



FOOTPRINTS

Impressions from where we were to where we will be

The Newsletter for the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego

Winter Issue 1998

Volume 7 Number 4



Kansha Award recipient, Susan Namba, accepts plaque from JAHSSD President Ben Segawa

JAHSSD Salutes Outstanding Women

By Mich Himaka

About 160 JAHSSD members and friends turned out Oct. 24 to pay tribute to four community-minded Nikkei women at the society's sixth annual membership meeting.

Also honored for his 12 years of service to the San Diego community as a whole was Rev. Akio Miyaji, recently transferred from San Diego to the Orange County Buddhist Temple. His wife, Tamiko-san, also shared the spotlight for all she has done for the temple and its members.

Those honored included Mrs. Misao Kawasaki, a long-time and highly honored *chano-yu* instructor; Mrs. Ruth Umeko Takahashi Voorhies, a volunteer Dharma School teacher at the Buddhist Temple and an active volunteer worker in the community; Mrs. Susan Hara Namba, a long-time volunteer worker and Sunday School teacher at the Ocean View United Church of Christ; and Mrs. Toshiye Sakaguchi Kiyoi, who taught at the Japanese Christian Church nursery school for 20 years

See JAHSSD salutes Outstanding Women page 5

DATES TO REMEMBER

December - Exhibit Chula Vista Heritage Museum

360 3rd Ave. Chula Vista, CA
Open Mon.-Thur. & Sat. 1-4 p.m.

December 20, 1998 - Christmas Service
at Ocean View United Church of Christ 10:00 a.m.
at San Diego Japanese Christian Church 10:30 a.m.
Japanese Service 9:00 a.m.

Christmas Concert 4:30 p.m. (Junko Nishiguchi-Cheng)

December 20, 1998 - Mochitsuki
Buddhist Temple of San Diego 6:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

December 24, 1998 - Candlelight Service
Ocean View United Church of Christ 6:00 p.m.

December 31, 1998 - Year End Service
Buddhist Temple of San Diego 7:30 p.m.
Joya no Kane - Shelter Island Friendship Bell
11:30 p.m.

January 1, 1999 - New Year Service
Buddhist Temple of San Diego 10:00 a.m.

April 26-28 1999: Poston Reunion (Reno)

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MY FIRST CHRISTMAS PRESENT

By Yukio Kawamoto

Being Buddhist and poor, our family didn't celebrate Christmas when I was growing up. I knew about Christmas because we learned Christmas carols in school, but at that time I didn't connect anything religious to it. It was just time for getting popcorn balls from Santa Claus (actually the school janitor) who came to our classroom and for a break from the rigors of school. After Christmas vacation, other kids would talk about what they got for Christmas. It was humiliating and embarrassing when I had to answer, "Nothing" when they asked me what I got. I must have bugged my parents about it, because just before Christmas when I was about 8 years old, my dad took me to Nippon Shokai at the corner of 5th and Island in downtown San Diego and bought me a genuine Hohner Marine Band harmonica. What a thrill that was! My very first Christmas present. Now, I had something I could proudly tell the other kids when they asked what I got for Christmas. I never learned how to play a tune on that harmonica, except maybe "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," but after a lot of Christmases and Christmas presents, that harmonica is still the most memorable Christmas present I ever got.

'TIS THE SEASON...

By Mich Himaka

Christmas Eve!

You know... "*'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, hoping that St. Nicholas soon would be there...*"

Not at OUR house!

Guess living in a Buddhist household didn't count!

What the heck. How could he know, right? Or was he supposed to know? We did live in downtown San Diego. Right their on lower Fifth Avenue, 437 to be exact. No snow there. No chimney either. We did have a transom window on the roof, though. (Heck, the Big Guy could fit through that window, I'm sure.)

But, come to think about it, there WERE some Buddhist families that DID receive goodies in stockings I recall. At least, they said they got something in their stockings.

But then, I don't think they had chimneys in their homes either!

Hmmm...

I know, it must have been because my sister

Mizu and I didn't leave any cookies and milk in the kitchen.

Heck, I don't think we had any cookies in the house!

Milk? Hardly drank the stuff. Got the runs, you know.

(Today, they call it *lactose intolerance* or something like that. Don't think they had a name for it in the old days. Maybe they did.)

Every year, since I started kindergarten and found out that kids hanging their stocking out the night before Christmas can receive goodies, I began hanging my socks out on the old *tansu* we had in the bedroom.

(Ahh! Maybe that's why the Big Guy didn't leave anything. He didn't know where we hung our socks! Nah! The kids said he always found theirs no matter where they hung it.)

Maybe it was because I hung socks I had worn all day the day before Christmas? Okay, maybe they stunk a little. But they were nothing like the socks my brothers wore in gym classes! Talk about dead air!

Maybe it was greed on my part.

I hung my socks up next to my sister's and they seemed awful small. I don't know how he could get anything in them!

So, I *borrowed* one of Mama's silk stockings and hung them up! (Think he'd know they weren't mine? Nah!

So, like the poem said, I hung the stocking up... well, on the *tansu* with care... and waited.

Any little noise I heard during the night, I was up!

Nothing. No one. Just Mama coming to bed late as usual.

The next morning, after another almost sleepless Christmas Eve again we got up to find... nothing. Just Mama's stocking hanging their from the *tansu* empty. Nothing in them. (Well I did hang one of Mama's stocking up for Mizu. I wasn't being completely selfish.)

So, here I sit, wondering what I did wrong in those youthful years. Because, the other kids did tell me that Santa would visit ONLY if you had been good.

I don't think my kids were any better or worse than I was as a kid.

And yet, *their* stockings have ALWAYS been full on Christmas mornings.

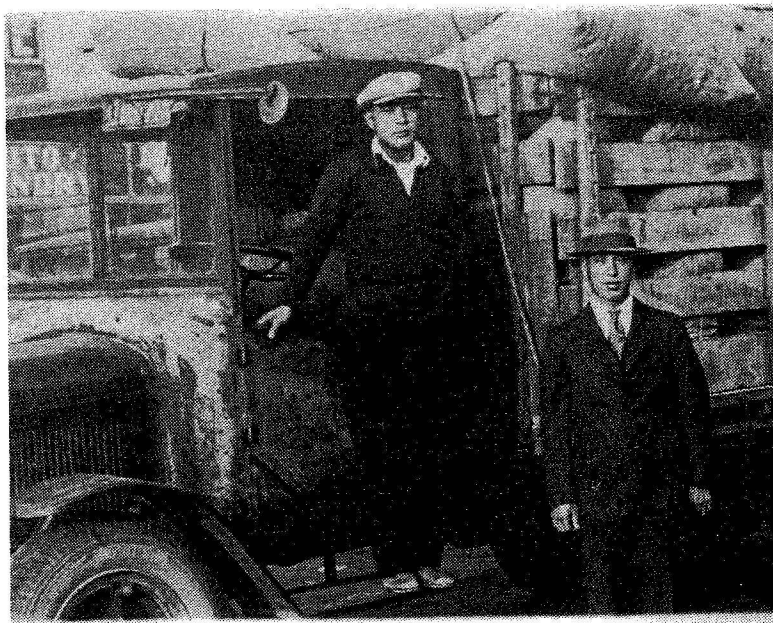
(*Good cookies! But still lactose intolerant! Oh well, what's an extra trip or two to the benjo as long as the kids are happy.*)

(Come to think of it, my stocking have been full every Christmas morning.. since I got married!)

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

And Happy New Year, too, to you from us.

Omedeto gozaimasu



George Yasukochi, left, delivers a load of chili peppers to the San Diego Market c. 1935

A VIEW FROM THE NORTH

by
Don Estes

Little has been written or is generally known about the relocation experience in North San Diego County. Initially, only the Nikkei population south of Del Mar was forcibly removed on April 8, 1942. Under the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order Number 4 they were first sent to the Santa Anita Assembly Center for five months and then to Camp III at Poston, Arizona.

The Nikkei of North San Diego County were unaffected until May 17, 1942, when the publication of Order Number 54 forced the removal of approximately another thousand individuals of Japanese ancestry. One of those forced from his home was Shozo George Yasukochi, whose family lived in San Marcos and farmed in Oceanside.

George, as he was popularly known, was the third son of the Yasukochi family and had been born in Fukuoka-ken on May 5, 1913. He came to the United States in 1915 when his mother joined her husband, Kiso. The family farmed in the Garden Grove area until 1923 when they moved to the San Marcos area. When the U.S. Army issued Order Number 54, the Yusukochis, like most of the north county Nikkei, were moved directly to Poston's Camp I. While at Poston, George, who was thirty at that time, wrote his impressions of the evacuation for the camp's Community Analysis Section.

What follows is George's abridged description of the events leading up to their removal written in February, 1943.

Instead of being evacuated to a concentration camp, as it was known in my community, the majority of the bigger families wanted to go out to New Mexico and start a [cooperative] farm of their own. In one particular case, one family, the most noted in Oceanside, planned to take the family to Kansas. The father of the family was interned, and the wife had to take over the ranch and the family properties. The family sent their farm equipment to that state, but then were not allowed to move.

The people were getting stirred up about evacuation and at various meetings were trying to form groups large enough to go to the "free zone" areas. People feared going out in small groups, chiefly because they might be attacked by ignorant people on the outside. The Kumamoto-mura group sent delegates to New Mexico to negotiate a contract, however, this plan failed.

The last three weeks before evacuation was really a turmoil for most of the Japanese people. The younger generation as busy shopping and clearing up their position as far as the legality of some of the leases and contracts. Most of the male Issei were taken to internment camps, so the selling of equipment and properties was either done by the mother or the children.

There was some resentment among the Nisei, especially from the families who had sons in the armed forces. A typical comment from the Issei was, "They [the government of the United States] take my boy to the Army, and now they take my other children to a concentration camp. I may have to go to an internment camp." Most of the Issei were expecting to be taken into the internment camps. I have known many cases where the father was packed up and ready to be taken.

(In our next issue thirty-year-old George Yasukochi writes about the fear Nikkei families in the North County experienced as the FBI began arresting the Issei fathers.)



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Rev. Akio Miyaji expresses his appreciation after accepting his Kansha Award plaque.

Mrs. Misao Kawasaki accepts her Kansha Award from JAHSSD Pres. Ben Segawa as Yukio Kawamoto looks on.



OUR HOLIDAY MESSAGE

AS WE COUNT DOWN TO THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM, WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE START OF ANOTHER. WHILE NIKKEI HISTORY IN SAN DIEGO GOES BACK ONLY ABOUT A CENTURY, WE LOOK FORWARD TO ANOTHER CENTURY AFTER ALL, HISTORY IS OUR MIDDLE NAME. WE THANK ALL OF OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS FOR THEIR SUPPORT THIS PAST YEAR AND HOPE WE CAN COUNT ON YOU FOR FUTURE SUPPORT. WE WISH YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

***SINCERELY,
THE BOARD OF THE JAHSSD***



as well as serving as a volunteer worker for numerous organizations, including the Japanese Friendship Garden Society.

Each of the honorees were presented with the **Kansha Awards**, plaques that were beautifully put together for the society by board member **Yuki Kawamoto** and certificates. (A HUGE "thank you" to Yuki!)

The JAHSSD also paid tribute to the initial group of people interviewed for the REgenerations Project carried out in conjunction with the National Japanese American Museum in Los Angeles. Individuals who participated by being interviewed were presented with copies of their transcribed interviews by REgenerations chairperson **Susan Hasegawa**.

This group included **Kay Fukamizu, Masaaki Hironaka, Masami Honda, Lloyd Ito, Umeko Kawamoto, Hisako Koike, Ruth Voorhies, Shig Yamashita, James Yamate, Dorothy Yonemitsu and Joe Yoshioka**.

Susan is in the process of compiling another list of possible interview subjects for future use.

(We thank **Don Estes, Carol Estes, Susan Hasegawa, Joyce Teague, Debbie Kodama and Leng Loh** for conducting the interviews.)

Municipal Court Judge Gale E. Kaneshiro, who became a Superior Court judge effective Dec. 1, delivered the keynote address for the meeting describing the workings of the criminal court system in San Diego.

Another highlight of the meeting was a display of a valuable collection of Hakata dolls recently donated to the society by **Mrs. Nancy Martinez**. The display was arranged by **Dr. Don Estes**, society historian. Another masterful job by The Master.

Letters

To the JAHSSD:

Thank you so much for selecting me as a recipient of your Community Service Award. It is an honor to be included in a group of such outstanding women, and with Rev. Miyaji. The dedication and service of these individuals to the Japanese American community are an inspiration to me and to all who have had the opportunity to work with them. It was so nice to hear about all of their accomplishments!

I thank **Don Estes** for composing such a complimentary description of me, and **Yukio Kawamoto** for designing the beautiful plaque. It is something that I will always treasure.

Sincerely,
Susan L. Namba

To the JAHSSD:

Congratulations on a successful annual meeting of the JAHSSD and for the very impressive work that you have performed on behalf of the Japanese American community.

Also "*arigato gozai mashita*" for the accolade received as one of the recipients of the Kansha Award. Although there are many more qualified people who could have been selected, it's always nice to be remembered. The plaque is gorgeous. Yukio does a great job!!

Thanks again and best wishes on your continued A1 performance.

Gratefully,
Ruth Voorhies

The JAHSSD:

Thank you for the great honor bestowed on me at your luncheon meeting. What an honor to receive such accolades along with a beautiful plaque. It will be treasured with a place of honor in my living room.

Half of the honor goes to my husband, Guy. He's my chauffeur as well as the person who feeds the computer with all the info that goes with the many things that need to be done at the church and the Garden.

Much love,
Toshi Kiyoi

Dear Members of the JAHSSD,

I congratulate you on your selection of Ms. Susan Namba as one of the women honored Oct. 24, 1998. Susan has been a faithful member of the Ocean View Church since her childhood, and as an adult and committed parent, has always taught Sunday School. Her other accomplishments include serving as Sunday School superintendent for almost 15 years, organizing our Vacation Bible School, and serving as church moderator from 1993-95, moving us to be a more faithful community that cares for others.

Susan is one who quietly goes about her tasks with efficiency and tact, always encouraging youth and adults to act with service and care. She also participates. I remember her carrying wall blocks and buckets of wet cement as we helped pour a cement roof for a community center in Tijuana; I recall the many years she has organized and even stayed overnight to promote our church's commitment to the homeless through the Interfaith Shelter Network program. She, her husband, Richard, along with their daughter Jennifer, have been generous in their support of our church through the years, even donating their

See Letters page 10

REgenerations Update

By Susan Hasegawa

It's A Wrap

The REgenerations Oral History team (pictured below) has wrapped up the first phase of the project. Funded by the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and in collaboration with the Japanese American National Museum and two other cities, the team completed ten oral history interviews in San Diego. Narrators (interviewees) received their bound copies at the annual meeting.



(Row 1: Don, Carol Estes; Row 2: Leng Loh, Debra Kodama
Row 3: Joyce Teague, Susan Hasegawa.

Coming To A Channel Near You

The team is exploring an opportunity to produce a program utilizing footage collected during our forays. In collaboration with *Earth Vision Production, Inc.*, a local production company, JAHSSD has submitted a grant proposal to the County of San Diego Cable Television Franchise. This is exciting stuff! The grant would fund a 28-minute documentary of San Diego's Nikkei experience.

JACL San Diego Chapter

Sponsored by JACL San Diego Chapter, the team will conduct two interviews focused on the development of local chapter and the organization's activities before and after the WWII. Little is known about organization during the 1930s and these interviews will shed new light concerning the history of our local chapter. As 1998 comes to an end, the team reached a milestone completing the first interviews. The new year looks even busier. We're looking forward to another productive year

IN MEMORIAM

The JAHSSD notes with sadness the passing of San Diegans and former residents of our community. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and friends.

Jack **ARAKI** - September 1998
Guadalupe Vargas **SUGIOKA** -September 25, 1998
Hideo **CHUMAN** - October 17, 1998
Jodene Kobayashi **TASHIRO** - October 20, 1998
Aiko Endo **TACHIKI** - October 28, 1998
Mercedes A. **SEGAWA** - November 4, 1998
Mutsu **OMORI** - November 9, 1998
Eugene Saburo **YAMAMOTO** -November 21, 1998
Roy T. **HORITA** - November 1998

IN GRATITUDE

The JAHSSD BOARD gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the following monetary donations.

Don and Carol Estes - On the marriage of their goddaughter, Tasia Dawn Asakawa

Gene and Arleen (Hagio) Hasegawa - On their marriage

For the 1998 Annual Meeting

Mr. Lloyd Ito

Dr. Mits Tomita

Arnold Watanabe

Richard & Susan Namba

Rev. & Mrs. Akio Miyaji

NIKKEI EXPERIENCE

TO BE FEATURED

An exhibit featuring aspects of the Nikkei experience in San Diego County will go on display in Chula Vista in December, 1998.

Working with the Chula Vista Historical Society, the JAHSSD will display selected artifacts and photos from our collection that illustrate the local Japanese American story. The exhibit will be hosted by the museum operated by the Chula Vista Historical Society located at 360 Third Avenue in Chula Vista.

This exhibition has been made possible largely through the efforts of John Rojas, CVHS president and charter life member of our society. The willingness of the CVHS to provide us with a facility allows the JAHSSD an opportunity to showcase both our society and our collection. At this time, we plan to have the exhibit in place for at least six months. The proposed opening of the exhibit is around mid-December, 1998.

Please watch for more information.

CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING NICE

Like all volunteer organizations, we rely heavily on the support of our membership. From time to time we would like to recognize the contributions of folks who have taken a moment to help our society become stronger and more effective.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the magnificent job done by **Jeanne and Bill Elyea**. Assisting once again this year were Jeanne's sister **Linda McLemore, Dorothy Asakawa, Grace Tsuida, Mits Kawamoto and Sakiko Kada**.

The special obento lunch was the product of **Ichiban Uptown** located at 1449 University Avenue in Hillcrest. The owner **Mr. Yoshihiro Minezaki** has been a generous supporter of the JAHSSD and again provided us with a number of door prizes including some of those ever popular **Ichiban** tee shirts.

We appreciate the donation of a number of pre-World War II photographs sent to us by **Mrs. Kay Torio Fukamizu**. Kay also thoughtfully sent along copies of the **Torio Family's** lug labels for our collection.

Another very big thank-you to **Mrs. Michi Okuma**, who has donated another series of photographs to be copied and added to our photo archive. **Michi** has been one the major supporters of our photo archive program.

Mr. Arnold Watanabe, a former San Diegan and now a resident of Chicago, Ill., has sent the society Xerox copies of pages from his San Diego High School annual. The January 1941 annual shows a number of our members as they were in high school. Arnold also provided us with referenced Xerox copies of photographs of the Star Laundry which his family ran before the war. His materials are much appreciated and have been added to our growing reference library.

Our editorial staff thanks **Ms. Pamela K. Segawa** for providing us with a copy of a photograph of **Toshi Kiyoi** one of our honorees at our October annual meeting.

Mr. Masaaki Hironaka has also assisted our growing archives by the donation of a number of materials related to JACL and other community activities. Thanks Mas.

Our society would also like to acknowledge and thank the board of the **Chula Vista Historical Society** for their kind offer of display space for our exhibit, **The Hundred Year Road**. The use of their building on Third Avenue allows us to display some of the fine items we have collected over the past five years. We especially want to recognize the efforts of, **Ms. Nora McMartin, John Rojas, Frank Roseman, and Peter Watry**.

Thanks to **Mr. Vernon Yoshioka** for the use of his photos of our annual meeting and presentations of our first **Kansha** awards.

NEW YEAR'S HANA STYLE

By Susan Haegawa

As a neo-San Diegan (I've lived here for eight years), I feel perfectly comfortable calling San Diego home. But as the holidays roll around, I can't help but reminisce about "going home" for the holidays. Home is a small town on the island of Maui called Hana. And I do mean small. Hana makes Julian look like a metropolis. Since we were one of the few Japanese American families (actually Japanese Filipino American) in town, there was never a large community to come together for ethnic festivities. Hana used to be a bustling plantation town where Nikkei families were numerous enough to support a temple and language school. However, after World War II and the demise of the sugar plantation, the number of Nikkei had dwindled to a handful. In fact, every time a Japanese-looking person would come to town, my friends would needle me and ask if they were cousins. Despite the absence of a Japanese American community, my grandparents were emphatic about continuing New Year's traditions.

Every year, my grandparents spearheaded *mochi* making activities. In many Nikkei communities, *mochi* pounding is a group activity which brings people together. Well, my family didn't see it that way. We didn't really cheat in making *mochi*; my grandparents still used Japanese methods. However, the choice of cookware was a Panasonic electric *mochi* maker, not the wooden mallets usually used.

My grandparents lived two hours away from us so we were not present when they "pounded *mochi*." It was the younger generation that would often set-up the *kagami mochi* (two flat moons of *mochi* sitting on special paper and ferns with a tangerine perched on top). We put it on or in anything of value. Of course, one went in a place of honor in the house. We didn't have a *tokonoma* (special alcove), so we usually used the piano. We also felt cars needed good luck, so we put one on our favorite car. The family business, a general store, also deserved a *kagami mochi*. We placed one near a cash register. The store's truck and generator (used when the power lines went down) was also a repository for the funny looking pyramid. This was usually done on New Year's Eve, after we had finished hearty servings of *soba*. My grandparents insisted on a meal of *soba* on New Year's Eve. As my grandfather put it, *soba* would "get out all the bad feelings for the year" and "ensure long life."

One tradition which I dreaded as a child but it see *New Year's Hana Style* page 8

has grown on me in my adulthood is the first meal of the year, *ozoni*. Every year my mother had the soup ready as I trudged out of bed. I dutifully ate half a bowl of soup to start the new year "right" and then grabbed the cereal and milk to finish my breakfast. The New Year's luncheon was a feast. In addition to all the traditional foods (*osechi ryori*), we also had *kalua* pig, chow mein, custard pie and chocolate cake.

Looking back on my childhood, I now appreciate the different traditions that my grandparents have preserved over the years. I've even acquired a taste for *ozoni*. As my grandparents get older, I've come to realize the importance of continuing family traditions. I guess someone has to learn how to prepare the *mochi* for the electric cooker. Ah, my New Year's resolution for the year.

(Editor's Note: Susan Hasegawa is a JAHSSD board member and adjunct professor teaching history at City and Mesa Colleges For instant information about Hana, go to <http://www.hanamaui.com/> The general store she refers to is the famous Hasegawa General Store in Maui.)



An unidentified man uses the kine at annual fish camp *mochitsuki* as Mr. Kobayashi turns the hot mochi.

NEW YEAR'S FISH CAMP STYLE

By Elaine Hibi Bowers

New Year's Day definitely was *the* day of the whole year in pre-war Fish Camp, and making mochi for it was a major project.

Great quantities of rice were washed and apportioned into wooden boxes that were square and several inches deep. These were stacked atop a large metal drum that contained a very hot fire, and somehow, without benefit of thermometers or

technical gauges of any sort, the rice was perfectly cooked by merely closely watching the steam emitted out of the top box. It was mystery to me.

Then the men would rhythmically pound, with long-handled wooden mallets with large heads of around five inches or so made from tree branches or small logs taking turns mashing the rice until it was a thick mass. "Thud, thud, whack, whack." It just wouldn't do if a person couldn't keep time, obviously. Towards the end, a deft specialist with rice paddle in hand would turn the rice between blows until it was just the right consistency for shaping.

At this point, the women, with cornstarch on their hands, shaped the beaten rice into thick round patties of various sizes. The rice was very hot and they worked quickly to form the desired shape.

Everything was done almost routinely, but now as an adult, I marvel at the art and science of mochi making with such rudimentary equipment. Someone, or somebodies, who figured out the various steps was extremely observant and ingenious.

The other memorable part of the holidays was the long group photo. A professional Caucasian photographer would come every year on January 1st, set up his tripod and everyone, scores and scores of people, assembled to be in it. In these days of modern cameras, it still is unusual to participate in such panoramic shots with so many people. Historically, they are invaluable.

(These are just some thoughts about holidays in years past -- more than half a century ago -- as memory serves me.)

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A Ham for a Turkey

By Mich "Hamaka"

My dear brother-in-law, **John Copple**, joined us for dinner a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving and proudly told my wife, **Naomi**, how he had purchased **TWO** turkeys **AND** a ham **"AND IT ONLY COST ME \$59!"**

(To explain, John usually barbecues the turkey for our holidays.)

"I don't know **HOW** he (me) could have spent \$80 for a ham!" said Ol' Blabber Mouth. (It was John putting the BIG screws in a little deeper. He'd talked about it all year!)

Those of us sitting around the table chuckled. Nephew **Norm** glanced up to see what reaction there would be. There was none. Only an icy glare and a wan smile.

"But, you know, he sure made it easier on the rest of us guys," he said, stifling a smile that stretched from ear to ear. "They (the wives) will never ask us to go out and buy a ham for them any more."

More chuckles and smirks.

"But, you know, you have to remember the circumstances," he said.

"Thanks, Norm," I said.

It was the day before Thanksgiving 1997. Rain poured down cats and dogs like toilet water draining down a commode.

Water, water everywhere.

"I forgot the ham," Naomi said. "We'd better go get one."

She had to see our insurance agent, whose office was near the ham store in La Mesa.

"Here's the checkbook. You run inside and get a ham while I go to the insurance office. I'll pick you up when I get back."

I got out of the van dodging every other raindrop and ran into the shop soaking wet.

Everyone in the store sort of smiled as I entered and saw a line winding around like at a Disneyland ride.

It wasn't long before I got to the counter because it seemed like every other customer had some small piece of paper in hand.

It turned out they had ordered their ham in advance...**DAYS IN ADVANCE.**

My turn. I got to the counter and asked for a piece of ham weighing six to eight pounds. People behind me sort of snickered.

"I'm sorry, we don't have anything that small," the clerk said politely. "You had to have ordered in advance to get one that size."

"What's the smallest one you've got?" I asked.

"Let me go look," she said.

A few minutes later, she returned with one that looked, well, not **REAL** big but not **REAL** small either.

"How much is that?" I asked.

"Seventy eight (something)," she said.

People in line snickered louder.

I gulped. (I actually heard my small Adam's apple go down my throat and barely come back up. That is to say, I almost choked.)

"Okay, I'll take it," I heard myself saying.

The people lined up behind me almost applauded. "He's actually going to pay \$78 for that ham???"

Hell, I wasn't going to look like a cheapskate in there after running through all that rain, wringing out my pants and raincoat in the store!

The clerk smiled. (Hell, why not? I'm sure she got a commission for unloading that one. Her colleagues probably high-fived her after I left.)

She put the ham (I swear it was wrapped in **GOLD FOIL**) when she put it in three plastic bags for me.

I carried it out with both hands. (It felt like it weighed a ton.) As I walked past the crowd in the store, I think they were applauding as I passed them.

Maybe it was just because I was able to pick the damn thing up.

I dodged every little raindrop again and got soaked again as I barely ran up to the van with Naomi waiting inside.

(I just knew she'd be proud that I didn't let the price of that ham deter me from embarrassing myself by not buying it, not with that crowd watching me.)

I opened up the side door and carefully laid it down on the floor. It seemed to glow with all that gold foil around it. (I'm pretty sure that all the other hams that left the store that day was wrapped only in aluminum foil.)

I settled in my seat, put my seat belt on and she began to drive.

"How much did it cost?" she asked.

"About \$80," I said.

She **SLAMMED** on the brakes and said calmly:

"YOU PAID WHAT??"

Lucky for us, there was no one behind us. Lucky for me, I had on my seat belt because my face pressed against the windshield as the belt sort of wrapped itself tightly around my throat and I could barely answer her.

"About \$80," I shouted. (Well, I thought I shouted anyway. Maybe not. Probably not. No, okay, I didn't shout. Would you?)

(I think the people in the ham shop all ran to the window to see what happened.)

(Good! I hope you all lost your place in line!)

"YOU PAID \$80??" she asked, this time a little more calm. Okay, so she was choking a little bit. Okay, so she was maybe crying a little? Maybe she was in awe(?).

See A Ham for a Turkey page 12

President's Message

As 1998 comes to a close, so will my term in office. In January 1999, Elaine Hibi Bowers will be installed as new president.

In reflecting on these past few years, many memorable events come to mind. All the annual meetings were well-attended.

This past annual meeting's "A Salute to Women" was an overwhelming success with more than 160 members and friends attending.

The 1997 "The One Hundred Year Road" exhibit at the Museum of San Diego History that JAHSSD Historian Don Estes put together will be hard to beat. People still talk about it.

Don will be putting together a similar, but smaller version, of that exhibit this month at the Chula Vista Heritage Museum. The exhibit is limited only because of the space available to us.

Our presentation at the Parker, Ariz., Historical Society was another unforgettable and pleasant experience. More than a dozen board members participated.

Today, our membership hovers around 300. Ryo Imamura in Japan and Prof. Shinkichi George Tajiri in The Netherlands are among of members with numerous others living in other states. We appreciate very much their continued interest in the San Diego of old.

The REgenerations project is a vehicle for the society to capture biographic data of many of our friends in the Nikkei community who have been willing to be subjected to interviews. Their experiences will I've forever.

As the year comes to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during the past few years. I ask your continued support

in the future years. What we leave behind is for our grandchildren and beyond. Thanks again for allowing me to serve you.

Ben S. Segawa

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van to the church earlier this year!

We have been blessed to have Susan in our church and for the many ways she inspires others by her example. Her insightful wisdom is invaluable when difficult choices need to be made for she has the unique ability to see options clearly!

Again, I congratulate you on your choice of Susan Namba for this honor. May God continue to bless her with many, many more years of joy and love that she generously shares with all of us in this

community, who love her so much.

With heartfelt congratulations,

Dr. Tom Fujita, Pastor

Dear Mrs. (Elaine) Bowers,

I appreciate your sending me the corrected copies of the JAHSSD annual meeting (program).

It was my pleasure to participate in the REgenerations (project).

Thank you,

Dorothy Yonemitsu

REgenerations: A Reflection

By Debbie Kodama

Last month, I had the pleasure of attending the annual meeting of the historical society. My main purpose was to give a transcript to individuals I interviewed for the REgenerations Oral History Project. During the year, I was fortunate to interview Ruth Voorhies, Shig Yamashita, Mas Hironaka, Umeko Kawamoto, Kay Fukamizu and Lloyd Ito.

My participation at the meeting of handing a small package to each of my "narrators" was very minor. I realized it was because I wasn't able to properly express how thankful I was to be entrusted with their stories. Nor was I able to explain what this project meant to me on a personal basis. This, then, is my attempt to fill that void.

When I became involved in the project, I thought it would be a nice way to give something back to the Nikkei community, a way to fulfill my community service obligation. I also thought I would be able to learn a little bit about my own roots, since I am a native San Diegan. What I didn't expect were all the other benefits I have received since I joined the group in the spring of 1997. I find that I have received more than I have given.

There are so many rewarding aspects to this project, it is difficult to know where to start. Probably first and foremost was hearing the heartwarming (and sometimes heart wrenching) stories as the narrators explained how they tried to piece together their lives after internment. Words like amazement, inspirational and courageous come to mind when I think of how they were able to sustain themselves and their families during the Resettlement Era (1946-70).

Without revealing any intimate details, I can unequivocally state they were extremely humble, almost embarrassed to sing their own praises when they described how they overcame adversities. Each of them

See REgeneration: A Reflection page 12

Membership News

Welcome and thank you to the following new members who recently joined our society.

New life members:

Misao Kawasaki
Joe & Mitsuko Yoshioka

New Members:

Gale Kaneshiro
Toshiko Kawasaki,
Frank Matsumoto
Kiyo Matsumoto,
Richard & Susan Namba
Glenn & Keiko Negoro
Shig & June Yamashita

Thank you also to the following members to who recently renewed their memberships:

Frank & Jean Boyd
Richard & Norma Jean Courtenaye
Frank & Suye Fujikawa
Sue S. Gerrish
Susan Hasegawa
John & Tsune Hashiguchi
Art & Judy Hibi
Osao & Setsuko Himaka
Miki Honda
Grace Igasaki
Mary Iguchi
Miyoshi & Emi Ikeda
Cecilia Ishibashi
Harvey & Rose N. Itano
Sakiko Kada
Richard & Mary Karasawa
Jon & Carrie A. Ware Kawamoto
Ken Kida
James Kondo
Roy Y. Kusumoto
Shizue Maruyama
Masako Matsuhara
Taro Matsui
Ken & Akiko N. Matsumoto
Emiko Obayashi
Norman & Rebecca Obayashi
Shig Oto
Yukiko Sugiyama
Sumitomo Bank of California
Les & Allyne Tachiki
Jane Takeshita
Shigenori & Peggy Tsurudome
Saburo Uyeji
Shizu Watanabe
James & Yuri Yamate
Alice Yano

The National Japanese American Memorial

As the 21st century awakens a new era, a memorial of deep historic significance will rise in Washington D.C.

The memorial will honor the loyalty and courage of the Japanese Americans during World War II. It will commemorate not only the heroism and sacrifice of the Japanese Americans who fought and died in defense of their country, it will tell how, despite the abridgement of their civil rights 120,000 men, women and children maintained their loyalty.

The memorial will be built on it's own triangle of federal land bordered by Louisiana Avenue, New Jersey Avenue, and D street in Washington D.C. It is readily accessible to tourists and other visitors. The location is equidistant from the U.S. Capitol and historic Union Station, a site less than a five-minute walk from either location.

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation has started its drive to raise funds for this important project. The total target is \$8,600,000. Leading the local drive are Karen Tani, Elizabeth Yamada, and Dennis Otsuji. This is your opportunity to take a part in a truly great project.

Buddhists And Christmas

By Joyce Teague

Okay, you come to Dharma School faithfully on Sunday, you recite the *Golden Chain*, you wear a cool *ojuzu* you strung together yourself, and each day you consciously try to be a kind and compassionate follower of Buddhist tenets. So...what's with that giant Christmas tree in your living room, all glowing with lights and bedecked with angels? And what about the huge stocking hanging nearby, awaiting gifts from Santa Claus? Isn't Christmas by definition a *Christian* holiday? And aren't you and your family being just a bit hypocritical exchanging gifts with your neighbors, singing carols and wishing everyone in sight a "Merry Christmas?"

A closer look shows this apparent conflict may actually be a reflection of the generosity of Buddhism. Most American Buddhists cherish the celebration of Christmas as a national holiday that promotes charity and goodwill. In his wonderful book *Ocean - An Introduction to Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism in America*, Ken Tanaka explains that "the openness of Buddhism encourages us to look beyond form to see the spirit behind rituals. The spirit of sharing, giving and appreciation is deeply cherished in Buddhism."

So breath easy. Enjoy the season. Give generously, share with those around you and spread joy and goodwill. Add a big dollop of gratitude and you just may find that Christmas makes a pretty darn good Buddhist holiday.

"Was that smallest they had?" she asked. "Uh huh," I replied. I looked back to see how *Hammy* was doing back there. (Hey, at that price, he *deserves* a name don't you think?) He survived the sudden stop. In fact, he hardly moved. Too heavy, I guess.)

Not even the gold foil was wrinkled.

We got home okay. (I should say *I* got home okay.) Naomi was still a little shook up and not by the sudden stop in traffic.

I lugged the ham wrapped in gold foil and put it three plastic bags into the house...barely. (Actually, she offered to help carry it in but I refused the offer. And I didn't drag it in but it was just barely off the ground. Stopped once on the porch to rest and carried it the rest of the way.)

On Thanksgiving Day, we put the ham out on a platter.

Everyone who had a piece *raved* about it.

"It sure is delicious!"

"Better than ever before!"

"Tastes expensive!"

Of course, they all heard the story.

"\$80 ham? Wow! Don't waste it, kids! Eat it all up! I've never eaten anything that costs that much! How did it happen again?"

Yadada yadada yadada. Big laugh.

We called our friends, **Rev. Jim and Patsy Yanagihara**, in San Luis Obispo to wish them a happy Thanksgiving and Naomi told them about the \$80 ham.

His reaction?

"He did WHAT? Bakatare!"

(I expected he would say something like that.)

I got on the phone and said:

"And, yeah, when you come down for the Christmas holiday, you can taste it cuz there'll be plenty leftover!"

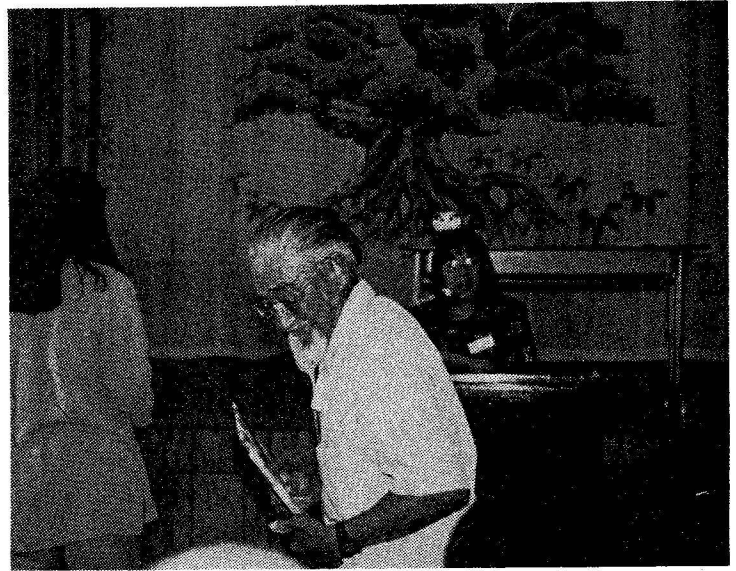
I was right!

There was plenty leftover for Christmas.

In fact, we had some for New Year's Day, my birthday and other special occasions. We might still have some for soup some-where down the line.

The gold foil? Still in the freezer.

It's my way of remembering *Hammy*.



REgenerations interviewee Lloyd Ito receives his copy of his interview transcript from project director Susan Hasegawa.

REgeneration: A Reflection continued from page 10

were certain their experiences could not compare to the stories of others. These proud, unassuming Nisei all said resettlement wasn't so bad, that others were worse off. It is hard to imagine how anyone could be worse off than a young mother with three children starting life anew living out of a barn.

How can a returning war hero feel as though being denied service in a restaurant because he is a Japanese American isn't an unforgiveable sin? Yet, even dealing with such circumstances, each narrator told his or her story without bitterness, resentment or regret.

In addition to meeting these six remarkable individuals, the REgenerations project introduced me to five smart, talented, giving and fun people -- Don and Carol Estes, Susan Hasegawa, Joyce Teague and Leng Loh. We created a wonderful bond uniting our collective interests in history, community, service and food. (We tried to use every meeting as an opportunity to eat!) I thoroughly enjoyed working with each of them. We liked working on the project so much, we have decided to continue conducting more oral history interviews with other Nikkei in the community.

The most valuable lesson I learned from each of the narrators is humility, when faced with racism or other hardships does not mean losing dignity. These individuals are living proof that the opposite is true. What a rare and wonderful honor it was to be welcomed into their homes, to hear their stories. I will always be grateful to them for their willingness to share their experiences. When historians and scholars read their stories 50 or 100 years from now, they too will be grateful.

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