

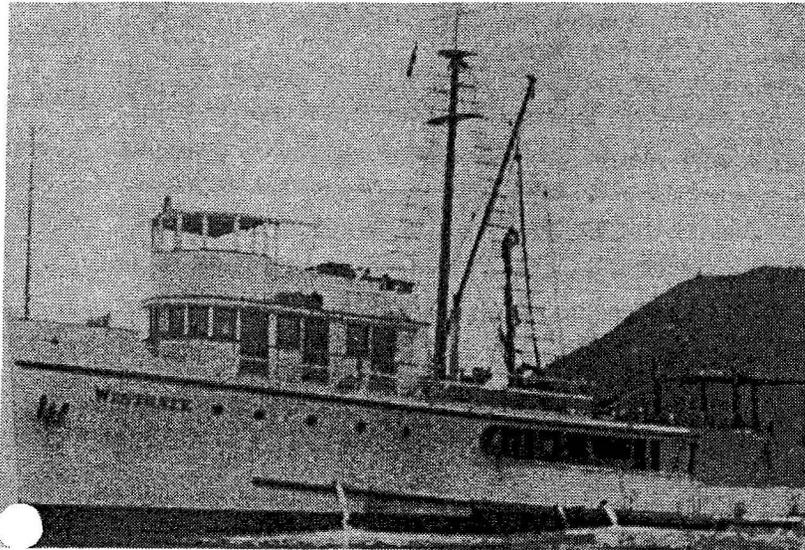
FOOTPRINTS

Impressions from where we were to where we will be

The Newsletter For The Japanese American Historical Society Of San Diego

Spring Issue 1999

Volume 8 Number 1



LAST CHAPTER IN NIKKEI FISHING INDUSTRY STORY(?)

The death last November of Wiley "Wade" Ambrose closed what may be the final chapter in the story of Japanese American involvement in the tuna fishing industry in San Diego.

Mr. Ambrose, 87, died Nov. 29 at his home in Rancho Mirage.

He and his father, Wiley, before him were instrumental in helping Nikkei community make major contributions to the industry during its heyday before World War II.

One of those helped by the Ambroses' willingness to help was the late Motosuke Tsuida, fondly remembered by friends as "the captain."

Mr. Tsuida's children -- Masayoshi Tsuida, Masako Matsuhara, Masaharu "Fatty" Ts'ida and Kiyō "Parker" Uda -- all described the Ambroses as being very generous to the Japanese families.

It was the father who put up homes for families who worked at the family's Westgate Tuna Cannery. That community would be referred to the Japanese in San Diego as "Hokkaido" because of its northern most location of the city as it existed at that time.

That fish camp was a Pacific Highway and Kalmia Street.

(Hokkaido, of course, is northern most island of Japan.)

"Every Christmas, the father gave out boxes of candy and other gifts to the Japanese families living there," remembered Mas, the oldest of five children born to Mr. Tsuida and his late wife, Namie. The fifth and youngest was daughter, Hideko "Bubbles" Shimasaki, who was prominently mentioned in an article that ran March 4 in *The Reader*.

"It was the father who helped Dad, Mr. (T.) Tsumagari and Mr. (K.) Morishita with a loan to build the fishing boat. *Westgate*, which was named after the cannery the Ambroses operated across Pacific Highway," Mas said. "The son was a little more conservative than the father but he was nice to us, too."

"Neither had any animosity towards the Japanese."

The elder Ambrose moved his family to San Diego from the Los Angeles area and, with money borrowed from family and friends, started his own cannery naming it the Westgate Sea Products. The cannery produced canned tuna under the *Breast-O-Chicken* brand name. It would become one of the major brands in the industry.

Young Ambrose took over the company in 1938 after his father was killed in a horseback riding accident in Mexico.

According to *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, the cannery employed about 500 people and helped many a fisherman finance their first boats. When the boats returned to San Diego with their catch, the cannery bought the fish from them.

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An FBI agent searches the home of a Nikkei family in
December 1941

THE F.B.I. COMES TO CALL

by
Don Estes

(In our last issue we published extracts from a report written on February 3, 1943 containing an interview given by George Shozo Yasukochi of Oceanside to the Community Analysis section at Poston. The interview deals with events that lead up to the removal of the North County Nikkei on May 17, 1942. In this issue, we present George's description of how the community viewed the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (F.B.I.) activities during the period leading up to relocation.)

... As soon as a federal or sheriff's car passed the ranch, I always had the fear that they came after father. I felt very uneasy and in my mind I thought if father was going to be taken that I was going to find out why they came to pick him up. I had known a case where the father was taken away just because he was the richest farmer in San Diego County, and the F.B.I. made the supposition that being a rich man, he must have contributed lots of money to the Japanese government. Actually, they couldn't prove this man had donated any sum of money. They found one check for five dollars to the Japanese Association, but the check wasn't even his. It was his daughter's. It was a shame that many good, innocent Issei were taken from their families.

There were many cases in our community where the F.B.I. mistreated the children of the family. I know of one case where the father was being taken away and the eldest son tried to stop the agents from getting to the father, but the agents just pushed the son aside and took the father.

One day, my father and the rest of my brothers were working in the fields when the F.B.I. came to

the house and asked my mother where my father was. Mother told them that he, was working on the other side of Oceanside. The F.B.I. told mother that they would be around that evening and to tell father to stay home.

That was the very night there was a dance in Chula Vista I had planned to attend, but when mother said that the Federal men were coming, I couldn't leave father home and have him taken away without me knowing it. I remained home, but the federal men didn't show up. I was relieved, but I still feared this would never stop. Will they come back and take father? I felt good when I was able to leave Oceanside with both my parents.

On May 17, 1942 the North County Nikkei were ordered to leave their homes and proceed directly to the camp located at Poston, Arizona.

~~~~~ **DATES TO REMEMBER**

March 28, 1999 - VFW Easter Egg Hunt 1 p.m.

Now - Thru April 15 - Circa Exhibit a.d.

Display of Obi and Kimono (1868 - 1926)

3867 4th Ave. (Hillcrest) Mon.-Wed. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Thur.-Sat. 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Now -Thru Aug 1, '99 - Nippon Mingeikan Collection

Mengei Folkart Museum - (239-0003) Balboa Park

April 11, 1999 - Hanamatsuri 10 a.m

Buddhist Temple of San Diego

April 26-28 VFW Las Vegas Trip*

April 26-28 1999 - Poston Reunion

Reno, Nev.

June 6, 1999 Bazaar 11a.m.-5 p.m.

Buddhist Temple of San Diego

June 27, 1999 JACL Picnic 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Crown Point Shores

July 12-14 Zen Lite Trip LV*

July 31, 1999 Obon Odori 6 p.m.

Buddhist Temple of San Diego

Aug. 6-8 Buddhist Temple LV Trip*

September 5, 1999 Bazaar 11 a.m.

Ocean View UCC

September 9, 1999 - Japanese Friendship Garden

Building Dedication - Balboa Park

* Contact Miki or Ralph Honda 278-4572 or 279-6494

President's Message

"How is Mas Hironaka?" must be one of the most frequently asked questions of the last several months. The GOOD NEWS is our popular JAHSSD board member is improving! Mas is recuperating from automobile injuries and subsequent brain surgery, and as yet his verbal skills have not returned. However, he can be visited at Stanford Court, 7800 Parkway Drive (near Baltimore), La Mesa 91942. Cards are welcome. Mas' daughter, Wendy Thornton, and sister, Sue Tsushima, wish to thank Mas' many friends for their expressions of concern. Sue also stated that Mas has a good appetite, likes sashimi and is undergoing swallowing therapy. The facility has an open visitor policy.

There is a mini-version of our Balboa Park exhibit on view at the Chula Vista Heritage Museum. Look for details elsewhere in this issue.

This organization has just undergone an enormous change. Ben Segawa, who has been president for six years, has deservedly been elevated to executive director and the reins of the presidency have been entrusted to me. We applaud Ben for starting this organization, for his commitment, hard work, vision and perseverance since our inception. Now we are charged to continue the progress in our collecting, recording, preserving, disseminating and educating about the story of the San Diego Japanese and Japanese Americans. As always we will need and seek your collective help.

Elaine Hibi Bowers

"HISTORY" VISITS MT. CARMEL HIGH

A visit to JAHSSD Board member Karen Kawasaki's Mt. Carmel High School history classes proved to be an enlightening experience both for visitors and hosts on Feb. 26.

That's when "historic" figures Yukio Kawamoto, Dorothy Yonemitsu and Mich Himaka spoke to four combined classes about their internment experiences. Mt. Carmel High human relations teacher, Doug Kamon, a Sansei, whose parents and grandparents were interned at Gila River, told the students what his relatives had told him about their internment trials and tribulations.

Karen and Doug did a super job in preparing their students for the visit because they were quite attentive and had good questions for their visitors.

The students prepared for the visit by reading "Farewell to Manzanar" by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and studying the internment issue prior to the visit.

Dorothy, who was interned at Heart Mountain in Wyoming, gave another perspective of internment

compared to Yuki and Mich, both of whom were interned at Poston III. All three told of their experiences while they were at the Santa Anita Assembly Center prior to being moved to Heart Mountain and Poston.

The panelists peppered their talk with humor and insight, which students apparently enjoyed as reflected in letters and notes of thanks they sent.

"I understand how hard it must be to recall the injustice and harshness of the internment," wrote Teresa Summers. "Yet, your lectures touched my heart and made it reality. Your speeches created vivid pictures in my heart, which will stay in my heart and mind forever. I found it shocking to know Executive order 9066 is still active. Also, I admire you because through your life-changing incident you held no anger towards America and its government. I hope you continue to share your stories with more students, because hopefully more knowledge of Japanese American internment will stop anything like this from happening again."

Jennifer A. Edwards wrote she was unaware of Japanese American internment until it was covered in class. "I never thought that here, so close to San Diego, places called internment camps took away the freedom of thousands during the war. The thought that the American government could punish all people of Japanese descent due to what happened at Pearl Harbor is quite disturbing. I suppose the government never stopped to think that it wasn't the civilians in California who were dropping those bombs, it was the Japanese soldiers. Despite this, innocent people were punished for something they did not even do. I cannot imagine having my freedom taken away like that and having where I went and what I did so far out of my control. It must have taken a lot of courage to keep yourselves intact emotionally."

"Your stories were really heart-warming," writes Christy Dunn. "I was able to understand more about the internment camps than I could have learned from a textbook. I could almost imagine myself in your place in internment camp. I now understand that you were just teenagers like us when you were put into the camps. I learned about the food, homes and life at the internment (camps) I did not know about before...I believe your stories will stay in the hearts of a lot of your listeners. You all had so much courage to retell your experiences and I am glad you took the time to relive them with us."

"After listening to your remarkable stories of life in the internment camps, I realized that when put into a difficult situation, the best thing to do is look at it with a positive, open outlook," writes Marina Frey. "I respect and congratulate you all for the productive healthy lives you have made for yourselves. It was a pleasure to have heard you speak. Thank you for sharing your experiences with us."

CALIFORNIA CIVIL LIBERTIES PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND

We have been notified that Diane Matsuda, a representative of the California Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (CCLPEP), was in the San Diego area on Tuesday, March 16th to discuss the fund's grant application process.

The 1998 legislation sponsored by Assemblyman Mike Honda appropriated one million dollars for the current fiscal year to provide grants for the development of public educational materials dealing with the World War II removal and detention of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

Deadline to apply for the 1999 grant is April 9. For applications and more information, contact Don Estes at 280 9418 or Diane Matsuda at (916) 653-9404 dmatsuda@library.ca.gov

The ultimate goal of the project is to educate the public on the World War II Nikkei experience through the development, coordination and distribution of new educational materials, and/or the development of curriculum materials designed to complement and augment existing resources and subject matter materials.

Letters

Former San Diegan **Shinkichi Tajiri**, an artist-sculptor now living in The Netherlands, writes to help **George Joji Watanabe**, a Hawaiian Sansei living in Livorno, Italy, locate former 100th Infantry and 442 RCT veterans.

"I have been living in Livorno/Leghorn, Italy, working for U. S. NATO forces as a civilian contractor (ITT Corp.) since 1982 with my wife, Graziella (Gracie) who is from Udine, Italy," Watanabe writes.

"Livorno is roughly the geographic center of the 100th/442nd fighting during WWII. They garrisoned this city, filled the U. S. Army hospital with their wounded and spent some time here between their battles. Alpi Apuane, Belvedere and Pariana are just a few miles north and south of Livorno.

"I feel that some sort of memorial honoring the 100th/442nd should be put up in Camp Darby, a NATO Army Supply Base where I work. Bruyeres, France, has long honored the 100th/442nd. We here in Livorno can do the same.

"Artist-sculptor Shinkichi Tajiri of Baarlo, The Netherlands, recently contacted me and generously

offered to donate a steel Friendship Knot Monument similar to the one he donated to the city of Bruyeres in 1994.

"In July 1944, Mr. Tajiri was a member of Co. M of the 100th/442nd when he was wounded at the battle of Hill 140, about 15 miles from here.

"We are trying to obtain permission from the Army to erect the monument at Camp Darby. When (the monument is completed), we would like the Japanese American community on the mainland and Hawaii to know about this recognition."

Watanabe is offering himself as a contact point in Italy and is seeking any help on how to go about establishing the monument.

When the government upgrades Distinguished Service Crosses awarded the vets who served in the 100th and 442nd, to Congressional Medals of Honor as he expects it to, he hopes those vets and others will make a trek to Bruyeres and make a side visit to Camp Darby.

"Many older Italians fondly remember the kind soldiers of the 100th/442nd they met some 50 years ago," he said. At last year's Veterans' Day observance, Camp Darby saluted the Japanese American soldiers, which included a speech he wrote for the post commander outlining the accomplishments and sacrifices of those soldiers.

To contact Watanabe write to:

George Joji Watanabe

CMR 426 Box 942

APO AE 09613 or his civilian address of

Piazza Villa Chayes 11

57127 Livorno, Italia

His home phone number is: Italy 0586-815218

His office number is Italy 050-54-7465 or

Italy 050-54-7610.

(Editor's Note: In a separate postscript, Watanabe, who has researched 100th/442nd battles, writes about the battle of Hill 140. We hope to run that in a future edition.)

See Letter page 7



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Moto and Bruce Asakawa visit the 100 Year Road Exhibit

100 Year Road Opens in Chula Vista

Over 100 members and friends of the JAHSSD gathered on January 24th for the opening reception of our exhibit on the Nikkei experience in San Diego, The 100 Year Road. With light refreshments provided by the Chula Vista Historical Society those attending were able to preview the displays that featured the story of Japanese Americans in the South Bay.

The exhibit continues through June and can be seen at the Chula Vista Heritage Museum. The museum is located at 360 Third Avenue in Chula Vista. The hours of operation are 1 p.m. through 4 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Entrance to the museum is free.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Peggy Fumiko **JENKINS** - November 28, 1998
 Yoshiko **KASHIMA** - December 15, 1998
 Raymond K. **HASHIMOTO** - December 27, 1998
 George H. "Wrap" **YAMADA** - January 10, 1999
 Yukiko **WUTZKE** - January 14, 1999
 Kazumi "Chiboti" **YAMADA** - January 20, 1999
 William Kinichi **HARADA** - January 31, 1999
 Utako **HARADA** - January 31, 1999
 Kameyo Mary **FURUYA** - February 4, 1999
 Tsuyako **YAMAMOTO** - February 1999
 Chisato **KANEYUKI** - March 3, 1999

IMPERIAL VALLEY NIKKEI REUNION

An Imperial Valley Nikkei Reunion was held on March 13, to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Japanese American Gallery in Imperial Valley Pioneers Museum.

The Japanese American Gallery is a 720-square-foot exhibit dedicated to the area's Issei pioneers.

"There are hundreds of photographs and artifacts that show the significant contributions the Issei made to the development of the Imperial Valley, particularly in agriculture," said **Tim Asamen**, Japanese American Gallery coordinator and reunion chairman.

In 1930, with the exception of Los Angeles County, Imperial County had the largest Nikkei population in the southern half of California. There was also more farmland under Japanese cultivation in the Imperial Valley than any other region in Southern California.

The museum is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. The reunion at the Barbara Worth Convention Center in Holtville attracted people nationwide with reservations coming from Washington state, Texas and Illinois.

"It was intended to be an event for all ages," Asamen said.

FOOTPRINTS MILLENNIUM YEAR FUND RAISING PLANNED

The start of a new millennium (or is it the end of an old one?) is closing in fast now. Less than 300 days to go.

Footprints is hoping to conduct a year-end fund-raising campaign for the JAHSSD with a year-end issue (in December) by publishing New Year's or New Millennium greetings from members or families for a minimum \$10 donation for each message.

We would like to include you or your family members among contributors.

We have only three more issues to go this year. In future issues, we hope to include sample message you might want to use for your greetings.

The funds raised in this manner will help defray organizational expenses, including printing costs of *Footprints*.

Please think about it. We will begin accepting such messages immediately.

We thank you for your past support and hope we can count on your future support.

CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING NICE

The reason our historical society is growing in reputation, stature, and resources is because of the wholehearted support of each of our members and friends. Each issue of the *Footprints* we try to acknowledge the "good acts" of folks who have assisted us.

Michi Sakaguchi Okuma, a long time member and active supporter recently donated a very fine example of a hand built bonita shaver to our artifact collection. The shaver was constructed by her father **Tomekichi Sakaguchi** a former San Diego fisherman.

Joe Yoshioka, who has assisted us as a participant in our two year Regenerations study very kindly has allowed us to copy two of his photo albums which illustrate many of the Nikkei fishermen and boats working out of San Diego before the outbreak of World War II as well as rare photos of the post World War II Frontier Housing project. Joe's photos have been added to our growing photo archive.

When you visit our 100 Year Road exhibit at the Chula Vista Heritage Museum please remember that "little gremlins" did not come in and put everything in place. All our thanks to the crew who did such a magnificent job in putting it all in place. **Elaine Hibi Bowers, Jeanne and Bill Elyea, Don Estes, Mich and Naomi Himaka, Yuki and Mits Kawamoto, and Ben and Grace Segawa.**

The JAHSSD would like to acknowledge the generous loan of museum space for our exhibit by the **Chula Vista Historical Society**. If you're are interested in the history of CV and the South Bay you might consider a membership. Membership categories are: Senior (62+) \$5, Individual \$10, Family \$15, Sponsor \$25, Patron \$50, Benefactor \$100, Business \$200, Life \$1000. Checks may be mailed to PO Box 393, Chula Vista, CA 91912.

Assisting in the ongoing effort of the JAHSSD to educate the greater San Diego community on the Nikkei experience we would like to recognize the efforts of, **Dorothy Yonemitsu, Doug Kamon, Mich Himaka, and Yukio Kawamoto** who spoke to **Karen Kawasaki's** U.S. History Classes at Mount Carmel High School in February. Also our thanks goes to **Howard Takahashi** who volunteered to bring his personal recollections of camp to U.S. History classes at Mount Miguel High School.

Rev. Dr. Tom Hulas Off to Hawaii

By Elizabeth Ayako Ozaki

On May 6, 1990, almost nine years ago, I had the honor of standing before the congregation at Ocean View United Church of Christ to welcome the Rev. Tom Fujita to San Diego and to introduce him as our new pastor. I had chaired the Pastoral Search Committee and was the moderator at Ocean View.

One of the top priorities for the search committee was to find a pastor with good people skills, who would be willing to dedicate time to visitations, looking in on the infirm and the shut-ins. In Pastor Tom, we were very fortunate to find a man who did that so willingly and so naturally, reaching out with his easy, unassuming manner and truly enriching the lives of those he touched. He has offered comfort, support and encouragement through our sorrows -- and celebrated our joys, achievements and successes. He is a man who knows no strangers and makes friends with almost everyone he meets. That is his forte. He is an all-around nice guy.

Behind that laid back demeanor, though, is a motivated and determined individual, who is always striving to better himself. Although he was fifty something, he went back to school and subjected himself to hours and hours of grueling study to receive a doctorate. **That's** quite an accomplishment. But, despite his advanced degree, Pastor Tom still appeals to the common folk. The older members of Ocean View shared a special kindred spirit with this former Oklahoma farm boy, truck driver/businessman turned preacher, who had known difficult times. They could easily relate to the stories that the Pastor shared of his childhood and later years because they too came from humble backgrounds.

Whenever there was work around the church that needed to be done, Pastor Tom never hesitated to pitch in. He knows his way around electrical wiring and he's no slouch when it comes to using a hammer and saw. He knew a thing or two about plumbing, painting, automotive repair, etc., and the list goes on. He would pull out his tools and coveralls from the trunk of his car and set about fixing whatever needed to be fixed. He helped pour concrete and set the posts for the church sign that is prominently displayed in front of the chapel. He is a jack of all trades and the church got a bargain in the deal.

Tom Fujita is the epitome of the enlightened preacher of the '90s. He has taken the church out of the dark ages and brought it into the world of technology. Being very computer literate himself, he urged the board of trustees and the church council to provide the means for a better, more efficient way of doing things.

See Rev. Dr. Tom Hulas page 7

Soon to follow were a laser printer, scanner, fax machine, pager, cell phone and e-mail capabilities.

Pastor Tom planted the seeds for the Buddhist/Christian dialogue and worked with the Rev. Akio Miyaji, former minister of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, to see it to fruition. This was an opportunity for members of both churches to attend service together to learn more about each other's religion. This annual program proved to be very popular and was rated highly by members of both congregations.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the strong silent partner of this team, Sachi Fujita. In her own special way, she offers support and encouragement. She sits through a worship service, listens attentively and laughs at all his jokes. And on occasions when the Pastor has had bouts of forgetfulness, trying to remember a name or recall a Bible passage, Sachi has been ready with the information. In fact, Pastor Tom refers to her as the Resident Theologian.

We are sad that the Fujitas are leaving our midst, but lucky for us, Pastor Tom has found employment in Hawaii, where most of us love to visit and probably will. I know that our paths will cross again.

Together at Ocean View, we've cried, laughed a lot, eaten well, had loads of fun and accomplished much. But now the time has come for us to bid Tom and Sachi farewell and to allow you to pursue other opportunities. We have cherished your friendship and truly enjoyed your company.

Thank you for all you have done. We've appreciated your ministry and we shall miss you. Good luck and God bless you.

Aloha...until we meet again.

(Editor's Note: The above is an excerpt of a speech Mrs. Ozaki gave at a farewell luncheon March 13 at Tom Ham's Lighthouse Restautant for the Fujitas.)

Letters continued from page 4

Just a note to thank you for sharing the story, "A HAM For A Turkey." I had to laugh as I about flipped when I went to Honey Baked and paid \$39 for a small ham to take to someone. There were other articles of interest so I bought my uncle in Vallejo a membership.

Happy New Year!

Judy Hibi

(Following is a story Judy included with her letter for your amusement.)

It's the day before Thanksgiving and the butcher is just locking up when a man pounds on the door. "Please let me in," says the man, "I forgot to buy a turkey and my wife will kill me if I don't come home with one.

"O-kay" says the butcher. "Let me see what's left." He goes into the freezer and discovers that there's only one scrawny turkey left. He brings it out to show the man.

"That one's too skinny. What else have you got?" says the man. The butcher takes the bird back into the freezer and waits a few minutes then brings the same turkey back out to the man.

"Oh no," says the man, "that one doesn't look any better. You better give me both of them."

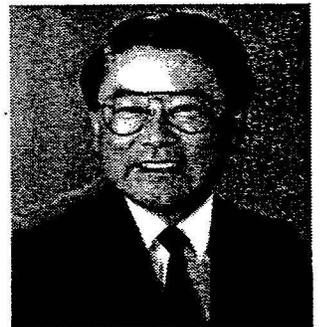
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Membership News

We thank the membership for responding promptly to the membership renewal letters. It is through the generous support of our members that we are able to continue our efforts in recording and publicizing the history of Japanese Americans in San Diego.

We welcome Amy Kaneyuki who joined our membership as a life member, Toyoo Nitake of Vallejo who joined as a senior member. We also thank Paul Kaneyuki, Tom Yanagihara and Sumi Yanagihara who upgraded their membership to life.

We also thank the following members to who recently renewed their memberships:

Patricia Asakawa
Robert W. and Hisae S. Batchelder
Jeanette M. Dutton
Yeaji and Midori Fujino
Taye Hashiguchi
Yukie Hayashi
Mabel C. Hibi
Holly Hiding
Tetsuo and Sasako Himaka
Fred T. and Jacquelyn Hosaka
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Editors: Michio Himaka
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Footprints Editor
P.O. Box 620988
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