



PACIFIC CITIZEN

JEROME ROHWER PILGRIMAGE 2025

CELEBRATING
96
Years

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The gathering offers opportunities beyond historic traumas of Japanese American history in Arkansas.

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Assault Survivor
Aki Maehara
Speaks.

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JA Groups
Support Black
Reparations.

Jerome Rohwer pilgrims stand in front of a replica of the March on Washington at the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn.

PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER

'EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE'

You may have seen the Oscar-winning 2002 absurdist comedy set in an Asian American immigrant laundry that slips in and out of a parallel universe. The film title also describes the surrealistic moment we are living in now, when daily headlines break the brain.

Everything we read seems impossible: ordering the revocation of foreign student visas at Harvard. A budget that slashes by 40 percent funding for the National Park Service, the steward of our sites of conscience, among them, Amache, Manzanar, Minidoka and Tule Lake.

Everywhere we see our constitutional rights under threat. People snatched off the streets and taken to foreign and domestic

prisons without due process, the way our Issei ancestors were rounded up and secretly transferred into forced incarceration in American concentration camps, and Latin American Japanese were kidnapped to Crystal City, Texas.

All at once: Birthright citizenship challenged. If not for birthright citizenship, my Nisei parents, born in Oakland, Calif., would not have been U.S. citizens. How would that have impacted our community's Sansei, Yonsei, Gosei, Rokusei and hapa community today?

If the visa of Barack Obama's father, a Harvard graduate student, had been revoked, the future president would not have been.

If the visa of Kamala Harris' mother, a University of California,

Berkeley, student, had been stripped, the future vice president would not have been a historic first.

The *Pacific Citizen* publishes news, columns and information that is not deeply covered by the mainstream media. The *P.C.* offers a unique perspective grounded in our history of legal battles, fighting for reparations, being an early supporter of LGBTQ rights and protesting the invocation of laws such as the Alien Enemies Act.

Please consider adding your voice by giving whatever amount feels comfortable to the *Pacific Citizen's* Spring Campaign. By supporting the hardworking *P.C.* staff, who bring connections, community and coalitions to the national Nikkei community, you will be helping



to ensure that an essential place for our voices endures. The *P.C.* will continue to deliver the news: everything you need to know, everywhere, every two weeks.

With Gratitude,

*Nancy Ukai,
Pacific Citizen Editorial Board
Member and JACL Berkeley
Chapter Co-President*

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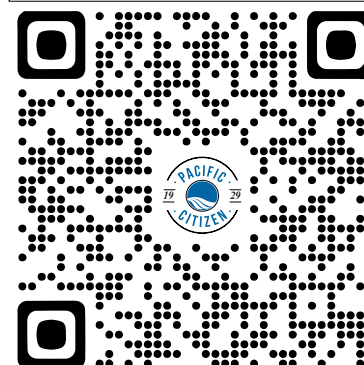
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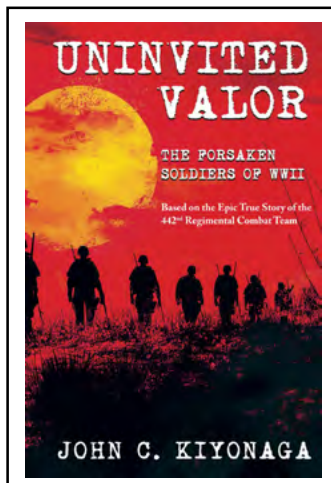


BOOK REVIEW:

'UNINVITED VALOR: The Forsaken Soldiers of WWII'

By Gerald Yamada

Uninvited Valor: The Forsaken Soldiers of WWII" by John C. Kiyonaga is a compelling and informative story about a



Japanese American fictional character named Joe Horiuchi, a high school English teacher living in Honolulu on Dec. 7, 1941. Horiuchi is a reluctant patriot who is torn between serving his country and fighting for a country that distrusts his loyalty solely because of his ethnicity.

After volunteering for the Army, he is assigned to a mortar platoon in M Company, 2nd Battalion of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

As a combat soldier, Horiuchi is not a gung-ho "Go for Broke" superhero. Rather, his story shares his mixed emotions after witnessing his friend being killed in action during his first combat encounter, killing his first German soldier, receiving a "Dear John" letter, fighting with the 442nd RCT in saving the Texas "Lost Battalion" and defeating the critical

German stronghold atop of Mount Folgorita.

In writing this story, Kiyonaga fictionalizes the characters in the story and Company M in the 2nd Battalion but skillfully draws on the experiences of his father, Joseph Y. Kiyonaga, who served as a 1st Lt. in the 442nd RCT, to create an effective story for readers. "Uninvited Valor" is an important read for two reasons. First, it allows the readers to understand the reasons members of the 442nd RCT volunteered to serve in WWII and the emotions combat soldiers felt as they fought in two of the 442nd RCT's significant battlefield achievements.

Second, Kiyonaga lightly delves into then-California Attorney General Earl Warren's motives as a leading advocate for the forced evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and into President Franklin D. Roosevelt's reasons for signing Executive Order 9066. The book's discussion about EO 9066 is not definitive nor complete but raises two significant questions that

are perhaps beyond the scope of the book's story.

If Warren used war hysteria to promote prejudice, is his advocacy for the forced evacuation of ALL persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast evidence that he was a "white supremacist"? If EO 9066 is an example of racial profiling — issuing an adverse governmental action based solely on ethnicity — does President Roosevelt show that he was a "racist" by issuing EO 9066?

With the same valor shown by the legendary 442nd RCT during WWII to fight prejudice in America, the Japanese American community needs to continue the war against prejudice by pursuing answers to these questions. Until these questions are fully addressed and answered, the whole story about the Japanese American WWII experience cannot be accurately told. "Uninvited Valor" helps to start us on this journey.

"Uninvited Valor: The Forsaken Soldiers of WWII" is available for purchase at Amazon.com.



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

'VOICES IN UNITY'

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

It's almost cliché now for JACL conventions. You can almost count on seeing the words "unity" or "community" someplace in our themes or even combinations like this year of "Voices in Unity." But the reason for that is so central to who we are as an organization and what we do.

Just a few days ago, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights celebrated the 75th anniversary of its founding. JACL was one of the original 30 organizations that coalesced to form that first coalition, which has

now grown to over 200 member organizations.

Ralph Neas was executive director of the Leadership Conference from 1981-95. As you can guess, this placed him in his role right at the height of the push for redress, and any conversation with Neas highlights how important that fight was for him and the coalition, making it one of the greatest achievements during his tenure. Indeed, it was not only the coalition of the Leadership Conference but also the direct support of so many of its member organizations as well.

While I very much want to celebrate the long history of the Leadership Conference, what we

see now is the erosion of much of the work that the coalition accomplished in its early years with the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960 and 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and Fair Housing Act of 1968. The coalition is needed more than ever, and this brings us back to the theme of this year's convention, "Voices in Unity."

Another coalition to which JACL is a member, the National Council on Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), recently published a report on the first 100 days of the Trump administration (<https://www.ncapaonline.org/100dayreview/>). The steady flow of presidential Executive Orders that fly in the face of the Constitution and seek to roll back the gains of these past 75 years of civil rights advancements has been dizzying. The 100-day report only scratches the surface focusing on actions directly related to and impacting Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities.

The report highlights some of the

work JACL has focused on, including its opposition to the invocation of the Alien Enemies Act against the people from Venezuela. A document such as this highlights how different coalition members might take the lead on certain issues, but we all work together and in support of one another.

At this year's National Convention, you will be able to see this firsthand as we combine the concept of "Voices in Unity" with the issues upon which we speak. Among the plenary sessions will be one featuring leaders from many of the coalitions within which we work.

We will have another session highlighting the in-depth work that we have done on the Alien Enemies Act. Workshops will highlight issues such as transgender rights, also making the ties between national policy and state/local policies that sometimes have an even greater impact.

Another session will highlight the attacks on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs across several

different sectors and the need to fight these attacks together. Finally, the opening plenary will highlight the importance of storytelling, the basis of how we accomplish our advocacy and communicate the impact of policies on us personally.

Join us in Albuquerque, N.M., at this year's National Convention, "Voices in Unity," to better understand the breadth and depth of issues facing our diverse communities today. Together, we can speak out to protect the historic work of JACL and our partners and protect the rights of all Americans. Perhaps you might feel that there is little we can do, but when we work together in unity, our collective voices grow in strength, and we can accomplish so much more.

Register for convention at <https://jacl.org/2025-national-convention>.

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

JACL Takes Bold Stand in Federal Appeals Court Amicus Brief Against Discriminatory Alien Enemies Act

By JACL Members Naoko Fujii, Esq; Daniel Mayeda, Esq; Larry Oda; Matthew Marumoto; and Mike Honda

The Japanese American Citizens League, joined by over 60 Japanese and Asian American organizations, filed an amicus brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit on June 3. The brief challenges the federal government's use of the Alien Enemies Act — an 18th-century law — now being invoked to justify the deportation of Venezuelan nationals.

The Alien Enemies Act has a troubling history. During World War II, the statute was used to detain Japanese immigrants in Department of Justice and military-run prisons, separate from the 10 War Relocation Authority camps where over 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated. Among those targeted were Buddhist priests, Judo instructors and respected community leaders — not because of any proven wrongdoing, but because of their roles as leaders within the Japanese American community.

A Congressional commission later found that these mass incarcerations were not driven by military necessity, but by "war hysteria, racial prejudice and a failure of political leadership." That conclusion, once assigned to a past

era, now holds renewed relevance.

For the JACL, the parallels between the government's treatment of Venezuelan immigrants today and the experiences of Japanese Americans during WWII are unmistakable — and deeply personal.

JACL members including Naoko Fujii, Daniel Mayeda and Larry Oda all had parents or grandparents arrested under the Alien Enemies Act in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Taken by the FBI without notice, denied legal representation or the right to contact family, they were held in jails and later transferred to "enemy alien" detention camps — often for longer durations than family members incarcerated under Executive Order 9066.

Now, more than 80 years later, the Alien Enemies Act is again at the center of legal controversy. The Trump administration has used the statute to deport Venezuelan nationals to detention in El Salvador, alleging — without presenting clear evidence — ties to the Tren de Aragua gang. Legal scholars and civil rights advocates argue that the government's rationale mirrors the flawed reasoning used against Japanese Americans: The absence of evidence is itself evidence of danger.

In a recent case before the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas, a federal judge rejected the government's argu-



Pictured are Alien Enemies Act Descendants (from left) Brian Shibayama, Anne Oda, Victor Uno, Mike Honda, Sharon Uyeda, Larry Oda, Bekki Shibayama and Naoko Fujii.

ments, citing "shoddy affidavits and contradictory testimony." The court concluded that the evidence presented would not withstand scrutiny in even the smallest lawsuit, "let alone what is at stake here."

The JACL's decision to act was grounded in a collective memory of injustice. "We couldn't keep quiet," said Fujii, who led the JACL amicus brief team. "If we don't speak up, this law — used against our families — will continue to be used to discriminate based on nationality and fear, not facts."

The brief, prepared by pro bono counsel from the Asian Law Caucus, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC and the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality, draws a direct line from current executive overreach to historical civil liberties violations. It references the infamous *Korematsu* decision, in which the Supreme Court upheld Japanese American incarceration

during WWII. In his dissent, Justice Murphy warned against judging individuals by ancestry rather than actions, while Justice Jackson cautioned that the Court's decision had created "a loaded weapon ready for the hand of any authority."

That weapon, the brief argues, is now in use once again.

The Executive Branch is exercising broad powers to detain and deport immigrants, often without the due process protections guaranteed by the Constitution. Courts, reluctant to interfere, have deferred to executive discretion. What makes this moment particularly alarming is how easily long-standing laws are being distorted to serve political ends.

The historical parallels are stark. In 1930s Germany, authoritarianism advanced through the targeting of marginalized communities, the silencing of dissent and the erosion of the rule of law. While the United States is not yet in such a state,

the trajectory is unsettling. It often begins with a statute reactivated, a right revoked, a group scapegoated.

Japanese Americans know the cost of silence. Far too few other Americans stood up to object as thousands of Japanese Americans were stripped of their civil liberties, their livelihoods and their dignity. Even after WWII, it took over half a century for Japanese Americans to achieve redress for wartime incarceration; the Japanese Latin Americans are still fighting for redress and reparations. That legacy compels the community to speak out when new groups are targeted based on xenophobia and fear.

Unlike the wartime "enemy," the threat today is artificially constructed — ordinary migration reframed as an invasion. Fear, once again, is being deployed as a political tool, and it is easier to target those who look different.

JACL National President Larry Oda's personal story appears in the brief. His father, Junichi, was a hardworking businessman who helped lead Monterey's abalone processing cooperative. Active in the Japanese Businessmen's Assn. and a donor to the Japanese Red Cross, Junichi Oda had lived legally in the U.S. for 25 years. Nonetheless, at age 41, he was arrested without notice, labeled an "enemy alien" and detained in a succession of government facilities, including the Santa Fe and Lordsburg internment camps. He was later reunited with his family at Crystal City, where Larry was born.

» See JACL on page 8

Assault Survivor AKI MAEHARA Speaks

History professor hit by vehicle as driver shouted slurs endures pain to speak to community, media.

By George Toshio Johnston,
P.C. Senior Editor

With a black-and-white keffiyeh draped over a pistachio green button-down oxford dress shirt and exhibiting a discolored, egg-sized bruise to his left cheek, 71-year-old Aki Maehara walked slowly but purposefully to a microphone-laden lectern.

Speaking at a May 22 news conference at the Pico House in downtown Los Angeles a little more than three weeks after relaying that he had been intentionally rammed by a motor vehicle driven by a slur-spewing hit-and-run perpetrator, the East Los Angeles College history professor delivered a deliberate account of what he had experienced in his hometown of Montebello, Calif., after 10 p.m. on the evening of April 29 while riding home on his electric bike.

Maehara's swollen cheek was one of the visible injuries he sustained. The other injuries — to his neck, teeth, chest, ankle, thigh, lower back and hips, and to his left elbow (requiring more than 10 sutures), not to mention bruises, scrape wounds, a concussion and dizzy spells over the first four or five days afterward — initially put him in the Long Beach VA hospital for a day.

The former Marine who served during the Vietnam War nevertheless mustered his do-or-die spirit to endure his continuing pain and report to the community and the media what he had experienced.

After finishing teaching a class and leaving the ELAC campus, Maehara said he was a just a few blocks from his home on his e-bike when the incident took place around 10:13 p.m. "I noticed there were headlights behind me by the reflection in front of me, and I turned my body and my head to the rear to check the location of the approaching vehicle, as I always do for safety reasons," he said.

"That's when I saw the silhouette of what looked like a four-door, mid-sized sedan coming right at me. . . . I immediately tried to turn my bike toward the curb, hoping I could find the driveway or hop up the curb to get out of the way. As I began to turn, I heard somebody yell out, 'F*****g Chink,' and then I got hit. "When I got hit, it sent me flying. I ended



Aki
Maehara

up face-planting on concrete several times and rolling about 30 feet, 35 feet until I was stopped by a row of bricks, facedown. As I lay there face down with my head pounding in pain, I heard someone yell out, 'Go back to Chinkland.'"

The racist slurs directed at him made Maehara think the attacker may have known and targeted him because the life-saving helmet and visor he had been wearing completely obscured his facial features.

Maehara alluded to making an initial report to the Montebello Police Department when two officers came to his home after he was released from the hospital. He said he later spoke over the phone to an MPD detective, from whom Maehara learned that the initial police report excluded "information I provided on a possible suspect, possible motive, two prior police reports on the suspect." It was a reference to published reports that Maehara gave police a lead on someone who had harassed him in the past about his classes on the history of racism in the U.S.

"This was very disturbing. It does not give me faith in an objective, thorough process of investigation," Maehara told the audience. In a follow-up visit by two MPD detectives, however, Maehara said the two received all the omitted details and that when a report is finalized, "I'm supposed to be given a copy,

which will be reviewed and examined, and decisions about how to proceed from there will take place then."

According to the "2023 Hate Crime in California" report issued by the California Department of Justice in 2024, there were 664 hate crimes in 2023 in Los Angeles County, with three events taking place in the city of Montebello, Calif. (*see composite graphic*).

In response to a query from *Pacific Citizen*, the city of Montebello shared a news release. In reference to the description of the individual Maehara said he gave to the MPD, the news release stated: "The description of the suspect provided by the victim is of a male, Caucasian, with blue eyes and sandy blonde (sic) hair. No further details of the suspect were provided."

Regarding the MPD's ongoing investigation into the incident, the news release also stated: "At this time, a suspect has not been identified."

Following the vehicular assault, a GoFundMe account was set up to help pay for the ongoing costs for Maehara's care, including getting dental implants that insurance doesn't cover. The link is at tinyurl.com/2t7n3mnj.

Maehara indicated that once the expenses for the additional care had been addressed, he would consider shifting the campaign to redirect the funds toward "other victims of Asian hate violence . . . in need of support."

In his closing remarks, Maehara expressed his thanks for the "continued support provided me from all over the nation and internationally."

Several speakers representing various

community organizations spoke after Maehara. They included Greater Los Angeles JACL Chapter President Mitchell Matsumura; Save Our Seniors Network's David Monkawa; Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California CEO Connie Chung Joe; Asian American Civil Rights League Co-Founders Gerald Ohn and Christina Ku; Alliance for Asian American Justice's Brian Sun; Chinatown Community for Equitable Development's King Chung; and Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations Executive Director Robin S. Toma. Also included was a short address by a 2023 victim of an anti-Asian assault on a Metro train who wished to remain anonymous.

Serving as the news conference's facilitator was Matsumura, who also recognized several notable guests in attendance, including Chinese American Museum Executive Director Michael Truong; District Representative Kyle Miller, representing Sen. Bob Archuleta (D-30th District); Field Representative/Caseworker Gigi Lee, representing Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.); Field Representative Jayson Hugh, representing California Assemblymember Mike Fong (D-Calif.); Faith and Community Empowerment founder Hyepin Im; Asian American Community Media Project's Don Bannai; Nikkei Progressives' Mark Masaoka, the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis; Monterey Park City Council Member Henry Lo (District 4); and Center for the Prevention of Hate and Bullying Director Osman Khan.

Save Our Seniors Network's David Monkawa

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

Table 6
HATE CRIMES, 2023

Events, Offenses, Victims, and Suspects by County and Jurisdiction				
County and jurisdiction	Events	Offenses	Victims	Suspects
Los Angeles County	664	748	744	650
Montebello	3	5	5	1



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JAPANESE AMERICAN GROUPS SUPPORT BLACK REPARATIONS

A national rally in D.C. draws support from across the country to promote unity and awareness.

By Rob Buscher,
P.C. Contributor

Several Japanese American groups traveled to Washington, D.C., during the week of May 12 in support of Black reparations. The focal point was a reparations rally organized by the National Reparations Network on May 17. This historic rally was organized with the intention of aligning the national narrative on reparations for the enslavement era and its ongoing legacies while demonstrating broad-based public support for this cause. Including members of Tsuru for Solidarity, Nikkei Progressives/Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress and JACL D.C., Japanese American groups were present, traveling from regions across the country including Los Angeles, Maryland, New York, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco and Seattle.

The convener of the rally, NRN, is a coalition of organizations advocating for reparations for Black Americans, specifically those harmed by chattel slavery, Jim Crow laws and modern-day systemic racism. It organizes events promoting unity and awareness around the issue of reparations. NRN describes itself as “a mobilizing big-tent umbrella endorsed by over 150 organizations. Together, we are organizers, educators, artists, legislators, descendants, scholars, youth, faith leaders, allies and funders. We are the reparations ecosystem — lifting our voices as one.”

Like the Japanese American Redress Movement, there are many diverse perspectives on how Black reparations should be enacted. Not everyone shares consensus on approach or strategy, and, in some cases, there are disagreements about

JACL National fellows Matthew Marumoto and Katie Masano Hill



who should receive reparations and how they should be paid. Some advocates believe that local reparations campaigns at the state or municipal level might be more effective than national reparations enacted by the federal government. While unlikely to move forward amid the current political landscape, many continue to view national reparations as a north star for the movement.

Events like this rally provide an important opportunity for individuals and organizations doing this work in a variety of contexts to come together to demand reparations as a unified movement. With more than 50 groups present, this rally might have been the largest single convening of reparations stakeholder groups in recent decades. The rally featured remarks from legacy reparations organizations like National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, 21st century Black-led reparations organizations, state and local reparations commissions/task forces, descendant initiatives and ally organizations.

NRN Founder Nkechi Taifa wrote in the commemorative journal that was produced for the rally, “This landmark event is more than a gathering. It is a jubilant declaration of

unity, a vibrant tapestry of history and culture, a roar of resistance echoing through generations and a sacred space of remembrance and renewal.”

The date was selected for its proximity to May 19 in remembrance of what would have been Malcolm X’s 100th birthday. Coincidentally, Nisei activist Yuri Kochiyama, who organized alongside Malcolm X during his last years of life, shared the same birthday. This was referenced during the speech that Kathy Masaoka gave on behalf of the Japanese American groups during the rally.

Representing Nikkei Progressives/NCR, Masaoka spoke to the crowd about the long history of solidarity between Black and Japanese American communities.

“Many in our communities, who came of age in the ‘60s and ‘70s, were deeply influenced by the civil rights movement, the Black Power movement — and we learned about the power of Third World solidarity. So powerful that stories of solidarity between our communities, like that of Yuri Kochiyama and Malcolm X, were kept from us. A solidarity that was such a threat to a racist system that it had to try to divide us. But it could not — and, instead, we stand here in solidarity with all

Tsuru for Solidarity members at the Reparations Rally

of you, ready to support Black-led organizations, to fight together to win reparations,” she said.

A longtime organizer with NCR, Masaoka’s movement work dates back to the anti-Vietnam War and women’s liberation movements. She first became involved as a student of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She also participated in the Redress Movement as a member of NCR. Connecting her remarks back to the overarching goals of the rally, Masaoka continued, “We would not have won reparations in 1988 if not for the support from non-JA groups . . . especially the Congressional Black Caucus, led by Congressman Mervyn Dymally. . . . We know that the incarceration of our community is but one of the countless examples of racist harms that people of color have faced beginning with the enslavement of African peoples and the stealing of Indigenous land rooted in white supremacy. We know that reparations are owed, long overdue, and it is the only way this country can heal itself.”

Tsuru for Solidarity Black Reparations Campaign accounted for the largest group of JA activists present at the rally, including campaign co-chairs Peggy Nagae and Miwa Tokunaga Griffin. Established in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020, Tsuru’s campaign aims to support any efforts to push reparations forward at both local and federal levels while centering Black people’s voices.

Much of the group’s work involves building and fostering relationships

JACL D.C. and Tsuru member Julie Abo

PHOTOS: ROB BUSCHER



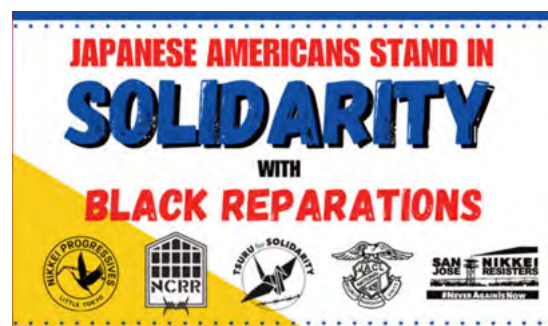
among people of the global majority, learning and teaching the history of Black-Asian solidarity and challenging anti-Blackness in the Japanese American community. Tsuru members have effectively done this work by educating themselves and the larger community about Black history. The campaign also seeks to reframe Japanese American stories beyond the context of white supremacy culture, in ways that challenge postwar assimilation and the model minority narrative.

Nancy Matsumoto, a Tsuru member based in New York City, shared her thoughts on what it means to be involved in this work. “One thing I appreciated most about the D.C. fly-in was spending time with like-minded AAPI folks who feel as I do that African American reparations is an important cause for us to get behind,” she said. “We can and should use our people’s experience of successfully lobbying for reparations to help the Black community in its effort.”

Acknowledging that not all Japanese Americans share this perspective, Matsumoto continued, “I think many of my fellow JAs don’t understand or subscribe to this view. Many have unwittingly adopted the racist point of view of the white majority rather than seeing that we have much more in common with the struggles of people of color and the unique ability to use our own experiences to be in allyship with them.”

Nagae and Griffin were also given the opportunity to participate in an annual leadership convening of reparations organizations, facilitated by N’COBRA on May 16. Asked to describe the meeting in two words, Griffin responded, “Commitment to relationship.” She elaborated, “Differences of opinion and conflict are natural parts of life — on their own, they are neutral. But white supremacy and other oppressive cultures label them as ‘bad,’ making it difficult to address them with an

Rep. Summer Lee (D-Pa.) speaks at the Reparations Now press conference.



A solidarity ad in the rally program

» See REPARATIONS on page 9

CIVIL RIGHTS AND MOVEMENT MUSIC AT THE 2025 JEROME ROHWER PILGRIMAGE



Pilgrims in attendance at the 2025 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage gather on May 22 at the Rohwer Relocation Center Memorial Cemetery.

PHOTO: EVAN KODANI

The gathering offers meaningful opportunities to experience beyond the historic traumas of Japanese American history in Arkansas.

By Rob Buscher,
P.C. Contributor

This Memorial Day weekend, I had the opportunity to participate in the 2025 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage. Having recently attended the National Reparations Rally in Washington, D.C., my thoughts were centered on the historical parallels among Japanese Americans and African Americans and our shared experiences living under institutional white supremacy. Over the three days I spent in Little Rock, Ark., and Memphis, Tenn., I came to further appreciate these linkages as I explored historic civil rights sites and spent time with local communities in the Delta.

The main purpose for my return to Arkansas was to moderate a panel discussion on mixed-race Japanese American identity. This topic is rarely discussed in pilgrimage programs despite the growing presence of mixed-JA folks.

Preparing for the presentation gave me a welcome opportunity to delve into my paternal family's history — itself a unique blend of Spanish, Czech, German and English heritage, which I have sometimes felt the need to minimize in order to find acceptance

within JA community spaces.

The panel also gave me the opportunity to deepen relationships with friends and colleagues who participated as co-presenters during the session. This included Tsuru for Solidarity Director of Organizing Becca Asaki (Irish-Japanese), Artistic Director of Global Arts Performance Initiatives at UIUC Krannert Center Jason Finkelman (Jewish-Japanese); and Emmy Award-winning film/TV producer Rachel Watanabe-Batton (Nigerian-Japanese).

We each shared details of our family histories in individual presentations, then reflected together on the similarities and differences between our experiences. We started the program by asking how many people were mixed, had mixed children and had mixed grandchildren. Almost everyone in the room raised their hand.

I was uncertain how this program would go over, as I have never participated in a similar session at a pilgrimage. Happily, it was very well-received by the audience of about 150 pilgrims. During the Q & A, participants shared stories about their own challenges in navigating their mixed identities, and one of the survivors whose daughter had



Jerome Rohwer survivors at the 2025 gathering PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER

struggled with acceptance thanked us in tears afterwards.

After an emotional morning and in search of a good meal, Rachel and I ventured into downtown Little Rock, where we ate at a taqueria near the Riverwalk shopping district. On our way back from the restaurant, we stopped at a café across the street. Waiting on our coffees, I spied a display of cigar box guitars made by a local Arkansas luthier. A three-stringed model fabricated out of a bright blue Monte Cristo cigar box caught my eye, so I picked it up and started strumming. Tuned similar to the banjo with a tonal quality somewhere between a resonator guitar and a shamisen, I bought it on the spot.

A little while later, I met Jason in his hotel room and showed off my new instrument. I figured we might find an interesting way to improvise together using his berimbau — a single-string bow percussion instrument. The berimbau is used in Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art that combines elements of dance, music and combat. It developed out of the resistance and resilience of enslaved Africans in Brazil.

The cigar box guitar was also invented out of necessity, originating in impoverished communities of the rural South. Often associated with the period of enslavement, cigar box guitars are rooted in a lineage of resistance through cultural expression. Given the parallel origins of these two instruments, their sounds melded together in a complimentary way. We moved into the hallway and played some impromptu entrance music for the closing dinner.

The dinner program featured a tribute to the 15 survivors in attendance at this year's pilgrimage. Each survivor was gifted a kintsugi bowl and honored in a photo

slideshow. The program also included video remarks from Rohwer survivor George Takei and a recorded piano performance of "Clair de Lune" by Jerome survivor Alice Takemoto that left many pilgrims in tears.

Following dinner, John Nishio, pilgrimage committee chair, opened up a room across the hall where Jason and flautist Ori Kawa began another improvised tune. Ori played the Shinobue, a short flute that is used in Japanese folk music. The three of us played together for half an hour, as a crowd of about 50 pilgrims watched our spontaneous performance. This concluded the formal pilgrimage program, but my journey was only beginning.

Aside from the panel, I decided to visit Arkansas a second year in a row because pilgrimage committee member Mari Carpenter agreed to organize a one-day excursion to Memphis. Mari works as senior director of museum collections at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She previously served as a curator at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis and continues to champion interracial solidarity in the field of public history.

While she has no direct family ties to the wartime incarceration, Mari has roots in the Mississippi Delta. Several of her family members lived near the former sites of Jerome and Rohwer, on the other side of the Mississippi River. We met at the 2024 pilgrimage, where I taught her the "Tanko Bushi," and we have since become good friends.

Our Memphis excursion began with a tour of Stax Records Museum of American Soul Music. Operating from 1960-75, Stax was the Mid-South's answer to Motown — a bluesier, funkier version of what was happening in Detroit during the same era. Central to the museum's narrative was the role that race



(From left) Jason Finkelman, playing the berimbau, Ori Kawa, playing the Shinobue, and Rob Buscher, playing the cigar box guitar he purchased while in Arkansas, perform at the pilgrimage.

and racism played in the creation of Black music genres in the Delta and the significant role that many recording artists played in the civil rights movement.

Beginning with the humble origins of gospel music, the exhibit detailed how race, religion and the Mississippi River were key elements that defined the Memphis Sound. The museum also told the story of segregation through music, explaining how Black musicians were excluded from white radio stations in the Jim Crow South and had to create their own stations to play Black music.

The main attraction was the recording studio and control booth where countless hit records were cut. For fans of soul music, this is hallowed ground. Hit singles such as Albert King's "Born Under a Bad Sign," Otis Redding's "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay," Sam & Dave's "Soul Man" and Booker T. and the M.G.'s "Green Onions" were all recorded here.

The space resonates with echoes of the past, when music was made to groove and organize to — truly the soundtrack of the movement. After dancing our way through the rest of the museum, we drove across town to Central BBQ, where we enjoyed some of its world-renowned Memphis cuisine.

Following lunch, we visited the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel, the site where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. The museum's core exhibit spans the transatlantic slave trade and period of enslavement to post-civil war reconstruction and the civil rights movement of the 1950s-'60s.

With Mari as our guide, we were given a behind-the-scenes tour from the perspective of a museum curator who managed many of the collections on display in the main exhibit. She told us stories about how certain artifacts were sourced, like the retired sanitation worker who donated his uniform. Mari also spoke of the emotional toll of curating problematic artifacts such as lynching postcards and Klan robes.

The museum made effective use of built environments in ways that were haunting, incorporating human-sized statues into re-creations of historic events including Maryland diner sit-ins, the firebombed Freedom Riders Greyhound bus, March on Washington and Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge. Particularly evocative was the slave ship hold that allowed visitors to crouch on the floor in the cramped conditions that enslaved Africans were subjected to while enduring the Middle Passage.

Another room held a replica of the jail cell where King wrote his famous "Letter From Birmingham Jail." Sitting inside the space listening to the letter read aloud was a powerful experience I will not soon forget.

We spent a long while in one room dedicated to the Albany Georgia Freedom Singers, a group established by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Youthful voices singing songs of freedom were piped into the room, accompanied by projected images and footage of protests on the wall.

The main exhibit culminated with an in-depth section on the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers strike that began after two African Americans, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were gruesomely killed on the job. They had taken shelter from rain in the back of their



WWII incarceration survivors also had the opportunity to stamp the Ireichō book of names while on its national tour.

PHOTO: EVAN KODANI



Pilgrims share a meal at a local restaurant in Little Rock, Ark. Pictured (from left) are JACL Executive Director David Inoue, Jason Finkelman, Mari Carpenter, Hana Maruyama, Rachel Watanabe-Batton and Rob Buscher.

PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER

truck when it malfunctioned, and both men were crushed to death.

After peaceful protests demanding better working conditions were met with violence from local law enforcement, King and other members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference became involved in negotiations with city officials, also lending their moral and spiritual support to local organizers.

It was here that King participated in his last protest march on March 28 and gave his final speech, "I've Been to the Mountaintop," at Mason Temple church on April 3. In the closing words of the speech given the day before his death, King prophetically stated, "I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land."

In the final gallery is an original Memphis garbage truck with projections of images from the sanitation workers strike featuring picket

signs emblazoned with the iconic slogan, "I Am a Man." The gallery leads into a hallway where visitors can view the two modest motel rooms where King and his entourage slept the night before his assassination. The exhibit ends at a window overlooking the balcony where King was shot. We took turns paying our respects mere steps away from where King spent his last conscious moments on this earth.

As we processed the sobering reality that what was gained during the civil rights movement came at such great and terrible costs, we shared quiet conversation with museum docents who offered their own local perspectives on the events that transpired in this place. I later learned that we visited the museum on the fifth anniversary of the murder of George Floyd. I wonder what King might say in the face of such continued injustice today.

Following this extensive four-hour visit to the museum, our Memphis excursion ended

with an informal dinner at BB King's Blues Club on Beale Street, where a small group of pilgrims enjoyed live blues music performed by two local bands.

After a challenging day of learning, listening to these soulful sounds was a cathartic experience, reminding us that amid the difficult work of social movements, we must also make space for joy. My time in the Delta reminded me of this as the music of this region was born of great struggle, yet it offers a means of taking that hurt and turning it into something beautiful — a symbol of resilience and cultural resistance to which you can stomp your feet, clap along and shout.

Although the times we are living through today are grim, the Black civil rights movement stands testament to the power of organizing. These Black activist leaders overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to achieve their goals.

We have been given a roadmap to resistance today by these movement ancestors who paved the path before us. To quote Chinese American activist Grace Lee Boggs, "We are the children of Martin and Malcolm. Black, brown, red and white. Our birthright is to be creators of history. Our Right, Our Duty. To shake the world with a new dream!"

I am grateful to the organizers of the Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage for offering such meaningful opportunities to experience both the sites of our own historic traumas in Arkansas and these significant historical sites related to the civil rights movement in Tennessee. I look forward to attending future pilgrimages, as we build toward collective liberation in our own time.



The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. took place on April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Hotel, now the site of the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tenn.



"Race, River and Religion" at the Stax Records Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis, Tenn.

JWSSC, Downtown JACL Commend Six Honorees

The 2025 Women of the Year luncheon accentuates accomplishments.

By George Toshio Johnston,
P.C. Senior Editor

Although May 5 was unseasonably cool and overcast outside the Quiet Cannon, the atmosphere inside the Montebello, Calif., banquet hall was bright and lively for the 2025 Women of the Year luncheon, jointly produced by Japanese Women's Society of Southern California and the Downtown Los Angeles Chapter of the JACL.

Perhaps the festive air was because the 2025 cohort was larger than usual, with six honorees — Kimiko Fujita, Elaine Kei Inoue, Jean Kodama, Darlene Kinuko Kuba, Yuko N. Uyesugi and Heidi Miyoshi Yoshioka — which meant more friends, family and supporters. According to planning committee member Amy Tambara, the headcount for the event was 335.

The roster of dignitaries, many of whom gave short speeches, might have also put some extra buzz into the afternoon. The list included Mami Sone, honorary president of Japanese Women's Society of Southern California and wife of Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles Kenko Sone; Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.); California state Sen. Maria Elena Durazo (26th Senate District); California Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (66th Assembly District); Assemblymember Mark Gonzalez (54th Assembly District); and Lauren Hodgins, chief of staff to Los Angeles City Councilwoman Ysabel Jurado. Unable to attend but sending her congratulatory wishes was Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis.

Thanks to the political delegation, the six honorees each received certificates of recognition from the California state Senate and Assembly, as well as from the U.S. House of Representatives.

Reprising his role as master of ceremonies as he has done for the past several years was Downtown Los Angeles JACL Chapter President George Kita, who started the



Pictured are (seated, from left) Darlene Kuba, Kimiko Fujita, Yuko Uyesugi and (standing, from left) Yuriko Shikai, Mami Sone, Elaine Keiko Inoue, Jean Kodama, Heidi Yoshioka and George Kita. PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

event providing a short history of the two sponsoring organizations, with the JWSSC tracing its roots to 1904, when it was known as the Rafu Fujinkai, and the DLA JACL dating back to 1929, making it the oldest JACL chapter in Southern California. Both groups have co-produced the Women of the Year luncheons since 1963.

Kita then introduced JWSSC President Yuriko Shikai. "Today, we celebrate the extraordinary achievements of six remarkable women," she said, adding, "We have a music teacher and music school founder, a lunch program supervisor and cook, an electrical engineer/martial arts master, a founder of a senior nutrition services organization and a government relations firm, a tea ceremony master who is persevering through the recent wildfires and a basketball coach/lawyer who mentors young women attorneys to attain successful careers."

"All of our honorees share something in common," Shikai continued. "They've made significant contributions to the growth and development of our community, to the development of future generations and to the cultural exchange between Japan and the U.S."

Following the lunch service,

before each honoree received their commemorative clock award, Kita recognized a pair of JACLers in attendance: Ken Inouye, past JACL national president, and Nancy Takayama, Pacific Southwest District board member.

Each recipient was introduced by a friend, colleague or family member. Keiro President and CEO Beverly Ito introduced Kimiko Fujita, whose activities include volunteering for the Orange County Japanese American Assn.; establishing Yamaha Music Schools in Irvine, Torrance and Laguna; and serving on the board of directors for Keiro Services.

Ryan Kagiya prefaced his grandmother, Elaine Keiko Inoue, who was recognized for her years of utilizing her cooking skills for the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Cultural Center's Hot Meals lunch program.

Shikai returned to the stage to tout Jean Kodama, an electrical engineer who also holds a seventh dan in *kendō* and a fifth dan in *iaidō* and was the first female president of the Southern California Kendo Federation and the first woman board member of the All United States Kendo Federation.

Japanese American National

Museum Board of Trustees Chair Bill Fujioka vouchsafed the accomplishments of his wife, Darlene Kinuko Kuba, whose accomplishments include helping to create Little Tokyo Nutrition Services and founding Kuba and Associates, L.A.'s first AAPI woman-owned government relations firm, of which she serves as its president.

Sunao Sugita spoke on behalf of *chadō* (tea ceremony) master Yuko N. Uyesugi, a longtime member of Urasenke Tankokai, founder of the nonprofit Yusuian Foundation and the Yusuian tearoom in Malibu, which was lost in the January wildfires.

Attorney Candice Shikai praised Heidi Yoshioka, also an attorney who has been active over the years with the Japanese American Bar Assn., the Los Angeles County Bar Assn. and the Asian Pacific American Bar Assn. and whose auxiliary interests have ranged from coaching youth basketball to mentoring young women attorneys striving for success and career advancement.

Speaking on behalf of all the awardees was Fujita, who expressed the collective gratitude from all the recipients. "This is a wonderful recognition that inspired us all to strive for excellence and make meaningful contributions to our community," she said.

Giving the closing remarks was Kita. "Their stories all empower us to want to do more to help better our society," he said.

Included among the persons serving on the luncheon's planning committee were Joyce Chinn, Toshie Kawaguchi, Jan Fukuhara, Kita, Rodney Nakada, Miyuki Namiki, Sachiko Okazoe, Mari Robinson, Tomoko Sakurai, Kitty Sankey, Shikai, Patricia Sookdet and Tambara.

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The Oda family: Maki Lorraine, Junichi and Larry Oda (seated on his father's lap)

Junichi Oda's story is not unique. Beginning Dec. 7, 1941 — before EO 9066 — the government used Presidential Proclamation 2525, issued under the Alien Enemies Act, to arrest more than 17,000 Japanese and Japanese Latin Americans. Many had lived in the U.S. for decades but were ineligible for citizenship due to racial restrictions in federal naturalization laws.

Former Congressman Mike Honda has long warned of the dangers posed by the Alien Enemies Act. "This is not a partisan issue — it is a Japanese American issue," Honda said. "This is a call to action for all Japanese Americans: Engage your local school boards, county supervisors, state legislators and congressional representatives to pass resolutions supporting the Neighbors Not Enemies Act, which would repeal the Alien Enemies Act."

The proposed legislation — S.193 in the Senate and HR 630 in the House — is co-sponsored by Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn, Fifth District).

Under Executive Director David Inoue's leadership, the policy team has submitted testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, led grassroots lobbying efforts, created public action alerts and trained advocates through programs like the 2025 JACL/OCA Leadership Summit.

The law, first passed in 1798, was last used during WWII. Critics argue that its use now is a legal shortcut — an effort to bypass the due process required under modern immigration law.

"If we don't tell these stories, no one will know this happened to us," said Larry Oda. "And we can't let it happen again."

To read the authors' and more stories, visit the Alien Enemies Act Stories Project at: <https://jacl.org/alien-enemies-act-stories>.

Pictured (from left) are Amy Tambara, Kitty Sankey, Nancy Takayama, George Kita and Yuriko Shikai.



REPARATIONS » continued from page 5

open mind and heart. Avoiding or demonizing conflict prevents us from deepening our relationships. As a result, we lose resilience and the ability to build community. Throughout the meeting, I witnessed a mindful intention to truly get to know one another. Respect was present, even when differences of opinion emerged.”

As one of the only non-Black individuals present at the convening of more than a hundred reparations leaders, Griffin reflected on her positionality within the Japanese American community as an Issei.

“With my identity and background, I am often invisible, and my words frequently carry little weight,” she said. “I feel unseen and unheard — not only in white-dominant spaces but also in some JA spaces. However, during the meeting, I felt included. I didn’t need to fight for space. That was new for me, and I’m still processing and reflecting on it.”

Two other Black reparations-related events also took place that week that included Japanese Americans: a reparations happy hour hosted by JACL National and a press conference at the U.S. Capitol. Hosted at the new office that JACL shares with APIAVote

and several other AANHPI advocacy organizations, the happy hour invited Japanese American allies to Black reparations and representatives of Black-led reparations groups to meet in an informal social gathering. The event was attended by about 25 people and offered an important opportunity to build and strengthen relationships across organizations in the movement.

On May 15, a press conference held by members of Congress at the U.S. Capitol building announced the reintroduction of the Reparations Now Resolution by Congresswoman Summer Lee (D-Pa). The 24-page resolution outlines the deep entrenchment of slavery within the U.S. government, including facts such as that 10 of the first 12 presidents enslaved people, more than 1,700 congressional members were also enslavers and that both the White House and U.S. Capitol were built by enslaved Black people.

Without mincing words, the resolution goes on to call for the House of Representatives to “recognize the responsibility of the Federal Government to provide reparations, in all necessary forms, including financial compensation,



Japanese American groups at the Reparations Happy Hour hosted by JACL National PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER

to rectify ongoing harms resulting from violations, by the Federal Government, of Black people’s human right to self-determination and freedom from discrimination, including with respect to housing, health, education, life, security of person, water and sanitation and a healthy environment.” The resolution also calls on congress to pass HR 40, the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, which has been introduced in every session of Congress since 1989.

The late-Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.) first introduced HR

40 in 1989. The timing was strategic, immediately after the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was passed, granting redress to Japanese Americans. After Conyers retired in 2017, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) took up the mantle as a sponsor of the bill. Under Lee’s leadership, the bill passed out of the House Judiciary Committee for the first time in 2021 but failed to receive a vote on the House floor. After Lee died in 2024, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) reintroduced it on Jan. 3, 2025, to the 119th Congress.

In its current iteration, the bill has 77 co-sponsors as of press time.

This is significantly lower than its 130 co-sponsors during the previous session, despite the fact that the bill text remains the same.

JACL National has also been a longtime proponent of the bill, working with N’COBRA and other legacy reparations organizations to encourage additional members of Congress to co-sponsor the legislation. A significant motivation is the parallels between Japanese American redress and Black reparations.

Said JACL Executive Director David Inoue in a statement provided by the organization: “We are long overdue in fully coming to terms with our government’s complicity in the institution of chattel slavery and continued state-sanctioned and enforced racial discrimination against Black people. The Japanese American Citizens League continues the call for our nation to once again correct a historic injustice as it did for Japanese Americans and seek to truly respond to the harms that our government has inflicted upon the Black community in the form of reparations to bring healing for all Americans.”

For information on how to get involved with local reparations efforts in your region, visit: www.reparationsresources.com.



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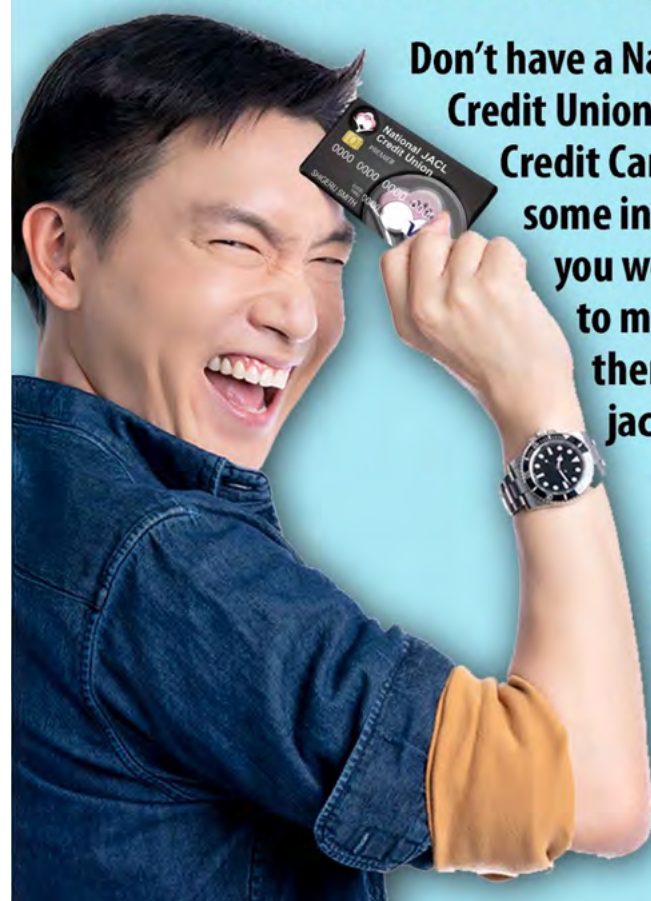
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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

2025 JACL National Convention
Albuquerque, NM
July 17-20
Price: Registration Now Open.
Save the date for this year's JACL National Convention in the beautiful city of Albuquerque! This year's event will feature plenaries, special events and the annual Sayonara Gala. Full details, including how to register, are available on the JACL website.
Info: Visit www.jacl.org.

NCWNP

Changing Perspectives on Japanese American Incarceration
Oakland, CA
June 21 and 22; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Oakland Asian Cultural Center
388 Ninth St.
Price: \$150
This two-day conference will feature speakers and workshops focused on Japanese American history. Registration includes lunch on both days. Featured speakers include Frank Abe, Dr. Satsuki Ina, David Inoue, Mike Ishii, Barbara Takei and Nancy Ukai.
Info: To register, visit jampilgrimages.org/changing-perspectives.

Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL 2025 Community Picnic
Watsonville, CA
June 28; 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Watsonville Buddhist Temple
423 Bridge St.
Price: Free
The chapter is celebrating its annual community picnic and all are welcome to enjoy scholarship presentations, games, senior bingo, a new lunch menu and entertainment featuring Watsonville Taiko.
Info: Visit watsonvillesantacruzjacl.com.

‘Ni Do To: A Transplanted Pilgrimage’
San Jose, CA
Thru July 13
Japanese American Museum at San Jose
535 N. Fifth St.
This transformative lobby experience of shared connection journeys through ancestral joy, historical trauma and community resilience with the narrative of Japanese American incarceration through various interactive technologies.
Info: Visit <https://www.jamsj.org/ndt>.

PSW

Annual Summer Natsu Matsuri Festival
Los Angeles, CA
June 21, Noon-9 p.m.; June 22, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Venice Japanese Community Center
12448 Braddock Dr.
Price: Free
This two-day event will feature festival food favorites, games, martial arts demonstrations, a taiko performance, ondo dancing, Japanese cultural exhibits, music and dance featuring Elemental Funk and much more.
Info: Visit www.vjcc.com.

LTCC Annual Dance Benefit
Los Angeles, CA
June 28; Doors Open 6-11 p.m.
Nishi Hongwanji Kaikan
815 E. First St.
Price: Tickets Start at \$50
This year's benefit dance will feature live music performed by Kokoro. All proceeds will support the mission of the Little Tokyo Community Council.
Info: For questions, contact info@littletokyo.org.

‘Kansen Nu Michi Tirashi’ Lighting the Path for Future Generations
Torrance, CA
June 28; 2 p.m.
James R. Armstrong Theatre
3330 Civic Center Dr.
Price: General \$45; Student \$40
This performance celebrates 40 years of Okinawan dance featuring professional performers and musicians from Okinawa, California, Hawaii and Texas. This event honors Keiko Yonamine's legacy since founding the group in 1984.
Info: To purchase tickets, visit <https://kansen.squarespace.com>.

‘Brushed Between Worlds’ Art Exhibit
Albuquerque, NM
June 28-July 25
Japanese American Cultural Center
1501 San Pedro Dr. N.E.
Price: Free
This exhibit will feature the artwork of local artists Junko Nakao and C. Hitoshi Nakagawa and their poetic nod to sumi-e, watercolor and storytelling rooted in nature and memory.
Info: For questions, call (505) 308-8090.

Sake in the Park
Los Angeles, CA
July 18; 7-10 p.m.
Grand Park in Downtown L.A.

Between First and Temple Streets
Price: Early Bird Until June 15 \$150; General Until July 17 \$175; At the Door \$200
This year's benefit, supporting Little Tokyo Service Center, includes unlimited food and drink from 20-plus breweries and food providers. Come on out and support a great cause and savor in delicious food and drink offerings.
Info: Visit www.LTSC.org/Sake.

TAIKOPROJECT 25th Anniversary
Los Angeles, CA
July 19; 7 p.m.
Walt Disney Concert Hall
111 S. Grand Ave.
Price: Tickets \$35 and Up
This concert celebrates TAIKOPROJECT's 25th anniversary. Joining the group will be Chicax band, Quetzal and Sumie Kaneko. The group will also release its fourth studio album at the concert as well.
Info: For tickets, visit www.taiko-project.com.

CCDC

Art of the Word: ‘Once Upon a Book — Featuring the Illustrations of Grace Lin’
Fresno, CA
Thru June 29
Fresno Art Museum
2233 N. First St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit features Grace Lin's original illustrations from “Once Upon a Book,” co-written with Kate Messner. In the book, Alice is tired of winter and decides to escape by reading one of her favorite books. She steps inside the book and becomes a part of the story . . .
Info: Visit <http://www.fresnoartmuseum.org/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/>.

PNW

‘Sadako and Paper Cranes: Through Our Eyes’
Portland, OR
Thru Sept. 7
Japanese American Museum of Oregon
411 N.W. Flanders St.
In observance of 80 years since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this exhibit examines the devastation of nuclear war through the eyes of Sadako Sasaki.
Info: For information, visit <https://jamo.org/sadako/>.

2025 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage
Powell and Cody, WY
July 24-26
Heart Mountain Interpretive Center
1539 Road 19
Price: Pilgrimage Registration Prices Vary
Featured events include the premiere of “Hello Maggie!” the stamping of the Ireicho, the debut of a short film exploring cultural connections to Heart Mountain, multigenerational discussion groups and the ever-popular Sayonara Banquet.
Info: For more information and to register, visit www.heartmountain.org.

IDC

‘Uncovering the Journey: Japanese American Pioneers in Box Elder County’
Brigham City, UT
Thru June 21
24 N. 300 West
Price: Check Museum for Admission Pricing
This exhibit highlights the lasting impact of Japanese Americans on Box Elder County's culture and history.
Info: Visit <https://brighamcitymuseum.org/uncovering-the-journey-japanese-american-pioneers-in-box-elder-county>.

51st Annual Denver Cherry Blossom Festival
June 21, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; June 22, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Downtown Denver, Sakura Square
Price: Free
All are welcome to attend this community event highlighting Japanese culture!
Info: Visit www.milehighjacl.org.

MDC

Kansha Project Culmination
Chicago, IL
June 28; 3:30-6:30 p.m.
Midwest Buddhist Temple
435 W. Menomonee St.
Price: Free
This program will celebrate participants' experiences as they share and reflect on their 2025 trip to Manzanar.
Info: For free tickets, visit <https://bit.ly/kanshaculmination2025>.

2025 Crystal City Pilgrimage and Conference
San Antonio, TX
Oct. 9-12
Conference Portion: DoubleTree San Antonio Airport Hotel
611 N.W. Loop 410
Price: \$395
Themed “Crystal City Rising — Neighbors Not Enemies,” event programming will be centered around the present-day attacks on immigrant communities,

Participants will also have the opportunity to stamp the Ireicho book.
Info: Visit www.crystalcitypilgrimage.org/2025-pilgrimage.

EDC

Japanese War Brides: Across a Wide Divide
Delray Beach, FL
Thru Aug. 17
Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens
4000 Morikami Park Road
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit illuminates previously unknown American immigration stories and offers a space to rethink how we hate, why we love and what it means to be American.
Info: Visit <https://morikami.org/upcoming-exhibitions/>.

Japanese Lacquerware Culture and the Appeal of Urushi Lecture
Boston, MA
June 28; 2 p.m.
Museum of Fine arts
465 Huntington Ave.
Price: Tickets Available to Purchase
Join Murose Kazumi, a master of urushi lacquerware and designated a Living National Treasure of Japan, as he delves into the relationship between the Japanese people and urushi lacquer dating back to the early Jomon period.
Info: For tickets, visit <https://www.mfa.org/event/the-rad-smith-program-in-japanese-art/japanese-lacquerware-culture-and-the-appeal-of-urushi?event=142211>.

‘Yakyu/Baseball: The Transpacific Exchange of the Game’
Cooperstown, NY
Opens in July
Baseball Hall of Fame
25 Main St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit explores the exchange of baseball between Japan and the U.S. from the Meiji era to today and the transpacific circulation of baseball concepts, style of play and people that shaped the shared culture of the game.
Info: Visit <https://baseballhall.org>. ■

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News Briefs

CAPAC: State Dept.'s Threats 'Un-American'

WASHINGTON — In response to Secretary of State Marco Rubio's May 28 announcement the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security would "aggressively revoke" the visas issued to Chinese students, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus raised its concerns over "the impacts of this policy on individuals of Chinese descent and how the Trump administration will determine which students have ties to the Chinese Communist Party." In its statement, CAPAC said, "We agree that anyone who comes to the United States under false pretenses to gather intelligence with the intention of benefitting a foreign adversary like the Chinese Communist Party has no place here. ... However, the lack of any details about the process or standards by which you intend to conduct this review raises serious concerns that innocent students will be caught up in this ordeal, simply because they are of Chinese descent. That's not smart national security policy—it's just un-American."

JANM Makes New Additions to Its Boards

Joining the Japanese American National Museum's board of directors are: Diana Abouali, director of the Arab American National Museum; Anthea M. Hartig, Elizabeth MacMillan director of the

Smithsonian's National Museum of American History; Hiroshi Kawano, executive chairman of MUFG Americas Holdings Corp. and the deputy regional executive for the Americas; and Erika Moritsugu, former deputy assistant to the president and Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander senior liaison during the Biden administration. Jay A. Shiba, former supply chain management vp, Northrop Grumman, joined the museum's board of governors. Joining its honorary board were Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.) and Sen. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.).

JACF Reveals 10 Nonprofit Org Grant Winners

The 10 nonprofit organizations that won Japanese American Community Foundation grants in the latest round are Asian Cultural Experience of Salinas (Salinas, Calif.); Central California Nikkei Foundation (Fresno, Calif.); Chicago Japanese American Historical Society (Glenview, Ill.); GenRyu Arts (San Francisco); Marysville JACL Chapter (Marysville, Calif.); Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego (San Diego); Nikkei Heritage Association of Washington (Seattle); Nisei Veterans Memorial Center (Kahului, Hawaii); Poston Community Alliance (Pleasant Hill, Calif.) and St. Louis JACL Chapter (Creve Coeur, Mo.).

Feds Nab Clinic Suicide Bomber Accessory

The Justice Department announced the arrest of Daniel Jongyon Park at JFK International Airport after he was deported from Poland.

The 32-year-old resident of Kent, Wash., was charged with providing and attempting to provide material support to terrorists for allegedly shipping and paying for significant quantities of ammonium nitrate — an explosive precursor — to Guy Edward Bartkus, 25, of Twentynine Palms, Calif., killed as he drove a motor vehicle containing a homemade bomb that detonated in the May 17 attack on a Palm Springs, Calif., fertility clinic that resulted in the destruction of the facility and injuries to several individuals.

CSULA Confers 3 Honorary Degrees to AsiAms

California State University Los Angeles conferred honorary doctorates to three Asian Americans: On May 20, biotech industry leader and philanthropist Kevin Xu received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at the 9 a.m. ceremony; and actor, comedian, producer, writer and AAPI community advocate Ken Jeong received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts at the 5 p.m. ceremony. On May 21, stand-up comedian Jo Koy received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts at the 1 p.m. ceremony.

2 Indicted in Scheme to Silence U.S. Dissident

The Justice Department announced May 30 that federal grand juries returned indictments charging Cui Guanghai, 43, of China, and John Miller, 63, of the U.K. and a U.S. lawful permanent resident, with interstate stalking and conspiracy to commit interstate stalking (Los Angeles) and conspiracy, smuggling and

violations of the Arms Export Control Act (Milwaukee). "As alleged, the defendants targeted a U.S. resident for exercising his constitutional right to free speech and conspired to traffic sensitive American military technology to the Chinese regime," said Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche.

Man Pleads Guilty to Selling Fatal Painkillers

After selling dozens of fentanyl-laced counterfeit oxycodone pills to a drug dealer who later sold them to a victim who died soon afterward from a fatal overdose in January 2020, Marcus Michael Takaya Poydras, 36, of Redondo Beach, Calif., pleaded guilty to one count of distribution of fentanyl resulting in death.

Ex-Teacher/Coach Named in Child Porn Case

A preliminary hearing date was scheduled for June 5 for Justin Akio Yasutake, 39, of Pasadena, Calif. The former teacher and youth soccer coach was charged with possessing child pornography.

Prison for Teacher Who Sexually Abused 2

Jacqueline Ma was sentenced in May to 30 years to life in prison after pleading guilty to two counts of forcible lewd acts on a child, one count of a lewd act on a child and one count of possessing child sexual abuse material after grooming and sexually assaulting two young boys. She taught at Lincoln Acres Elementary in National City, near San Diego.

— P.C. Staff

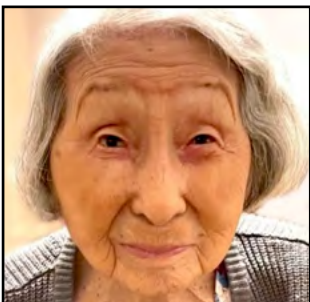
In MEMORIAM

(Editor's Note: Boldfaced names in blue in the PDF version of this page are active hyperlinks to published obituaries for the decedent.)

Asato, Morio, 92, Honolulu, HI, Feb. 8.

Cope-Miyashiro, Carole Robin, 82, Redwood City, CA, Dec. 23, 2024.

Doami, Koko, 82, La Palma, CA, April 25.

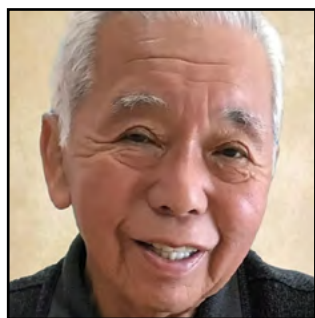


Fujii, Marie Park, 105, Honolulu, HI, Jan. 3.

Fujikawa, Tamiko, 97, Los Angeles, CA, April 21.

Furukawa, Chizuko, 86, Los Angeles, CA, March 5.

Higa, Ronald Tadao, 68, Kaneohe, HI, April 27.



Ishioka, Tatsuo Roy, 84, Culver City, CA, Jan. 1.

Kajimura, Tadashi, 88, Puyallup, WA, March 29.



Kyomen, Yoshie, 90, Buena Park, CA, April 18.

Masuda, Susumu, 75, Los Angeles, CA, March 21.

Miyashiro, Kenneth Kiyoshi, 71, Kailua, HI, Dec. 31, 2024.

Naito, Bessie M., 98, Newcastle, WA, April 8.

Nishimoto, Jean Murakawa, 84, Los Angeles, CA, April 25.

Okazaki, Lynette Hatsumi, 65, Portland, OR, Feb. 26.



Sakakihara, Paul, 73, Sacramento, CA, Dec. 11, 2024.

Shibata, Hiroshi, 87, Torrance, CA, Jan. 5.

Shigezane, Minoru, 96, South El Monte, CA, March 3.

Suyenaga, Umeko M., 90, Roseville, CA, Feb. 10.

Takeuchi, Kazuki 'Kaz,' 79, Lynnwood, WA, May 31.

Taku, Melissa Renee, 46, Gilroy, CA, May 19.



Tao, Tomoko (née Ikuma), 95, Santa Clara, CA, May 15.

Tanahashi, Nana, 85, Los Angeles, CA, March 17.

Tasugi, Kinji Mark, 79, Los Angeles, CA, April 9.



Williamson, Eiko, 84, Albuquerque, NM, April 22.

Winters, Jane Kimiko, 85, Fairfield, CA, March 22.

Yonamine, Myrtle, 91, Carson, CA, Dec. 26, 2024.

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 \$25/column inch.

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**JACL National Convention
in Albuquerque, New Mexico
July 17 - 20, 2025**



**Soar in a
one-of-a-kind
balloon ride**

Photo Credit: Core-Visual



**Visit the Botanic Garden,
Aquarium and Zoo**



**Hike Sandia's
trails or ride the
longest tram in
the Americas
to the crest**

Photo Credit: Jay Blackwood and Sandia Peak Tram



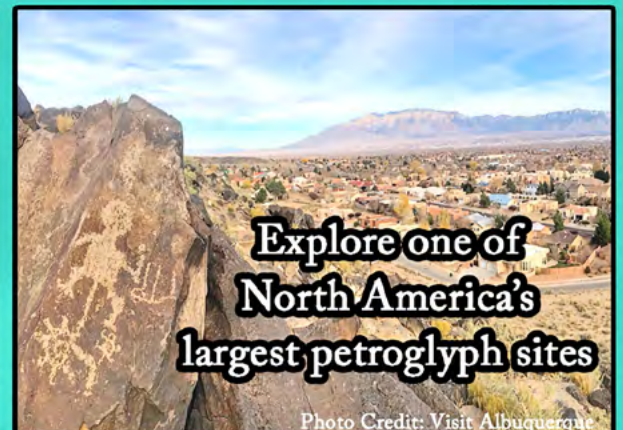
Visit historic Old Town

Photo Credit: Julia O'Connell



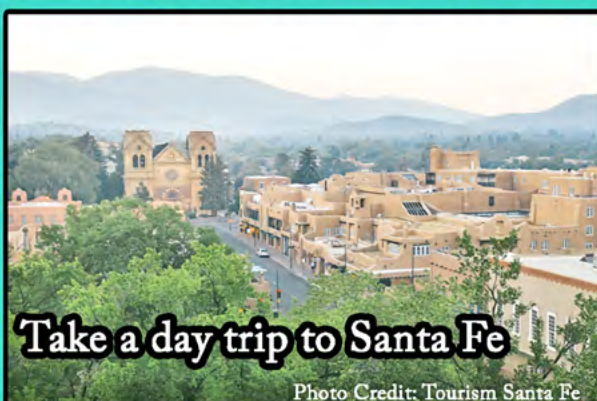
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New Mexican
cuisine and
microbreweries**

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**Explore one of
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largest petroglyph sites**

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Take a day trip to Santa Fe

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