



PACIFIC CITIZEN

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'House of Ninjas' Is a Hit for Netflix.

Kakehashi 2024 participants walk the white-walled streets of Yanai, famous for its picturesque merchant homes, all of which are decorated with red paper goldfish lanterns.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NOAH HARAMOTO/
ZARIA GUIGNARD

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SoCal JACL Chapters Hold Installations.

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KAKEHASHI 2024

Nikkei travel to Japan to strengthen their connections to Japanese culture.

CELEBRATING
95
Years

JACL 2024 National Convention Registration Now Open

This year's gathering will take place from July 10-14 in Philadelphia.



By JACL National

Join JACL at its 54th National Convention in Philadelphia from July 10-14. Registration is now open to attend this year's gathering, which is set to take place at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown. Centering on the theme "LIFT: Looking Into the Future Together," this collective and futuristic convention will be jam-packed with activities and events.

Along with partners OCA-National and APIAVote, the convention will feature joint programming and networking that will include a special election-year "APIAVote Presidential Town Hall," a forum for AAPIs to push for issues in political campaigns and the media.

This is also an important election year for the JACL National Board, so the organization's National Council will be making important decisions on future leadership and platform

for change. In addition, 2024 marks just five years until JACL's historic 100-year anniversary in 2029.

JACL continues to plan for its future, which will be a prevalent topic in its convention programming, and the annual Sayonara Gala will feature its Centennial Education Fund campaign, which concludes at year's end.

The early bird rate registration deadline date is May 12. Full registration, which includes access to all five days of convention programming, National Council sessions, plenaries, Welcome Reception, awards luncheon, Town Hall event, Sayonara Gala and additional programming events and access to the Whova convention app, ends on June 18. There will be no virtual registration this year.

JACL looks forward to seeing you in Philly!

For details on this year's annual convention, visit tinyurl.com/djsv4syj.

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JACL/OCA 2024 Leadership Summit Marks Special Anniversary

By JACL National

JACL and OCA-National completed another JACL/OCA Leadership Summit on March 12. Since 1984, the summit has brought JACL members from across the country to Washington, D.C., to learn about policymaking and nonprofit work on a national scale. Starting in 1994, OCA-National joined the summit, increasing the number of attendees and programming possibilities. This past summit marked two special anniversaries: 40 years since the initial program was started by JACL and 30 years since OCA joined the program.

This year, 27 attendees from JACL and OCA experienced panels fea-

turing leaders from many national advocacy partners in our coalition work through the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the National Council on Asian Pacific Americans. Participants attended a briefing with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders and spent their final day of the program meeting with their representatives and senators to advocate on immigration and education issues.

JACL Executive Director David Inoue stated, "As an alumnus of this program from 2003, it is especially gratifying to see so many JACL and OCA members complete the program and do great work through their chapters or even careers in

public service that have been at least in part influenced by their participation in the Leadership Summit. The need for this program continues, and we look forward to training another 40 years of JACL and OCA community leaders."

"The Leadership Summit has created a key pipeline of leaders both within the OCA and JACL communities but also the greater AANHPI community in private and public arenas," stated Thu Nguyen, OCA National executive director. "This program has also fostered and strengthened collaborations between the two organizations at a national and chapter level, as well as other entities that participants are involved in. As the demand for

the program only increases, with some participants even requesting to repeat it the following year, we are committed to continuing this opportunity for AANHPIs for many years to come."

Said JACL Norman Mineta Policy Fellow Ariel Imamoto: "This was my first JACL/OCA Leadership Summit, and I left the program educated and inspired. This summit was an invaluable experience that I think many people would benefit from. Not only were bonds made among participants, but I truly believe each person walked away empowered that their voice counts in our nation."

The program is funded through a grant from State Farm Insurance. ■

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

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

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2024 SPRING CAMPAIGN

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

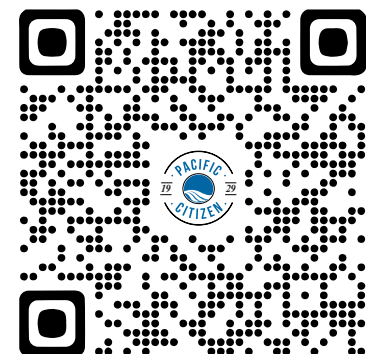
— Gil Asakawa



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All Americans Should Have Access to Affordable Internet Service

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

As we all know, one of the impacts of Covid was the rise in awareness of the importance of internet connectivity. Even with the return to in-person activities both in the workplace and our personal lives, virtual meetings are now a normal part of our lives. More than before, our children's schoolwork is often supplemented with online videos, and assignments are completed online. In our personal

lives, my children's music lessons are even held virtually sometimes, and Zoom even has a different setting to accommodate the differing audio of music vs. conversation. Our reliance upon the internet is fully set.

The other revelation brought on by Covid was the lack of internet access for too many people. As schools shifted to distance learning in a matter of days, it was quickly found that many students did not have broadband access in the home, other than through a cell phone. The demands of two or more concurrent video conferences in a

home overloaded broadband service purchased with the idea of maybe a single person streaming a movie at once, not two or three.

In one of President Joe Biden's major legislative victories, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act with \$1.2 trillion in spending to support businesses, schools and more. Included in that spending was \$14.2 billion, or one percent of the bill's total funding, for the Affordable Connectivity Program, through which over 23 million people have received subsidies to subscribe to broadband internet services.

Unfortunately, because this is an election year, and there is a perception that the beneficiaries of this program vote for a certain party, Congress has been unable to pass additional funding. As a result, funding will run out in April, and subscribers have already been notified that they will be unable to continue to receive their subsidies.

There are two problems in high-speed internet access, availability and accessibility or affordability. This is similar to problems with

health care, an area with which I am more familiar from my background.

For many end users, due to accessibility or affordability, they do not use high-speed internet. It may be available for them to subscribe to, but they choose not to due to the cost.

In health care, this would be like an individual living next door to a highly regarded academic medical center who doesn't get treated for a health issue because they can't afford to see the doctor. Ostensibly, health insurance should pay for their health care. In a way, the Affordable Connectivity Program has served as an insurance program for people to get subsidized broadband service.

On the other hand, by opening up the accessibility and affordability of high-speed internet, we revealed the places that face the problem of availability to a greater extent. People believing they now have access to high-speed internet found that they couldn't find a reliable service to subscribe to.

As I have written before, this is the problem several areas of San Francisco Japantown face where only

copper line-based DSL service is available at the modern-day equivalent of dial-up modem speeds relative to the maximum speeds available through cable or fiber optic. This is a problem that will take years to resolve as this is truly the infrastructure part of the legislation, but hopefully those capital dollars will be flowing to localities such as Japantown to ensure that everyone has available broadband connectivity.

In the meantime, we need to continue to ensure that everyone who can receive reliable broadband service can also access it. Congress must act to ensure that all Americans have access to affordable broadband so that no one is left behind. I urge all our readers to take a moment to call your member of Congress and urge them to fund the Affordable Connectivity Program immediately through the end of the current year.

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



LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

What Is Hospital Delirium?

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Have you ever noticed sudden changes in your senior's awareness, mood, attention, perception and thinking? Has your senior ever seemed completely "out of it?" If so, they might be experiencing delirium, especially if they are in the hospital or very ill. Delirium is common, showing up in about 80 percent of patients in the intensive care unit and up to one-third of all patients staying in the hospital.

Delirium is a state of worse-than-usual mental function, brought on by illness or some kind of stress on the body. Delirium affects people of all ages, but especially older adults in hospitals who are acutely ill.

Many family caregivers have never heard of hospital delirium. This is unfortunate since "developing delirium is linked to worse outcomes in older people in the hospital, and it is associated with a higher risk of declining health and death," says Dr. Esther Seunghee Oh, co-director of Johns Hopkins Memory and Alzheimer's Treatment Center ([source: www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org)).

In people who have Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, just the stress and unfamiliarity of the hospital setting can be enough to tip them into increased confusion. Sensory impairments, such as

corrected vision or hearing, can also help tip a vulnerable older person into delirium. Some common causes and triggers of hospital delirium include dehydration, sleep deprivation, infections and blood electrolyte imbalances.

The good news is that family caregivers can do a lot to prevent delirium, or at least prevent it from escalating into a serious complication. According to Dr. Oh, the best way to treat delirium is to find and treat the thing that's causing it. Sometimes, the person's health-care provider may need to order many tests to find the cause of the delirium. These tests can include blood tests, X-rays, brain imaging (such as MRIs and CT scans) and electrocardiograms.

Once the cause of the delirium is found, treatment can start. There are no medications that treat delirium itself. Instead, the person's health-care provider may give them medication to treat what is causing the delirium. Or, they may give them medication to treat certain delirium symptoms.

Of course, not all hospital delirium can be prevented. Some people are very sick, or very prone to delirium, and it's certainly possible to develop delirium even when all triggers and risk factors have been addressed. It is sometimes referred to as "hospital confusion" or "hospital sun-downing." And if it happens in the

intensive care unit, it is sometimes referred to as "ICU psychosis."

Unfortunately, delirium is often missed by hospital staff. Busy hospital staff may not realize that an older person is more confused than usual. "No one knows the patient better than friends and family members," says Dr. Oh. "If you notice something not quite right about your loved one, telling the nurse or doctor is very important. The sooner delirium is identified, the sooner the team can address it."

Experts estimate that about 40 percent of delirium cases are preventable. There are also steps that you, the caregiver, can take to reduce the chance of a bad delirium. Board-certified geriatrician Dr. Leslie Kernisan has listed seven steps that you can take to prevent delirium ([source: www.betterhealthwhileaging.net](http://www.betterhealthwhileaging.net)).

- 1) Minimize sleep deprivation.** Consider asking the nurses if it's possible to avoid blood pressure checks in the middle of the night. A quieter room can help. Do NOT ask for sleeping pills, however! Even a mild sedative, such as diphenhydramine (brand name Benadryl) increases the risk of developing delirium. Sleeping pills can also make delirium worse in someone who is already affected.
- 2) Minimize vision and hearing impairments.** Make sure the older person has glasses and hearing aids available, if they usually need them.
- 3) Provide familiar objects and reassuring companionship.** A few family photos can bring some soothing cheer to an older person's hospital stay. Family or friends at bedside are also often very helpful, especially since they can help gently reorient an older person to where he

is and what's been going on.

- 4) Avoid overwhelming or overstimulating the person.** Try to minimize mental strain or emotional stress for the person. A calm reassuring presence is ideal. If you need to give instructions or discuss something, try to keep things simple.

- 5) Encourage physical activity and mobilization.** Although many older people are sick or weak while in the hospital, it's important to encourage safe activity as soon as possible. Physical therapy and minimizing bladder catheters (which can tether an older person to the bed) can help.

- 6) Avoid sedatives and tranquilizers.** Especially if the older person is restless or having difficulty sleeping, it's not uncommon for sedatives such as diphenhydramine (brand name Benadryl) to be prescribed. But these can increase the risk of delirium and should be avoided. So instead, try nondrug relaxation therapies such as soothing music, massage, a cup of tea and familiar companionship.
- 7) Minimize pain and discomforts.** Ask the older person if he or she feels bothered by pain or constipation. If so, bring it up to the doctors. It's not uncommon for pain to go inadequately treated unless family caregivers helping an older patient bring it to the doctors' attention.

In conclusion, as the family caregiver, you can play a very important role in providing a supportive and reassuring presence during an older person's delirium. Question things if the hospital staff wants to physically restrain the older person in bed. In many cases, if a person is dangerously restless, it's better to start by trying a low dose of anti-psychotic, as mentioned above. Physically

restraining a person often increases agitation and can lead to injury.

It can be hard to talk to someone with delirium, but it's important to be patient and understanding. According to the experts, keep conversations basic. Speak clearly, softly and use short, simple sentences. Make sure the person can hear you and understand what you say. Repeat things, if needed.

When you're talking to the person or asking them a question, give them some time to respond. They may need a minute to think about what they want to say. If the person is confused or scared, remind them of where they are and what is happening. Talk to them in a calm and soothing voice. Reassure them and tell them you're there to help and keep them safe ([source: www.mskcc.org/cancer-care-patient-education/delirium](http://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care-patient-education/delirium)).

Finally, even after getting the person home to a restful familiar environment — it often still takes a while for delirium to get better. In fact, it's pretty common for it to take weeks — or even months — for delirium to completely resolve in an older adult. In some cases, the person never recovers back to their prior normal.

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@elderlawcalifornia.com. The 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.

THE AMERICAN BEHIND NETFLIX'S HIT 'HOUSE OF NINJAS'

Filmmaker Dave Boyle learned Japanese for his LDS mission.

By Gil Asakawa,
P.C. Contributor

Ninja have always been popular fodder for action movies in Japan, though usually in the historical context of samurai-era stories. Now, a new Netflix series, "House of Ninjas," has brought ninjas to modern times, and since its Feb. 15 debut has been ranked No. 1 in 16 countries and regions around the world, reached the Top 10 list in 92 countries and currently sits atop the global list of non-English TV shows on the streaming service.

"House of Ninjas" is an eight-episode action drama about a clan of ninja, or *shinobi*, that fought evil until a tragedy caused the family to retire to live a menial existence. But the government's secret "Bureau of Ninja Affairs" convinces the Tawara family to get back in the battle against a mysterious foe that turns out to be a rival *shinobi* clan from the ancient past.

The series was filmed in Japan, with Japanese actors and a Japanese script, though it's dubbed and subtitled into various languages including English. In Japan, it's called "Shinobi no Ie," or "House of Shinobi," the preferred term by many Japanese instead of "ninja" that's more familiar to us in the West.

It was filmed on location, including at the famed Toho Studios in Tokyo. But not everyone involved in the series is Japanese. The series' showrunner is Dave Boyle, a 42-year-old white guy from Utah.

But Boyle is no stranger to Japan, or even Japanese American and Asian American themes in films. As a director, writer and producer, his credits include titles such as "Big Dreams Little Tokyo" (2006), a partially autobiographical comedy starring himself, about an American who wants to work in Japanese business; a family comedy "White on Rice" (2009) about a Japanese salaryman who comes to the U.S. after a divorce; three films starring JA singer-songwriter Goh Nakamura, "Surrogate Valentine" (2011), "Daylight Savings" (2012) and "I Will Make You Mine" (2020); as well as a well-received noir mystery about a Japanese author who comes to the U.S. and become caught up in a murder.

All this cross-pollination with Japan has been a natural arc of Boyle's career.



"It started with a little bit of a coincidence," Boyle said. "I come from a Mormon family, and you know, Mormon folks when you turn 18, you get sent on a mission. You don't choose where you go or anything, and I was sent to Sydney, Australia, on a Japanese-speaking mission. So, I was assigned to learn to speak Japanese, and then I found that I really, really enjoyed studying the language and learning about Japanese culture."

The experience changed his life. "When I came back and returned to ordinary life and started working on my film career, my first tiny, scrappy, little indie film that I made with my friends, called 'Big Dreams Little Tokyo' was very directly about that experience, sort of about the experience of trying to learn a foreign language or fit into another culture."

He has certainly accomplished that with "House of Ninjas." When Netflix was approached by Japanese actor Kento Kaku, whose career in movies and television began in 2007, the year after "Big Dreams Little Tokyo," with an idea for a new series about a modern-day family of ninja, Netflix reached out to Boyle.

He initially signed on to flesh out Kaku's ideas and place them into a narrative. "The first thing I did was write what they call a show



bible that lays out the world of the show, the characters, and it's sort of a guidepost of what the show is," Boyle explained. "Kento was totally onboard, really happy with what I had done. Originally, that was going to be the limit of my involvement. And then more and more, my responsibility grew."

Before long, Boyle wrote the script for the pilot and supervised the writing for the rest of the series, as well as directed the first three episodes and the season finale, while two other directors handled the other episodes. "And so, there was definitely a team effort."

Still, he noted, "I was the primary decision maker." As the show's "head honcho" (a term lifted by American GIs after World War II

from the Japanese *hanchō* or "team leader"), Boyle was in Japan for 18 months working on the series.

"Oh, it was just incredible," he said. "I would ride my bike every day to the studio past the statue of Godzilla, past the mural of the Seven Samurai, and park my bike and go into work." The environment inspired his vision for the "House of Ninjas," working with Kaku and his Japanese colleagues.

The show is appealing on many levels, including the action of the fight scenes, which will satisfy even the blood-thirstiest "John Wick" blood-and-guts fans, but also its moody, dark scenes and carefully manipulated cinematic atmosphere.

Not much of the film shows Japan in broad daylight, though there are

striking shots of Mount Fuji as the backdrop for a bright landscape and cool shots of Odawara Castle, where the Tawara family lives south of Tokyo. Boyle acknowledges that the overall tone of the series was a priority for himself and Kaku, with a lot of attention paid to the lighting and color palette.

Even the music, which Boyle chose, was an important element for its tone. Over the opening scene, a gentle cover of the classic folk-rock song "Our House" by Crosby, Stills and Nash from 1969 accompanies the frenzied fight scene between the Tawara family and evil ninja amidst a nighttime maze of shipping containers. He also chose Carla Thomas' pining soul song "Gee Whiz" and four songs by the British invasion '60s band the Zombies.

"There's something about the Zombies and especially in (the song) 'Our House' that I felt like was really the right tone for the show," he said. The music is "expressing sort of a longing and a sadness, but the songs themselves are really fun. We're trying to make a fun, fast-paced show, but also there is a little bit of a core of sadness at the center of it."

The music is an important element of Boyles and his collaborators' attention to detail in crafting the world of this modern *shinobi* family. All of the details wrapped together make for a supremely entertaining thrill ride that has a heartwarming family drama at its center.

In the wake of the streaming service having canceled another Asian-themed series after one season ("The Brothers Sun"), Netflix will hopefully greenlight a second season "House of Ninjas" quickly, so that the cast and crew won't lose any of their ninja momentum.

This article was made possible by the Harry K. Honda Memorial Journalism Fund, which was established by JACL Redress Strategist Grant Ujifusa.



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SoCal JACL Chapters Install 2024 Officers, Board Members

San Fernando Valley and Ventura County chapters usher in the Year of the Dragon.

By P.C. Staff

‘Aware of the responsibility to which I have been elected and conscious of the role which the Japanese American Citizens League must play in our community and our nation, I do swear that I will discharge the duties of my office conscientiously and to the best of my ability. I will continue to further the purposes and mission of the JACL and to serve my fellow citizens in this country, the United States of America.’

With that oath, JACL chapters across the nation have installed their respective officers and board members in recent weeks. Following is a report on installation luncheons of two Southern California JACL chapters: San Fernando Valley JACL and Ventura County JACL.

San Fernando Valley JACL

On a brilliantly sunny Jan. 21, the San Fernando Valley JACL chapter held its 82nd installation luncheon at the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center in Pacoima, Calif. The program kicked off with taiko, courtesy of the SFV Taiko Group.

The new board consists of May Wood, incoming president, with the remaining board of directors as follows: Linda Tanaka, Nancy Takayama (outgoing president), Marcia Mahoney, Barbara Okita, Lana Kobayashi, Kiyo Fukumoto, Nancy Gohata, Jean-Paul deGuzman, Tomo Hattori, Michiko Tokunaga Kus, Mitzi Kushida, Geri Shiraki and Patty Takayama.

The program began with a welcome by deGuzman, who introduced JACL Pacific Southwest District Gov. Ryan Yoshikawa, who later administered the JACL’s oath of office for the incoming board. Other special guests recognized by deGuzman included 2023 Nisei Week Queen Kaitlyn Emiko Chu, 2023 Miss Tomodachi Nancy Izumi Chin and 2022 Miss Tomodachi Maile Tabata Yanguas; Janice Tanaka, representing the Ventura County JACL; Kyoko Nancy



Jean-Paul deGuzman



Bill Watanabe



(From left, back row) Nancy Gohata, Kiyo Fukumoto, Jean-Paul deGuzman, Tomo Hattori and Nancy Takayama (outgoing president). (From left, front row) Geri Shiraki, Patty Takayama, Michiko Tokunaga Kus, Barbara Okita, Marcia Mahoney, Linda Tanaka, May Wood (incoming president) and PSW Gov. Ryan Yoshikawa.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



May Wood, incoming chapter president

Oda and Kay Oda, representing the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center board; Rev. Paul Iwata, representing Sunrise Japanese Foursquare Church; Linnae McKeever, president, San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple; Margaret Takimoto, chair, SFVJACC future planning committee; LAPD Foothill Division officers Jesse Ojeda and Esther Alvarez; and Kiyo Watanabe of the San Fernando Japanese Language Institute.

DeGuzman also introduced Ariel Imamoto, the current JACL Norman Y. Mineta Fellow, who shared with the audience the report of Pacific Southwest District Youth Representative Lana Kobayashi, who was unable to attend the installation. Nancy Takayama introduced the luncheon’s keynote speaker, Bill Watanabe.

He began with a quip. “They say that life is like a roll of toilet paper. It seems to go around faster as you get to the end,” Watanabe said to audience chuckles. “I know for me, it’s going around pretty quickly.”

Watanabe shared his family’s stories, which exemplified the experiences and complicated differences within the Japanese American community that still resonate in the present. Prior to being removed from their home, his father and older brothers buried family

heirlooms, including a katana, on the farmland they were leasing. Years later, they were unable to relocate what they had buried.

In his remarks, he noted that years before he would spend 31 years at the Little Tokyo Service Center as its founder and executive director — he retired in 2012 — he was a “San Fernando Valley boy” whose parents were farmers at the corner of “Laurel Canyon and Mountain View Street” on land owned by a Mr. Meichtry.

Watanabe praised Meichtry for driving from Pacoima to Manzanar to deliver “Mrs. Meichtry’s delicious fried chicken dinner” a couple of months after the Watanabes — along with thousands of other Nikkei families — were incarcerated at the Manzanar War Relocation Authority Center after World War II began. At his father’s request, Watanabe said Meichtry made a couple more trips to bring up some furniture to help furnish their barrack. “That’s the kind of guy that he was.”

Also, the Watanabes would be transferred to another concentration camp — Tule Lake — after his Issei father, who was ineligible to become a naturalized U.S. citizen and didn’t want to become “stuck without a country,” answered “no and no” to key questions on an infamous loyalty questionnaire.

Meantime, his Kibei Nisei mother, “who was a U.S. citizen, she didn’t know whether the family would be split apart from her husband and what would happen with the kids. So, she renounced her U.S. citizenship in the hopes of keeping the family together — and so, she was without a country because she was not a Japanese citizen.”

Watanabe also related how his mother had three brothers, two of whom joined the pro-Japan Hoshi Dan group and one, Tomio Fujiyama, who joined the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. “If they all got together over lunch during the war, it would have been interesting to be a fly on that wall” to hear that conversation, he speculated.

After the war ended and Watanabe’s parents contemplated moving to the Philippines, Brazil or Japan, some factors came into play that persuaded them to stay in America: a letter from Japanese relatives that essentially said, “Don’t come, it’s terrible here, we’re starving — and if you come, it’s going to be worse”; and a mentor to his father who acknowledged America’s flaws, but also noted that “America is also a land of great opportunity.”

“Then, the U.S. government did something positive,” Watanabe said. “The war in Europe just ended. So, the government told those Japanese

who decided to go back to Japan that they could change their minds if they want to stay.”

They were eventually able to move back to their old place in Pacoima. “Our family was extremely lucky because of this man, Mr. Meichtry, who was very kind and generous and honorable. Many others were not so lucky. Many of the Japanese came back and all their property was stolen or destroyed, and they came back to nothing.”

Watanabe closed by encouraging those in the audience to work on a family history if they had not already done so. “If you still have grandparents or parents or uncles or cousins who might have some stories or recollections of your family here in the valley, it’d be good to record it and write it down,” he said.

After Yoshikawa administered the installation of the chapter’s new board, Nancy Takayama said a few words, reflecting on the past 20-plus years of her involvement with JACL and the Japanese American community and thanking all those who had helped her with during that time. She introduced the new chapter president, May Wood, who noted that JACL should not just move forward, but “move forward with love and compassion.”

» See JACL CHAPTERS on page 9

Looking into the Future Together

2024 JACL NATIONAL CONVENTION PHILADELPHIA

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BRIDGING CONNECTIONS: KAKEHASHI 2024

The 2024 Kakehashi participants and chaperones unite for a final photo in Tokyo before departing back to the U.S.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JICE



Nikkei from across the U.S. journey to Japan to develop and strengthen their connections to Japanese culture.

By Kakehashi 2024 Participants

In January, 71 Nikkei and three chaperones traveled from the U.S. to Japan to participate in Kakehashi 2024, where they visited numerous historical and educational sites, experienced traditional and cultural activities and participated in lectures and workshops with the goal of building a mutual understanding between the U.S. and Japan for future friendship and cooperation.

Divided into three groups, participants began their trip in Tokyo and then traveled on to Hiroshima and Okinawa, depending on their group destination assignment. This “once-in-a-lifetime dream trip” to Japan was made possible thanks to coordination by the JACL and the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) and supported by funding from the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Following are personal trip reflections from several of this year’s participants.

ASHLEY BUCHER, Group B Chaperone

Anyone identifying as Japanese living outside of Japan has probably felt some degree of disconnectedness. Whether it’s longing for the comforts of home, grieving loss of culture due to your family’s assimilation or feeling like you don’t fit in where you live, separation from your family’s homeland can affect your sense of self and place in the world. Trying to navigate this Nikkei diaspora by yourself can be especially lonely. Thankfully, being in community with people who have similar experiences can provide solace, strength and space to feel at home in who you are.

Through the Kakehashi Project, our mighty group came together in Japan and fostered community in just nine short days. We were a diverse bunch, hailing from New York to Hawaii; identifying as mixed Japanese American, full Japanese American and Japanese American by adoption; ranging from freshmen in college to young professionals in the midst of our 20s. With open hearts and minds, we set out on this once-in-a-lifetime experience to discover as much as we could about Japan, ourselves and each other.

After a couple days in Tokyo, Group B flew to Iwakuni, a small city in Yamaguchi prefecture. We wandered the drizzly streets in search of okonomiyaki (happy to report we were successful), and some of us got up early the next day to catch a glimpse of the famed Kintaikyō Bridge at dusk.

As we made our way to the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii, we were welcomed with sweeping views of rice fields, mountains and the Seto Inland Sea. The museum is located in the beautiful town and island of Suō-Ōshima, a laid-back spot also known as the Hawaii of Setouchi and famous for its mikan, a type of citrus fruit.

Once at the museum, we took in the troubling past of Japanese emigration in the late 1800s and Suō-Ōshima’s personal ties to Hawaii. Generous museum staff also helped some of us use their well-kept database to find records of family who came to Hawaii from Japan.

Later that afternoon, we traveled to the white-walled streets of Yanai for goldfish lantern crafting. This charming historical town is dotted with hundreds of delicate goldfish lanterns, originally crafted by merchants over 150 years ago to entertain children. Inside a

stunning white and wooden building known as Yanai Nishikura, gracious volunteers guided us in painting and gluing together our very own goldfish, complete with wide eyes and flowing tails.

Next door, we stumbled upon Sagawa Soy Sauce Factory, where we were kindly given a tour. The factory has been in the shoyu business for nearly 200 years and ferments soy sauce in enormous wooden vats. The intense, umami aroma of shoyu enticed us to indulge in omiyage to bring home and some shoyu ice cream for the road.

That evening, our participants set off to their respective host families’ homes all around Suō-Ōshima. I had the chance to visit a few of them the next day as they experienced Suō-Ōshima life — harvesting mikan, learning the art of bento, frying up okonomiyaki. The families’ hospitality was unlike anything I’ve ever seen as I watched them curate intentional experiences and welcome participants into their lives with open arms.

They were thoughtful toward us visitors, too, offering mikan to try, giving a tour of the 100-year-old home they restored, setting up mats to sit on and passing out homemade mikan jelly. After a quick two days, we said our tearful goodbyes and promised to see each other again, waving to the families from the bus until they were out of sight.

Our last stop before we reunited with the rest of our cohort was Hiroshima. We walked through the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum as well as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, taking in the horrors and devastation of the atomic bomb on Aug. 6, 1945. Later that night, a few of us came back to the park to see it lit differently and reflect more.

Looking back, I am overflowing with gratitude for this rare opportunity to be in community with so many young Japanese Americans. Countless vulnerable conversations were had about our family histories, mixed identities, cultures and traditions and so much more. I’m honored to have been welcomed by Group B to join in these experiences and have played a small, small part in their trip. Thank you to Cheyenne Cheng, Bridget Keaveney and David Inoue, and to our dedicated JICE coordinators Mayumi Iida and Keisuke Matsuzawa for making any of this possible.

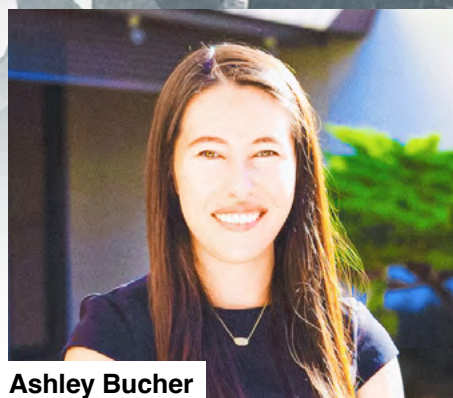
どうもありがとうございます！



(Top) Crafting goldfish lanterns in Yanai are (from left) Zaria Guignard, April Gore, Adam Bittner and Shari Nishijima.

(Middle) Group B at the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ASHLEY BUCHER



Ashley Bucher



Group C shares some American dances as a thank you to their host families in Suō-Ōshima.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SPENCER UEMURA

SPENCER UEMURA,
Group C Chaperone

In mid-January, I had a taste of what I call “Japanese American heaven.” Traveling along with about 70 young adult Nikkei from across the country, I had the unique privilege of supervising 24 of them as we developed and strengthened connections to Japanese culture and between ourselves as Japanese Americans. For one very full week, our itinerary was as jam-packed with learning opportunities as our suitcases would be filled with souvenirs at the end of the trip.

Our first days were in Tokyo, where we visited the Tokyo National Museum and had a few brief meetings with government officials. Our next few days were spent in Yamaguchi prefecture on the island of Suō-Ōshima. Not surprisingly, it also has close ties to Hawaii through the large proportion of residents who immigrated there around the turn of the 20th century.

Our group visited the local Museum of Japanese Immigration to Hawaii, and kind volunteers pored through records to help many of us learn new information about our ancestors who immigrated to Hawaii. Of course, a major highlight for the participants was a short homestay experience on Suō-Ōshima, which involved cooking (and eating!) local foods, sightseeing and talking about Japanese and Japanese American culture. After leaving Yamaguchi prefecture, we had a short visit to Hiroshima to visit the Hiroshima Peace Museum before spending our final days in Tokyo.

While the places we visited and the things we did were impactful on their own, for me the power of the trip was in the people I traveled with. Multiple times a day, I’d take a look around and marvel at the rare experience of being in Japan with dozens of other Nikkei. This was indeed my “Japanese American heaven,” being in our heritage country, having conversations about cultural and personal identity and making connections with every kind of Nikkei across the tapestry that is the diverse experience of being Japanese American. We represented different regional JA experiences in the US, multiethnic and monoethnic, across all levels of language knowledge, those with dual citizenship as well as first-time travelers to Japan and with a diversity in gender, sex and ability.

Through years of my own personal healing journey and the invaluable guidance of wise Japanese American mentors, I’ve come to embrace the belief that there is no wrong way to be Nikkei. Contrary to the shame many of us may feel for “not being Japanese enough,” each individual in our community brings a



Spencer Uemura

unique perspective and contribution to our shared heritage.

We all belong. All of our experiences, our identities, our aspirations paint a picture of the long history that we have in America and the resilience required to make a place for ourselves in the past and into the future. And if the folks in my group were any indication, our community is in good hands moving forward.

It’s difficult to describe the incredible impression these young adults had on me. In our group, there was so much evidence of thoughtfulness, determination, community investment, curiosity, kindness and humor. Within a short period of time, we had gone from strangers to a small community of friends, a microcosm of the support and care that thrives in many Japanese American spaces.

One repeated theme that arose in conversations about JA community involvement were the barriers to leadership, the organizational hierarchies that have dampened their voices. There were stories of unacknowledged feedback even when it had been requested and a feeling of dismissal from some of the groups that aim to represent them. Sometimes in the veneration of age and experience, we may miss the wisdom coming from all around. And that is a loss for all.

A few weeks ago, I watched “What the Constitution Means to Me” at the Portland Center Stage. Through anecdotes, personal stories and historical context, the play explored how young people engage with and interpret the Constitution, as well as their role in shaping the future of the country. The main character offers an admonishment toward the end of the play, as paraphrased below. May it serve as a reminder to keep our ears open and listen to the younger voices. May we take heed especially as they draw necessary attention to things like climate change, gun violence prevention and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

“Young people are not waiting for us to pave the way for them. They are out there, shining a light on the issues that matter, and it’s up to us to follow their lead and support them in creating a better future for all.”

JULIE ABO,
Group A Chaperone

I was elated when I opened my email to find that I was selected to be a chaperone for the 2024 Kakehashi trip to Okinawa. Over the past few years, I had learned pieces of culture and history about Okinawa/Uchina and recently discovered my Ryukyu Kingdom DNA. There were also nine participants with family connections to Okinawa. I felt the excitement of self-discovery along with them.

We were under the great care of Erito Uchiyama, Japan International Cooperation Center Kyushu Office director, and Miki Yanase, who was our awesome guide and translator. Airi Goto was our trusted travel agent. They were our cultural ambassadors as we traveled from Tokyo to Naha and Kin, Okinawa.

The strong and distinct Okinawan culture was reflected in some of the historical and educational sites such as Kyuzo Toyama Memorial Museum (emigration history), where we learned about the forced incorporation of the Ryukyu Kingdom into Japan after 1879 and the sudden economic decline and subsequent push by Kyuzo Toyama to allow Okinawans to emigrate to Hawaii. There were harsh working conditions in Hawaii, but many stayed.

We traveled to Kin town and greeted the mayor and his staff, who were very welcoming. Another highlight of the trip was an exciting exchange with University of the Ryukyus students, where the participants were put into groups and discussed immigration, identity, food and culture.

They formed fast friendships and found it



Julie Abo with Erito Uchiyama, director of the Kyushu Office for JICE, at the pottery kilns in Yomitan, Okinawa

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JULIE ABO

hard to leave. The most memorable part of the trip was the homestay with local families who provided traditional and cultural activities such as harvesting sugar cane, playing the sanshin stringed instrument and making sweet mochi for three days and two nights.

At the closing in Tokyo, the participants gave a reflective group presentation about what they learned about Japan, Okinawa and their own identity. The resilience, openness and inclusionary culture of the Okinawan families inspired them. At the beginning of the trip, some may have felt some apprehension about their Japanese identity, others not, but this shared experience created a community that made them feel supported and acknowledged. Many of us hope to return to Japan and Okinawa. We are ready to learn more.

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At the Hachiko statue in Shibuya Station are (from left) Alana Komatsu, Robin Dewis, Allie Umemoto, Zaria Guignard, April Gore and Amy Hattori.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALLIE UMEMOTO

ALLIE UMEMOTO,
Group B Participant

Before the Kakehashi trip, I had a strong sense of my Japanese American identity. My parents and grandparents taught me about

the World War II incarceration camps, and when I was 8 years old, we visited Topaz, Utah, where my mother's parents were incarcerated.

I am immensely grateful for these strong Japanese American communities that raised me, but I also understand the history in which they were created. A history of intense discrimination, exclusion and hate that Japanese Americans experienced before, during and after the war.

These communities allowed me to develop a strong sense of a *Japanese American* identity largely defined by the incarceration experience, which pushed many Japanese Americans to quickly assimilate. Japanese Americans were forced to prove they were American and denounce their Japanese identity. I still have this feeling of needing to prove I am American. As a Yonsei, I also feel disconnected from the Japanese part of my Japanese American identity, and I feel the need to simultaneously prove that I am Japanese. Not knowing the

Japanese language especially makes me feel self-conscious and a lack of ownership of being Japanese.

Searching to build a stronger connection to Japan, I was excited for the opportunity to participate in the Kakehashi Program to build an internal bridge to my Japanese identity. During the trip, I felt more connected to Japan through eating familiar foods, hearing certain Japanese sayings, seeing Buddhist temples and feeling a sense of belonging in a country I had never even been to. I realized, despite language, there were still a lot of things that my parents and grandparents had passed down that made me Japanese. When the Special Adviser to the Prime Minister said, "I hope Japan can be a second home to you," I felt welcomed and a sense of belonging.

The other unique aspect of Kakehashi for me was traveling to my ancestral homeland for the first time with 70 other young Japanese

Americans. I am grateful for all the people I met on this trip and every conversation we had, from debating our Japanese noodle rankings to talking about our Nikkei identity and shared experiences.

At the end of the trip, one of our supervisors said, "There is no right way to be Japanese American." After hearing this, I had a sense of ease and peace after years of trying to prove I am American or prove I am Japanese — I realized, yes, there is no right way to be Japanese American and that I could just be and feel fortunate for being both.

After the trip, I continued to reflect on my experience and realized how healing it was for me. The purpose of the Kakehashi program is to build a bridge between Japan and the United States. What I did not expect was how many smaller bridges would be built during the trip. I found that building these smaller bridges among each other and internally was truly healing.

GENE NAONO,
Group A Participant

I am extremely grateful that I was able to participate in the program, as it not only provided me a more nuanced perspective of my own identity, but it also allowed me to meet and connect with many young adults with impressive résumés and the same sentiment of wanting to develop their worldview as a Japanese American. If there are any young JAs who are interested in wanting to extend both their personal and professional network with Japan, I would wholly recommend the Kakehashi trip experience.

The trip was a relatively short one where we spent four days in Tokyo and three days in Okinawa. However, during this short duration, I have come to realize many things about Okinawa and the Japanese American identity in relation to the U.S. and Japan.

First, I want to touch on the incredible richness of Okinawa's history and the different influences that continue to be exerted within its culture. Through my homestay experience at Uechi-san household, I learned about the



Gene Naono
in Japan

PHOTO: COURTESY OF GENE NAONO

dominant Chinese and Ryukyu Kingdom influences that linger today in society, now under Japanese leadership and American military influence. The Okinawa leg of the trip left such a strong impression on me that I tried my best in putting the deep complexities I felt in a simple haiku (Japanese and English versions):

リュウキウで *Land of the Shisa*
日系のいしずえ *Finding out identity*
気づけたよ *Stronger than ever*

There is no place like Okinawa. Hearing the

stories and history of Okinawa oddly empowered me to further try and understand my own identity. Many native Okinawans are trying their best to find their foothold in identity and culture, and I stand in solidarity with them as I believe that their effort in trying to find the fragile balance of the mixture can be shared with Nikkeijins' sentiments in their own journey of self-realization.

Next, I want to pivot and talk about how I came out as a different person from the person I was before the trip. Prior to the trip, I knew that I wanted to dig deeper into my Japanese roots and see if there are any more connections and opportunities that I could find for self-growth.

What I did not know was that this Kakehashi project trip could pull so much out of me. From attending courtesy calls of high-ranking Japanese government officials to hearing a lecture from Glen Fukushima, a well-established Japanese American, I began to wonder why any organization would be interested in sponsoring this trip for an individual like myself.

The name of the project had the answer in itself, Kakehashi — bridging the gap. Japanese Americans can be ethnically Japanese, but we

are very much so American, in the sense that we have assimilated and adopted the American way of life and thinking.

I was aware that American and Japanese philosophies differed, but this trip has helped me understand how much of a gap there is between the two. As Japanese Americans become more sparse with time, the duty to step up to the plate and become the "kakehashi" between the two countries becomes imperative for the success of both nations. The two cultures (American and Japanese) each have their own strengths and weaknesses, and it is critical that Japanese Americans are able to extract the positive aspects and foster a future that incorporates the best of both worlds.

I plan on continuing my education at UC Berkeley studying civil engineering with an emphasis on transportation engineering/planning. Visiting Japan has given me newfound appreciation for the possibilities of sophisticated transit systems here in the U.S. It is one of my ambitions to stay connected with Japanese American and Japanese organizations while I develop my career as a civil engineer.

SOPHIA SAITO AND KYLE MASUKAWA,
Group C Participants

Participating in the Kakehashi Project was a transformative experience that exceeded all expectations. Going into this program, we were excited to travel to Japan and build deeper connections to our ancestral homeland; however, we never imagined how impactful this trip would be. Each moment truly embodied the meaning of kakehashi, "building bridges."

Our group, Group C, traveled alongside Group B to Yamaguchi prefecture. While in Yamaguchi, our days were filled with exploration, creativity and connection. We visited the white-walled streets of Yanai, made goldfish lanterns, taste-tested shoyu ice cream at a local shoyu factory and traced our family histories at the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii.

After an activity-packed day, we arrived in Suō-Ōshima, where our host families welcomed us and immediately made us feel at home. Our homestays involved immersive experiences from mastering new recipes to teaching each other games, exploring the island and even delving into our creative sides, learning

Sophia Saito (third from left) and Kyle Masukawa (far right) enjoy okonomiyaki with their fellow Kakehashi friends.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SOPHIA SAITO AND KYLE MASUKAWA



the intricate art of calligraphy and making Hina dolls from old kimonos. The homestay experience was unforgettable, providing us with insights into daily life and heightening our appreciation for Japanese culture.

It was apparent that in the few days we spent together, strong bonds were formed between participants and families. We were able to communicate through language barriers and share pieces of ourselves with one another, bridging the Suō-Ōshima and Nikkei communities together.

The final leg of our trip took place in Hiroshima, where we visited the Peace Memorial Park, the Atomic Bomb Dome and the Peace Memorial Museum. At the park, we

left paper cranes as a symbol of peace before we explored the museum, which was filled with remnants of life before the bombing, images of the aftermath and art from survivors.

The museum deepened our understanding of the extensive impact the bombing had on Hiroshima and showed us that despite the hardships, the community endured, embodying the essence of *gaman*.

While the activities and sightseeing played a significant role in our learning and appreciation, the most impactful part of Kakehashi was the supportive community that emerged amongst the 2024 cohort. As Nikkei, our shared experiences bonded us, but even when personal experiences or feelings didn't align

with the majority, they were welcomed with curiosity, empathy and understanding.

Bus conversations, led by our amazing leader Spencer (Uemura), became a safe space for open dialogue and reflection, which can be hard to find in daily life. The varied stories shared within our group served as a powerful reminder that there is no "right" way to be Japanese American and that the beauty of the Nikkei community lies in its diversity. The community that emerged from these conversations became a huge source of support as we worked to embrace the intricacies of our own experiences. We leave this journey recognizing the multitude of ways that individuals forge connections with their heritage and navigate their identities.

While it is difficult to articulate the profound effect this program has had on each of us, the memories that we made, the sites that we saw, the stories that we heard and the community we built all undoubtedly shaped our perspectives and are invaluable experiences that we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

Part II of Kakehashi reflections will be featured in the Pacific Citizen's next issue.

JACL CHAPTERS » continued from page 5

With food and the formalities out of the way, it was time for some fun, via a game in which the audience was divided into teams and asked to identify the business or product based on a logo sans wording.

Ventura County JACL

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley was again the site of the Ventura County JACL chapter's 44th installation lunch, which took place on a blustery, cool Jan. 28.

PSW Gov. Ryan Yoshikawa administered the JACL Installation Oath to the incoming Ventura County JACL board, comprised of incumbents Megan Gately and Lily Anne Welty Tamai (co-presidents); Jessica Wan and Janice McCormick (co-vps); Anne Chilcott (secretary) and Ken Nakano (treasurer), who are also the cemetery restoration coordinators; Betty Katsura (book club coordinator); and Akemi Ketchum, Samantha Wyllis-Quiñonez, Janice Tanaka, Jessica Wan, Mark Chilcott and Joanne Nakano.

The luncheon's guest speaker was Dean Kato, chairman of the California Strawberry Festival. A special guest was Michelle Sevilla, the communications director for Assemblymember Steven Bennett of District 28. Following the installation ceremony, she gave out recognitions



2024 Ventura County JACL board members (from left): Ann Chilcott (secretary), Betty Katsura (book club coordinator), Akemi Ketchum, Samantha Wyllis-Quiñonez, Janice Tanaka, Jessica Wan (co-vp), Mark Chilcott, Ken Nakano (treasurer), Joanne Nakano, Megan Gately (co-president), Lily Tamai (co-president) and PSW Gov. Ryan Yoshikawa. Out of frame: Janice McCormick (co-vp)

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



Ken Inouye shares an anecdote about the famous photo of President Ronald Reagan signing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.



Ventura County JACL Chapter Co-Presidents Megan Gately (left) and Lily Tamai flank guest speaker Dean Kato, chair of the California Strawberry Festival, during the chapter's installation luncheon on Jan. 28 at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.



Joanne Nakano (left) displays the certificate of recognition presented on Jan. 28 by Michelle Sevilla, director of communications for Assemblymember Steven Bennett of District 38.

from Bennett's office to the officers and incoming board members.

Early in the luncheon, former JACL National President Ken Inouye, who has been a stalwart JACL member active with the SELANOCO JACL chapter for decades, went to the lectern and shared a short anecdote about the projected photo of President Reagan taken during the signing ceremony for HR 442, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

Pointing to the picture, he noted that standing next to the late Harry Kajihara, who was serving as JACL's national president at the time, was Rep. Bill Lowery, a Republican who represented the San Diego area. Inouye recalled meeting with Lowery prior to the bill's enactment by Reagan.

"When I said, 'Would you pass the redress bill?' he looked at me in the face, and he said, 'I can't. I don't have enough of your kind in my district.' 'You don't have enough Americans?' He didn't vote for the bill."

That Lowery appeared in the picture was a mistake — "They invited the wrong guy," Inouye said. Instead, it should have been Rep. Mike Lowry, a Democrat representing Washington state who was one of Congress' early proponents for Japanese American redress and who later served as the state's governor.

"So, when you see this picture, you'll see a lot of historical Japanese American people, people that we all know and love. But there's always that one ironic moment when you have somebody that shows up that just didn't belong. I just wanted to share that with you," Inouye said, garnering laughs from the audience.

Tamai introduced Kato, who was born and raised in Oxnard, Calif., and has been active with the California Strawberry Festival since 1984. Over the decades, the festival's trajectory has been upward, despite the challenges and setbacks — including

unpredictable weather events and a global pandemic — that can occur in the course of mounting such a time- and labor-intensive undertaking.

One constant, of course, is strawberries, which Kato said are Ventura County's No. 1 crop, having produced \$725 million in sales in 2022, most of that attributable to an area called the Oxnard Plain, which boasts the climate and soil needed to grow the popular fruit.

"Seventy-five percent of the strawberries in America are from California," Kato said. "Ninety-hour percent of households eat about five pounds of berries per year. I actually eat about 120 pounds." He noted that "one cup of strawberries is only 55 calories" and that his favorite variety is the Albion.

This year marks the fest's 38th anniversary and will take place from 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m. on May 18 and 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m. on May 19 at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. It will feature live bands and family-friendly entertainment on three stages, more than 75 food and beverage stands, more than 220 fine arts and crafts vendors, carnival rides, the Ninja Nation Obstacle Course, 15

novelty snack food vendors and, of course, Berry, the festival's mascot.

"Everything costs more, as you know: water, tents, security — everything," Kato noted. Although the price per-person of admission increased to \$15 from \$12, he said, "We still have a \$5 strawberry shortcake." Furthermore, he said that adopting technologies like DocuSign for behind-the-scenes necessities like getting contracts signed and using payment methods like PayPal, Venmo and Zelle have helped make processes more efficient. He also noted that because the fest's site is now the Ventura County Fairgrounds and Event Center, it's possible to take the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner, which stops near the Fairgrounds — and avoid the drive. (Visit <https://www.castrawberryfestival.org/> for details and ticket information.)

Before wrapping up the event, Gately also noted that Rep. Julia Brownley, whose district encompasses most of Ventura County, also had certificates recognizing the Ventura JACL's service. All the attendees were able to bring home bags of fresh, locally grown produce. ■



California Strawberry Festival Chair Dean Kato speaks about the history and future of the annual event.



Berry, mascot of the California Strawberry Festival



Thank You for Your JACL Membership!



We're grateful to have some of the most engaged and committed members around! Because of your loyal support, we have more premium membership upgrades and generous additional gifts than ever. We're also appreciative for those who renew year after year (some for 50 years or more!) and for our increase in new members. Your dedication is essential to our ongoing mission for social justice, education, and community! Thank you! - JACL Membership Department

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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

Irei — A National Monument for the WWII Japanese American Incarceration
Los Angeles, CA
JANM

100 N. Central Ave.

The *Ireichō* contains the first comprehensive listing of more than 125,000 persons of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly incarcerated during World War II. Visitors can now view the book and leave a special *hanko* (stamp/seal) for each person in the monument as a way to honor those incarcerated. The project's online archive is now searchable alphabetically or by camp.

Info: Visit [ireizo.com](https://www.ireizo.com) for more information and [janm.org](https://www.janm.org).

NCWNP

Building a DFC (Dementia Friendly Community)
San Jose, CA

April 14; 11:30 a.m.

San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
64 N. Fifth St.

Price: \$10 Includes Lunch

This presentation will focus on building a place or culture in which people with dementia and their caregivers can feel empowered, supported and included in society and want to remain within the community that normalizes dementia.

Info: To register by the March 31 deadline, email kazokuai2024@gmail.com.

Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival 2024

San Francisco, CA

April 13-14 and April 20-21

San Francisco Japantown
Sutter Street

Price: Free

This festival is one of California's most prominent celebrations of Asian traditions and the largest Cherry Blossom Festival on the West Coast. All are welcome to join in the festivities as the city celebrates Japanese and Japanese American culture. There will be food, entertainment, exhibits, and much more to enjoy!

Info: Visit www.sfcherryblossom.org.

Theater: 'Larry the Musical: An American Journey'

San Francisco, CA

Thru April 14

Brava Main Stage

2781 24th St.

Price: Ticket Prices Vary

This musical pays homage to Larry

Itiliong's remarkable legacy as a labor activist in California's Central Valley. It breathes life into Itiliong's extraordinary journey, illuminating the pivotal role of the Filipino American community in shaping his leadership.

Info: Visit <https://www.brava.org/all-events/larrythemusical>.

Japanese Heritage Night With the San Francisco Giants

San Francisco, CA

May 17; 7:15 p.m.

Oracle Park

24 Willie Mays Plaza

Price: Starting at \$32 for JCCNC Members

Join the JCCNC at Japanese Heritage Night as the San Francisco Giants take on the Colorado Rockies. This year's special event giveaway is an exclusive Giants Cherry Blossom Jersey, which will be available with your electronic ticket. The evening will also feature special pregame entertainment that will highlight local cultural performances.

Info: Visit <https://www.jccnc.org/japanese-heritage-night-2024/>.

PSW

The Seventh Annual VJAMM Commemoration

Venice, CA

April 18; 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Northwest corner of Venice and
Lincoln Boulevards

Price: Free

The Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument Committee celebrates seven years of the memorial monument, which reminds visitors of the 1,000 persons of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly removed from Venice, Santa Monica and Malibu in April 1942. Following the commemoration, there will be the annual VJAMM fundraiser at Hama Sushi in Venice from 4-9 p.m.

Info: Visit www.venicejamm.org or www.facebook.com/VeniceJAMM/.

'Giant Robot Biennale 5'

Los Angeles, CA

March 2-Sept. 1

JANM

100 N. Central Ave.

Price: Museum Admission

This recurring art exhibition partnered with Eric Nakamura, founder of Giant Robot, highlights creative works celebrating the ethos of Giant Robot.

Info: Visit www.janm.org.

'J. T. Sata: Immigrant Modernist'

Los Angeles, CA

Thru Sept. 1

JANM

100 N. Central Ave.

Price: Museum Admission

James Tadanao Sata (1896-1975) created some of the most adventurous photographs made in America in the 1920s and '30s, having taken photos in and around Little Tokyo, at the sea and in the mountains of Southern California. At the onset of WWII, he was forced to abandon photography and instead made drawings and paintings about life in the camps.

Info: Visit www.janm.org/exhibits/jt-sata.

Okaeri Connects! LGBTQ+ Support Group Virtual Event

English Speaking LGBTQ+ only —

Second Sundays from 4-5:15 p.m.

Japanese Speaking LGBTQ+ only —

Third Sundays from 4-5:15 p.m.

(9 a.m. JT)

Japanese Speaking Parents/Allies —

Third Sundays from 2-3:15 p.m.

(7 a.m. JT)

Price: Free

Are you a Nikkei LGBTQ+ individual or have a Nikkei LGBTQ+ loved one? We create affirming spaces by sharing our personal experiences and stories. We believe that building relationships, being seen and connecting ourselves within our Nikkei community can improve the quality of our lives.

Info: To register, visit [Okaeri.org/connects](https://www.okaeri.org/connects). For questions, please email connects@okaeri.org.

PNW

Chinese Characters Across Asia: Continuity and Transformation in Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese

Seattle, WA

April 3; 7-8:30 p.m. In-Person and

Zoom Livestream

University of Washington

Kane Hall 210

Price: Free; Reservation Required

Professor Zev Handel will explain how the building blocks of the Chinese script were adapted to represent the words and sounds of Japanese via their transformation into the scripts known as kanji and kana.

Info: Visit <https://www.washington.edu> for more information and to register.

'Advancing Democracy in the Face of Current Threats'

Portland, OR

April 6; 1-3 p.m.

University of Oregon

White Stag Building

70 N.W. Couch St.

Price: Free But Registration Is Encouraged

Join the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project and the Japanese American Museum of Oregon for the 2024 Minoru Yasui Day, which was designated in 2016 by Oregon's legislature to honor the state's only Presidential Medal of Freedom Awardee's tireless fight for equality, justice, democracy and civil rights. The event will also discuss the challenges democracy faces today, as well as explore strategies for protecting our democratic values.

Info: Visit www.jamo.org.

'Craft, Community and Care: The Art and Legacy of Bob Shimabukuro'

Portland, OR

Thru April 14

Japanese American Museum of Oregon

411 N.W. Flanders St. (entrance on

Fourth Avenue)

Price: Museum Admission

This exhibit explores the life of Okinawan American activist, artist and writer Bob Shimabukuro, who was instrumental in the Pacific Northwest's Japanese American redress movement, as well as an acclaimed woodworker and furniture maker known for his design of the Portland restaurant Tanuki. He also served as editor/columnist for the *Pacific Citizen* and the *International Examiner* in Seattle.

Info: Visit www.jamo.org.

MDC

Japanese American Veterans Memorial Program

Minneapolis, MN

May 16; 10-11 a.m.

Fort Snelling National Cemetery

7601 34th Ave. S

Save the date for this important event that will honor more than 100 local Japanese American veterans. Volunteers are needed for various tasks in preparation for the event.

Info: For more information, email chiratadulas@tcjacl.org.

IDC

2024 Topaz Art Pilgrimage

Salt Lake City, UT

May 2-4

Utah Museum of Fine Arts

410 S. Campus Center Dr.

Topaz Museum

55 W. Main St., Delta, UT

Price: \$80 to attend the May 4

gathering; some additional/optional

fees available.

The Friends of Topaz Museum and the Topaz Museum announce the 2024 Topaz Art Pilgrimage, which will pay

tribute to the 11,212 people of Japanese descent who were incarcerated at the WWII American concentration camp at Topaz and will explore the legacy of the artists of Topaz. The pilgrimage will be held in conjunction with the exhibition "Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Miné Okubo." On May 4, bus transportation will be available from Salt Lake City to Delta for a day trip to the historic Topaz site and Topaz Museum.

Info: Registration is required. Visit <https://topazmuseum.org/pilgrimages/>.

'Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Miné Okubo'

Salt Lake City, UT

Thru June 30

Utah Museum of Fine Arts

Marcia and John Price Museum Bldg.

410 Campus Center Dr.

This exhibit reveals a broader picture of the American experience through artworks and life stories of three Japanese American women from the pre-WWII generation, seen together for the first time.

Info: Visit <https://umfa.utah.edu/pictures-of-belonging>.

EDC

National Cherry Blossom Festival

Washington, D.C.

Thru April 14

Tidal Basin

Price: Various Event Ticket Prices;

This celebrated springtime event features a Cherry Blossom Parade, art installations, fashion show, kite festival, cultural events and much more!

Info: Visit nationalcherryblossomfestival.org.

Vista Philharmonic Orchestra

Featuring Midori

Groton, MA

April 6; 7:30 p.m.

Groton Hill Music Center

122 Old Ayer Road

Price: Ticket Prices Vary

Maestro Bruce Hangen welcomes violinist Midori in a concert that will feature works from the classical and romantic periods.

Info: Visit <https://grotonhill.org/concerts/vista-philharmonic>.

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In MEMORIAM

Utah Judicial Giant Raymond Uno Has Died at 93

Incarcerated as a boy in Heart Mountain, he also served as JACL national president.

By P.C. Staff

Raymond Sonji Uno, an Ogden, Utah-born Nisei who spent part of his boyhood in an American concentration camp but whose accomplishments included becoming a civil rights advocate, serving as Utah's first minority judge and in 1970, the youngest person ever elected to the office of national president of the Japanese American Citizens League, died March 8 at Salt Lake City's Veteran's Hospital. He was 93.

Larry Oda, who served as JACL national president from 2006-10 and currently serves again in the same capacity, said, "Ray was our longest-lived national president, having served in 1970-72, and was a fixture at many of our activities. He was instrumental in forming the Past Presidents Council to



Raymond S. Uno

"It was our privilege to host the Uno family reunion at JANM last year when they gathered to stamp the Ireichō. Our deepest condolences go to his family during this time of great sadness."

The College of Law of his alma mater, the University of Utah, in a statement said it mourned "the passing of retired Judge Raymond Uno — a Utah Law alumnus, the first minority judge in Utah and a towering figure in the state's legal community."

According to his autobiography, Uno was born "in a Yellow Cab before it reached the hospital on Dec. 4, 1930" — he was named after the cabdriver — to Osako Teraoka Uno, of Okayama Prefecture, Japan, and Clarence Hachiro Uno, of Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan.

His father served with the American Expeditionary Forces to France in World War I, and before he died at 47 while incarcerated with his family at the Heart Mountain War Relocation Authority Center in Wyoming on Jan. 21, 1943, the elder Uno had become Utah's

first Japanese national to become a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1936. This was thanks to an act of Congress that allowed aliens ineligible for naturalization to gain citizen status so long as the person had enlisted in the U.S. Army before April 6, 1917, and served before the Nov. 11, 1918, Armistice, had been honorably discharged and was a U.S. resident.

In his memoir, Uno wrote that his family had moved to California's San Gabriel Valley in 1939 when his father "got a job as the secretary of the Japanese Association of San Gabriel Valley." The lives of the Uno family forever changed, along with those of tens of thousands of other ethnic Japanese living along the West Coast, after Imperial Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, followed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order in February 1942.

"Our family was first rounded up with others and loaded on army trucks or buses and taken to the Pomona Assembly Center located on the Pomona Fair Grounds in Pomona, Calif.," Uno wrote. "After around three months, we were removed by troop train to a place called Heart Mountain Wyoming, a place I called 'a concentration camp.'"

Following the end of WWII, Uno enlisted in the Army in 1948 and was assigned to the Military Intelligence Language School and later was transferred to Japan, where he served with the 319th Military Intelligence Service, General Headquarters, in Tokyo, spending three months in advanced Japanese language training.

"When the Korean War

started, I interrogated Japanese prisoners of war repatriated from Russia and did liaison work with local police monitoring communist activity in the community in the prefecture of Tochigi. I was discharged May 22, 1952, with the rank of corporal," Uno wrote.

Using the GI Bill, Uno earned an associate's degree from Weber Junior College and then transferred to the University of Utah, earning a bachelor's degree in political science, followed by earning a juris doctor degree.

"Since I had no interest in practicing law, I looked for various kinds of work and started selling encyclopedias. I eventually found a job as a caseworker with the Salt Lake County Welfare Department. While employed there, I applied and was awarded a stipend and accepted by the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah in 1960.

"My first year, my field work was with the probation department of the Juvenile Court. After two years, I graduated and received my master's in social work. I then became a caseworker at the Salt Lake County Welfare Department in Salt Lake City," he wrote.

Uno's path toward a judgeship began in 1963, when he was appointed to the position of referee of the Juvenile Court in Utah, followed by an appointment as Utah's deputy county attorney — in both cases Uno being the first ethnic minority to hold those positions.

"I was appointed an assistant Utah attorney general by Utah Attorney General Phil Hansen and served from 1965-69," he wrote. Stepping away from the AG's office, he went into private practice from 1969-76, forming the firm Madsen, Uno and Cummings.

JACL chapter president, as well as the youth commissioner of the now-defunct Jr. JACL. His accomplishment — becoming elected JACL's leader at age 39 and defeating Dr. Tom Taketa and Henry Kanegae in JACL's first three-way race for the office — was overshadowed by shock and tragedy when 18-year-old Evelyn Okubo, a Jr. JACL member, was slain in her room at the Palmer House hotel. Her roommate, Ranko Yamada, was also attacked but survived after being hospitalized.

In May 1976, even though a "judgeship was not even close to anything I was thinking about at the time," Uno wrote that Salt Lake City Mayor Ted Wilson had tapped him for the Salt Lake Court bench. In 1984, he won the race for Third District Court and retired as its senior judge in 1990. Nevertheless, he wrote that he was "able to keep abreast of what was happening judicially because after I retired, I became a Senior Judge and heard cases until 2003."

Of his time serving as a judge, Uno wrote, "My 25 years on the bench were some of my most exciting, challenging, rewarding and stressful times of my life; particularly, during my term as a district court judge. It was the crown jewel of my life on this earth, and I would not exchange it for any price."

In 1991, when the Utah Minority Bar Assn. was founded, Uno served as its first president. The government of Japan would in 2012 recognize him when the consul general of Japan in Denver awarded him with a Foreign Minister's Commendation for promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S.

Of his parents, Uno wrote: "I owe a lot to my mother, Osako Teraoka Uno, who lived a long and fruitful life." She died in 1995 at 101, having lived with her son for the last 36 years of her life. Uno noted that before his father died, he had been "very active in community in the camp. He was member of the Draft Board, active in the USO and other community things."

Uno was also predeceased by his brother, Wallace Ichiro (Wally) Uno, and sister, Yuki Alma Tomomatsu. His survivors include his wife, Yoshiko, and his five sons, Tab (Bobby), Kai (Sheri), Mark (Kris), Sean and Lance and grandchildren Drue, Taylor, Summer, Sam, KT and Jax.

A celebration of life for Uno is slated for 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. on April 20 at the University of Utah Eccles Alumni House.



Anne Oda, Larry Oda and Raymond Uno at the 2019 JACL National Convention in Salt Lake City

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

have the past presidents stay involved in the well-being of the organization. I'll miss him."

"We have lost a truly great man," said Japanese American National Museum President and CEO Ann Burroughs.



Page one story from the July 24, 1970, Pacific Citizen about Uno's election as JACL national president.

PHOTO: PACIFIC CITIZEN DIGITAL ARCHIVE

It was during that time Uno was elected JACL national president in Chicago in July 1970. Prior to that, he had participated in JACL as the Salt Lake City

PLACE A TRIBUTE
 'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$20/ column inch.
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REIMAGINE EVERYTHING

TECH DIALOGUES: HOW TO CUT THE CABLE CORD?

By Ryan Kawamoto

Are you ready to ditch the cable and join the ever-growing cord-cutter team? Here, Senior Planet answers the essential questions you must consider before returning that cable box to your current TV provider company. **Why Cut the Cord?**

The most common reason that pushes people to cut the traditional cable cord is how expensive cable bills have become. Cable TV prices now average more than \$200 monthly, including all the fees for DVR, an extra cable box and taxes. Moreover, though they offer hundreds of channels, people typically only watch a handful of them.

In contrast, when it comes to streaming services, you only pay for the services you use. Plus, you can easily cancel or resume a service

subscription anytime.

Other reasons to cut the cord include the convenience and availability of streaming services, fewer ads, access to original content unavailable on cable and a vast library of on-demand content.

What Equipment Do I Need to Cut the Cord?

Most households already have everything necessary to cut the cord. To ditch the cable, you only need two things:

- **A reliable internet service** — a mere internet speed of 25Mbps is enough to stream 4K quality content.
- **A smart TV or streaming device** — If your TV can connect to the internet, it is a Smart TV and can stream. For TVs that cannot connect to the internet, you can use a streaming device. These devices connect to the internet

and are plugged into your TV via an HDMI port, allowing you to stream.

An optional piece of equipment worth listing here is an indoor HD antenna, which allows you to watch local channels for free in high definition.

Which Streaming Services Should I Get?

Before answering the question of which streaming service you should get, you should examine your viewing habits and preferences. Write down a list of all the channels, TV programs or shows you cannot live without. And be sure to include all the members of your household in the activity for a smooth transition!

If you're a fan of shows, movies and channels in other languages, certain streaming platforms offer international packages that you can add on to your base subscription. Most streaming services also have the option to turn on subtitles, or even dialogue audio tracks, in your preferred language.

Once you have a clear idea of your must-have programs and channels, you can compare and decide which streaming services work best for your household.

Types of Streaming Services

Streaming services can be grouped into four categories depending on the

type of content they provide:

- **Free** — You can cut the cord and not pay for any streaming service. Free streaming services are ad-supported and often offer a mix of unpopular live channels, on-demand classic TV shows and movies and a few original contents.
- **On-demand** — In this category, each streaming service costs \$5.99-\$22.99 per month and offers a vast library of ad-free and high-quality content, including numerous blockbusters, mainstream movies, TV shows, documentaries and original content exclusive to the service.
- **Live** — Services in this category are more expensive but still less than regular cable. They can range from \$20-\$76.99, depending on the service and the number of live channels.
- **Sports** — If you only care about live sports, certain streaming services provide a wide range of live sports events to fill the needs of any sports buff.

Is Cutting the Cord Worth It?

For most people, yes! However, only you can answer this question, given everybody's unique situation. Many on-demand streaming

options offer free trials, so you can test out if it's right for you (just be sure you know when the trial ends).

A common mistake most people make once they cut the cord is signing up for multiple streaming services for specific shows and then forgetting to cancel the service once the TV show they are interested in is over or on a break.

For more information, we invite you to access our free weekly virtual programming online at www.seniorplanet.org or call our toll-free national hotline at (888) 713-3495, open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. ET.

Ryan Kawamoto is a regional program manager for Older Adults Technology Services from AARP, a national nonprofit behind the award-winning Senior Planet program that brings together older adults to find ways to learn, work, create, exercise and thrive in today's digital age. A longer version of this article was originally published on www.seniorplanet.org by Senior Planet's resident "Techspert" Jonathan Ushindi Zaluke.



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