COUNTDOWN FOR THE TANAKA TESTIMONIAL

Only a few days remain to reserve your tickets for the community testimonial honoring the life and work of Dr. Francis Tanaka. The luncheon will be held Saturday, April 2, 1994 at the Town and Country Convention Center in Mission Valley. The price of the meal will be $20 per person and will be served promptly at 11:30 a.m.

The theme of the luncheon will be casual Hawaiian, and will feature the Buddhist Temple Taiko group, and live Hawaiian entertainment.

For tickets and reservations please contact Carol Kawamoto at 287 7584. Don’t delay, the last day to purchase tickets will be March 26, 1994, and no tickets for this event will be sold at the door. The cost of parking at the hotel will be $1.00 with a validated parking ticket. Validations will be available at the luncheon registration desk.

ON THIS ISSUE

In this time of expanding urbanization it has become easy to overlook the importance that agriculture has played, and continues to play in the economic well being of San Diego County.

With this edition we start a two issue series featuring about the Nikkei farmers who contributed so much to agricultural productivity of the South Bay. The Footprints staff is especially pleased to be able to feature a number of first person recollections of South Bay residents in these issues.

BEFORE THE WAR-MEMORIES

BY

SHIG OTO

I enjoyed reading, Hard Rap-Genkotsu by Mich Himaka, and Bukkyokai Memories by Yukio Kawamoto in the Fall, 1993 issue of Footprints. Those articles also brought back memories of my own childhood days. I was born in Palm City, but my childhood memories start in Otay where my parents farmed with the Ogino’s across the road from the Takashima’s and Saito’s. There was no electricity in our area at that time and the toilet facilities were the “quarter moon” outhouse type.

We had a Model A Ford sedan and I remember going up to visit our relatives, the Yajiro Ito’s who lived in Encinitas, on the old Highway 101, which took a whole day to travel.

Please see Memories on page 3.

In This Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memories-Oto</th>
<th>Page 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grove's-Segawa</td>
<td>Page 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family History-Hosaka</td>
<td>Page 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916 Flood-Estes</td>
<td>Page 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Page 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

We of the JAHSSD would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new members who have joined with us in our effort to preserve and perpetuate the Nikkei story in San Diego County.

Bill and Ruth Fujimoto
Robert and Edna Ito
Thomas T. Minamide
Dorthy T. Otsuka
Connie I. Taniguchi

If you haven’t received your 1994 membership card, please call our membership chairman, Yukio Kawamoto at 286-8203.

1994 MEMBERSHIPS DUE

We would like to remind all our members and friends that their 1994 membership dues should be paid as soon as possible. Simply fill out the membership form found elsewhere in this newsletter and mail it with your check today.

Your 1994 membership will entitle you to continue to receive copies of Footprints and your dues will assist in our continuing effort to tell the story of the Nikkei experience in San Diego. Do something for the future today; join with us in keeping the story alive.

TURN OF THE CENTURY JAPANESE PHOTO EXHIBIT

“Souvenirs From Japan: Japanese Photography at the Turn of the Century,” an exhibit of more than 100 hand-colored, Meiji era photographs will be on display March 23 through May 22, 1994 at the San Diego Museum of Photographic Arts, 1649 El Prado, Balboa Park.

The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is $3 with children under twelve, free. The second Tuesday of each month is free. For more information, call 238 7559.

IMPERIAL PAIR TO VISIT U.S. IN JUNE

The Japanese media is reporting that Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko will make a state visit to the United States next June. The trip will mark the first visit to the United States by a Japanese Emperor since Akihito’s late father, Emperor Hirohito, toured the country in 1975.
in the first years of the 1930's. We would always stop in Old Town around noon and eat the best tasting tamales I can remember.

I went to school at Otay Elementary School up to the second grade. There were no school busses at that time so we had to walk to school, which was quite a ways for me. There was a turkey farm along the way and I used to run by there as fast as I could just in case one of them decided to come after me. One time, on the way home, I got to playing and forgot all about the time. The sun set and my parents and the Takashima's came looking for me.

Later, my parents moved to the Tijuana Valley near what they used to call Border Gate Number Two and farmed with my uncle, Toyokichi Ito. That's when I remember going to Japanese language school with the Ito girls riding on the back of an old truck. I know I never got higher than Book Six because, as Yukio said, “...they kept demoting us.” The best times were the lunch hour where we would play games like capture the flag, kick the can, and marbles. In our group Jack Fujimoto was the king of the marbles game, so we would try to avoid playing with him. After school they would line us up in rows to be dismissed. One day a bunch of us took off before we were excused and Ouchi Sensei caught us and lined us up in his office and we sure got slapped in the face. Another time I got bonked on the head by Tokunaga Sensei for peering into the room from the outside and making faces at the students inside.

There was a Tanomoshi club, which was like a private rotating credit union. I didn’t know what it was at the time, but I sure enjoyed going every month to all the different homes. We would visit the Ito’s, Tanaka’s, and Torio’s and play kick the can, ping pong and a whole variety of other games with the kids from the other families that were members of the

Memories continued from page 1.

Tanomoshi. Then there were the joyous occasions when we would take part in a Mochi-tsuki at the Ito’s residence and everyone would participate except us kids who were too small to pound the mochiko.

The next relocation came when we moved to Nestor to farm by ourselves where the Nakagawa’s and Kuroye’s used to live. The neighbors to the East of us were the Funaki’s and the Kida’s. To the South of us were the Imaizumi’s, Segawa’s, Iguchi’s and the Itami’s. Also farming in the area were the Furuya’s, the Hirata’s, and the Yano’s. There was a Seinen Kai composed of older Nisei in our area, but I can’t recall the name of it. There was also a softball team that played against the Vista team which had the Sugita brothers on it. The battery for the Nestor team were Min Akiyama and Tom Sugioka. My memory is amiss since I can’t recall any of the other players on the team besides Harry Segawa, Flash Sugioka, George Akiyama, Charlie Iguchi, and my brother Kaz.

Then came the famous Executive Order 9066 which ordered us to relocate again, but not by choice.

Memories are things that anyone can remember, but which fade as I grow older, but it’s nice to reminisce about the good old days. They were probably not as good as today with all the modern conveniences and such, but to me they are still good, and fun.

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego
I’LL MEET YOU AT GROVE’S
by
BEN SEGAWA

The Grove Chemical Company was a farm supply store started by Robert W. (Bob) Grove. Local growers would come in regularly to purchase seed, pesticides, fertilizers, farm tools and the like. More often than not, local growers would meet at our counter, and I thus became a party to many long conversations, by accident, as it would be.

By 1960 we outgrew the old store and were forced to move a block away to a larger facility. You know, one with more space including a larger area for conversation and coffee. The new addition rapidly became a huge success. Growers coming in for supplies would hang around for hours talking to each other. Every subject you can imagine must have been discussed at one time or another. We talked about farm issues, new farming techniques, the latest in farm, politics, and on and on. The shed soon became the daily meeting place: “I’ll meet you at Grove’s for coffee....” quickly became a by-word among South Bay farmers.

Inevitably, the first person to show up every day was “Windy” Marumoto - he would be waiting for me when I arrived to open at 7:30 a.m. “Windy” would make the coffee, and many was the time he would have a box of fresh Winchell’s donuts with him. Not surprisingly everybody at Winchell’s knew “Windy” - not by name - but as the guy who spoke Japanese, Spanish and English; usually all at the same time. Amazingly, everyone always seemed to understand exactly what “Windy” was saying.

As the years went by, it seemed that everyone in the South Bay who was even remotely connected with agriculture would stop by for conversation and coffee. We had politicians looking for votes, and union organizers. University types seeking growers to try out new varieties of crops and farm techniques, and farm bureau officials. Here and there were always a few foreign growers, and there were always lots of suppliers around.

I remember Tosh Hasegawa coming in almost every day, even after he had become gravely ill. More than once Tosh marched in with his intravenous bottle hooked up. He would point to the collection of packing labels I had collected over the years and put on display above our coffee maker, and announce to all present, “See, that’s our vegetable label.” What started out as a simple little display of lug labels soon became a comprehensive collection representing most of the active farmers in our area. As I thin back, I believe that Tosh is the only man I ever knew who modified his pick-up truck so he could hang his IV bottle and drive at the same time.

I recall Frank Otsuka coming in all the time, stretching out, and taking a nap on top of our fertilizer bags. Jim Shinohara was famous for his antics. He would cut up the fertilizer bags with his knife, or run full tilt into the bag just to see how many he could knock down one time. Every now and again he would light firecrackers that always managed to wake up.

George Yamamoto was one of the quiet ones. He was also very personable and intelligent. I always enjoyed visiting with George.

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego

Please see Grove on page 10.
WRITING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY
BY
FRED T. HOSAKA

We are pleased to acknowledge the following article contributed by Fred T. Hosaka, a former San Diegan, now residing in Coquille, Oregon. Fred is the author of two works, A Japanese Immigrant in America (1990), and Shortchanged in America (1993), both center on his family’s experiences in the United States. The JAHSSD welcomes Fred as a contributing author.

Finding information about your Issei parents or grandparents who came to this continent during the early 1900’s is not as difficult as it might first appear. Have you ever wondered when, and on what ship they embarked when they left Japan? Where was their first destination? Who, if anybody, were the friends or relatives they were joining?

The Church Of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has, available to the general public, a Family History Library with branches located in each of the fifty states, connected to a central library located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

At each family history center, you will find the International Genealogical Index, the Family History Library Catalog, and other resources that will assist you with your research. You may also use microfilm on loan from the Family History Library. Each regional center is staffed by volunteers who can help you use the library’s collection of genealogical materials.

These library centers are open on different days at different hours depending upon the schedule of the specific library. It is always best to contact the center you intend to use to determine its days and hours of operation. You may find it necessary to call several times, so just keep trying.

The microfilm collection alone includes over 1.7 million rolls, with each roll requiring a minimum of four hours of study. Documents included in this part of the collection include: church records from 1550 to 1910, copies of the Census of the United States from 1780 to 1910 (all census records are sealed for their first seventy-five years), passenger lists of immigrant ships, records of individual military service, land ownership, and the decisions of the probate courts. A wide variety of other types of records are also available to the individual researcher.

In the San Diego area there are three such LDS centers: In Alpine at 2425 Tavern Road (619) 445 1455, In El Cajon at 1917 East Washington (619) 741 8441, and in San Diego at 3705 Tenth Avenue (619) 295 9808, The passenger lists of the ships arriving at the port of San Francisco are probably among the easiest documents to use, and most valuable as you search for your Issei ancestor. On these lists you will generally find: the family name, given name, place of birth, age, sex, marital status, occupation, ability to read and write, race, nationality, last permanent residence, the name and address of their nearest relative or the person that they are joining, money on hand, whether they had any prior arrests, deportations, or exclusions. Included also will likely be a

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego
Family continued from page 5.

physical description including details like height, weight, complexion, hair and eye color, and any unusual body marks. Finally the port of debarkation, the date of landing, and the name of the ship.

At the Family History Center ask for the Index to Passenger Lists 1883-1934. That index will list the available microfilms alphabetically. For instance, on roll number 1440965 you will find the names of all passengers ranging from Herberts through the remainder of the H’s into the I’s, up through the Inouyes. The microfilm will be in a file case. Take the roll to a projector, (a volunteer is usually available to help you get started). Expect to find a lot of names listed as you scroll through the file. This is a task that takes time and requires patience, but excitement and a feeling of reward runs high when you uncover the information you are seeking. Photo copies of your find can be made for twenty-five cents per page.

On occasion, the person filling in the blank spaces either misspells words, or worse yet, makes up words which “sound like” the Japanese terms that have been given. While these concocted responses are at times hilarious, they can also be very frustrating since you are working for exactness.

If a desired microfilm is not available at your library, it can be obtained from Salt Lake for a three dollar fee. The rental time is approximately three weeks for the use of the film.

Another excellent source of information on the Issei is the census. In case you ever wondered what happens to all that information the census takers collect, it ends up in places like the LDS libraries or the regional centers for the National Archives like the one located in Laguna Nigel, south of Los Angeles.

The reports of each census from the first in 1790 to the most recent, the fourteenth in 1920 are now open to the public. Federal law requires that the material from each census is sealed for seventy-five years. The census may provide things like, residence, occupation em-

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego
Family continued from page 6.

health records, property records, relocation employment records, leave records, and all related correspondence.

Another excellent source includes some of the Japanese American Historical Societies that have been springing up along the West Coast. Don’t forget your local department responsible for vital statistics: Birth, marriage and death certificates. Records involving wills and probate, corporation records are valuable, as are court records involving lawsuits. Churches maintain both histories and records, as to cemeteries. Tombstones can yield you a lot of information.

Another source is the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Many pre World War II Issei were the subject of FBI investigations, Under Freedom of Information Requests, this information is also available upon request. You should note that the agency has the right to censor “sensitive” material so the papers frequently arrive with a lot of heavy black lines marking out material so judged.

The process of researching the origins of your family can be difficult, frustrating, challenging, exciting, and rewarding, all at the same instant. Finding and tracing the lost history of your ancestors in America can be a meaningful gift to your family and their future. I hope you have luck, fulfillment and fun as you search for your “roots”.

Turning over stones of the past, can be an exciting adventure.

Looking for Lost Lug Labels

The Nikkei have always been a part of the great agricultural experience of San Diego County. One of the most immediate and graphic manifestations of the Japanese American presence in this area are the lug labels many farm families utilized to identify their products. The JAHSSD is presently attempting to collect as many examples of family lug labels from San Diego county as we can. Please look around in the shed, garage, or wherever and see if you don’t have a few left. If you’d care to donate them to our collection, we would be more than pleased to use the labels in an exhibit on Nikkei agriculture we will be developing.

If you can help us, please call Ben Segawa at 482-1736.

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego
THE GREAT HATFIELD FLOOD

Extracted from the oral interview of
Mr. Shigenobu Imamura

In 1916 the San Diego area was suffering from a prolonged drought. In an effort to do something the city fathers of San Diego contracted with Charles Hatfield to "make rain", and "make it" he apparently did. The resulting downpour caused a rupture of the dam at Lower Otay and in the ensuing flood a number of people were killed.

In an oral interview given in Japanese on February 12, 1972 to Don Estes, Mr. Shigenobu Imamura, who was 28 years old in 1916, describes some of what he remembered of the Hatfield Flood.

Q: Do you remember the 1916 flood when the dam at Lower Otay broke?

I: Yes, I lived below the dam. That is to say, I lived three or four miles from the dam.

Q: We would like to know anything you can remember of the storm.

I: We had had rain every day. It rained so much that we were unable to work because the field was soaked with water. Since it was the winter season we only took our produce to market in San Diego every two or three days.

Around January 17th or 18th, word reached us that we should be prepared to leave, evacuate because it was feared that the dam at Lower Otay might break. It was city workers who came to warn us. There was another family above us (towards the dam). Their name was Kajiya. He was from Kagoshima. The family next to us was the Ogino's, then the Takashima's. We didn't know for sure what we should do, but when the rain stopped temporarily, we three, (Imamura, Ogino, and Takashima) got on horseback and rode up to the dam.

When we got there, we saw the dam filled to the top. It was full, but there was a spillway and there was another dam where the water was stopped. After looking around, we said to each other that the City would certainly take care of things and they wouldn't let the dam break. After determining this, we turned around and rode home.

Two or three days later, it began to rain heavily again. Around noon of January 26th, we noticed that the water was getting higher and higher, so we went to the Ogino's place where a pipeline went across the river to see what was happening. By three o'clock in the afternoon the volume of water was increasing very rapidly. It had risen so high that we were unable to recross the river to where we had been before. Because of the rising water we all decided to evacuate.

Rare Photograph taken on January 24, 1916 of the lower Otay Dam by Mr. Shigenobu Imamura.

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego
Flood continued from page 8.

Everyone left, even our hired Mexican workers. We all fled. At the place where Mr. Takashima lives now, there was a barn and we all took shelter there. It was about six o’clock in the evening; in winter time it gets dark early, and it was already dark at six o’clock. All at once one of the Mexicans yelled, "Mira, mira," or "Look, look." We saw a huge wave of water coming down the valley, and we fled leaving everything behind. Our horses were still tied to the trees, but we didn’t have time to free them so they were ultimately lost, too. It was raining and cold so we built a fire to warm ourselves. We dried our shoes by the fire.

Later, we climbed the hill in the darkness. We knew a hakujin (caucasian) farmer who was farming higher up. We went to his house and he put us up for the night in his barn. We slept on dry hay. They served us breakfast the next morning. After breakfast we went out and looked down where the river was. By that time the water was gone and all we saw was a trickle of water, the dam had broken.

We decided to go to San Diego and started down the mountain. On the way down we saw two Japanese bodies laying by the side of the road. I thought many Japanese must have lost their lives. These two were some of Mr. Kajiya’s people. Here I parted from Mr. Sasaki, who went across the river to search one side, while I searched the other bank.

To get to San Diego, we had to go to Chula Vista first. Reflecting back now, I think we must have gone down E Street to the bay where we took a boat to San Diego.

The following day, Friday the 28th, they formed search parties to look for victims of the flood. Since I was from Otay, I went out with them. There was a railroad line to Chula Vista called the San Diego Electric Railroad, but several bridges and much of the track had been washed out so we had to take the boat back to the foot of “E” Street in Chula Vista and hike up to the Otay Valley on foot from there.

Later, we learned that Mr. Ogino, who farmed, above us was preparing to evacuate just as the dam broke. He was able to save himself by clinging to a gum tree, but his wife, and their baby boy, who was tied to her back, were washed away. Their bodies were never found.

We were never able to bring the land back to its original condition because almost everything was washed away. We had a huge tank on the farm that we used to pump water out of. After the flood we could never find it. It was very big and heavy, and just like a stone in the mud it must have sunk down deep.

Please see Flood on page 10.

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego
Flood continued from page 9.

carried there by the water. I am sure that even
today heavy engines are buried down in the mud
of the Otay Valley.

It was awful, just awful.

Lower Otay held an estimated eleven billion gallons of water, all of which flowed
down Salt Canyon to the bay in about three
hours leaving utter devastation in its wake. The
total number killed by the rupture of the dam has
never been factually established.

Of the Japanese who died in the flood,
eleven are memorialized at Mount Hope Cem­
eteries on a fine shaft of granite, dedicated by the
local Japanese American community. Listed
are: Kahei Kajiya, Toyozo Miwa, Mother and
son - Tokie and Shigeto Ogino, Chiyokichi
Fukui, Toyojiro Kato, Iwataro Kaminura,
Hikujiro Amano, Kunimatsu Kunio, Jinshiro
Kitazawa, and Ryoichi Kaneda.

Since most of those who died in the
disaster were Buddhist, a Buddhist service was
held in San Diego with the Reverend Zenyu Aoki
of Los Angeles officiating. With the service
acting as a catalyst, local Buddhists began to
meet on a periodic basis and eventually orga­
nized to found the San Diego Buddhist
Temple, which became a reality on May 19,
1926.

With the possible exception of the San
Francisco earthquake of 1906, the Otay Dam
disaster may represent the greatest single loss of
life ever experienced by the Japanese community
in America.

Grove Continued from page 4

He later became the President of the South Bay
Farmers Cooperative, a position he still holds.

During the season that Del Mar was open
"Windy's" son, Steve, and his son-in-law Les
Tachiki would drop by to get help with certain
financial speculations. Since "Windy" was a
very successful speculator a great many growers
sought his help and advice.

Joe Owashi, the President of the Chula
Vista Growers Association, conducted more than
a few of his meetings in our warehouse, using
field boxes for chairs. Wages, union activities
and miscellaneous farm issues were always on
the agenda.

We saw a good many birthday parties at
Grove's. Our beloved girl Friday, Darlene
Goldhagen, was both hostess and social director.
Nothing ever got by her, and everyone shared
their thoughts and feelings with Darlene. We
sure miss her. After seventeen years as my right
hand, we lost her to cancer.

Then we lost "Windy" too, and the mood
of our coffee group began to perceptibly change.
It just wasn't the same without someone there to
greet the growers; to laugh, and tell the wild
stories.

I worked for Bob Grove for twenty-eight
years. There was a real enjoyment in getting up
every morning and looking forward to the day's
work. I enjoyed every minute of it. I had fun,
and Bob Grove even paid me for it. I guess the
bottom line was that it was those growers who
came in for coffee and conversation who were
the real tribute to Grove Chemical.

Time passes, but the names and faces still
stand out clearly. Paul and his brother, Johnny
Yamamoto, the Aztec superstar. Charlie and Roy
Iwashita, Jay and Kenji Sato, Penny and Kenbo
Iguchi. There was Tom and Mits Nakano, Tom
and Shiz Maruyama, Freddy Hatashita, and
Henry Nakaji. Min and “Two-tone” Date, Akira
and Hiro Mayumi. All three Takashimas:
Jimmy, RTT, and Nobe. There, too, was Frank
and Glen Yonekura, Yeiji Fujino and as the faces
and names close in on my memory, so many
more that I can't begin to name them all.

Maybe what I remember best are all the
years of support and friendship. So many pleas­
ant memories to cherish. Thanks, guys.

Footprints
Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego
IF YOU ENJOYED THIS ISSUE....

If you enjoyed this issue of Footprints, we hope that you will tell a friend about the JAHSSD. All of which brings us to gently remind our readers that if they haven’t renewed their membership by May, 1994, we will have to, ever so reluctantly, remove you from our mailing list. Don’t be left out. Renew today, and bring along a friend, too.

THANKS FOR THINKING OF US

With your assistance we are gradually building a collection of artifacts that we hope will eventually be displayed for the enjoyment and education of the community. The JAHSSD would like to acknowledge the following gifts:

Fred Hosaka - For permission to quote freely from his newest book, Shortchanged in America.

Professor Shinkichi Tajiri - For the donation of a copy of his book, Tajiri.

Mrs. Mitsue Tanaka - For the loan of family photos and documents to be copied for our archives.

Mr. Vernon Yoshioka - For the donation of a nicely preserved child’s kendo suit, and wooden lug boxes dating from the 1930s.

Our thanks to Aiko Owashi, Moto Asakawa, and Michio Himaka - For participating in a "Day of Remembrance" panel at U.C.S.D.

If you have any artifacts, documents, letters, diaries, or photographs you would be willing to either donate or allow us to copy, we would very much appreciate it. Please contact any member of the JAHSSD Board listed elsewhere in this issue, Ben Segawa at 482 1736, or Don Estes at 280 9418. Thanks for thinking about the future.

JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO

1994 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Initial Application
- Renewal

☐ $20 Individual
☐ $30 Mr. and Mrs.
☐ $15 Senior (Over 62 years of age)
☐ $25 Senior Mr. and Mrs.
☐ $200 Charter Life (Individual)
☐ $300 Charter Life (Mr. and Mrs.)
☐ $100 Corporate (Annual)
☐ $500 Corporate (Life)

NAME
(include title: Mr., Mrs., etc.)

NAME
(include title: Mr., Mrs., etc.)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE & ZIP

TELEPHONE

Please mail this form and your check to:
JAHSSD
Elaine Bowers, Treasurer
833 Lori Lane
Chula Vista, CA 91910
LETTERS - DO WE GET LETTERS

WHERE WAS THAT BEARDED MAN?

Dear FOOTPRINTS Editor:

Congratulations on an excellent publication. As a pre-WWII resident of San Diego who has returned post-war only to visit, I find that the articles revived wonderful memories of my boyhood and youth.

The Fish Camp article was great, and proved my contention to my children that canned tuna tasted better in the old days. Skipjack was not considered of sufficient quality and taste to can then... only albacore (chicken of the sea) was canned. I had always thought this was so, but was not certain until I read the piece on the recollections of an old time resident. Those of us who had the privilege, will ne’er forget the wonderful unmatched flavor of dried abalone, available only through Fish Camp friends.

No doubt you have heard from readers on the identity of the family pictured on page 3 of the Winter:93 issue. It is not a San Diego family, but the Fukuyama family of Los Angeles, photo taken in the living room of their home on East Adams Boulevard.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Seiji Kiya

Dear Seiji:

Thank you very much for the kind words, and especially for the identification of the Christmas photograph. We have many unidentified photos and with your help and the help of others, we hope to eventually get them properly identified.

Sincerely,

San Diego, CA 92154
4270 Powdethorn Dr.
Jeanne K. Elvira, Editor

JAGSSD