

FOOTPRINTS

Impressions from where we were to where we will be

The Newsletter For The Japanese American Historical Society Of San Diego

FALL Issue 2000

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Misako and Harry Honda at his 80th birthday celebration.

Former PC Editor to address JAHSSD's Annual Meeting Oct. 21

Harry K. Honda, editor emeritus and archivist of JACL's weekly newspaper, *The Pacific Citizen*, will be the featured speaker for the JAHSSD's annual meeting scheduled at 11 a.m. Oct. 21 at the San Diego Buddhist Temple.

Mr. Honda probably is one of the most knowledgeable persons about events affecting the Nikkei community after having served on the staff of the PC for some 48 years.

A native of Los Angeles, Mr. Honda, 81, attended Maryknoll School, Belmont High School and Los Angeles Junior College before WWII. Although his interest in journalism started in his high school days, he obtained his first writing job on the English-language staff of *The Rafu Shimpo* in 1936. After three years there, he edited the *Sangyo Nippo* newspaper from 1939-40 before joining the *San Francisco Nichibei*. In 1941, Mr. Honda was

drafted into the U. S. Army and served four years.

After the war, Mr. Honda enrolled at Loyola University and graduated in 1950. He assisted Saburo Kido in publishing the *Shin Nichibei* newspaper in Los Angeles from 1949-52.

When the PC shifted its publishing headquarters from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles in September 1952, Mr. Honda was named editor and remained on the job for 38 years. In 1980, he was appointed general manager of operations and served in that capacity until 1990 when he was designated senior editor.

In 1992, he was designated editor emeritus and in 1997 appointed JACL/PC archivist. Although he no longer is involved in the day-to-day operations of the PC, Mr. Honda remains an active contributor to the newspaper with his column, "Very Truly Yours." He still occasionally writes articles and archives documents and photographs which the JACL and the PC has accumulated over the years.

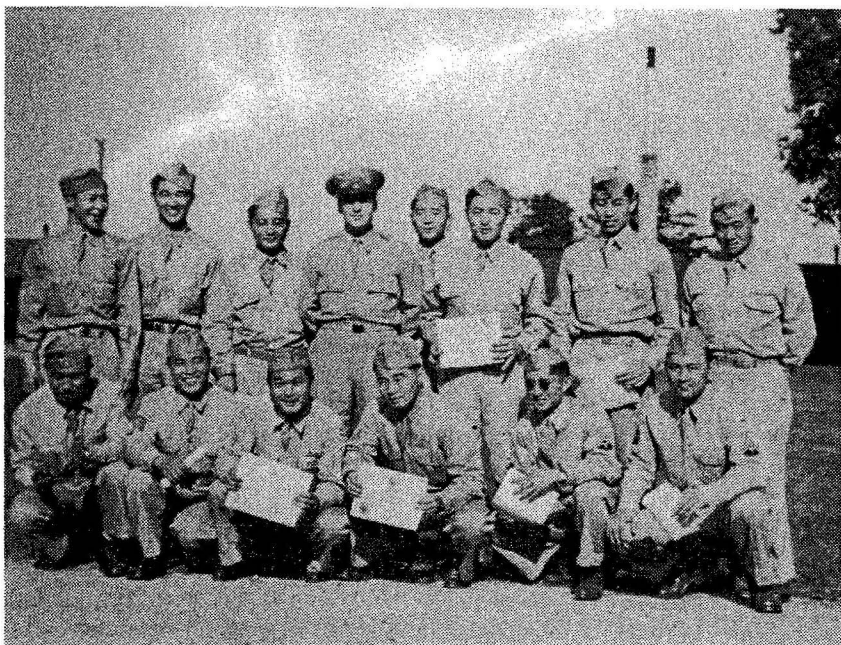
see Harry Honda page 3

The JAHSSD invites you to join us at our annual meeting to hear Mr. Honda talk on "The Nikkei Identity With A South American Beat."

(A form to order *bento* lunches for the meeting is in the centerfold of this newsletter. Bentos cost \$15 each and must be pre-ordered by Oct. 14.)

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Section 18 Military Intelligence Service (MIS) Graduation
June 1943 Camp Savage Minnesota

TOSHIO ABE: Part II

By Al Zdon

(Reprinted by permission of Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary Legionnaire)
(Drafted and trained at the Army's military intelligence school, former San Diegan Toshio Abe remained behind as others in his class shipped overseas. He learned he was delayed because he remained under suspicion because of his race.)

Finally, Abe got orders. He took a train to Los Angeles and reported aboard a Liberty ship that took 60 days to reach Calcutta.

"We ran out of things to do," he said. "We were captive on shipboard."

The unit was moved to New Delhi, where the headquarters for the China-Burma-India Theater was located.

Abe was assigned to Merrill's Marauders, the only U. S. unit in Burma. His primary job was to interrogate prisoners of war and to translate captured documents.

The Marauders, a small force of about 3,000 men, were involved in 20 major battles during their short existence. By the time the unit was disbanded at the end of May 1944, after capturing the key Myitkyina Airfield, only 200 of its original complement remained.

Bill Abe's job involved more than the

language training he received in Minnesota.

"Some people have this idea that we just sat back in the office and waited for prisoners to be brought in," Abe said. "In fact, we were right out there with the rest of the soldiers. When a prisoner was captured, we would interrogate them right on the spot. They gave us a carbine and a .45 pistol. We didn't use the pistol much because it had such a kick that you could never hit anything with it. We always said the best way to use the pistol was to throw it at the enemy."

The fighting was intense as the Marauders drove south through the jungles and mountains of Burma. The Americans were decimated during that campaign, not only by the enemy, but by malaria and typhus.

"During the monsoon season from April to September, the humidity was 100 percent," Abe said. "You were wet all day long. You'd go to sleep wet and wake up wet. You didn't want to wear fatigues."

"Some guys just went out of their minds and they were shipped back. Everything we got had to be supplied by air drops, so if there was bad weather, you just had to sweat it out."

The Japanese army also suffered grievous losses. Long cut off from their supply lines, the enemy soldiers had to live off the land.

"Many of them were out of bullets," he said. "Toward the end, we were capturing some of the enemy that were 16 or 17 years old. They could care less if they won the war or not. They just wanted to get the hell out of there."

Abe said most prisoners were fairly cooperative. "They had been told if they got captured, don't ever come back to Japan," he said. "It was their job to kill or be killed. They didn't know what to do when they were captured."

"We would give them cigarettes and treat them the best we could. It kind of surprised them. It was the exact opposite of what they had heard about American servicemen. Still, they didn't exactly gush out information."

The MIS specialists would translate documents at the same time as they talked to prisoners, cross-checking the information to see if the prisoners were telling the truth.

"A big problem was that many of the Japanese soldiers had no knowledge of where they were, or where they had been. They were never told."

The Allied intelligence group in the CBI Theater was overseen by Col. Joe Stillwell Jr., son of the famous general.

"He was very friendly toward the Japanese see Toshio Abe Page 4

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

October 1, 2000 Food Festival
Buddhist Temple 11am - 3p.m.

October 21, 2000 - Annual JAHSSD Meeting
Buddhist Temple of S.D. 11:00 a.m.

November 22, 2000 Joint Thanksgiving Eve Service
SD Japanese Christian Church 7:30 p.m.

December 17, 2000 - Mochitsuki
Buddhist Temple
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### *Harry Honda Continued from page 1*

Mr. Honda's connection to San Diego is through his wife, the former **Misako Mayumi**, a native Chula Vista. They were married in 1958. They lost their first daughter, **Teresa**, in 1976 but they have another daughter, **Patricia Arra**, of Los Altos. The Hondas' pride and joy are their four grandchildren - **Michelle, Joey, Nicole and Benjamin**, who was born this year on the 4th of July.

Mr. Honda has been a member of our historical society since 1994. He also has served on the board of governors of the Japanese American National Museum and belongs to the Japanese American historical societies in San Francisco and Southern California.

Mr. Honda has received numerous accolades, including a California State Assembly Commendation, LA County Commission on Human Relations Award in the field of media, Loyola Marymount Asian American Distinguished Alumni Award, JAHS of Southern California Outstanding Community Nisei and the JACL President's Award.

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### **Ocean View Names New Pastor**

The **Rev. Norma Nomura DeSaegher** has been named as the Ocean View United Church of Christ's new pastor to replace the **Rev. Dr. Tom Fujita**, who accepted a call from a church in Hawaii.

Mrs. DeSaegher was born and raised on Kauai, Hawaii. Her father emigrated from Fukuoka-ken and her Nisei mother was born on Kauai. Rev. DeSaegher graduated from Waimea High School and received her BA in communications with a minor in political science from California State University Fullerton. Later she received her Master of Divinity degree from the Claremont School of Theology.

Rev. DeSaegher was ordained by the United Church of Christ in 1999 and has been co-pastor with her husband, **John Allen DeSaegher**, of the Congregational Church of the Good Shepherd in Covina, California. Prior to entering the ministry, Rev. DeSaegher spent 10 years as an environmental consultant, served as a council member and mayor pro-tempore of the City of La Palma and was Communications Director for American Technologies in Anaheim.

Rev. DeSaegher has two grown children, **Anne Leiko and Richard**, and one grandson. Her husband is a retired Army colonel, who served as an Army chaplain.

On June 18th, the congregation of the OVUCC confirmed the recommendation of the church search committee at a special congregational meeting.



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## 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.

Terue Hironaka **OKABE** - June 13, 2000  
Hiroko **MORIO** - June 17, 2000  
Nobuko Nakana **OHGI** - June 17, 2000  
William **HATTORI** - June 25, 2000  
Kazuo E. **SHINNO** - June 25, 2000  
Gary Mitsuo **NAKASHIMA** - June 27, 2000  
Minoru **NAKAMURA** - June 28, 2000  
Ella Yuri **MARTIN** - July 6, 2000  
Tose **ONISHI** - July 16, 2000  
Elizabeth **MAESHIBA** - July 2000  
Tsuneji **SUDA** - July 21, 2000  
Keizo **IDA** - July 24, 2000  
Herbert **KOGA** - Aug. 5, 2000  
Kazue **HASTINGS** - Aug. 6, 2000  
Chieko **EDWARDS** - August 13, 2000  
Kiyoko **NAKAMURA** - August 19, 2000  
Sachiko **TSURUDOME** - August 22, 2000  
Yuriko **OBAYASHI** - August 26, 2000  
James M. **KODAMA** - August 28, 2000  
Pauline R. **MATSUO** - August 30, 2000  
Shizue "Susie" **CARTER** - August 31, 2000

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## IN GRATITUDE

The membership and the Board of Directors of the JAHSSD would like to gratefully acknowledge the following memorial donations to your historical society.

**Ken and Akiko Matsumoto** in memory of **Mr. Frank E. Matsumoto**

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*Toshio Abe continued from page 2*

Americans and he determined that our ratings were too low," Abe said. "He gave a blanket promotion to everyone. I went from a T-4 to T-5. Everyone was pretty happy."

It was a multi-national force that was taking on the Japanese.

"Stillwell asked the Chinese to send us troops and they sent a couple of division," Abe said. "All I remember was that they would steal anything that wasn't nailed down. Pretty soon, they were recalled."

Abe was detached for a while to a British unit that also included Indian troops.

"The British were very envious of our equipment.

Some of them were still using bolt-action rifles.

"Many of the British were professional soldiers and some had served in Burma for 10 years," Abe said. "They weren't very aggressive and I couldn't blame them. They were ready to go home and they didn't want to get killed. But they were good fighters and very tough.

"The reason it took the British so long to fight the war was they had to stop everything at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. every day to have their tea, no matter what was going on. And it wasn't just having the tea, they'd have to find the firewood and build the fire. Those guys had to have their tea."

The Japanese American intelligence specialists did their duty with the prisoners and captured documents, but they also distinguished themselves with their fighting abilities. Those assigned to that area received two Silver Stars and a host of Bronze Stars medals.

"I didn't get any of them, although I was recommended for a Bronze Star," Abe said.

One of Abe's closest friends, **Kenji Yasui**, earned a Silver Star for killing two of the enemy and capturing 12 others during an attack. Yasui later lived with Abe back in Minnesota.

The MIS soldiers were paired with each other, one of them usually being very proficient in the language and the other not so proficient. Abe was the not so proficient partner, he said.

"The problem was that my partner would snore, very loudly," he said. "One time we were dug in at an outpost and he was snoring so loudly that I was afraid he'd give our position away. I hit him on the head but he kept snoring. I finally just went some distance away and dug my own hole.

"The Allies pressed on. We kept fighting through these small villages. We were really looking forward to getting some of the big towns. Before we did, I was relieved and sent back to India."

Abe was sent back to rest camp in the Himalayas and then to New Delhi to work with captured war documents, radio messages and with prisoners.

As summer 1945 passed, hopes rose that the war would end soon.

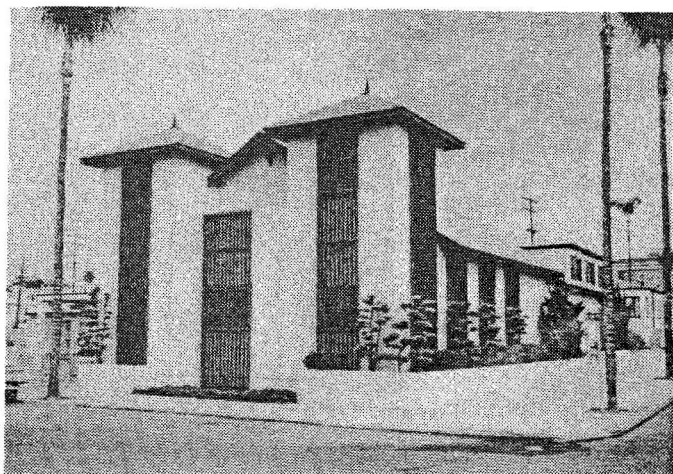
"We heard that they had dropped a bomb on Hiroshima," he said. "We said, 'So what? They've dropped a lot of bombs. When we learned the Japanese had surrendered, we got excited."

Abe and his unit then boarded a ship in Karachi and traveled through the Suez Canal. They reached New York Harbor in early November.

He returned to Minnesota, finished his engineering degree at the University of Minnesota and went to work for the 3M Co..

Abe met his wife, **Mary** in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. They have two sons living in the Twin Cities area, and a daughter living in California. The Abes have four grandchildren





## SAN DIEGO JAPANESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH MARKS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

The congregation of the San Diego Japanese Christian Church officially celebrated its 70th anniversary Aug. 4.

In actuality, the church's roots extend back to 1923 when **Junro Kashitani**, a ministerial student from Los Angeles visited some San Diego families while vacationing in El Cajon.

It was a powerful message he shared with those families as the fateful meeting eventually led to the establishment of what became known as the San Diego Holiness Church.

**Mr. and Mrs. Tasaburo Mukai** became the first members of the church.

During the years that followed, the **Rev. Sadaichi Kuzuhara** of Los Angeles came to minister to the growing San Diego group bringing him with him several ministerial students.

These students included **George Yahiro**, **Henry Sakuma**, **Paul Okamoto** and **Toshio Hirano**. The students alternately traveled the 120 miles south to hold monthly services and cottage meetings.

By 1930, the congregation had grown to 19 members and those members decided it was time to establish their own church.

They initially met in a rented house at 30th Street and Newton Avenue. The **Rev. Kichiro Fukuda** served as the first minister at the church's inaugural service held Feb. 9, 1930.

The seven charter members included **Mr. and Mrs. Kataro Ishimoto**, **Mr. and Mrs. Kamekichi Kaminaka**, **Mr. and Mrs. Tasaburo Mukai** and **Tatsugi Mita**.

They were soon joined by **Mr. and Mrs.**

**Kinya Shizume**, **Mr. and Mrs. Tokugoro Furuta**, **Mr. and Mrs. Shinzaburo Okamoto**, **Mr. and Mrs. Toshisaku Takehara**, **Mr. and Mrs. Masahiko Koba**, **Mr. and Mrs. Otokichi Miyamoto**, **Mr. and Mrs. Fujitaro Mishima**, **Mrs. Chizue Kida** and **Mrs. Tsuna Nakaji**.

The new church had visions of sharing the gospel with the Japanese community in San Diego, which included evangelistic street meetings held each Saturday night at the corner of Fifth and Island Avenues in downtown San Diego.

These meetings consisted of singing, the sharing of the gospel and testimonials by lay members of the church. One memorable aspect of the Saturday night street meetings was the beating of a large bass drum providing not only the tempo for the singing but to attract the attention of the community.

After six years here, the **Rev. and Mrs. Fukuda** were transferred to the Honolulu Holiness Church. The **Rev. Sadaichi Kuzuhara**, pastored the needs of the congregation from Los Angeles. He was assisted by a retired missionary from Japan, **Miss Mary Belle Griffith**, whose background enabled her to minister in both Japanese and English.

In 1937, the **Rev. Tameichi Okimoto** was appointed pastor and he was accompanied by his wife. It was during his tenure here that members purchased a permanent building site at 3042 Webster St. The new site was dedicated in July 1940.

The outbreak of World War II forced the evacuation of church members along with other in the Nikkei community.

After the war, the church reopened its doors to the first gathering of three members. **Rev. Okimoto** served briefly before he was transferred to San Lorenzo Holiness Church and he was succeeded in 1946 by the **Rev. and Mrs. George Yahiro**, one of the student ministers who used to travel here from Los Angeles.

Under the leadership of **Rev. Yahiro** and his wife, **Hatsu**, the church began a visitation ministry to reach out to potential new members. The visitations included visits to the infirm and bedridden. The **Rev. Yahiro's** ability to speak both Japanese and English enabled him to begin a bilingual ministry, which included a "young people's service" for the Nisei held on Saturday evenings.

Sunday School classes were started for the young. The growth of the church's ministry required the members to build an educational unit, which was used as a combination social hall and Sunday School room.

As the Nisei reached adulthood and their group expanded, it became necessary to develop an English-speaking department and the need to welcome its first English speaking Nisei deacons onto the church board.

**Bill Hara**, a student at San Diego State, was appointed student pastor in 1957.

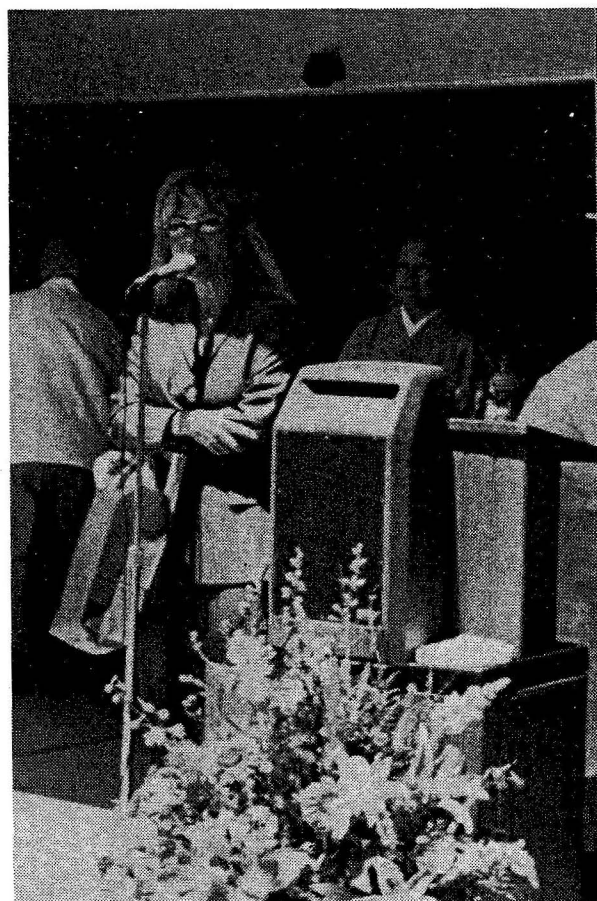
*Japanese Christian Church see page 12*



**Jeanne Elyea, Tom Ozaki,  
Grace Iwama**



## **Grace Iwama's 108th Birthday Party**



**Mayor Shirley Horton**



**Grace Iwama, Calvin Tajima (nephew) and Relatives**



**Dr. Randall Phillips  
Honorary Consul General of Japan**



**Grace Iwama and Niece**





*Grace Tajima Iwama with Kiyoko Ochi*

### GRACE TAJIMA IWAMA: 108 Years Young

A spry Grace Tajima Iwama briskly strode to the podium with the help of a walker on July 17 as fellow residents at Kiku Gardens and several Chula Vista city dignitaries turned out to help her celebrate her 108th birthday.

She would observe her birthday two days later with family members.

Speaker after speaker urged her to reveal her secret to her longevity but she resisted.

Her message to one and all was:

"Thank you everybody. I hope everyone can live like me."

Chula Vista's Nikkei Mayor Shirley Horton presented her with a city proclamation declaring July 19, 2000, as "Grace Iwama Day" in that city. The mayor also presented the big television wrestling fan a WWF action figure of her own.

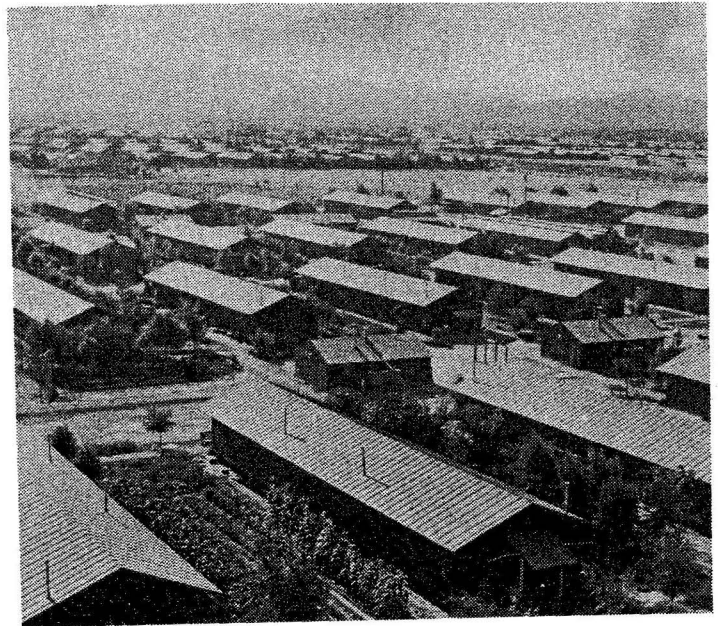
Kiku Garden President Tom Ozaki spoke on behalf of the association and Dr. Randall Phillips, honorary consul general of Japan, congratulated her on behalf of the Consul General Nishida of Los Angeles.

"We thank you for showing us what the secret of life is all about," Dr. Phillips said.

Mrs. Iwama's nephew, Calvin Tajima of Altadena, said Mrs. Iwama was born in Toshigu-ken, Japan on July 19, 1892. She came to the U. S. in 1920 and lived in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas before World War II started. During the war, she was evacuated to the Gila River Relocation Center.

After the war, she moved to Chicago and then on to New York, where she worked as a seamstress. She married at age 60 to Kimi Iwama but Mr. Iwama passed away not long afterward.

Mrs. Iwama moved to San Diego from Miami, Fla., in 1982. She became a U. S. citizen in 1953 after the McCarran-Walters Act passed allowing Asian-born residents to apply for citizenship.



### San Diego's Relocation Story Now Available on Video

Copies of *Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans and the Constitution* are now available in video from the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego.

The video, produced by an grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Project with additional funding from National JACL Legacy Fund and supported by the individual donations of 241 members of the JAHSSD, vividly relates the story of the forced removal and incarceration of San Diego's Nikkei community during World War II.

The twenty-seven minute video, which will be distributed at no charge to over 250 public and private schools in San Diego and Imperial counties, can now be obtained by interested individuals.

A suggested donation of \$15 per video for society members and \$20 for non members is recommended. If the video requires mailing please add \$5 for postage and handling.

Copies of *Democracy Under Pressure* may be ordered by sending your donations to JAHSSD, P.O. Box 620988, San Diego, CA 92162-0988.

To those friends and members who supported the video project with a donation, a commemorative lapel pin of is available as a small token of our "thanks" for your generous assistance. The pin may be picked up at the annual meeting October 21st. Pins not picked up will be mailed after the annual meeting.





Walter Obayashi, Yuriko Sukuto, Al Obayashi, Grandpa Joe

Obayashi (in back), Fred "Porky" Iguchi (right side)

### **A Moment in Time: Classic Photographs From the JAHSSD Archives** by Don Estes

Before World War II, the heart of San Diego's Nikkei community was located around Fifth and Island. In point of fact, the area really didn't even have a name per se. Unlike San Francisco's "Japan Town" and Los Angeles' Li'l Tokyo," in San Diego the district was just called "Fifth and Island."

In terms of longevity and continuity, one of the oldest of the Nikkei establishments in the district was the Sun Cafe located at 421 Market Street and run by the Obayashi family. The patriarch of the family was Mr. Uichiro Obayashi who had been born on December 26, 1879, in Yanagii-machi Kyua-gun Yamaguchi-ken. He had come to the United States in 1898 and, like many of his Issei peers, Mr. Obayashi lived a peripatetic existence until 1911 when he arrived in San Diego and settled down.

In 1918, Mr. Obayashi purchased the building located at 421 Market Street and opened a shooting gallery. The very nature of shooting galleries in those days required that they be open to the air so it seems inevitable that managing the shooting gallery would involve getting cold from time to time. Astute business man that he was, Mr. Obayashi began to keep a pot of hot soup at hand to help ward off the at times bitter cold. As time went on the patrons of the shooting gallery and even casual passersby would ask

if they could buy a bowl of soup. Before long, the shooting gallery was selling more soup than bullets; a fact not missed by Mr. Obayashi. In 1920, the gallery was closed and the Sun Cafe was opened.

In 1925, the Obayashi family had the building remodeled and repaired. It was at this time that a new "Sun Cafe" sign was installed - the sign that can still be seen on the restaurant today. By 1935, the cafe had a liquor license and, in 1941, the interior of the restaurant was extensively remodeled as may be seen above in the commemorative photograph taken March 22, 1941.

Following World War II, the restaurant was reopened and continued to be operated by the Obayashi family until 1963 when the cafe was sold to the Jeong family. For those of you who have forgotten, just a reminder of the, "good old days." From a Sun Cafe menu dated Tuesday May 9, 1950. Half a broiled lobster with drawn butter - \$1.25. Fried abalone steak, 90-cents. Broiled Large T-Bone steak, \$1.45.

Broiled Filet Mignon, \$2.00. Grilled Pork Chops, 85-cents. Of course, for dessert there was, Old Fashioned strawberry short cake for 25 cents and coffee with refills 5 cents.

Next time you're in the Gas Lamp District, just for fun, walk by and look at today's menu.

### **NIKKEI VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT FOR CHOLESTEROL STUDY**

Dr. Ken Fujioka of Scripps Clinic's Nutrition and Metabolic Research Center is seeking 10 to 15 Japanese American volunteers aged 18 to 75 to participate in a cholesterol study comparing Nikkei with Caucasians.

Volunteers need not have high cholesterol to help in the study. The purpose of the study is to compare Japanese Americans with Caucasians to see if cholesterol improves with certain diets.

If interested, contact Dr. Fujioka at the research center, 12395 El Camino Real Suite 315, San Diego. (858) 794-1240.



*George Sakato at his induction into the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes after Medal of Honor presentation.*

## **UNCLE JOE**

By Grace M. Segawa

My uncle, **George T. Sakato**, served with Co. E of the 442 RCT during WWII.

The Sakato family was living in Colton, Ca., when WWII broke out. When the evacuation notice came out, they elected to move inland out of the military zone. They had three days to move and went to live with a relative in Glendale, Ariz.

Uncle Joe volunteered for the Army in January 1943 but was rejected after having been classified 4C, or an enemy alien. In March, President Roosevelt changed the status of those in that classification and Uncle Joe tried to sign up for the Army Air Corps but his only choice was to join the Army so his dream of becoming a flyer crashed.

Following his combat infantry training, Uncle Joe was shipped overseas, a trip which saw three transport ships sunk by German subs.

Within days of arriving in Europe, he was sent to Marseilles, France.

His first taste of combat occurred Oct. 15, 1944, at the Vogues Mountain. He could hear rifle fire and machineguns blazing. Artillery shelling began and one fell about 10 feet away, knocking him for a loop. He

recalled aching all over his body. A buddy nearby was fatally wounded.

Uncle Joe crawled on his stomach, inch by inch at a time to reach the hilltop. From that hill, he saw the town of Bruyeres as German tanks moved toward the town. Being scared was second nature.

He tried to dig his foxhole but the ground was so hard, he barely could dig six inches deep. German shells rained down. As German troops advanced, he started firing like crazy.

He was scared as hell, crying and praying at the same time. The Third Battalion finally took Bruyeres. He came down from the hill and entered the outskirts of town to see death all around.

A night in a farmer's barn, where it was nice and warm, and then came another order: Take the hill to Biffontaine.

Under heavy enemy fire on "Hill 617," they were pinned down by Germans on top of the hill. He saw another best buddy hit and held him in his arms as he died.

Uncle Joe cried and was so mad he jumped up, grabbed his Tommygun and ran up the hill zigzagging all the way. He hollered to the rest of his company to follow him and they retook the hill. For this action, his citation reads:

*For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:*

*Pvt. George T. Sakato distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in action on 29 Oct. 1944 on Hill 617 in the vicinity of Biffontaine, France. After his platoon had virtually destroyed two enemy defense lines, during which he personally killed five enemy soldiers and captured four, his unit was pinned down by heavy enemy fire. Disregarding the enemy fire, Pvt. Sakato made a one-man rush that encouraged his platoon to charge and destroy the enemy strongpoint. While his platoon reorganized, he proved to be the inspiration of his squad in halting a counterattack on the left flank during which his squad leader was killed. Taking charge of the squad, he continued his relentless tactics, using an enemy rifle and P-38 pistol to stop an organized enemy attack. During this entire action, he killed 12 and wounded two, personally captured four and assisted his platoon in taking 34 prisoners. By continuously ignoring enemy fire, and by his gallant courage and fighting spirit, he turned impending defeat into victory and helped his platoon complete its mission. Pvt. Sakato's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit and the U. S. Army.*

While recovering from war wounds in Washington, his brother wrote to him saying he had earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest medal. He was unaware of this.

*Uncle Joe see page 10*

## CHANKO-NABE

By Joyce Nabeta Teague

Four or five years ago, the Los Angeles-based newspaper, *Rafu Shimpo*, printed an article called, "50 Ways you Can Tell You Are Japanese American." If you've never seen the list, here are a few items from the recent e-mail version which appeared in our In Box recently:

- You have a Japanese middle name.
- As a kid, you thought everyone ate rice every day.
- You have a Japanese doll in a glass case in your living room.
- You have nekkō [beckoning cat figure] in your house for good luck.
- No matter how bad your Japanese is, you still know what the words "shi-shi," "baka," and "benjo" mean [pee, stupid, potty].

The list was widely circulated among Nikkei and was the source of much laughter which sprang from recognition of traits or habits which many JAs saw in themselves or their families.

If I remember right, the thing got started when several L.A. journalists got together and had fun compiling this light-hearted enumeration of JA cultural touchstones. The list definitely has a west coast perspective, and is mostly a bemused reflection of the Issei-Nisei generations' lifestyle, which is why their children and grandchildren especially found much familiar to chuckle over. For instance,

- Along with salt and pepper, you have a shoyu [soy sauce] dispenser at your table.
- You have an air pump thermos decorated with lilacs.
- Your grandma still cooks with Ajinomoto [MSG], regardless of what medical reports say about it.

My siblings and I had some good laughs going over the list, rejecting a few things as too specific to one or another generation or region, and even adding to the list. For example, we added, "Your friends call those rubber beach thongs "Flip-flops" or "slaps" but you and your parents call them "zori." I imagine a lot of folks were likewise spurred to talk about which items did or did not apply to themselves or people they knew.

At the first annual San Diego Asian American Film Festival in August, Bill and I attended the screening of a film called *The Debut*, a charming and well-crafted story about a college student whose desires and those of his parents were at odds. These coming-of-age stories have been told countless times

on the big screen. But only recently have we been able to see filmmakers of color not only telling stories about their cultures, but -- very importantly -- meeting commercial success. (The wonderful *Smoke Signals*, about Native American youth, comes to mind.)

*The Debut* may be the first feature-length film ever about the Filipino American community. It has yet to find a distributor. But the outbursts of laughter and cries of recognition from the audience at the familiar cultural touches, which were a natural part of the story show that the movie has an audience out there waiting to enjoy it. Listening to their reaction made me think of my family's response to the list started by the *Rafu Shimpo*.

The truth is, we like reading about ourselves and seeing images of people like us onscreen. In an era where images is all, seeing a reasonable facsimile of "me" -- in other words, a reasonable reflection of "my world as I know it" -- is one way we can appreciate that part of ourselves we are sometimes self-conscious about because the image doesn't always seem to fit nicely into the generic American culture presented to us as the norm. When the media validates us by showing us as we are, we no longer need to explain or justify our ethnic or cultural uniqueness. We can just wear our identity easily, like a T-shirt, instead of lugging it around uncomfortably like so much baggage.

That's why something as light-hearted as "50 Ways You Can Tell You Are Japanese American" can have such impact. It's a small but potent way to say, "We exist, we have number, we have traits in common, and we accept them as part of who we are." That's why we should support and encourage filmmakers of movies like *The Debut* to continue talking about their communities, and why we need to continue sharing our own stories with our offspring.

*Uncle Joe continued from page 9*

While in a San Diego rehabilitation hospital, he recovered enough to get a medical discharge. His commanding officer wanted to have a parade for him but he told the colonel he just wanted to go home. The colonel presented him with the DSC and his honorable discharge.

For his heroism, Congress upgraded his DSC to the Congressional Medal of Honor, which he received June 21, 2000, in ceremonies hosted by President Clinton. His medal was one of 21 upgraded and awarded to Asian Americans who served with honor during WWII.





*President Clinton congratulates George Sakato after presenting him the Medal of Honor for WWII heroics.*

## **MEDAL OF HONOR**

BY BEN SEGAWA

*(Ben and his wife, Grace, recently attended Medal of Honor Awards ceremony at the White House, where Grace's uncle, George T. (Joe) Sakato, was one of the recipients. This is Ben's recollection of the trip.)*

How proud I am to be an American. My wife, Grace, and I had the privilege to attend the Congressional Medal of Honor Awards ceremony held June 21 at the White House. The event was so memorable, I just had to put my impressions on paper.

As we gathered at our hotel in Washington, D.C., the Army made available six buses to transport all of us to the events. First, we went to Fort Myers, Va., for a memorial service.

Four ministers shared the pulpit -- a Buddhist priest, a Catholic priest, an Army chaplain and a Protestant minister. One of the ministers was a former 442nd RCT combat soldier. He spoke of a memorial marker in England, which bears the words: "When you go home, tell them of us. We gave today for your tomorrow."

We all sang "America The Beautiful."

We were then all transported to Arlington National Cemetery where we witnessed Uncle Joe, Rudolph Davila of Vista and Yeiki Kobashigawa, the latter wheelchair-bound, placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The Army had roped off the entire area for those attending the special ceremony. The Honor Guard, Army Band

and the Ceremonial Guards all stood at attention. It was difficult to hold back the tears.

After lunch, we were off to the White House. First, we all had to be cleared by the Secret Service before boarding the buses. On the way, we had a police escort all the way to the White House. Traffic was stopped to allow the buses to travel freely. It was a sight I will never forget seeing all of us Asian Americans having traffic stopped while we proceeded to the White House.

At the White House, we were treated to refreshments. There were numerous photo opportunities. A large tent was set up on the White House grounds for the occasion. President Clinton led a procession followed by all 22 Medal of Honor Awardees.

"Rarely has a nation been so well served by people so ill-treated," the President said. "Americans of Asian decent did much more than prove they were Americans. They made our nation more American. They pushed us towards that More Perfect Union of our founders' dream."

To see George T. Sakata (Uncle Joe) receive his Medal of Honor was very emotional for us. It took about two hours for the presentations. As the event was winding down, the President greeted some of his guests. He came right down where we were seated. What a thrill it was shake his hand and thank him for inviting us. We were then ushered back into the White House where we greeted each other with congratulations.

On our way back to the hotel, I had the privilege of sitting next to Lt. Gen. Robert F. Foley, a Medal of Honor recipient himself and currently commanding general of the Fifth Army. We had a very fruitful talk about the state of our country, what we came through and where we are headed. He commented what an honor it was for him to attend the Award Ceremony. Lt. Gen. Mark Clark commanded the same Fifth Army during WWII. The 442nd RCT was attached to the Fifth Army. Gen. Foley was quite familiar with the history of the 442nd.

A reception followed at the hotel with many of the President's cabinet and flag officers from all branches of the service attending. We were fortunate to have photographs taken with Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii; Gen. Eric Shinseki, Army chief of staff; Army Secy. Louis Caldera; and many of the awardees.

The following day, we were bussed to the Pentagon where we witnessed the new Medal of Honor recipients inducted into the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes, another moving experience. Uncle Joe's name is now inscribed in the Hall of Heroes for eternity.

During the visit to Washington, each family had our own military escorts, always in full dress uniform. It was an experience of a lifetime, which we will always remember. It made me realize how proud I am to be an American and of Japanese ancestry.

In 1959, the **Rev. Arthur Tsuneishi** and his wife, **Sally**, served the English speaking congregation working closely with Rev. Yahiro.

The Rev. Mr. Yahiro served the church for 16 years before he passed away Dec. 20, 1962.

Under Rev. Tsuneishi, it was decided to move the church to 1920 E St. and it was dedicated Aug. 7, 1966.

One year later, Rev. Tsunieshi was transfered to San Lorenzo Holiness Church and he was succeeded by the **Rev. James Toda** and his wife, **Alice**, transferred here from Honolulu.

In 1969, the **Rev. David Hosomi** of the San Fernando Holiness Church began parttime service as the Japanese speaking minister. He was replaced the following year by the **Rev. Shinichi Fukiage**, who became a fulltime minister here.

The Rev. Fukiage and his wife, **Shizu**, ministered to a growing congregation of military wives until he was transfered to the Santa Clara Holiness Church in 1981.

The **Rev. John Katagi**, accompanied by his wife, **Donna**, succeeded the Rev. Toda and his family in 1978.

In 1981, the church officially changed its name to the San Diego Japanese Christian Church.

The **Rev. Michio Okawa** succeeded Rev. Fukiage in 1981.

In 1984, Rev. Katagi transfered to San Gabriel and was succeeded by the **Rev. Isoroku Sekiguchi** from Hawaii. In 1987, the Rev. Sekiguchi passed away.

The **Rev. Brian Nakamura** and his wife, **Emiko**, arrived here with their three children.

**Pastor Roy Toma** is assisting as youth director.

The **Rev. Kunizo Nakao** is serving the Japanese language congregation today.

### **ROY S. YONEKURA**

Certified Public Accountant

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\*\*\*\*\*

## **SUNSHINE COMMITTEE**

### **Let a Little Sunshine In**

Do you know a JAHSSD member who is sick?

If you know of a JAHSSD member who is ill or in the hospital, please let our Sunshine Coordinator, **Nancy Cowser**, know. We would like to send a card to the ailing member wishing them a speedy recovery. We are asking that all our members and friends help us with this worthwhile project.

Nancy can be reached at **(858) 270-0733** and let her know the name of the person and where they are, if hospitalized. Your help on this project is greatly appreciated.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Haiku Lost In Time**

By Hugo Seligman

### **Poem Unwritten**

## **The Moment's Thought Lost With The Wind**

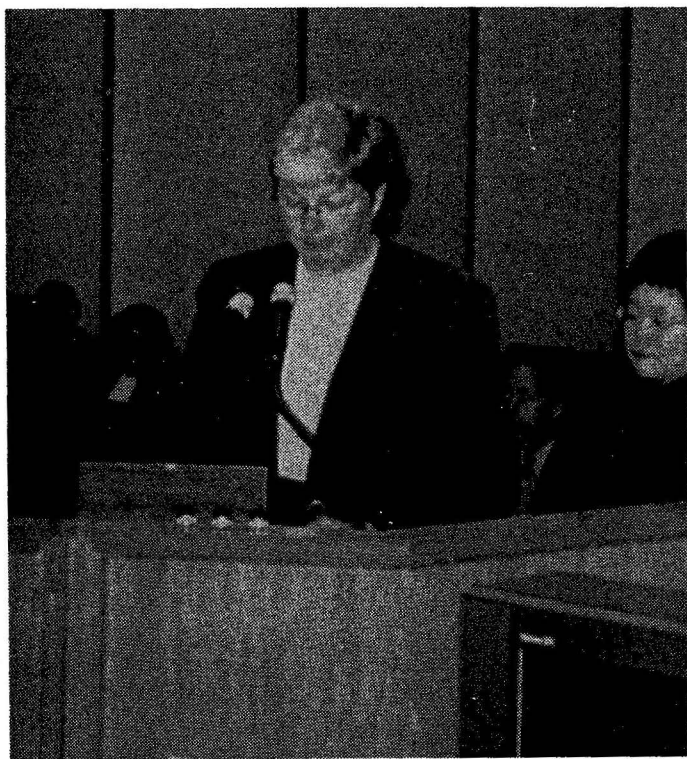
### **Upon A Fall Day**



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## SD City Council Repeals War Time Resolution

On Monday, July 17, 2000, fifty-seven years after its adoption, the San Diego City Council voted to repeal Council Resolution 78331.

Resolution 78331 was a by-product of the fear and racism that gripped San Diego during World War II. In 1943, when the War Relocation Authority announced that Nikkei families were going to be gradually released from the camps, cities and counties on the West Coast responded with virulence.

The San Diego City Council, in particular, passed a resolution which reminded the President and the Congress of the "...danger involved in permitting Japanese (read American citizens) now concentrated in restricted areas (read concentration camps like Poston) from being released therefrom and returned to our midst, that the Council does hereby protest against permitting any Japanese (again, read American citizen civilian or military) to return to this area while we are fighting this war against Japan."

An unsuccessful effort was made in 1972 by the San Diego JACL to have this resolution and a companion resolution passed by the County of San Diego rescinded.

In a conversation with JAHSSD members this past May, council member **Christine Kehoe** offered to carry a resolution rescinding the war time act. With the help of Kehoe's aide, **Jeffery Tom**, a new resolution was presented July 17th to the council. Some opposition came from council member **Judy McCarty**, but strong and vocal support to rescind the

1943 resolution came from council members **George Stephens** and **Juan Vargas**. Attending the meeting to show community support for the Kehoe effort was, **Don Estes**, **Carol Kawamoto**, president of the SD JACL, **David Kawamoto**, National Vice President of Operations of the JACL, **Yukio Kawamoto**, **Susan Moribe** and **Joyce Teague**.

## Letters

Dear Susan (Hasegawa):

Thank you very much for loaning me this great work.

I'm impressed with the hard work put into this and deeply touched by the plight of the Japanese American people. Again, this brought back memories of my childhood and rekindled the need to tell that story.

Thanks again and stay in touch.

Mario

*Mario Chacon, Dean of Student Services at San Diego City College, wrote this note after recently viewing Democracy Under Pressure produced by the JAHSSD.*

see letters page 14

\*\*\*\*\*

## FROM YUTAKA'S CAMP COOKBOOK

(From Yutaka Kida Block 330 cookbook)

Friday Sept. 11, 1942

Breakfast: Honeydew melon  
Bake corn beef hash  
Doughnut butter  
Bread Coffee

Dinner: Stuffed seabass  
Tomato sauce  
Garden pea  
Macaroni salad  
Dutch pear cake  
Bread Tea

Dutch Pear Cake  
8 # sugar  
4 # short  
1/2 cup salt  
4 doz. eggs  
4 qt. milk  
10 # flour  
10 oz. baking powder  
vanilla extract

\*\*\*\*\*



## Membership News

by Yukio Kawamoto

### Caught Doing Something Nice

Each issue of *Footprints* we like to pause a moment and recognize the activities our members and friends make on behalf of our organization. Without the help of those of you who care about preserving the Nikkei experience for future generations, our job would be well-nigh impossible.

The membership and the board would like to thank **Ruth Takahashi Voorhies** and **Don Estes** for their generous donations following the panel discussion that was part of our "*Democracy Under Pressure*" presentation made at the public library. Thank you all so much for what you continue to do in our support.

We also appreciate the loan of MIS photographs from his personal album made by **Toshio Abe** of Bloomington, Minnesota. Some of the photos have been used in the last two issues of the *Footprints* and the others will be utilized in a future photo exhibit on the Nisei soldier during World War II.

Thanks to **Maya Nishikawa**, television journalist of **KGTV** who provided our archive with a video out-take of Council member **Christine Kehoe** presenting our president **Jeanne Elyea** with our copy of the council's resolution naming May 31, 2000, as **JAHSSD Day** in San Diego. Thanks, **Maya**, for the video record.

The JAHSSD would like to congratulate and express our thanks to **Dr. Minou Djawdan** and her husband **Mr. Geoff Spradley** for their generous donation to our society's photo archival efforts in honor of their recent marriage. We wish you both the best of luck.

We really hit the jackpot when **Amy Kaneyuki** donated an original 1920 interior photograph of the old Yokohama Laundry on 7th Avenue, and a 1941 original photograph of the **SD JACL Credit Union (Hayato)** picnic. Both photos are in mint condition. In addition, Amy also donated a three-tiered, lacquered Japanese stacking box set used for serving food. Thank you, Amy, for your thoughtful donations.

A warm welcome to the following new members who recently joined the JAHSSD membership: **Mr. & Mrs. Robert P. Jackson** of Apple Valley, **Junko Kajita**, **Eileen Katayama** of San Jose, **Shinji Kimura**, **Drs. S.S. and Nori Ishimoto Komorita** of Champaign IL, **Rhonda E. Kruse**, **Shigeru Kuge**, **Tadashi Yamaguchi** and **Eunice (Hirase) Yamane** of Murray, UT. A big thank you to **Susan Hasegawa** and **June Kushino** who upgraded their membership to life.

We also thank the following members who renewed their memberships: **Toshio and Michi Fujimoto**, **Edythe Hirase**, **Masami Honda**, **Kenji Iguchi**, **Sakie Kawahara**, **Toshiko Kawasaki**, **Guy and Toshi Kiyoi**, **Frank and Janet Koide**, **Hiroshi and Yayoi Kubota**, **Mary Marumoto**, **Jodi Masumoto**, **Maya Nishikawa**, **Toy Nitake**, **Hideo and Kiyoko Ochi**, **Hideko Shimasaki**, **Pam Springer**, **James N. and June F. Tajiri**, **Chie Roxanne Takehara**, **Tyler and Peggy Tanaka**, **Karen Tani**, **Masaharu Tsuida**, **James and Helen Urata**, and **Frank Wada**.

*Letter s continued from page 13*

JAHSSD  
Yukio Kawamoto, Membership

My niece **Judy Hibi**, signed me up on your newsletter some years back and I have been receiving your newsletter ever since. I was surprised that there is a significant Nikkei population in the San Diego area. But as I read your newsletter, I know none of the people or activities in your articles. So, I never renewed as there is a limit to all of us how many we can subscribe to.

However, this last issue caught my attention on the article on **Cpl. Toshio Abe**. So many stories that are untold will be gone forever if not put into print. I would like to keep up on such stories and hopefully there will be more that I enclose my dues to your newsletter.

My politics are supportive and appreciative of the service of the Nikkeis in uniform but also, I am supprotive of the resisters. Both had an important purpose in history that will forever be meaningful in the future.

Toy Nitake

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