

PACIFIC CITIZEN

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A MURAL FOR THE AGES

The SF JACL proposes a historic mural in the heart of Japantown.

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'Tokyo Cowboy' rides into theaters.

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'Arkansas Traveler': Part 1 of 2



CELEBRATING
95
Years

JACLers Get a Preview of a Documentary About the Organization

You can't accuse Lane Nishikawa of not being thorough. The filmmaker/writer/director/actor/playwright spent years interviewing over a hundred people in 17 cities for "League of Dreams," an epic documentary history of JACL. During the Philadelphia convention, members had the chance to preview a first take of the film, which clocked in at well over feature-length.

During the Q & A that followed the screening, Nishikawa acknowledged that the documentary needs to be edited down, especially for an eventual PBS screening. "League of Dreams" is meant to be a history of JACL's first 100 years, so he technically has until 2029 to put the finishing touches on the project. It'll be done sooner, though, and he's offering to show the film for JACL chapters across the country.

Nishikawa is no stranger to JACL, or to the wider Japanese American community. Born in Hawaii and raised in California, he created his own degree, a B.A. in Asian American Theater at San Francisco State University, and made a name for himself doing one-man shows that combined a sharp wit with sharper social justice observations. He wrote and performed a trilogy about the

"League of Dreams" filmmaker Lane Nishikawa introduces the film at the recent JACL National Convention in Philadelphia.

PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA



challenges of Asian American writers getting published and actors finding roles, and if they get a role, avoiding stereotypes. He also wrote plays, including one about a Nisei soldier and his lifelong friendship with a Jewish holocaust survivor that he rescued from a concentration camp, and another play about a Nisei baseball player who leaves camp to be a soldier and runs into his brother, who's fighting for Japan.

Then, he wrote, directed and starred in a trilogy of feature films about the Nisei soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The first, "When We Were Warriors," is a short film based on his two-man play about a Nisei soldier and a holocaust survivor. The second, "Forgotten Valor," is a look at a 442nd veteran who disappears when it's announced that he'll receive a Congressional Medal of Honor with other Nisei vets after

50 years, because the announcement stirs up traumatic memories.

The third, "Only the Brave" (2006), is a powerful full-length feature film about the 442nd and the regiment's now-famous battle to rescue a battalion of Texas soldiers trapped in the Vosges mountains of France near the end of the war. Nishikawa starred in each of the projects, and for "Only the Brave," he was joined by an all-star cast that included Tamlyn Tomita, Jason Scott Lee, Yuji Okamoto, Mark Dacascos, Greg Watanabe, Ken Narasaki and Pat Morita in one his last roles.

Since then, working with the San Diego chapter and JACL National, Nishikawa has turned his cameras to documentaries that focus on the Nisei veterans and their families in "Never Forget" (2016), produced for the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII, and "Our Lost Years" (2019), a precursor

to his current project, which tells the story of wartime incarceration. Many familiar community leaders were interviewed for these films, with Nishikawa setting up a camera at JACL conventions (last year in L.A., he filmed interviews in a room off the library at the Japanese American National Museum).

"League of Dreams" closes out his latest trilogy of films, intercutting his many interview clips with historical film footage, photographs and many shots of the *Pacific Citizen* as a way to tell the story of the organization in headlines and images.

And to prove he's still being as thorough as possible, he has already set up more interviews to fill historical gaps that some audience members pointed out and is replacing interviews that were corrupted by technical glitches.

JACL conventiongoers were fortunate to get a preview look of the "League of Dreams" documentary that tells the proud story of JACL, from its origins to the social justice and educational work it carries on today.

— Gil Asakawa

To view a nine-minute teaser of the film, visit https://youtu.be/h3zP-PZ0d3g?si=x2Gt_zgdCyE0HH-T.

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NISEI WEEK COURT FEATURES JACL'S SEIA WATANABE

JACL National's Seia Watanabe, representing the Japanese Restaurant Association of America, was named First Princess on the 2024 Nisei Week Court during a coronation ceremony on Aug. 10 that also honored the 140th anniversary of Little Tokyo.

Watanabe, a graduate of California State University, Long Beach, is the current vp of public affairs for JACL. Among other members of the 82nd annual court are Queen Morgan Gee, Miss Tomodachi Amy Kubo, Anita Komatsu, Carina Sakimura and Caitlin Sasaki.

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

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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

Faster, Higher, Stronger?

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

It was interesting watching the Olympics split between the first half while in the United States and the second half while visiting Japan. It was a lot harder to follow Team USA from Japan as my streaming was blocked by geography and the coverage obviously tilted very heavily toward sports Japan was doing well in. So, I did get a good dose of wrestling, especially women's, rock climbing and, of course, breaking, where Japan's Ami Yuasa took the gold medal. What did not receive as much coverage in Japan, but I saw plenty of on

my newsfeed, was the performance of Australian breaker Dr. Rachael Gunn, aka Raygun.

Mediocre performances are nothing new to the Olympics. Pita Taufatofua from Tonga first participated in the 2016 Summer Olympics in taekwondo but then proceeded to qualify to participate in the Winter Olympics in cross-country skiing. He came in 110th out of 112 skiers, a result slightly better than posted originally with several disqualifications due to doping. And, of course, there is the Jamaican bobsled team, first establishing nonwinter-based participants for winter sports.

So, on the face of it, Dr. Gunn should not be the target of such vitriol

for what pretty much, universally agreed, was a poor performance and not worthy of Olympic representation. Many other athletes have done the same, gaming smaller talent pools for qualifying events to get onto the world stage of the Olympics. Many of her colleagues in Australia have lamented the small breaking scene on which Raygun has admittedly become one of the major leaders.

Most ironic is that Dr. Gunn, the professor, actually wrote a paper on concerns about breaking becoming an Olympic sport, that it would take away the essence of breaking and force it to conform to rules and regulations that might also exclude people from participation. And this is what makes what she did most odious. She pointed out the flaws in the system and then took advantage of the system to advance herself.

Without throwing Dr. Gunn under the bus entirely, many Australian breakers have alluded to a more diverse and vibrant breaking scene than portrayed by Dr. Gunn's rise to the presumed "top" of Australian

breaking competition.

And this is where Dr. Gunn the academic should have stepped back and recognized that perhaps she was not the best representative, and what should she be doing with her position as an academic and leader in the field to advance some of those who might otherwise not be seen or recognized by the process. Especially in an art form that is rooted in urban culture, and now as a sport, a ripe target for accusations of cultural appropriation and discrimination.

The Olympics and Paralympics are a celebration of athletic achievement. Fast, higher and stronger is the expectation, not to just "do your best and enjoy the party." So many athletes have sacrificed so much for their sport to get to the point of competing at the Olympics.

The previously mentioned Taufatofua and Jamaican bobsled teams still put in the training effort. Taufatofua had already proven his athleticism by participating in a previous Olympiad in taekwondo.

They seemed to try to do things

faster, higher and stronger. Dr. Gunn seemingly put in a half-hearted effort, fulfilling none of the three major pillars of Olympic competition, and now seems more focused on promoting her social media brand and claims to be the victim.

Contrast Dr. Gunn's path to the Olympics to gymnast Rebeca Andrade, who grew up in poverty in Brazil and came back to the Olympics faster, higher and stronger, defeating Simone Biles, the GOAT of gymnastics, for a gold medal in the floor exercise.

While we need to pay attention to stories like Dr. Gunn's, that should only be to serve as a warning from repeating the same mistakes. Stories such as Andrade's are the ones that truly make the Olympics special and worth watching every two years.

Looking forward to 2026 in Italy and, of course, 2028 in Los Angeles.

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

Importance of a Family Meeting

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Will your family fight over your estate after you are gone? That's a scary thought. Unfortunately, courts are often filled with brothers and sisters fighting over their parents' estate. Such disputes can lead to prolonged and costly legal battles. Perhaps worse, the pain, bitterness and resentment from this kind of division may never go away.

If keeping peace in your family is near the top of the list of estate planning goals, you're not alone. Every parent hopes their family will remain close even after they are gone. So, with some thoughtful planning, parents can prevent sibling disputes, ensuring that your children will still get together for Thanksgiving, New Year's Day and other family celebrations long after you're gone.

There are a number of ways to maximize the possibility that your family will remain conflict-free after you die. In this article, I have three tips to help you get that done: (1) give equally; (2) give equitably; and (3) have a family meeting.

GIVE 'EQUALLY'

If your goal is to minimize conflicts between your children, then you should consider dividing your estate "equally." Throughout their lives,

your children have likely heard you say, "I love all my children equally." Therefore, it's quite likely that your children might assume they will all get an "equal" share of your estate. So, the simplest solution is to divide whatever you have equally among your children.

During your lifetime, parents can make gifts to children or directly pay for things like a college education or family vacation. However, for the sake of peace and harmony after death, it's important to think about keeping things equal because you won't be around to explain things after you're gone. You can instruct your successor trustee to sell everything and then distribute the proceeds equally among your beneficiaries.

Also, parents should never divide an indivisible asset in hopes that it will bring their heirs together. Instead, give the house, the vacation property, the land or the business to just one child and make up the difference with a monetary share for the others. Alternatively, stipulate that all the assets be sold, and divide the proceeds equally. If a child really wants a specific asset, he or she can have the option to buy the others out.

GIVE 'EQUITABLY'

There are many reasons why parents might opt for another option. An equal split might have been fair a

generation or two ago when parents died in their 60s and 70s. But today, parents are living well into their 90s and even 100s. An equal split doesn't seem quite fair when the bulk of caregiving responsibilities (especially those latter years) fall on one child.

According to a Merrill Lynch study, two-thirds of Americans believe that under certain circumstances, an uneven split is the right way to go. For instance, a child who steps in as primary caregiver for an aging mom or dad deserves to inherit more than other siblings. Also, nearly 1 in 4 of those surveyed said a child with their own children deserves more money than a child who does not have kids.

Another possible exception to equal distribution is if there's an estranged child that you want to disinherit. This is legally permissible, i.e., there's no law that says you have to give to all your children equally. However, equally is what happens if you die "intestate" (without a will or trust). If that's your wish, make sure you seek legal advice to avoid legal challenges by the disinherited child.

Some other possible exceptions are: (1) you have a child with a gambling or drug addiction; (2) you have a child who is financially irresponsible; or (3) you have a child on Medicaid or some other public benefit program in which inheriting money might disqualify them for government assistance.

HAVE A FAMILY MEETING

The "traditional" estate planning model was to reveal the estate plan upon death, e.g., we have all seen the movies where the family gathers

to hear the reading of the will. This, however, will often lead to fighting over the parent's estate in court.

One of the best weapons you have against conflict, in all areas of life, is communication. There are times when the worst thing you can do is "blindside" a child after death. If they aren't inheriting as much as they expect, it's only fair to let them know the truth before you die. If you are leaving unequal shares, many estate planning attorneys describe "communicating the plan" as the final step in the estate planning process.

The modern approach is to have a "Family Meeting" after finalizing the estate plan. When they understand your reasons for making certain decisions and they hear them directly from you, you avoid one sibling blaming another. By conducting a Family Meeting, the potential for misunderstandings, family objections, confusion, delays and loss of control is greatly reduced.

So, once you have figured out how you want your money and possessions distributed after you die and you have incorporated those directions in your estate plan, it's time for a Family Meeting to communicate your intentions with your children. This allows family members and fiduciaries to understand the plan and ask questions of you and/or your professional advisers.

Experience suggests that ONLY the children/heirs be present for the Family Meeting. This is not just my experience but is found in nearly any book or guide on dividing. Sibling rivalries or tensions are hard enough to deal with in the face of loss; adding personalities and people perceived as "outside the direct family" participat-

ing in choices can create tensions and conflict easily avoided by keeping it only to the heirs.

In-law spouses, not being direct family members, can sometimes complicate estate and trust matters by exerting influence over a spouse who is a direct beneficiary, especially if they are "whispering in the ear" of such direct beneficiary spouse. In cases of unresolvable disagreement, consider bringing in an outside professional — whether a banker, financial planner or lawyer. That outside professional acts as the rational person in the room who doesn't have a dog in the fight.

Having a neutral third-party professional communicate your plan's intent and mechanics to the family members and fiduciaries in your presence of the client is a powerful tool to help avoid family bitterness and resentment. A Family Meeting is designed to flush out and deal with potential family problems and disputes in advance. If one family dispute can be avoided, the family might save hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees incurred in an unnecessary will or trust contest.

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.

GIDDYUP, 'TOKYO COWBOY' — IT'S WORTH THE RIDE

Indie pic turns tables on 'Western who finds self after visiting the East' trope.

By Alex Luu,
P.C. Contributor

The new film "Tokyo Cowboy" defies easy categorization. Is it a quirky fish-out-of-water story? A sly commentary on corporate culture vs. grassroots individualism? Or a meditation on alienation?

It is all of these things and more. It also happens to be a refreshingly original piece of storytelling complete with sublime performances, breathtaking cinematography and a subtle-yet-whimsical soundtrack. Add to that unexpected and tranquil moments of emotional poignancy, this debut feature film by American director Marc Marriott is one of the best films to come out in years.

"Tokyo Cowboy" traces the journey of Hideki Sakai (Arata Iura), a Japanese businessman sent by his superiors to a cattle ranch in Montana. Although owned by the Japanese company that he works for, the ranch is on the brink of being shut down and sold. Sakai has the arduous task of convincing the ranch boss (Robin Weigert) and her ranch hands to transition it to a strictly Japanese cow/wagyu beef ranch.

When he arrives in rural Montana, Sakai quickly realizes that he is absolutely ill-suited (literally and figuratively) for the job. He is given a chaperone, a Mexican ranch hand named Javi (Goya Robles), who reluctantly shows him the ropes. What follows is the remarkable journey of an unremarkable company suit who finds himself at a crucial crossroads in life and career, a crossroads that leads to a heartrending self-discovery in the unlikelyst of places — Montana's Big Sky Country.

What's even more remarkable is Marriott's own journey of bringing the film into fruition. Decades ago, he was a young Mormon missionary in Japan and lived in Hiroshima for two years, his daily life as a typical *gaijin* compounded by a profound sense of disconnect.

"That experience was really impactful, and it changed me a lot, and it does relate to the film," said Marriott. "I stuck out a lot in Japan — I was kind of this loud American. I found a little bit of humility. I learned that I had to listen more and not speak so much . . . and gradually opened up to the people, the culture and beliefs, and that really relates to the main character, Hideki, because he also has to find a bit of humility."

It was also around this time that Marriott read an article about a kind of subculture — Japanese employees being sent to American cattle ranches that are owned by Japanese businesses to learn how to ranch. "That

idea of the 'Japanese cowboy' really captivated my imagination, and it stayed with me for a long time."

Fast-forwarding roughly 30 years — after cutting his teeth as series producer and director on various shows for the History Channel, Discovery Channel, TLC, VHI, as well as reality TV — Marriott felt it was time to dive into directing a feature film. Marriott's friend and neighbor, Brigham Taylor, was the first person to hear his pitch for "Tokyo Cowboy."

Both men had known each other for decades and were interns at the famed Sundance Lab many years ago. Taylor, himself a veteran producer of big-budget Hollywood fare, immediately warmed up to the simple nuances of "Tokyo Cowboy."

"Brigham has a real sense of story and character. He liked that it was something that doesn't have any big, crazy special effects. He was interested in a quieter kind of film," Marriott said. "It was around February '20 when I pitched it to him, and then the pandemic hit. But all of a sudden that opened up this huge block of space, and within a year, we had a script."

As much as Marriott's infusing a bit of his own sensibilities and self-discovery in Japan that directly mirrors the main character Hideki's evolution in Montana, the other characters and the rest of the script also had to be completely authentic. This commitment to being real and vulnerable came via Ayako Fujitani's involvement in the project.

Fujitani, who co-stars as Hideki's fiancée, Keiko, also co-wrote the script with Dave Boyle.

The authenticity in "Tokyo Cowboy" is palpable, and there are no false notes in the film, from its first opening frames to its last iconic image of Hideki on a horse against the gorgeous Montana sky.

At previous screenings (especially in Japan), viewers were so impressed that Marriott was able to snag Iura for the role of Hideki. "So many people came up to me and said they were amazed that I was able to get the 'Tom Cruise' of Japan to be in my movie!" It is arguable whether the Cruise comparison is accurate (that's like saying the legend Hayao Miyazaki is Japan's Walt Disney, not exactly the same), but what's undeniable is Iura's masterful understated performance. His eyes reveal the depth of his character's awkwardness, heartbreak and ultimate joy. There's one pivotal scene that takes place at Javi's niece's quinceañera that will no doubt bring tears to viewers, a true testament to the perfect combination of Iura's acting and Marriott's masterful directing.

It is no surprise that "Tokyo Cowboy" has already racked up a slew of awards, including Best Narrative Feature at the Vermont Film & Folklore Festival, Tallgrass Film Festival, Sedona International Film Festival and San Luis Obispo International Film Festival, as well as Best Cinematography and Best Editing at the Zion Indie Film Festival.

But perhaps the most impressive response to the film is that countless audience members have told Marriott that the film genuinely feels like it was directed by a Japanese filmmaker. They're not wrong. "Tokyo Cow-

boy" has the meditative tone of the films of Yasujiro Ozu.

There is one line of dialogue in the film that encapsulates its various themes, delivered by Javi to Hideki: "You have to learn their language, and I'm *not* talking about English!" Hideki gradually learns how to do this, blossoms and grows as a human being. Likewise, Marriott has also done this as a filmmaker, and the result is nothing short of a movie gem that stands to be the indie darling of the year and beyond. ■



AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2024 TOUR SCHEDULE

- PANA CONVENTION (COPANI)** Sep 5-8
Asuncion, Paraguay
- EASTERN CANADIAN CAPITALS HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida) Sep 18-26
Montreal, Via Rail Canada, Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara Falls. **Waitlist**
- ICELAND HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida). Oct 2-8
Reykjavik, Blue Lagoon, Strokkur Geyser, Gullfoss/Golden Falls, Thingvellir National Park, Viking Ship Museum.

2025 TOUR SCHEDULE PREVIEW

- HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVALS HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Feb 3-14
Abashiri, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Otaru, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo. Hyobaku Ice Festival, Asahikawa Snow Festival, Sapporo Snow Festival, Hyoto Winter Festival.
- CLASSICAL JAPAN HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Mar 16-27
Tokyo, Mt Fuji, Yamanashi, Shizuoka, Hiroshima, Kyoto.
- TREASURES OF IRELAND TOUR** (Carol Hida). Apr 7-15
Dublin, Limerick, Killarney, Blarney.
- KOREA HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Apr 10-23
Seoul, Bullet Train, Gyeongju, Busan, Jeju Island, Jeonju, Daejeon, Nami Island, Seoul, DMZ, K-Drama sites.
- JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) May 11-23
Tokyo, Ashikaga Flower Park, Yamagata, Sakata/Shonai, Akita, Morioka, Sanriku Railway coastal train ride, Hanamaki Onsen, Matsushima, Nikko/Kinugawa Onsen, Tokyo.
- MUSIC CITIES HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida). May 12-19
New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville.
- GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Jun 15-25
Tokyo, Hakone/Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experiences.
- HOKKAIDO SUMMER HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Jul 13-25
Hakodate, Lake Toya, Noboribetsu, Otaru, Sapporo, Wakkanai, Rishiri Island, Asahikawa, Furano, Tokyo.
- DANUBE RIVER CRUISE** (Carol Hida) Aug 27-Sep 9
Pre-cruise in Budapest; Bratislava, Vienna, Weissenkirchen, Linz, Passau, Vilshofen; Post-cruise in Prague. **Bonus Discount - Limited Time Offer.**
- KENYA WILDLIFE SAFARI HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida) Oct 15-29
Nairobi, Amboseli-Nakuru Lake-Masai Mara National Parks, Mt. Kenya Safari Club, Sweetwaters Tented Camp, Jane Goodall Chimpanze Sanctuary.
- OKINAWA HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Nov 13-23
Naha, Onnason, Islands of Ishigaki, Iriomote & Taketomi.

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Ernest or Carol Hida

ARKANSAS TRAVELER: From Jerome and Rohwer to the Tule Lake Pilgrimage

Part 1 of this two-part series sparks conversation around the history of Jim Crow and our own community's wartime experiences.

Incarceration survivors pose with the Jerome monument.

By Rob Buscher,
P.C. Contributor

In June and July 2024, I had the opportunity to attend both the Jerome/Rohwer and Tule Lake Pilgrimages. Taking place just under four weeks from one another, these two events expanded my understanding of the wartime incarceration in new and different ways, based on the unique geographic features, regional cultures and historic experiences that incarcerated endured at each site.

Adding an additional layer of nuance to these trips was the fact that my family recently discovered that a distant cousin of my Obaachan and his wife were incarcerated at both the Jerome and later Tule Lake camps. With this renewed appreciation for the significance of these sites in the context of my own family history, I embarked on the Jerome/Rohwer Pilgrimage that took place June 5-8.

Perhaps based on the geographical distance from both West Coast JA communities and the East Coast resettlers, the Arkansas camps have not historically held organized pilgrimages until Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages began hosting them a couple years before the pandemic in 2018.

Certainly, the politics of the region as a former Jim Crow state may have deterred some would-be pilgrims from attempting such efforts earlier. The Governor of Arkansas during World War II, Homer Adkins, vehemently opposed the placing of WRA relocation centers in his state.

Whatever the case, few Japanese Americans have made the trek back to Arkansas until fairly recently. Having previously visited several of the former WRA sites in Western states, I was interested to see how the regional context would vary in the Jerome and Rohwer sites, which was something the pilgrimage organizing committee accentuated through their programming choices.

Hosted in the state capitol of Little Rock, the three-day pilgrimage featured a variety of local speakers and allowed participants to

also engage with the vibrant Black civil rights history of the region.

The opening program on June 5 was a special workshop on Black reparations hosted by members of Nikkei Coalition for Redress/Reparations and Dreisen Heath, who previously led Human Rights Watch efforts toward Black reparations and is herself a descendant of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921.

The workshop powerfully grounded the pilgrims in overlapping history of racial oppression and gave helpful context for what the region's most populous historically marginalized community was currently working toward in their own quest for reparative justice.

Following the workshop at the opening dinner, we heard keynote remarks from civil rights activist Akemi Kochiyama, granddaughter of seminal activist Yuri Kochiyama, who was herself a former incarcerated at Jerome. Included in the younger Kochiyama's remarks were personal stories about her family's multigenerational commitment to racial justice movements and a detailed account of the friendship between Yuri and Malcolm X.

After moving to Harlem in the postwar era, Yuri met Malcolm at a rally and invited him to visit her apartment when a group of hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) from Hiroshima and Nagasaki were in New York to testify at the United Nations.

This visit sparked both a friendship that would last until Malcolm's tragic death and an organizing partnership that expanded the vision and scope of both activists. The younger Kochiyama's own work to preserve and share

the story of solidarity and intersectional activism that her grandmother Yuri's life embodies left the pilgrims with a meaningful call to action, before ending the first evening's program with a short bon odori practice session.

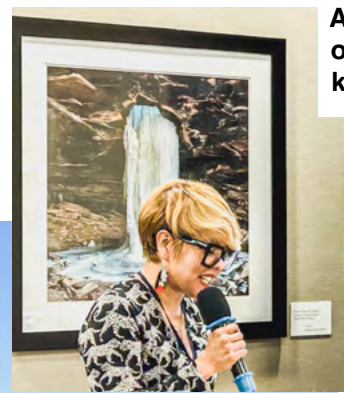
Early the next morning, we boarded coach buses and departed for the former site of Rohwer, which is located about 100 miles southeast of Little Rock in the heart of the Delta, less than seven miles from the Mississippi River in former swamplands-turned-farm fields by incarcerated laborers.

Their efforts were so successful that the former site of Rohwer relocation center spent most of the last 80 years as cotton fields, before later being converted into soybean fields. Aside from the cemetery, which is listed on the national register as a historic landmark, and a single smokestack that once belonged to the hospital complex, nothing of the camp remains.

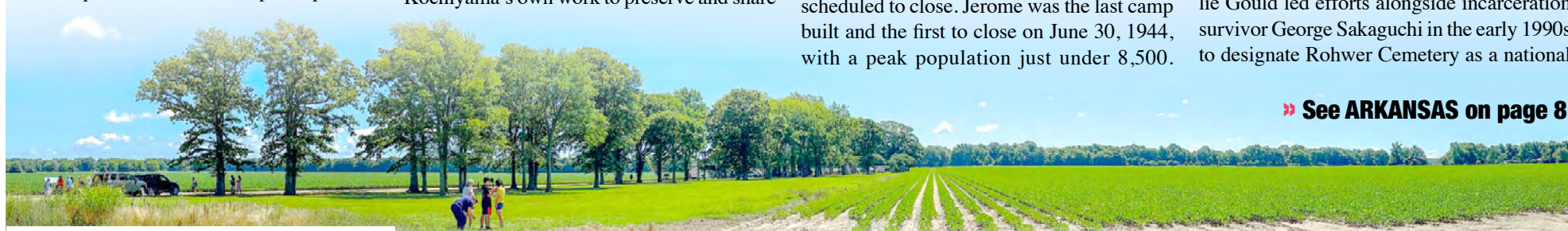
For a considerable portion of the ride there, we had the incredible fortune of listening to 98-year-old Mits Yamamoto recount his wartime experiences. Mits was 16 when Pearl Harbor was attacked and has a memory clear as the day it happened for much of his wartime ordeal. After being forced into the Fresno Assembly Center, he accompanied his family to Jerome camp. Shortly after the WRA began issuing temporary work leave permits, Mits spent time working in Chicago and later Florida.

After his job assignment concluded, Mits returned to Jerome to help his family pack their belongings when the Jerome camp was scheduled to close. Jerome was the last camp built and the first to close on June 30, 1944, with a peak population just under 8,500.

Akemi Kochiyama, the granddaughter of Yuri and Bill Kochiyama, gives the keynote address.



Historic landmark plaque at Rohwer cemetery
PHOTOS: ROB BUSCHER



Panorama of the former Rohwer site

PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER

» See ARKANSAS on page 8

A MURAL FOR THE AGES

The San Francisco JACL chapter proposes an art installation that will forever honor and remember key people, places and events that have shaped the 116-year history of Japantown.



By P.C. Staff

Kyutaro and Yona Abiko, Jeff Adachi, Jimbo Edwards, Archbishop Nitten Ishida, Tsuyako “Sox” Kitashima, Janice Mirikitani, Henri and Tomoye Takahashi, Clifford Uyeda and Yori Wada. You may have heard of some of these individuals, or maybe you’ve never heard of them before.

The San Francisco JACL has proposed a “Japantown History Mural” spanning a full city block, featuring large-format portraits of these individuals to bring to life key people, places and events that have shaped the 116-year history of San Francisco Japantown.

Since the proposed location along Geary Boulevard borders Peace Plaza, which is public property, the proposal will need to be approved by various city agencies.

The idea for a “Japantown History Mural” arose after the SF chapter received bequests from three long-time members: Yo Hironaka, Greg Marutani and Frank Minami.

Hironaka was a tireless community volunteer; Marutani dedicated himself to public education about the Japanese American wartime experience and served on the National JACL Education Committee for many years; and Frank Minami was a Shin-Issei banker known for his generosity in supporting community causes.

“This is an opportunity for the Japanese American community to tell the history of Japantown to a broader audience,” stated SF JACL President Judy Hamaguchi.

The mural effort began in July 2022 with an agreement to collaborate with Lisa Brewer of Mission Arts 415. Years ago, she and her partner, Randolph Bowes, came up with the idea of beautifying a San Francisco alley as a way to reduce crime. The resulting Lilac Mural Project in the Mission District has been highly successful, improving public safety and creating a new attraction for visitors.

“The vivid and high-impact Japantown History Mural promises to become a major destination for locals and visitors alike,” according to Brewer.

The master artist for the proposed project is Crayone (aka Rigel Juratovac), the legendary graffiti artist who has created numerous San Francisco and Bay Area murals to international acclaim. He was raised in San Francisco Japantown by a single mother from Korea and began his artistry with graffiti on the Japantown Bowl building that existed at the time.

“I am honored to work on a mural with so much significance for Japantown, a community I love,” said Juratovac.

The SF JACL launched a public nomination process for the mural portraits on Nov. 1, 2022. Submissions were accepted through Dec. 31, 2022. The chapter established the following criteria for portrait nominees, individuals who have made a significant connection to San Francisco Japantown.

1. Established and built San Francisco Japantown and who have made significant contributions to continue to build and preserve it; or
2. Advanced our diverse stories and history through education, the arts and culture; or
3. Played a leadership role in social justice and civil rights issues.

The SF JACL appointed a Mural Project Advisory Committee composed of Dr. Ben Kobashigawa, emeritus professor in Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University; Kenji Tagumi, editor-in-chief of the *Nichi Bei Weekly* newspaper; Rosalyn Tonai, executive director of the National Japanese American Historical Society; and Darcy Nishi of the Japantown Rainbow Coalition and a next-generation Nikkei leader.

At a public meeting on Jan. 12, 2023, the Advisory Committee reviewed the 70 nominations that were submitted and selected 27 nominees for portraits on the proposed mural for further consideration.

This list of 27 individuals was reduced to 10 portraits, which were then presented for public review at a community meeting held on Jan. 30, 2023. The 10 portraits included two couples: Kyutaro and Yona Abiko, as well as Henri and Tomoye Takahashi. One notable, Ruth Asawa, was selected, but the renown sculptor’s estate decided not to have her portrait included.

Below are brief profiles of the selected notables in chronological order.

KYUTARO ABIKO (1860-1936; Issei), a native of Niigata, was an early Japanese settler who arrived in California in 1885. In 1899, he launched the *Nichi Bei* newspaper, which would become one of the most influential Japanese daily newspapers until 1942, when the war forced the newspaper to cease operations. A successful entrepreneur, he purchased 3,000 acres in the Central Valley community of Livingston to establish the Yamato Colony in 1904, and he contributed to establishing Japanese colonies in Cortez and Cressey. He published the leading Japanese daily newspaper the *Nichi Bei Shinbun* for many years, and the newspaper’s legacy remains today with the Nichi Bei Foundation and its weekly newspaper that continues to connect Japanese American communities in and around San Francisco and beyond. A devout Christian, he was among the founders of the San Francisco Christian Federation, the first Japanese American ecumenical Christian organization that provided social services to Japanese immigrant survivors of the 1906 earthquake.

YONA ABIKO (1880-1844; Issei) immigrated to San Francisco in 1907 after graduating from Tsuda College, which was founded by her sister, Ume Tsuda, and marrying Kyutaro. A dedicated community leader primarily serving other women, Yona was among the

Issei women founders of the Joshi Seinen Kai, an organization dedicated to welcoming newly arrived Japanese immigrant women by offering temporary housing, English-language classes and other social services. As a founder of the Japanese Young Women’s Christian Assn., Yona helped the Joshi Seinen Kai raise money to purchase its own building, located in Japantown, in 1921. This building was later renovated by renowned architect Julia Morgan, reopened in 1932 and remains as a community asset in Japantown. Committed to preserving Japanese heritage among the Nisei generation, Yona and Kyutaro organized *Nisei Kengakudan* study tours to Japan for Nisei leaders, affording them opportunities to connect with prominent Japanese leaders and contribute to strengthening U.S.-Japan relations. When Kyutaro died in 1936, Yona succeeded him as publisher of the *Nichi Bei* newspaper, becoming the first woman to lead a Japanese community newspaper in the country.

ARCHBISHOP NITTEN ISHIDA (1901-1996; Issei), a native of Hiroshima, arrived in San Francisco in 1931 to establish the Nichiren Hokke Buddhist Church of America, which soon became a center for spiritual and cultural activity. Ishida taught calligraphy there for 60 years. His wife, Chiyoko, was a master instructor of the Omote Senke School of Tea, and a formal tea room was built within the Japantown property. As a community leader with strong ties to Japan, Ishida was incarcerated at the Crystal City, Texas, federal prison camp. After the war, he returned to his church and offered social services to families returning from prison camps and led efforts to send care packages to war-torn Japan. Appointed Archbishop in 1953, Ishida worked to bring together people of diverse religious backgrounds and was instrumental in the founding of the Japanese American Religious Federation. During urban redevelopment of Japantown that resulted in the displacement of many families and seniors, Ishida partnered with tenant rights organization Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions to secure the 235-unit Hinode Towers/Nihonmachi Terrace affordable housing complex that remains an important community asset.

JIMBO EDWARDS (1911-2000) bridged the Black and Japanese communities as proprietor of the jazz club Jimbo’s Bop City, located in the heart of Japantown. He provided a safe and inclusive community space for music lovers and jazz musicians that transcended ethnic barriers. A serial entrepreneur originally from Texas, Edwards first visited San Francisco in 1939 to attend the World’s Fair, after which he and his wife, Leola, decided to make the city their home. As automobiles became widely affordable, Edwards started out as San Francisco’s first Black car salesman but took over Jimbo’s Waffle Shop in 1950. The back of the restaurant became home to impromptu jam sessions,





and the renamed Jimbo's Bop City soon became a popular after-hours jazz club, open between 2-6 a.m. Despite many federal, state and local laws discriminating against Black people before the Civil Rights movement, Jimbo prohibited racism of any kind within his establishment. For the next 15 years until it closed in 1965, Jimbo's Bop City attracted the likes of Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker and Sarah Vaughn, bringing jazz greats and meaningful cultural diversity to Japantown.

DR. CLIFFORD UYEDA (1917-2004; Nisei), a longtime Japantown resident and beloved pediatrician, was an intrepid advocate for the Japanese American community. In 1969, he co-founded the Center for Japanese American Studies at San Francisco State University. He was an early board member of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. An active member and later president of the SF JACL chapter, he was a leader in the JACL redress campaign in 1977 and was elected JACL national president in 1978. Under his leadership, JACL expanded lobbying efforts to secure redress and contributed to the formation of the U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians by President Jimmy Carter. From 1988-92, Uyeda served as president of the National Japanese American Historical Society and published a book about the Military Intelligence Service. He then worked to secure greater recognition of the wartime Nisei draft resisters of conscience and Japanese Latin Americans.

YORI WADA (1916-1997, Nisei) served as executive director of the Buchanan YMCA from 1966-82, mentoring countless Black and Asian American young people. A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, before WWII, Wada encountered widespread job discrimination and worked as a grocery clerk before joining the U.S. Army 442 Nisei Regimental Combat Team. After the war, he dedicated his career to youth development. As the leader of the Western Addition Council of Youth Serving Agencies, Wada collaborated with other nonprofit leaders to fill federally funded paid summer jobs with neighborhood youth. As a member of the San Francisco Civil Service Commission, he advocated for the inclusion of more women and people of color in the police and fire departments. In 1977, Gov. Jerry Brown appointed Wada to the University of California Board of Regents, and he became the first Asian American regent in the board's 109-year history. During his tenure as regent, he was an early advocate for the university system's divestment from South Africa and championed affirmative action.

JANICE MIRIKITANI (1941-2021; Sansei) was an award-winning poet, performer and tireless advocate of the poor and marginalized. Incarcerated with her family at the Rowher prison camp during WWII, Mirikitani's poetry and activism address the horrors of war, institutional racism and sexual violence, as well as celebrate the power of love and humanism. In 2000, Mayor Willie Brown Jr. appointed Mirikitani as the City's second Poet Laureate, succeeding Lawrence Ferlinghetti. She wrote many poems about the Japanese American experience, from forced removal to horse stalls during World War II to the founding of the Japanese Cultural Community Center of Northern California to celebrating the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City. Together with her husband, the Rev. Cecil Williams, Mirikitani transformed the Glide Memorial Methodist Church from a traditional to a transformation Christian ministry focused on not only sheltering unhoused individuals but also affording them wrap-around services, including group therapy and employment services. Mirikitani served on the San Francisco Arts Commission, expanding opportunities for underrepresented artists, including those in Japantown, to access public funding.

HENRI AND TOMOYE TAKAHASHI (1914-2002, Issei; 1915-2015, Nisei) started the Takahashi Trading Company in 1945, just after they were released from the Topaz prison camp where their two children, Masako and Norman, were born. From the original store in Japantown, the couple secured an export license to ship medicine and other relief supplies to war-torn families in Japan. With Henri's innovative designs of Japanese screens, lamps and housewares, the business grew rapidly, expanding to multiple stores in and around San Francisco, as well as one in New York City. In 1986, the couple, joined by Tomoye's sister, Martha Masako Suzuki, established the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation with the mission of supporting the Japanese American community and to foster U.S.-Japan relations through cultural and educational endeavors. The foundation has awarded transformational grants to many Japantown organizations. In 2010, Tomoye and her sister received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, Japan's highest civilian award.

TSUYAKO 'SOX' KITASHIMA (1918-2005; Nisei), considered the "godmother of Japantown," was a 25-year volunteer and board member of Kimochi Senior Services, a JACL member and an iconic spokesperson for the National Coalition of Redress and Reparation. After being released from Topaz prison camp in 1945, Sox Kataoka married Tom Kitashima, and they settled in San Francisco. She initially worked at the Wartime Relocation Authority San Francisco regional office and,

later, at the Veterans Administration for 30 years. Upon retirement in 1981, she dedicated herself to the redress movement. Launching a letter-writing campaign from her kitchen table, she is credited with single-handedly gathering 8,000 letters of support for Japanese American reparations throughout the 1980s. After the enactment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, Sox focused on securing redress for every eligible Japanese American, even complex cases involving those without a permanent address or in jail or a mental health facility. In 1998, Sox was awarded a Free Spirit Award by the Freedom Forum.

JEFF ADACHI (1959-2019, Sansei) was elected San Francisco Public Defender in 2002, capping a 32-year tenure there, handling over 3,000 criminal cases over that time. For many years, he served on the board of the SF JACL chapter, the Asian American Theater Company and the Nichi Bei Foundation Advisory Council. In 1995, he founded the San Francisco-based Asian American Arts Foundation that hosted the Golden Rink Award to recognize Asian American creative artists, including actors and musicians. The foundation awarded more than \$100,000 in grants to emerging Asian American artists. Adachi also directed and produced award-winning films, including "The Slanted Screen" (2006), about Hollywood's stereotypical treatment of Asian men; "You Don't Know Jack: The Jack Soo Story," about Jack Soo, who was a Japanese American actor who used a Chinese name; "America Needs a Racial Facial," a short historical documentary about racism in the U.S.; and "Defender," about a notorious criminal case from Adachi's case files that was subject to intense racism.

The proposed mural also includes references to significant events such as the arrival of the Kanrin Maru ship from Japan in 1860, the 1906 Earthquake, the wartime incarceration, redevelopment, redress and reparations, key Japantown business such as Uoki Sakai supermarket and Benkyodo, as well as significant Japantown organizations such as the Committee Against Nihonmachi Evictions, the Japanese YWCA and Kinmon Gakuen Japanese Language School, among others.

The SF JACL chapter has hosted nine public meetings, including three following the release of the near-final design. The next step will be to seek approval from the Recreation and Parks Department, which owns the wall, and the Arts Commission.

For updates on the mural proposal, visit the San Francisco JACL chapter website at www.sfjacl.org.

Editor's Note: In a late-breaking development at press time, the SF JACL chapter has changed the name of the project to 'San Francisco Japantown Journey.'



The San Francisco JACL's proposed Japantown mural will feature the faces, places and events that have shaped the cultural landmark's 116-year history.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MISSION ARTS 415

ARKANSAS » continued from page 5

historic landmark, leveraging her relationship with fellow Arkansan and then-Gov. Bill Clinton to do so in 1992.

Later, Mayor Gould worked with incarceration survivors and descendants to establish a small museum in the old McGehee train station, located near the town center. It was here that our lunch program took place, with soul food dishes like fried catfish and hush-puppies catered by local food trucks.

Current Mayor Jeff Owyong, a third-generation Chinese American who has lived in the Delta for the last 40 years, gave welcoming remarks, followed by a performance from the Central Arkansas Taiko troupe.

The program concluded with a two-song mini-Obon, where the approximately 200 Japanese Americans danced the Tanko Bushi and Tokyo Ondo to honor our departed ancestors and those who were impacted by the incarceration in Arkansas. We then ended our time in McGehee by touring the Jerome Rohwer Incarceration Interpretive Museum, whose exhibit featured camp art and other artifacts donated by survivors.

From there we went to the Jerome camp, a further 15-miles south of McGehee, about a 30-minute drive from the border of Louisiana. Here for the first time, I stood on ground on which members of my own family were incarcerated.

My initial impression was shock at the total absence of what occurred in this space. Like Rohwer, the Jerome camp was all swamplands when the incarcerated arrived. After filling in the swamp with topsoil, the Issei and Nisei farmers toiled on this land to make it into productive farmland.

Shortly after the camp was closed, a farmer

by the name of Ellington purchased the land and proceeded to remove the barracks foundations from the ground with a backhoe. As our buses pulled into the Ellington farm's driveway, we were greeted by the son and great-nephew of the original landowner, who have pledged to make their lands available to visitors during the pilgrimage and other times when survivors or descendants have made their own solo trek to the site.

Aside from a large commemorative stone near the road and another smokestack from the Jerome hospital complex, no visible signs of the Jerome camp remain. As I meandered around the dusty access roads between the rows of soybean as far as the eye could see, I searched for any evidence of what had once occurred here.

Finding none, my initial sense of numbness turned to frustration and even anger. It was as if the experiences of our cousins and the approximately 8,500 other incarcerated who were imprisoned at Jerome had never happened. If not for the commemorative stone, there would be no way of knowing what occurred here.

Still processing this complex mix of emotions, we left the Jerome site for the McGehee Men's Club, where pilgrims enjoyed a barbecue dinner at the annual fundraiser for the Jerome Rohwer Interpretive Museum.

My earlier feelings of frustration melted into gratitude for the genuine Southern hospitality that our local hosts showed by welcoming us into their community. As we offered the local residents a glimpse of Japanese culture through the earlier Obon program, this was effectively their way of reciprocating a uniquely Arkansan cultural experience as we dined in a former Budweiser distribution warehouse. They then hosted a live auction where local farmers bid on yards of mulch,

weed killer and other agricultural goods from whose sale the proceeds benefited the incarceration museum.

On the bus ride back to Little Rock, I marveled at the complicated combination of racially restrictive policies that had shaped and molded this region of the country, as some of the pilgrims shared reflections. We then watched the documentary "Relocation, Arkansas," about the few Japanese American families who had stayed behind after the camps closed.

The next morning, our pilgrimage programs resumed at the Ron Robinson Theater in downtown Little Rock, located in the heart of the River Market District. There, we enjoyed a one-woman show by childhood incarceration survivor Connie Shirakawa, who regaled us with tales from her youth growing up on the South Side of Chicago after her family resettled there in the postwar era.

Other programs included presentations on the photographic record from the two Arkansas camps, a tribute to Mayor Rosalie Gould, a camp survivor panel and presentation on the Stockton Assembly Center.

That evening, ABC7 news anchor David Ono presented his multimedia theater presentation "Defining Courage," about the Japanese American veterans of WWII. But since I had previously seen it at the 2023 JACL National Convention, I took this opportunity to do some local siteseeing on my own.

Given that we were less than three miles away from Central High School, where the infamous Little Rock Nine school integration case took place following the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, it seemed remiss not to visit.

I was pleasantly surprised to see no fewer than a dozen other pilgrims who decided to join the historic walking tour operated by the National Park Service. Starting with a short presentation by NPS Ranger Jazmyn Bernard, we then walked over to the grounds of Central High.

Ranger Bernard proceeded to tell us in painstaking detail the vitriolic hate speech

and threats of physical violence that the Black children endured simply for attempting to attend school. At one point in the tour, Ranger Bernard walked backwards in front of us, shouting obscenities and other hate speech that the white supremacist protestors yelled at Elizabeth Eckford, the 15-year-old girl pictured in the renowned photos of the Little Rock Nine. I was not the only one of the pilgrims moved to tears as we caught a brief glimpse into the daily realities of Black Americans living in the Jim Crow South.

Following my visit to Central High, I had the opportunity to tour the Black history museum located at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, where I learned more about the history of school integration and the role that Booker T. Washington played in the Black school movement of the pre-civil rights era.

Speaking with the museum docents, I learned that several other pilgrims had also visited the museum during that weekend. We shared a quiet moment of reflection in the shared community histories of our respective traumas in this state.

Walking back to the pilgrimage hotel just a couple blocks from the Mosaic Templars, I encountered a sign for the Mount Holly Cemetery that proudly proclaimed it to be the final resting place of four Confederate Generals. Suddenly, the absence of wartime incarceration history at Jerome did not seem so bad when I considered the immense pain that Black Americans must encounter on a daily basis when facing reminders of Arkansas' past.

The final day of the Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage began with a keynote presentation by Frank Abe, followed by additional opportunities to connect with fellow pilgrims, including an intergenerational group discussion, farewell dinner and social gathering.

In the three weeks between these events and the start of my next trip, I frequently revisited the moments during that pilgrimage when I had opportunities to engage with local Black residents in Arkansas in conversation around the history of Jim Crow and our own community's wartime experiences. It has since led to many interesting conversations with our comrades from N'COBRA Philadelphia and other allies working toward Black reparations within the JACL Philadelphia chapter.

With these lessons and aspirations toward solidarity fresh in mind, I left for the San Francisco Bay Area on July 1, where I would later depart for the Tule Lake Pilgrimage.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Part 2 of this series will be featured in the Sept. 6-19, 2024, issue of the *Pacific Citizen*.



Survivor Al Harano poses outside the Central High National Historic Site.

Downtown McGehee, Ark.

PHOTOS: ROB BUSCHER



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A MOTHER'S TAKE

THE FEELING IS JOY

By Marsha Aizumi

Today, I want to talk about joy. For a while, I have not lived in joy because I did not live in hope. I tend to be an optimistic person, which has gotten me through many challenging times, but the convergence of so many things has darkened my optimism.

The reversal of Roe v. Wade, attacks on in vitro fertilization (IVF), hundreds of bills to take away rights from the LGBTQ+ community, voter suppression and book banning that would erase the history of marginalized communities like the Japanese American incarceration have all made me afraid. In some ways, all of these things have chipped away at my vision for the future happiness of my sons, the LGBTQ+ community, the Japanese community and my friends in other marginalized communities.

Both my trans son and cisgender son have talked about moving

out of the U.S. if a certain person was elected president because this would no longer feel like a safe place to live and raise a family. I have heard this thought among others who are not sure what the future holds for them as well.

But on July 21, President Joe Biden not only stepped down from the presidential race but also endorsed VP Kamala Harris — and something in the country began to shift. At first, I was fearful there would not be enough time to reach people around the country to affect the outcome of the election. But there is something magical about joy and hope . . . it is contagious, it attracts people. Doom and gloom just weigh people down.

No longer did I feel hopeless for people who want to conceive children through IVF. I went through this process myself, and though Aiden and Stefen were adopted, going through IVF always gave me the assurance that I tried to

conceive biologically, then chose to adopt. I know that if I was not allowed to go through IVF, I would have always wondered if I should have tried this route. Not all people need this IVF process, but I did. AND I HAD A CHOICE.

I also have hope for the LGBTQ+ community, voter rights and the ability to access care, whether it be for our trans community or a woman who needs to have an abortion. I have hope voters' voices can be heard and that our history as JAs and my book about a family with a transgender son will still be accessible to those who need to hear our stories. And hearing stories from other marginalized communities and their fight for equality will continue to bring greater compassion and humanity.

I have to be clear that I am not speaking as a representative of any organization, but as a mother who wants to make sure my children's rights and the rights of others are not taken away. I want Aiden to know as a transgender JA individual that he is respected and safe. I want Stefen to know that as a person born in Japan and a U.S. citizen, being Asian will not make him a target.

So, if you want to join the efforts to preserve and defend our

freedoms, please reach out to Japanese Americans for Harris at JAs4Harris@gmail.com or visit www.JapaneseAmericans4Harris.com.

There are so many ways to get involved: Encourage your family and friends to vote, help reach voters in other states through phone/text banking or writing postcards and, of course, DONATE. When I talked with Amy Watanabe, who is one of the leaders at Japanese Americans for Harris, she said, "Anything helps and can allow a future that is more inclusive."

I was nervous to phone bank for the JAs for Biden campaign four years ago, but in the end, I felt like I did something to help affect the result of the election. And so, I was

proud of myself. My husband is not a phone banker, but he has donated and talked to others about his support of Biden and now Harris. We can all do something.

In order to keep this momentum going to Nov. 5, we need you . . . our children need you . . . woman, JAs, LGBTQ+ individuals and their parents need you. And all communities of color need you. We are stronger together. Please join this movement to be part of the hope and joy!

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."



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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

INTL.

Heroes of the Vosges Museum Bruyères, France

Oct. 19 Opening Date
Heni-Mathieu Musee
Price: Free

This start-up museum will honor the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team and the French Resistance who bravely fought in battle during World War II. The museum will open during the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Bruyères, Belmonte and Biffontaine.

Info: Visit vosgesheroes.org.

NCWNP

Tabemasho 2024: The Joy of Matsuri San Francisco, CA

Sept. 21; 3-6 p.m.

The Center
Nisei Community Hall
1840 Sutter St.

Price: Individual \$225

This year, Tabemasho will feature culinary creations from Bay Area chefs and restaurants, including some old favorites like chirashi, Sokoji's famous takoyaki and some new additions. Special guests from Japan will make appearances, and the event will also feature various artisans and a silent auction and sweepstakes.

Info: Visit jcccnc.org.

'Ruth Asawa: Untitled (S.272)' Exhibit

San Francisco, CA
Ongoing Exhibit
Asian Art Museum

200 Larkin St.

Price: Museum Admission

Asawa is a pioneering figure both in the civic landscape of San Francisco and in the history of American art. This exhibit of her works represents a visionary bridge between the major themes of sculpture in the modern postwar period and the subsequent era of contemporary art.

Info: Visit exhibitions.asianart.org for more details on this exhibit.

Watercolor Painting

San Francisco, CA
Mondays; 10 a.m.-Noon

The Center

1840 Sutter St.

Price: \$40/Month Members and \$11 Drop-In; \$48/Month Nonmembers and \$14 Drop-In

In this weekly class, participants will learn the basics of watercolor painting through the instruction of Wendy Yoshimura. Subjects include still-life objects that will

bring your paintings to life in this class.

Info: Visit jcccnc.org.

PSW

'Beauty From Hardship: Storytelling, Art and Japanese American Resilience Then and Now'

Los Angeles, CA

Sept. 14; 2-4 p.m.

JANM

100 N. Central Ave.

Price: Free But Tickets Required

Discover how literature, music, dance and the visual arts capture and make the richness and resilience of the Japanese American community possible with panelists Erin Khue Ninh, Diane C. Fujino, Kim Yasuda and Constance Hays Matsumoto and Kent Matsumoto. The panel will delve into the transformative power of storytelling and how it is used as a tool for empowerment and healing.

Info: Visit www.janm.org.

Showtime! AADAP's 52nd Anniversary Benefit Concert

Los Angeles, CA

Sept. 21; 7-10 p.m.

Aratani Theatre

244 S. San Pedro St.

Price: General \$80; Premier \$120; VIP \$250

AAADAP, the Asian American Drug Abuse Program, presents this unforgettable program hosted by Mark Dascascos and featuring appearances and performances by Tia Carrere, 4th Impact, Janie Javier and Leo Mercedez. The event promises to be filled with memorable performances, an online auction and drawing, with all proceeds supporting AADAP's community services.

Info: Visit www.jaccc.org.

Trans Allyship: Learn, Grow, Act

Sept. 28; 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Virtual Symposium

Price: Free

Through guest speakers, workshops and discussion groups, this event, sponsored by Okaeri, JACL and PFLAG SGV API, aims to educate and inform allies about the transgender community to help them make better-informed and more inclusive social, community and civic choices that support transgender individuals.

Info: Register at bit.ly/TransAllyship-2024.

'Echoes of Resilience: Imagining the Possible in Preserving Japanese American Heritage' 2024 JACSC Education Conference

Los Angeles, CA

Oct. 4-6

JANM

100 N. Central Ave.

Price: Free and Open to the Public

This event brings together scholars, activists and community members dedicated and preserving the history of Japanese American incarceration during WWII. Highlights will include a panel on the Irei: National Monument and the immersive FandanObon event celebrating diverse cultural traditions.

Info: Visit www.janm.org for tickets.

2024 Poston Pilgrimage

Parker, AZ

Oct. 25-26

Blue Water Resort & Casino

11300 Resort Dr.

Price: Early Bird Registration \$195 Adults/\$100 Children; After Sept. 1, \$250 Adults/\$150 Children.

Attorney Dale Minami will be this year's keynote speaker at the 2024 Poston Pilgrimage. Other highlights will include a screening of Marlene Shigekawa's "The Blue Jay," an opening ceremony with remarks from Tribal Chairwoman Amelia Flores, tribal community performances, visits to the Poston exhibit within the Museum of the Colorado River Indian Tribes and educational workshops and bus tours of the Poston Monument and Camp I school sites.

Info: Visit www.postonpreservation.org. Registration is limited to 250 attendees due to facility space.

PNW

Democracy Summit

Tacoma, WA

Sept. 27; 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Tacoma Dome Exhibit Hall

2726 E. D St.

Price: Free

Join Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities from around the state to celebrate our culture, our voice and our vote. This free program will include a candidate forum among the top two candidates for governor, as well as keynote speakers and cultural performances.

Info: To register, visit <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHseOmnMWWK-gMDIEVkjBqBt4Y42vnSVCN3AvOt9vRZTQO-2qW/viewform>.

Sound Check!

Seattle, WA

Oct. 6; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Wing Luke Museum

719 S. King St.

Price: Museum Admission

This exhibition explores the role music has played in Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander lives and communities as an element of cultural heritage and identity through various photos, framed artworks, podcasts, artifacts, audio and video.

Info: Visit www.wingluke.org/soundcheck.

'Genji Mihara: An Issei Pioneer' Exhibit

Seattle, WA

Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Washington

1414 S. Weller St.

An Issei pioneer, JCCCW's feature exhibit on the life of Issei leader Genji Mihara (1890-1982) is part of a larger biographical project on Mihara. Features include original photos and artifacts donated by Mihara's family, historical research and interviews, including one from Mihara himself in the 1970s.

Info: Visit www.jcccw.org.

IDC

'Whiskey & Wagyu' 2024 JASC Annual Gala

Denver, CO

Oct. 9; 6-9 p.m.

ReelWorks Denver

1399 35th St.

Price: JASC Members \$135; General Public \$235

JASC welcomes attendees to an evening of celebration, culinary delights, exceptional networking and fundraising as it celebrates the anniversary of the Japan America Society of Colorado.

Info: Visit www.jascolorado.org.

EDC

Keiro Kai Family Day

Potomac, MD

Sept. 15; Noon-2:30 p.m.

Cabin John Group Picnic Area

7701 Tuckerman Lane

Price: Free for JACL Members; Nonmembers \$10

JACL DC chapter invites all for an afternoon featuring delicious food and drinks and activities for the entire family to have fun doing.

Info: Email jaclwdc@gmail.com for registration information.

'The Paradox of Seabrook Farms' Film Screening and Meeting With Director Helga Merits

Bryn Mawr, PA

Sept. 28; 10:30 a.m.

Bryn Mawr Film Institute

824 Lancaster Ave.

Price: Tickets \$10 and Can Be Purchased in Advance.

Don't miss this documentary about Seabrook about "the workers at Seabrook

Farms, the biggest industrial vegetable plant in the U.S. in the 1950s, who had to build up a new life for their families in very difficult circumstances." The documentary features interviews with Mas Nakawatase and former EDC Gov. Michael Asada. A meeting with the film's director follows.

Info: Email Sept28SeabrookParadox@gmail.com or call (610) 283-8645.

Japanese Celebration With the Boston Red Sox

Sept. 28; 4:10 p.m.

Fenway Park

4 Jersey St.

Price: Special Event Ticket Required.

The Boston Red Sox and the Japan Society of Boston celebrate Japanese culture at this special game that includes a Japan jersey (first-come, first-serve basis), Japanese food and other cultural festivities.

Info: Visit <https://www.mlb.com/redsox/tickets/promotions/themes/japanese-celebration>.

'The Inventive Brush: Calligraphic Echoes From China, Japan and Korea'

Boston, MA

Thru Oct. 13

Pao Arts Center

99 Albany St.

Price: Museum Admission

This exhibit showcases the diversity of contemporary calligraphy with works of three Massachusetts-based artists. This exhibit is a collaboration between the Pao Arts Center, Japan Society of Boston and Korean Cultural Society of Boston.

Info: Visit <https://www.paoartscenter.org/events/2024/inventivebrush>.

Outdoor Installation: 'Lot Lab 2024: Presence'

Boston, MA

Thru October

Charlestown Navy Yard

One Fifth St.

"Lot Lab 2024" utilizes underused parcels in Boston for contemporary public art created with the community. This year's theme is "Presence."

Info: Visit <https://www.thetriennial.org/lot-lab>.

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In MEMORIAM



Anbe, Amy Kameko, 74, Honolulu, HI, June 5.

Asato, Dorothy Yukino, 97, Torrance, CA, June 30.

Beppu, Jo Ann Kumiko, 72, Wahiawa, HI, June 29.

Fukushima, Allen Isao, 68, Honolulu, HI, July 28.



Hamada, Harold Seichi, 88, Honolulu, HI, May 31.

Hamada, Helen Teruko, 81, Sacramento, CA, May 4.

Hamasaki, Lillian Yuriko, 99, Maple Valley, WA, June 24.



Hasuike, Daniel, 74, Tigard, OR, June 29.

Hollister-Takashima, Laura, 75, Lake Oswego, OR, June 17.

Imanishi, Naomi Shirley, 65, Los Angeles, CA, July 26.

Inouye, Kathryn, 76, Steilacoom, WA, July 16.

Iri, Ayako 'Arleene,' 97, Long Beach, CA, June 24.

Ishii, Kuniko, 104, Santa Ana, CA, June 5.

Kadokawa, Dorothy Sumiko, 99, Sacramento, CA, May 4.

Kagawa, Betsy, 91, Honolulu, HI, July 29.

Kaneda, Patsy Hisako, 90, Gig Harbor, WA, Aug. 2.



Kaohi, Sharon Shigeko Kiyama, 87, Kaneohe, HI, Aug. 5.



Kawahara, Herbert Gunzo, 95, Corte Madera, CA, Aug. 2.



Kim-Tahara, Julia, 53, Flower Mound, TX, June 15.

Matsuoka, Akira, 101, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, July 8.

Mishima, James Sunao, 92, Palm Springs, CA, June 9.



Morishige, Jane Takako, 82, Honolulu, HI, July 1.

Nakai, Nadine, 94, Irvine, CA, Aug. 5.

Nakamura, Hiroko, 98, Villa Park, CA, June 23.

Nakamura, Nancy Sachiko, 98, Irvine, CA, Aug. 1.

Okamoto, Richard Kunio, 105, Honolulu, HI, April 19.



Ota, Yoshiko Jean, 94, Sacramento, CA, May 29.

Sasamoto, George Nobuo, 99, Chicago, IL, Aug. 11.

Shiba, Debra, 71, Chico, CA, Dec. 24, 2023.

Takasumi, Mitsue, 100, Portland, OR, March 13.

Tanaka, Florence, 84, Cypress, CA, April 11.

Uota, Nobuko, 86, Morgan Hill, CA, June 27.

Yamamoto, Frances Yonemoto, 97, Caldwell, ID, Jan. 16.

Yamasaki, Brent, 53, Pocatello, ID, March 8.

News Briefs

JA Among 5 Charged in Matthew Perry's Fatal Ketamine-Related OD

More than nine months after "Friends" star Matthew Perry's Oct. 24, 2023 death, authorities announced charges against five persons, including two physicians, in connection with the actor's fatal ketamine overdose. Among those charged was 59-year-old Kenneth Iwamasa — described as Perry's "live-in personal assistant" — who on Aug. 7 pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute ketamine causing death. Despite having no medical training, he admitted to injecting Perry on multiple occasions with the anesthetic, including on the day Perry died. Arrested on Aug. 15 were Jasveen Sangha, 41, of North Hollywood, Calif., and Dr. Salvador Plasencia, 42, of Santa Monica. The two were charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute ketamine. Along with Iwamasa, charged separately were Eric Fleming, 54, of Hawthorne, Calif., who pleaded guilty on Aug. 8 to one count of conspiracy to distribute ketamine and one count of distribution of ketamine resulting in death, and Dr. Mark Chavez, 54, of San Diego, a physician who has agreed to plead guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute ketamine.

Defense Attorneys: Disbarred Girardi Was Victim of Kamon's Fraudulence

Attorneys for 85-year-old Thomas Vincent Girardi — charged with four counts of wire fraud and on trial in Los Angeles for allegedly stealing \$15 million from clients when he was a partner at the now-defunct law firm Girardi Keese — on Aug. 6 sought to shift the blame to the law firm's former CFO, Christopher Kazuo Kamon. Citing Girardi's diminished mental capacity due to progressive dementia, public defender Samuel Cross depicted the disbarred attorney as the victim of Kamon, who allegedly used several transactions to siphon off more than \$50 million from the law firm. Kamon has also been charged with wire fraud. A trial date for Kamon is scheduled for next year.

Judge Sentences Yamanaka Mello to 15 Years for Stealing \$100+ Mil

Western District of Texas Judge Xavier Rodriguez has sentenced Texan Janet Yamanaka Mello, 57, to 15 years in prison for stealing more than \$100 million over six years from a grant program designed to provide services to military dependents and their families. Mello, a former civilian Army employee dubbed the "Gucci Goddess," pleaded guilty in March to five counts of mail fraud and five counts of filing a false tax return. Before she was caught — and sentenced in July — Mello used the stolen funds to buy real estate in Colorado, Maryland, New Mexico, Texas and Washington, as well as jewelry and several vehicles.

Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Withdraws From September Vote

Japan will soon have a new prime minister. On Aug. 14, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, whose three-year term ends in September, announced that he will not run in the Liberal Democratic Party leadership vote set for Sept. 27, opening the door for Japan to get a new prime minister. Because the LDP controls both houses of Japan's parliament, whoever wins the party vote will become the nation's new PM. A Jiji Press poll in July had support for Kishida's cabinet at 15.5 percent.

'Free Chol Soo Lee,' 'Omoiyari' Gets News, Docu Emmy Nominations

The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences announced its 45th Annual News & Documentary Emmy Awards nominations, and among the nominees are "Free Chol Soo Lee" (see *Pacific Citizen*, [March 18, 2022](#) and [May 5, 2023](#)) in the categories Outstanding Historical Documentary and Outstanding Promotional Announcement: Documentary for the documentary's broadcast as part of PBS' "Independent Lens"; and "A Song Film By Kishi Bashi: Omoiyari" (see *Pacific Citizen*, [Oct. 6, 2023](#)) in the category Outstanding Arts and Culture Documentary on Paramount+. The winners will be announced over two nights, Sept. 25 and 26 in New York, with one night dedicated to news, the other documentaries.

Oscar-Winner Tashima Tapped as AMPAS' Short Film Branch Governor

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced that Chris Tashima, who won an Academy Award for the 1997 live-action short film "Visas and Virtue," has been elected governor of the Short Films Branch.

Landmark Hollywood Japanese Restaurant Site Might Sell for Millions

Yamashiro restaurant and its surrounding 7.3 acre property has been put on the market — and could sell for more than \$100 million.

— P.C. Staff

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'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tribute Ads honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$25/column inch.

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TECH DIALOGUES

Five Uncommon Smartphone Uses

By Ryan Kawamoto

Smartphones have become an indispensable part of our daily lives, but it can still be easy to overlook their potential beyond conventional uses like talking on the phone, watching videos, taking photos and videos and browsing the internet. However, these pocket-sized powerhouses are capable of much more. This column will cover five lesser-known (yet intriguing!) ways to leverage your smartphone capabilities.

#1 Translation Tool — Smartphones can easily translate live conversations from one language to another. You can either download a translation application or simply pull up Google Translate and select the input and output languages. Your phone can then translate in real-time incoming English audio into written Japanese text.

#2 Document Scanner — Say goodbye to bulky scanners and tedious scanning processes. With just a

few taps, your smartphone can effortlessly digitize documents, receipts and notes. Most smartphones come with a preinstalled scanner app, and many other options are available for download on iOS and Android platforms. Using a scanner app allows you to capture high-quality scans, enhance text readability and even convert scanned documents into editable formats like PDF or Word.

#3 Personal Safety Gadget — Enhance your safety with versatile smartphone apps designed to protect you. From discreetly alerting trusted contacts in case of emergencies to providing real-time location tracking and even emitting a loud alarm to deter potential threats, having your smartphone as a safety companion can be a lifesaver.

#4 Convenient Toolbox — If you are like me, forget going through your garage past your collection of old miso containers or kamaboko boards and rummaging through your toolbox for a measuring tape, compass, metal

detector, etc. With augmented reality (AR) apps, your smartphone can now be a reliable measuring tool. AR apps go far beyond measuring distances, and some can be used for virtual home interior design, gaming, previewing furniture in your home before purchase, etc.

Other apps use your phone's magnetometer sensor to detect fluctuations in the magnetic field, potentially indicating the presence of metal objects nearby. Thanks to the same magnetometer sensor, you no longer need to buy a compass. Your phone already has one preinstalled.

#5 Plant Care Assistant — Have a green thumb but struggle to keep your plants healthy? Your smartphone can come to the rescue with plant care apps that provide personalized tips and reminders based on your plants' needs. With the advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, many plant care apps now only need a picture to detect the type of plant, diagnose any problem and offer guidance on watering schedules, sunlight requirements and fertilization techniques to help keep our plants healthy.

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. It's open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-8 p.m. ET and Saturday from 9 a.m.-2 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. 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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Answer Keiro's Memory Survey!

Keiro announced its intent to develop board and care homes to meet the needs of older adults affected by memory loss. We invite you to participate in our survey.

Please answer the survey if you are...

- Part of the Japanese American and Japanese community AND
- Residing or have a close loved one in LA, Orange, or Ventura Counties

Online surveys must be completed and mailed surveys must be postmarked by **September 30, 2024**.

Scan the QR code or visit keiro.org/survey. For questions, email survey@keiro.org.

How to Participate:

- 1 To get immediate access to the online survey, please visit website at keiro.org/survey.
- 2 To request a paper survey, please contact Keiro at 213.873.5700 or survey@keiro.org before September 1, 2024.



Keiro