japan, interacting with fellow UCLA students such as Olympian Rener Johnson, Walt Hazzard or tennis superstar Arthur Ashe or how, when he dropped out of ROTC at UCLA and then decided to enlist in the Army to serve in Vietnam — and was turned away when asked if he had been incarcerated in Manzanar.

Were it not for that incident, Ogawa might have never gone on to write those books, found NGN or teach for 53 years.

If, as Ogawa says, he’s been lucky, then so be it — and thank goodness. His luck has been everyone else’s good fortune.
Confinement Site Memorials of Remembrance and Repair

Eighty years after the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, communities unite in collective efforts to remember and honor generations.

By Nancy Ukai, Contributor

The desire to give permanent form to memory — in stone, cement, words — began as soon as the camps opened during World War II, following the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942.

The earliest memorials were gravestones. “Infant Masaki” was inscribed on a cement headstone in 1942 at the Rohwer cemetery in Arkansas.

The iconic Manzanar obelisk in eastern California, a monument of resistance and resilience, was built by prisoners in the camp cemetery in August 1943.

At Topaz, in Utah, Issei immigrants erected an unauthorized stone memorial to mark the spot where James Wakasa was murdered by a military guard. Officials ordered its destruction, but the wily builders buried it.

After the camps closed — the last site, Crystal City, Texas, shut down in 1948 — survivors began rebuilding their lives. The construction of memorials went quiet.

The locations of the camps, intentionally built in remote places, were barely known, easing the erasure of history. How can you build a memorial at a concentration camp if you don’t know its location?

Activism in the 1960s led to greater interest in the incarceration history, and pilgrimages to Manzanar in 1969 and Tule Lake in 1974 marked in the incarceration history, and pilgrimages to know its location?

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Memorials Opening in 2022

A bronze statue of Miyuki and Hiroko Mochida, two young girls tagged before their intake to Tanforan, was dedicated on Aug. 27 outside the Bay Area Rapid Transit station. This is the site of the former racetrack that served as a detention camp from April-October 1942. The Dorothea Lange photograph of the Mochida children is universally recognized as a symbol of the wartime incarceration, but nowhere is the image more meaningfully expressed than at Tanforan, their first place of imprisonment.

The 10-year-long project was led by Doug Yamamoto (Contra Costa JACL), Steve Okamoto (San Mateo JACL) and the Tanforan Assembly Center Memorial Committee. More than 750 people attended the opening, including 50 original survivors, according to Yamamoto.

The memorial includes a panel of the 7,984 names of incarcerees, a replica horse stall, an Akebono cherry tree and granite donor pavement bricks. A permanent installation of photos and panels by Paul Kitagaki Jr. and artist Na Omi Shintani is in the BART station.

Rededication of Arboga Memorial, Yuba City, Calif.

Silhouettes of three barracks welded in metal, accompanied by large photographic portraits of four incarcerees, were rededicated on Oct. 22. The collaborative project was led by the Marysville JACL, designed by Stuart Gilchrist, an artist and Marysville City Council member who grew up near the site, and supported by Yuba-Sutter Arts and Culture.

Memorials Opening in 2023

Puyallup Assembly Center Memorial Remembrance Gallery, Puyallup, Wash.

The Puyallup Valley JACL chapter is spearheading a project to create an extensive remembrance gallery at the historic fairgrounds, which were used as a detention camp that officials in 1942 called “Camp Harmony.” Plans include a panel that lists the names of the 7,603 incarcerees and a replica of a barrack and a horse stall that will be located beneath the grandstands.

“This is not just Puyallup, this represents the other assembly centers and WRA camps,” said Eileen Yamada-Lamphere, chapter president. “Just 20 miles from the Puyallup fairgrounds, we have the Northwest Detention Center, where immigrant families are locked up in camps. We have the moral imperative to say, ‘Stop, you are not going to do this again.’”

The target date for the remembrance gallery opening is spring 2024. Donations may be sent to the JACL through the chapter website at https://puyallup-valley-jacl.square.site.
Snow County Prison, Bismarck, North Dakota, Internment Camp Memorial

Between 1941-46, some 4,000 prisoners of Japanese, German and Italian descent were confined at the Fort Lincoln Department of Justice camp in Bismarck, N.D.

Two prisoner groups of Japanese descent were incarcerated there. The first group of 1,100 Issei community leaders arrived from the West Coast in February 1942, and the second group of 750 young men were transferred from Tule Lake, targeted for deportation because of their defiant answers to a loyalty questionnaire, in February 1945.

An undulating outdoor memorial wall is planned for the United Tribes Technical College campus, which was built on the site that is within the ancestral homeland of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Ari-kara People, later Dakota and Lakota. The memorial project is named after a haiku written by Itaru Ina of San Francisco while he was imprisoned at the camp. “The intersecting injustice of genocide, unjust incarceration and cultural erasure of Native Americans has … been underacknowledged,” writes MASS, the social-justice architectural firm designing the memorial. “Former prisoners must grapple both with the legacies of unjust incarceration as well as their theft of native land for these purposes.”

Tulare Memorial, Tulare Fairgrounds, California

Students at Mission Oak High School in Tulare, Calif., were so surprised and disturbed to learn about the role that their city played in the wartime incarceration of 125,000 Japanese Americans that they decided to memorialize the Tulare detention camp at the city fairgrounds, which had no historical marker. They received approval from the Tulare County Fair Board in April and hope to install a bronze monument within the next two years.

At a community meeting in June attended by 150 people, Tulare native Alice Ichinaga Nanamura, 90, said she was glad that the students are engaged. “I’m the only one here in Tulare who is alive — everyone else is gone,” she said in a KVPR news report. And high school teacher Michael Paul Mendoza, whose cultural history class inspired the students, said: “We don’t just learn history, we make history.”

Campaign for Signage

Sharp Park Memorial Interpretive Signage, San Mateo County, Calif.

The former Sharp Park internment camp for 193 Issei community leaders is now the quiet, verdant home of the San Francisco Archery Club, which is located in a canyon owned by the city’s Recreation and Parks Department. If a campaign underway to install historical signage succeeds, the city will acknowledge the little-known detention center that held incarcerated Japanese Americans, Japanese Latin Americans and other prisoners during WWII.

Informational meetings on the potential content and design of a historical plaque will begin in 2023, according to Diane Matsuda, president of the city’s Historic Preservation Commission.

In September, the SF Board of Supervisors and SF Historic Preservation Commission unanimously adopted resolutions calling on the Recreation and Parks Department to develop signage, a proposal supported by the SF JACL.


In Los Angeles, Amache survivor Min Tonal places a hanko stamp next to a family member’s name in the ireicho. PHOTOS: TRACY KUMONO


In-depth

In Los Angeles, Amache survivor Min Tonal places a hanko stamp next to a family member’s name in the ireicho. PHOTOS: TRACY KUMONO

In Los Angeles, Amache survivor Min Tonal places a hanko stamp next to a family member’s name in the ireicho. PHOTOS: TRACY KUMONO

The “book to console” was dedicated at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo in September, led by Rev. Duncan Ryaken Williams, a professor at the University of Southern California who received a Mellon Grant to lead the path-breaking project that will include a digital component and light sculptures to be installed at camp interpretive centers.

Descendants are invited to place a hanko stamp next to the name of family members and ancestors while the Ireicho is at the museum. Future venues are being discussed.

Progress on the Wakasas Monument

The top of the long-buried Wakasa Monument was rediscovered by archaeologists in 2020. In 2021, the 1,000-pound stone was unearthed by the Topaz Museum Board using construction machinery. Five meetings to discuss the protection of the artifact and site have been held since September by the Utah State Historical Preservation Office with participation by members of the Topaz board, the Wakasa Memorial Committee, the National Park Service and Utah State Sen. Jani Iwamoto.

The working group is currently discussing how to protect the 1,000-pound stone and the memorial site in advance of the 80th anniversary of James Hatsuaki Wakasa’s military homicide in 2023.
thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you

THANK YOU!

Albert Eddow
Beverly Mikuriya
Beverly Quan &
Jack Sakaguchi

Carl M. Asakawa
Carol Fujita - Kinu Shishido
Chip & Setsyu Larouche
Chris & Kenny Lauer
Christine Chen
Emiko Kawamoto
Endow-Hatanaka Family
Floyd & Ruth Shimomura
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Hiroaki Komori
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Tieko Moriya
Tom Uriu
Toshiko Sakamoto
Toshio Nakanishi
Yoshiko Tsuzuki
Yoshiyuki Kawazoe
Veterans,
when you’re struggling,
soon becomes
later becomes
someday becomes
...when?

Don’t wait. Reach out.
Whatever you’re going through,
you don’t have to do it alone.
Find resources at VA.GOV/REACH
After a decade-plus of Japanese American and Pan Asian American community work, I recently took a position at Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia in the summer of 2021. JASGP is a nonprofit organization that seeks to inspire mutual curiosity, understanding and collaboration between Japan and the Greater Philadelphia region through citizen diplomacy.

We operate Shofuso Japanese House and Garden, produce the Philadelphia Cherry Blossom Festival and provide Japanese arts, cultural and educational programming for all ages.

The past year and a half working for JASGP has reminded me why I got into this field in the first place, and I would like to share why I think more Japanese Americans should become involved in these kinds of efforts.

Whether through circumstance or intentional design, the Japanese American community has historically been excluded from most official diplomatic channels related to U.S.-Japan relations. Yet, it is our community who suffers the most when these relations sour.

The wartime incarceration is an obvious example, but even in my own childhood amid the U.S.-Japan trade war of the late 1980s and early ‘90s, I recall an extreme amount of prejudice targeted at me and my family living just over an hour’s drive outside of New York City.

Anti-Asian hate crimes have been on the rise nationwide throughout the past three years, and closer to home, Shofuso, our only Japanese structure in the city of Philadelphia, was vandalized in June 2022.

In light of these more recent events, I feel there is a certain immediacy in the need to be involved in work that continues to strengthen the relationship between our two countries. While this is not a singular solution, strengthening the U.S.-Japan relationship is one means of safeguarding our Japanese American community from further instances of violence.

This can be done effectively on the local level by engaging in cultural and educational programming that demystifies Japan, its culture and its people. In one of my work projects related to the history of Shofuso, I found compelling evidence that suggests the Nisei leaders who resettled in Philadelphia after the wartime incarceration engaged with Shofuso and other Japanese cultural programs for this express purpose.

Considering that the same Nisei led both the Friends of the Japanese House and Garden and JACL Philadelphia chapter, the Japanese American community’s involvement in Japanese cultural spaces seems to have had a deliberate goal of building empathy among the Philadelphia population at-large, particularly amid the Redress movement era.

The Nisei were uniquely qualified to do this sort of work because of the Japanese culture that their Issei parents imparted on them. I would argue however, that even for Sansei, Yonsei and later generations who did not have the benefit of a bilingual/bicultural upbringing, we can and should engage in work that embraces our Japanese cultural heritage and share it with others.

It can seem daunting to even know where to begin. The good news is that there are more ways than ever before to plug into cultural and language learning programs from the comfort of our own homes.

In my case, I began my journey back to Japan about 17 years ago when my Issei Hibaachan died. Hibaachan was our matriarch, the last surviving Issei in our extended family unit and our only direct link to Japan.

When Hibaachan died, I began to question whether I was still Japanese without her presence in my life. It took two years for my plans to materialize, but in the summer of 2008, I moved to Kyoto and began a Japanese-language-intensive program at Kyoto University of the Arts.

There, I learned enough conversational Japanese to navigate daily life in Japan, as I spent the next semester living in Tokyo studying at Temple University Japan Campus. After that experience, I decided to pursue a graduate degree in Japan Studies and had the opportunity to live in Kyoto again during the summer of 2010 while conducting research for my master’s thesis.

When I decided to live in Japan and learn Japanese, I was trying to prove to myself that despite being mixed race and not having grown up speaking the language, I was Japanese enough to have a relationship to my ancestral culture.

As a result of my time in Japan, I finally felt able to identify as a Japanese American, as I gained the perspective to identify the many elements of my upbringing that were both Japanese and Japanese American. It took living in Japanese society for me to discern the nuance between these two, sometimes contradictory, cultural influences.

In a sort of backwards way, I would not have found the community I was seeking unless I had first made contact with my identity as a Japanese American by traveling to Japan. Similarly, it was my work in the Japanese American community that allowed me to be hired into my current position at JASGP, which involves engaging the multigenerational Japanese American community in our daily activities at Shofuso.

Reconnecting to Japan has brought incredible joy and fulfillment to my life, and now that I am working in the field of U.S.-Japan relations, my closeness to Japan has begun to shape this current phase of my career in new and exciting ways.

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impact of institutional white supremacy and internalized racism that accompanies the intergenerational trauma preventing many incarceration descendants from pursuing an education in Japanese language or culture. These are very real challenges that our community continues to grapple with on a daily basis as Japanese Americans navigate our conditional acceptance within mainstream America.

I also acknowledge that my experience is specific to me as a mixed-race white-passing Yonsei who benefits from immense privilege in even being able to study in Japan in the first place. However, I share my story to suggest that many within our community may also be grappling with the fear of being perceived as “not enough,” and I would like to encourage others to push through that and find your own way to enjoy a meaningful connection with contemporary Japan.

I recently had the opportunity to represent JASGP at the international symposium organized by the America-Japan Society of Kyoto, which was my first work-related engagement in Japan, aside from chaperoning a couple of school trips. In many ways, this was a homecoming of sorts, since Kyoto was the city where I first lived in Japan. This was my first visit to Kyoto since 2016, though I had the opportunity to chaperone the Kakehashi Program in 2019 just before the pandemic began. Returning to Japan was a cathartic experience that allowed me to shed a lot of the pandemic stress that I had been carrying around with me and reinvigorated my interest in working to bring our countries and people closer together.

Visiting Japan at my current age brought up a lot of new feelings, especially now that I am a father. I feel content knowing I have made it through that and find your own way to enjoy a meaningful connection with contemporary Japan. In this sense, I find the Japanese concept of kaizen, or continual refinement, to be particularly apt in describing my own relationship to Japan. The more that I learn, the more I realize there is left to discover. Likewise, I would also use kaizen as a metaphor to describe what the ideal U.S.-Japan relationship should look like. In terms of the bilateral relationship, our two nations have never been closer than they are today. However, to think that this means no attention is needed to build or strengthen this relationship would prove a critical oversight.

Compared to the bubble economy years, American students are less interested in studying or working in Japan. Japanese immigration policy is largely to blame for this, as it is notoriously difficult to get a permanent visa to live and work in Japan as a noncitizen, so many college students forgo it as a realistic possibility for post-graduate employment.

From the Japanese perspective, there are also fewer reasons to go abroad when the aging population of Japan has resulted in an unprecedented number of job openings in their own domestic economy. Considering how safe Japan is compared to the U.S., risk-adverse Japanese citizens may be further deterred from venturing overseas amid the rise in anti-Asian violence. There is also the matter of the isolationist mentality that has developed in reaction to the Covid lockdowns, which is a factor in both Japan and the U.S.

While Japanese Americans may not be able to address these core challenges directly, our involvement in grassroots cultural exchange programs and other citizen diplomacy efforts may help on both sides as a presence that both Japanese and Americans can relate to.

Now that the travel restrictions have been lifted to allow easier entry into Japan, the Kyoto Symposium was the first opportunity for the U.S.-based Japan America Societies and Japan-based America-Japan Societies to hold a joint meeting since the Covid pandemic began.

While it was interesting to learn how our peer organizations are engaging in this work, my favorite parts were the many casual conversations between sessions with Japanese colleagues as we argued about baseball and swapped travel stories in each other’s countries.

After the joint meeting concluded, our delegation participated in a daylong summit with policy experts and diplomatic officials weighing in on issues related to security in the Indo-Pacific region, challenges and opportunities in bilateral relations during the Covid pandemic and best practices for strengthening U.S.-Japan relations on a local level.

One of the speakers made an analogy that I thought to be quite profound. Although U.S.-Japan relations are the best they have ever been, like a garden, the relationship needs regular tending to ensure its continued prosperity. At risk of stumbling into an Issei garden trope, I wonder who better than the Japanese American community to entrust this great responsibility?

Becoming a member of your local Japan America Society or participating in some of their cultural exchange programs is a good first step to getting involved in citizen diplomacy. For individuals already involved in this work looking to take their engagement to the next level, consider joining the U.S.-Japan Council, a membership organization founded by Japanese Americans and focused on amplifying our voices within the field of U.S.-Japan relations.

JACL is also doing great work to effect this in our continued partnership with the Embassy of Japan on the Kakehashi Project that brings youth ages 18-25 to Japan for short-term homestays. Another homestay program open to participants of all ages is the Japan America Grassroots Summit, organized by the Center for International Exchange.

With so many resources available, it is easier than ever before to get involved in U.S.-Japan relations. It is deeply satisfying to do this work, and I encourage others within our Japanese American community to seriously consider how they might become more involved in strengthening and maintaining this critical relationship over generations to come.
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Dear Members & Readers:

As we navigate this ever-changing world, nothing brings us more comfort than being Together Again.

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Happy Holidays and Best Wishes in the New Year!
A.

s I reflect on this past year, all I can say is that it’s been a year. I am grateful, however, for the return of family gatherings and in-person activities. The holiday season is well underway, and I was happy to attend the JACL Washington, D.C. chapter’s annual mochitsuki event in person!

Mochitsuki is a tradition for our chapter and many Japanese American families, where we come together to pound rice to make mochi. We always have delicious food, including homemade mochi, a traditional Japanese New Year’s dish. And we had the return of the JBE Band! The band is comprised of musicians who work at the Department of Business, a partnership of corporations who are members of the Japan Commerce Association of Washington, D.C. I am so glad they were able to join us once again.

Mochitsuki was a great opportunity to catch up with friends and make new ones — what a way to close out 2022.

With all the busyness the holiday season brings, I want to take this opportunity to talk about the Global Council on Brain Health and brain healthy habits. The GCBH is an independent organization, convened by AARP, to provide trusted information on how all of us can maintain and improve our brain health.

Clear and dependable recommendations generated by GCBH are based on current scientific evidence provided by scientists, doctors, scholars and policy experts from around the world.

The GCBH is led by my colleague, Sarah Lenz Lock, JD, senior vp for policy and brain health. Sarah’s team is supported by researchers, representatives of the Brain Health Institute, which is the part of the organization I work in. The council has developed the Six Pillars of Brain Health, which include:

• Be Social — Keep in touch with friends and family, and don’t let yourself get isolated.
• Engage Your Brain — Find ways to stimulate your thinking, explore new interests and hobbies.
• Manage Stress — Practice relaxation, adopt a stable daily schedule.
• Ongoing Exercise — Move throughout the day and target two-and-a-half hours a week of moderate physical activity.
• Eat Right — Fill your plate with mostly fruits, veggies, fish, whole grains and legumes.
• Restorative Sleep — Get seven to eight hours of restful sleep every day.
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I hope everyone stays healthy and safe this holiday season, and I wish you all the best for the New Year!

Scott Tanaka is a member of the JACL Washington, D.C., chapter and is a policy, research and international affairs adviser at AARP.

TOGETHER AGAIN — COMFORTING THE TERMINALLY ILL

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Together Again” is a song written by Janet Jackson, singer, songwriter, actress and dancer, to a friend who had recently died of AIDS, as well as AIDS victims and their families worldwide, as stated in the liner notes of “The Velvet Rope” (1997). “I wanted to do a song that was uplifting, rejoiced,” said Jackson, “I do believe that life doesn’t end here. That they’ve gone into another life. And that I will see them again.”

If you are caring for someone you love at the end of his or her life, talking with him or her about the future, including death, is important, albeit difficult. Accepting death requires tremendous strength. Yet, the experts say that most people who are confronting death find comfort in sharing concerns and having an opportunity to prepare for the tough decisions that they might face in the future.

Although painful in so many ways, a serious illness offers time to say, “I love you,” to share your appreciation and make amends. When death occurs unexpectedly, survivors often regret not having had a chance to do these things. Dr. Ira Byock, author of “Dying Well,” suggests that people with serious illness and their families have conversations with each other that include four statements: “I love you,” “I forgive you,” “Forgive me” and “Thank you.”

These early conversations, difficult as they are, will help you both to face harder times, when they come. Raising these issues can help in multiple ways. For most people, “unspeakable” issues are the most frightening, and beliefs about how to live a good life — and my answer is always a resounding YES” — and my answer is always a resounding YES” (source: “The Heaven Answer Book” by Billy Graham).

But it is important to point out that Graham wasn’t talking about being a reincarnated being. How would you recognize your loved ones? According to Graham, the Bible clearly indicates that our identities will remain unchanged. “This is why it’s so important for us to tell our loved ones what we believe about Christ. Nothing is more wonderful than for our families to share in this great hope of being part of the heavenly family.”

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or judd@elderlawcenter.com. Opinions expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.
Hershey Miyamura Dies at 97

The pride of Gallup, N.M., won the Medal of Honor.

By P.C. Staff

Meditation of Honor recipient Hiroshi Miyamura, born and raised in Gallup, N.M., and better known by his sobriquet “Hershey,” died early Nov. 29 in Phoenix, where he had been living with his wife, Katherine Hildahl. The World War II and Korean War veteran was 97.

By the time Miyamura had joined the Army, the United States had already ascended to the segregated and storied 422nd Regimental Combat Team, the war in the European Theater had begun to wind down. With Germany’s surrender by May, he avoided seeing combat. Five years later, however, when the United States became embroiled in the Korean War, Miyamura, who was in the Army Reserve, was recalled to active-duty status.

“He was greatly saddened to hear of his passing, as he was truly the best representative for the Japanese Americans during the Korean War,” said fellow Japanese American Korean War veteran Harumi “Bacon” Sakumura. “His bravery and dedication to his comrades was in the best tradition of the American way. His humbleness throughout his life showed what a great man he was.”

“The Japanese American Veterans Assn. is saddened to learn of the passing of Hiroshi ‘Hershey’ Miyamura,” said JAVA President Gerald Yamada, who noted that Miyamura served as the organization’s past president. “As a combat veteran of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during World War II and a Medal of Honor recipient for his valor during the Korean War, he is a role model for those who make military service their chosen career. His spirit and support will be missed.”

Ken Hayashi, a Vietnam War veteran and friend of Miyamura, told the Pacific Citizen, “If the government said we wanted to create a person to represent the Medal of Honor and the country, they couldn’t have done a better job than Hershey. He was just a humble, gracious man — and such a patriot. You just couldn’t ask for more in a person.”

For Mitchell Maki, CED and president of the Go For Broke National Education Center, Miyamura embodied America’s promise. “The son of immigrants and a veteran of WWII and the Korean War, he demonstrated that being an American is not a matter of the color of one’s skin, the nation of one’s ancestry or the faith one chooses to follow,” Maki said. “He is a living example of what GFBNEC stands for.”

“Being an American is about courage and service to others. Beyond Miyamura being a Medal of Honor recipient, he was a gentle soul with a keen sense of humor and a heart filled with compassion,” Miyamura High School Principal, Jerry Miyamura, said. “Hershey Miyamura was the fourth of seven children born to Yaichi and Tori (née Matsuoka) Miyamura, Issei who had emigrated from Japan and settled in New Mexico. His mother died when he was 11. As for his nickname, ‘Hershey,’ that was because an elementary school teacher couldn’t pronounce his first name, Hiroshi.

“We continue to fight for this country, for what any soldier or servicewoman or man does for his country. And I believe one of the things that we have to do is to let our young men and women know what the Medal represents or don’t know what the Medal represents or don’t know what the Medal represents or don’t know what the Medal represents or don’t know what the Medal represents or of the men and women have made for this country,” he said.

Miyamura died in Phoenix, Ariz., and was cremated in Gallup. In his honor, the Gallup City Commission agreed to call 2023 Miyamura Honorary Mayor Year and declared Oct. 27 a Miyamura Honorary Mayor Day.

Japanese American Veterans Association

PHOTO: JON KAJI

Hershey Miyamura and Sen. Daniel Inouye greet one another in this Pacific Citizen file photo.

PHOTO: LILLY FUKUI

Hershey Miyamura and Teri Miyamura

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MIYAMURA FAMILY

Hershey Miyamura statue with a flower wreath was taken during his funeral service in Gallup, N.M.

PHOTO: JON KAJI

Hershey Miyamura

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

PHOTO: LILLY FUKUI

This Dec. 10 photograph of the Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura statue in the Congressional Medal of Honor Society library, Miyamura reflected on the soldiers who deserved recognition but never received it.

“There are so many Americans who don’t know what the Medal represents or what any soldier or servicewoman or man does for his country. And I believe one of these days — I hope one of these days — they will learn of the sacrifices that a lot of the men and women have made for this country,” he said.

Miyamura remained active in veterans’ organizations until Annello convinced him to put him down. Annello was later picked up by another Chinese unit and taken to a POW camp, from which he escaped.

Miyamura was held as a prisoner for two years and four months. Upon his release, he weighed less than 120 pounds. After returning stateside, he

“The pride of Gallup, N.M., won the Medal of Honor.”
**OBITUARIES**

**NOTABLE 2022 LOSSES**

**WARREN MINAMI (83)** The Potomac, Md., resident died Jan. 9, 2022. He was a retired senior executive who worked with the International Monetary Fund. As a child, his family and he were incarcerated at the Gila River War Relocation Authority in Arizona during World War II.

Minami’s Asian American community involvement included serving on the board of governors of the Japanese American National Museum and as the chair of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation.

**JEFFREY L. YOSHOKA (63)** Yoshoka, who died Feb. 20, 2022, was the author of “The Man Who Didn’t Go to War” following a career accumulating from San Jose State University and helping found the Silicon Valley chapter in 2009.

He served as its president and treasurer, using his skills as a certified public accountant. He helped organize the annual Japanese American National Museum of California’s Silk Valley Basketball Tournament.

Among his other involvements, Yoshoka participated in the JACL Health Trust, National Japanese American Memorial Commission, API Force, the San Jose Peace Association, and the Japan Community Corporation, and he represented the chapter at Day of Remembrance and other community events. The JACL’s NCWNP district honored him with its Unsung Hero award.

**YURIKO KIKUCHI (102)** The dancer-choreographer died March 8 in New York City. She was born Yuriko Amemiya in San Jose, Calif. Her older brother, Kibi Nisei who furthered his dance training in Japan early in life, she returned to the U.S. in 1937.

During WWII, Kikuchi was incarcerated at the Gila River War Relocation Center. She went to New York City when she was released in 1943 after signing a loyalty oath, and in 1944 joined the Martha Graham Dance Co. and became known as an acolyte of the noted dancer and choreographer. Known professionally by her first name, she was said to be the first nonwhite dancer in Graham’s company. Kikuchi appeared in the 1956 film version of “The King and I.” In 2012, she was presented the Martha Hill Dance Fund Lifetime Achievement Award.

**JOHN KORTY (85)** The Oscar and Emmy-winning filmmaker died March 9 in Point Reyes Station, Calif. Korty, who was best known for directing the acclaimed 1976 documentary “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Addams,” passed away June 20. At 6, his mother, some of his brothers and he were

**Norman Yoshio Mineta (90)** The Edgewater, Md., resident died May 3. For much of his adult life, he was known as a barrier-breaking public servant, having served as mayor of San Jose, Calif., and, beginning in 1974, he would serve 10 terms as member of the House of Representatives for California’s Silicon Valley. During his service in Congress, Mineta was a member of the “Big 8” of Japanese American Congreess — Sens. Matsunaga and Inouye and Rep. Matsui — who helped shepherd the Japanese American Redress Act through both houses, culminating in 1988 and President Reagan’s signature.

As Commerce Department secretary under President Clinton, he simultaneously served as deputy secretary under President George W. Bush. Mineta became the Asian American Cabinet member, serving in Democratic and Republican administrations.

As a 10-year-old during WWII, Mineta accompanied his family when they were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain WRA Center in Wyoming. Returning to San Jose after the war, he went on to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley, with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. He served in the military, retiring as a rear admiral and was promoted to rear admiral and a fellow in residence at Stanford University.

Mineta’s career in politics came into play in 1967, when San Jose’s mayor tamped down on a vacant seat on the city council. He won re-election and served four more years on the council before winning the city’s first mayoral term in 1970. As mayor of San Jose, Mineta served three terms in office. He ran his father’s Mineta Insurance Agency.

After WWII ended, she moved to San Jose where she tamped down on a vacant seat on the city council. He won re-election and served four more years on the council before winning the city’s first mayoral term in 1970. As mayor of San Jose, Mineta served three terms in office. He ran his father’s Mineta Insurance Agency.

**Henry Fuhrmann (65)** The dancer-choreographer died Sept. 28. The Hawaii-born author-academician’s achievements in research and historical inquiry in the area of Asian American Studies led to Odo becoming the inaugural director of the Smithsonian’s Asian Pacific American Program for a 13-yearlong beginning in 1997. At its 2008 National Convention, the JACL presented to Odo its President’s Award.

Odo’s educational résumé included degrees from Princeton University (B.A. and Ph.D.) and Stanford University (M.A.). His teaching career included stints at Occidental College; University of California, Los Angeles; California State University, Long Beach; University of Pennsylvania; Hunter College; Princeton University; Columbia University; University of Hawaii at Manoa, and University of Maryland-College Park.

Fuhrmann’s most recent position was as its assistant dean emeritus. He served as a research professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, teaching in the history of U.S. aviation. In his adult years, Mas, as he was known, served in the Army from 1956-1960, and was stationed at the Gila River War Relocation Authority and at the Manzanar Relocation Center. In his early years, he represented the chapter at Day of Remembrance and other community events. He was a member of the “Big 8” of Japanese American Congress — Sens. Matsunaga and Inouye and Rep. Matsui — who helped shepherd the Japanese American Redress Act through both houses, culminating in 1988 and President Reagan’s signature.

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