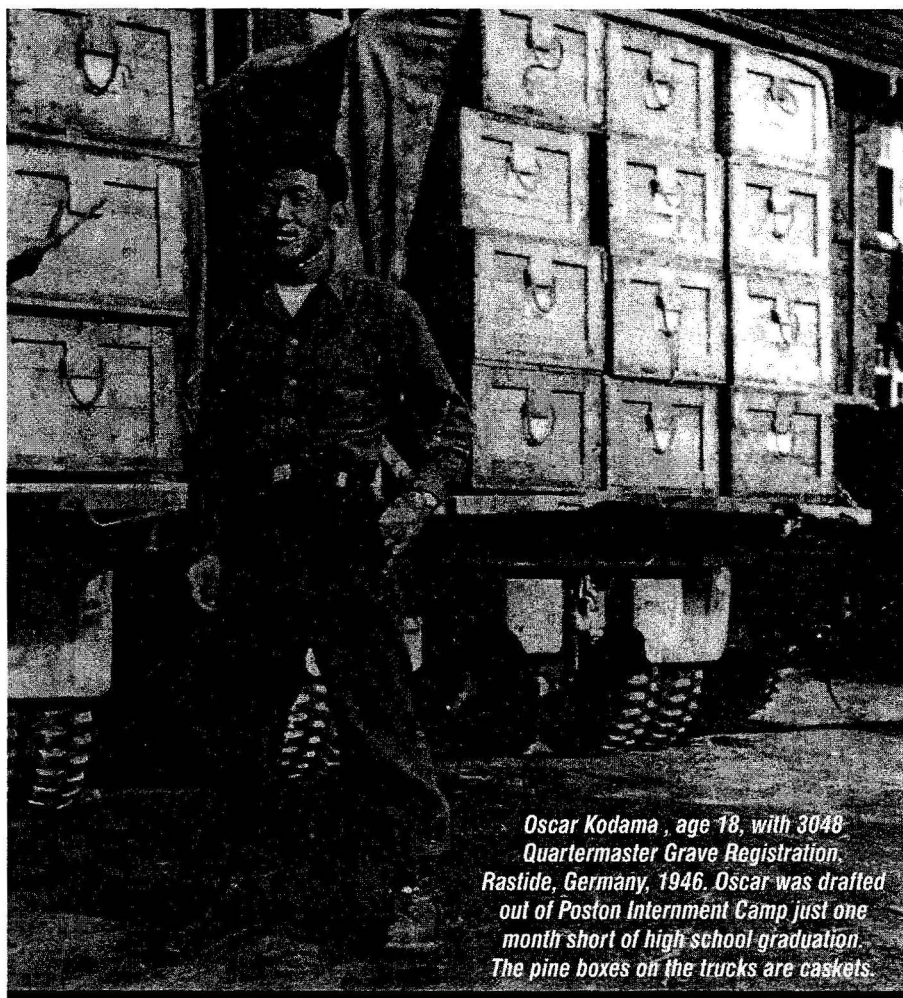


FOOTPRINTS

Impressions from where we were to where we will be...

Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego



*Oscar Kodama, age 18, with 3048
Quartermaster Grave Registration,
Rastide, Germany, 1946. Oscar was drafted
out of Poston Internment Camp just one
month short of high school graduation.
The pine boxes on the trucks are caskets.*

OSCAR KODAMA: A NISEI'S STORY

by Yukio Kawamoto

Wham! A few days after Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941, a white boy in Oscar Kodama's class, whose brother had been killed at Pearl Harbor, jumped him from behind when the teacher went out of the classroom. A couple of days later while Oscar was waiting for the bus after school, the same boy came by and told Oscar, "I'm going to beat the hell out of you, you Jap." A black friend of Oscar's since the second grade was standing beside him. He told the boy, "Come ahead," and the white boy took off. The guy never bothered Oscar again.

Oscar Kodama, 15 years old at the time, was in his freshman year at Imperial High School in Imperial Valley. Although he lived in Imperial, a town about three miles north of El Centro, he started his high school career at El Centro High. This was because one of his brothers had been driving a bus for El Centro High and when it was time for Oscar to start his freshman year, he climbed into his brother's bus and began high school at El Centro High. About three months later, the school officials told him he would have to transfer to Imperial High since he didn't live in the El Centro district.

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WINTER 2007

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DEC. 7 & 8 - DECEMBER NIGHTS, Japanese Friendship Garden fundraiser, Balboa Park

DEC. 8 - WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST (8:15 am), San Diego Japanese Christian Church (SDJCC) \$15.50

DEC. 9 - BODHI DAY SERVICE (10 am), Jr. YBA Chow Mein Fundraiser (\$6, 12 noon), Buddhist Temple of San Diego (BTSD). 619/239-0896

DEC. 15 & 16 - OBON AGAIN SHOP 2-DAY HOLIDAY SALE (10 am-3 pm), BTSD Sangha Hall. Info: 619/527-7855

DEC. 16 - BTSD MOCHITSUKI (all day), Mochi, holiday gifts for sale. Public participation welcome. 619/239-0896

DEC. 16 - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM & Children's Pageant (10 am), Pioneer Ocean View UCC (POVUCC); Christmas carolling, Kiku Gardens (1 pm). 619/276-4881, povuucc@sbcglobal.net

DEC. 16 - CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION: dinner (5 pm), program performed by children (7 pm), SDJCC. Free

DEC. 23 - CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE (10:30 am), SDJCC

DEC. 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE (6:30 pm), POVUCC, friends and family welcome. 619/276-4881

DEC. 28 - UDON & SOBA FELLOWSHIP and PRAYER (7 pm), SDJCC

DEC. 29 - VFW POST 4851 BINGO NIGHT (6 pm), BTSD Annex Hall. \$10 buy-in

DEC. 31 - NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE (7:30 pm), BTSD, **BELL-RINGING CEREMONY** (11:30 pm), Shelter Island Friendship Bell. Info: 619/239-0896

JAN. 1 - NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE (10 am), BTSD.

JAN. 6 - NEW YEAR'S WORSHIP SERVICE (10 am) followed by Mochitsuki, SDJCC

JAN. 15 - JSSDT HOSTS U.S. Ambassador to Japan (11:30 am-1:30 pm), details TBA. Info: 858/467-1727, info@japan-society.org

JAN. 19 - JAHSSD BOARD MTG. (8:15 am)

JAN. 19 - PRAYER SUMMIT includes guest speaker and lunch (10 am), POVUCC. Info: 619/276-4881

JAN. 20 - BTSD HO-ONKO SERVICE (10 am), New Year Party (12 noon). Bento \$15, 619/239-0896

JAN. 29 - PHOTO I.D. PARTY (10 am), Austin Archives

JAN. 29 - JAPAN SOCIETY OF S.D. & TIJUANA GALA (5:30 pm), Sea World Pavilion. Info: 858/467-1727

FEB. 15 - DEADLINE: Poston Reunion Booklet ads

FEB. 26 - PHOTO I.D. PARTY (10 am), Austin Archives

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Mich Himaka

For three years now, you've put up with my filling this space. I turn it over to **Gwen Momita** now.

I hope you will support her as you have me. When I came into this position, I thought it would be a breeze to get through the next two years because I had my old friend, **Don Estes**, to guide me, support me, lead me and carry me. However, five months into the first year, we lost Don. It was a devastating loss not only to his long-time life's partner, **Carol**, and their two boys, **Matthew** and **Kumao**, but to me.

We had been planning the unveiling of the Veterans' Memorial Monument, which Don was heavily involved with, planning the presentation of "Camp Dance," and seeking a storage site for our collection of artifacts, documents and photographs. I know if Don had been here to help us complete those projects, we would be much farther ahead than we are today. Yes, we made it through those projects but it sure would have been easier with his leadership.

I was fortunate in having you, our members to help me and guide me through this difficult period. We did reach 500 memberships though. I see our growth as an organization as a legacy of Don Estes. The size of our collection, the good that our organization has projected in our community, I see as legacies of Don Estes. He was the backbone of the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego. Anyone who thinks otherwise should go back to our very beginning, our first meeting. Ask anyone who was there and I think they will agree.

Yes, I missed Don, but we had to move forward. How far we have moved, I can't say. Somehow I feel we have been spinning wheels. For that, I accept full responsibility and I apologize.

Gwen can stop the spinning and move us forward. We can and we will move ahead, but she needs all of our support and all of our encouragement.

We don't have Don but we have others, like **Linda Canada**, **Joyce Teague**, **Christina Pierson**, **Bob Batchelder** and **Jeanne Marumoto Elyea**, one of the original board members.

In addition, I also thank **Nancy Cowser**, **Karen Kawasaki**, **Debra Kodama**, **Jim Yanagihara**, **Susan Hasegawa**, **Naomi Himaka**, **Vernon Yoshioka** and **Noriko Inoue** for sticking with me through these past three years.

I also thank **Yukio Kawamoto**, an ex-officio board member and past membership chairman, and **Robert Ito**, who has helped us find our Austin Drive site and serves on our Home Site Committee.

Thank you all.

And most of all, thank you to our membership.

DEBRA M. KAWAHARA, PH.D.

LICENCED PSYCHOLOGIST

INDIVIDUAL, COUPLE & FAMILY COUNSELING

Personal Growth, Depression, Anxiety/Excessive Worrying, Stress, Relationship Concerns, Cultural Issues, Transitions/Life Adjustments

10455 POMERADO RD.

SAN DIEGO, CA 92131

PHONE: 858.268.9054

CA. LICENSE #PSY 15540

CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING NICE

In each issue, we like to recognize and thank those members and friends who have gone out of their way to provide our Society with that effort that makes our organization successful.

Recent Donations: Thank You to...

■ **Mary Yamada** for a scrapbook of Poston Camp III memorabilia collected by her husband **Hank Yamada**, and some photographs from that period.

■ **Mich and Naomi Himaka** for the donation of an original JAHSSD T-shirt and two Bob's Buddies T-shirts from MS Walks as seen in our annual meeting exhibition.

■ **Mrs. Diane Perry** for a copy of *More Veterans Favorites*, a cookbook published by the Go For Broke Educational Foundation.

■ **Carol Hasegawa Estes** for an asparagus cutter used at Cozza Farms by her father, **Tosh Hasegawa**. Also from Carol: a Sumitomo Bank advertising fan, a poster from the 1994 Day of Remembrance, and a 1997 Arizona Humanities Transforming Barbed Wire events poster.

■ **Joann Yoshioka Allen** for a framed oil portrait she painted of her father, fishing captain **Joe Yoshioka**. (See related article on Page 11.)

■ **Elizabeth "Jinx" Ecke** for a photograph and newspapers published during World War II she found in an abandoned trunk in a barn on her North County property in the 1962. (See the photograph on Page 22.)

■ **Terry Thomas** for generously providing five student tickets for Asian Story Theatre's production of "Dear Miss Breed" at the Lyceum Theatre last Fall.

■ **John & Tsune Hashiguchi, James & Katsumi Kida, Eddy Kubota, Nancy Martinez, Ken Muraoka, Ritsu Nabeta, Jan Takehara, Dick Takeuchi, John Van de Ven and Patricia Williams** for generously donating funds for student tickets to the Nov. 18 "Only the Brave" matinee.

In addition, we very much appreciate those who have entrusted us with your precious photographs to copy and return.

Handy Helpers: Thank you to...

■ **San Diego Historical Society** for donating 6 sets of metal shelving for use in the archives. After helping deliver these materials using **Duane Siefers'** truck, **Rick Roussin** spent two days moving boxes and materials to help us make efficient use of the space at Austin Drive.

■ Our faithful Annual Meeting volunteers who helped set up and break down the display materials at the Buddhist Temple, and to move them to and from the archives: **Mits and Yuki Kawamoto, Jeanne Elyea, Susan Hasegawa, Karen Kawasaki-Williams, Mich and Naomi Himaka and Miki Honda**.

■ At the Fall Back Festival on Nov. 4, **Linda Canada and Misako and Michelle Roussin** helped the participants fold origami cats, frogs, and samurai helmets at the children's history event.

■ Those who came out to prepare a special mailing announcing the "Only the Brave" screenings: **Po Kaneyuki, Yuki & Mits Kawamoto, Bubbles Shimasaki, Kiyo Uda, Jim Yanagihara, Linda Canada, Bob Batchelder, Nancy Cowser, Gwen Momita, Grace & Mas Tsuida, Joyce Teague, Taka & Beverly Sawasaki and Mich & Naomi Himaka**.

Footprints Contributions

We are grateful to the following for their special articles and/or photo contributions this issue: **Linda Canada, Jinx Ecke, Jaime Enochs** and her ninth grade students at San Diego High School of International Studies, **Ralph Honda, Yuki Kawamoto, Oscar Kodama, Gwen Momita, Jim Tajiri, Shinkichi Tajiri, Yukina Warner and Vernon Yoshioka**. Arigato!

CELEBRATION, KANSHA AWARDS

MARK JAHSSD'S 15th YEAR

by Gwen Momita, Annual Meeting Chair

One pleasant day last October, where could you have found the following: happy folks greeting old friends, great food, autumn floral arrangements, a top-notch historical exhibit, hand-made Japanese crafts...and two smiling dentists?

No, it wasn't a dental convention! I'm describing JAHSSD's 15th Annual Membership Meeting and Kansha Awards held October 6 at the Buddhist Temple.

Our theme this year was *Iwai*, or "Celebration." We asked two members of our Board to talk about the first 15 years of JAHSSD as well as imagine where we might be after 2007. **Ben Segawa**, founding member and the Society's first president, and **Christina Pierson**, our youngest Board member, each presented us with a candid introspection about our past and future.

Yes, we've accomplished a lot during our first 15 years and we proudly celebrate that! However, there's still much to do and some hard questions to be asked. Do we continue to rent space in Spring Valley? How will we fulfill our dream of a permanent HOME? Will future generations step forward to give impetus to these dreams? Both speakers encouraged any interested individual to volunteer to serve on the Board, or to contribute time and ideas to our efforts.

In addition, we celebrated the accomplishments of two exemplary community servants: **Dr. Terry Tanaka** and **Dr. Yuri Kaneda**. It was purely a coincidence that these individuals are dental professionals.

As the "senior" awardee, Dr. Terry hopes his efforts inspire younger folks to search for ways to give back to the community. And Dr. Yuri is a wonderful reminder that you don't need to wait for retirement to make a meaningful impact on the lives of others. Start today and you'll be greatly rewarded! Good advice from two wise individuals, so arigato again from a grateful community!

Thank you to all who worked to make this day an enjoyable, historic event. We're moving forward; come join us!

Go to the Community Snapshots for more photos of the Annual Meeting.



OOPS! WE MAKES MISTEAKS

In the Fall 2007 Issue, the wrong phone number was given in DEBRA KAWAHARA'S ad on Page 9. The correct number is (858) 268-9054. Apologies to our good friend Debra!



Special Recognition to Our Good Friends at

ASIAN STORY THEATER

for generously donating a portion of ticket sales
for their production of "DEAR MISS BREED" to JAHSSD!

IN MEMORIAM

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

JAMES K. KONDO

July 18, 1914 ~ September 10, 2007

HIIZU UYEJI

December 24, 1917 ~ September 17, 2007

TAMAE ODA

September 2007

TAKAYE SHIZ FURUYA

April 8, 1922 ~ September 30, 2007

KIMIKO BROWN

January 8, 1924 ~ October 5, 2007

JOSE LUIS YOSHINAGA

March 19, 1959 ~ October 7, 2007

AIKO MURAOKA

May 31, 1938 ~ October 8, 2007

ESTHER MATSUYAMA

October 2007

TSUNEYO "SONNY" KANEKO

November 12, 1940 ~ October 31, 2007

JUNKO NIPPINS

July 13, 1939 ~ November 8, 2007

SACHIYE YAMAMOTO

August 2, 1943 ~ November 13, 2007

AKIJI OCHI

October 14, 1920 ~ November 25, 2007

LOOKING BACK: OUR FIRST 15 YEARS

by Ben Segawa

Ben is a founding Board member of JAHSSD and served as its first President. He gave the first half of the keynote address at the JAHSSD Annual Membership Meeting, an overview of the Society's first 15 years.

Many of you are well aware where we came from. My comments will be on the activities we were involved in that were meaningful.

In 1991, after we sponsored the **Poston III Reunion**, we had such a good time, we didn't want to disband. On the urging of **Miss Clara Breed**, we decided to go ahead and form this historical society.

Linda Noda Hobbs, an attorney, served on the **Kiku Gardens** board at the time when I was there. I talked her into helping us get started as our legal counsel. She came up with articles of incorporation and our bylaws, pro bono. We started with 13 members, which were all on the Board of Directors, and we were hopeful that someday we might get 100 members. **Naomi Himaka**, our current membership chair, tells us we have 500 members today.

In 1992, **Jeanne Elyea** was our first *Footprints* editor. The first issue was four pages and she did it all by herself. In 1993, we had eight pages.

In 1994, we honored **Dr. Francis Tanaka**, our family physician, our first awardee. Today it is called the **Kansha Award**. We drew a full house of over 700 to the Town & Country Hotel. The medical association was present, as was Mercy Hospital staffers and many of his patients. A week before the testimonial dinner, **Naomi Tanaka** contacted me that they wanted a full table for the family and their guests. We had no room for them. But on Naomi's insistence, we rearranged a lot of tables and squeezed them in.

October 1, 1994, was our first membership meeting, held at Southwestern College, featuring our own **Professor Don Estes**. He spoke on ways to record our family histories.

In 1995, we went back to Southwestern College to put on a display about veterans. We also enjoyed a piano concert by **Elaine Hibi Bowers**. It was very successful and I believe it was our first fundraising activity.

Also in the same year, three carloads of us journeyed to Parker, Arizona, to share our camp experience with the **Parker Historical Society**. Once again our talk and our exhibit filled the auditorium.

In 1997, our Society, in conjunction with the San Diego History Museum, sponsored the **One Hundred Year Road**. This display was on for six months. We were told by the museum that this was their most widely-viewed exhibit and the best they'd ever seen.

Our sixth annual membership meeting featured our very first presentation of a Kansha Award. We recognized five outstanding individuals for their outstanding service to the community.

In 1999, the Society received a major grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education fund to participate in the **REgenerations** oral history project. Over the course of a year, ten oral histories were gathered from San Diego Nikkei about their lives. That year, **Joyce Teague** took over as *Footprints* editor and we have gone big-time. Our current edition is 24 pages. She is doing an outstanding job.

We also hosted the 10th Poston Reunion at the Doubletree Hotel in Mission Valley. They came from as far away as Hawaii, New York, Ohio, Illinois and Kansas. Another full house.

(Continued on Page 5)



(LOOKING BACK 15 YEARS continued from Page 4)

In 2000, we produced a 30-minute documentary, **Democracy Under Pressure**, that tells the story of what happened to San Diego's Nikkei community during World War II. With a grant and major donations from members of the Society, the video was distributed free to all area high schools, colleges and libraries. Also that year, we worked with the **Smithsonian Institution** to display the letters of **Clara Breed** in an exhibit at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.

In June of 2004, the Society sponsored a free showing of **Farewell to Manzanar** and had author **Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston** as guest speaker. The screening was at the Educational Cultural Complex Theater in San Diego. The Society received \$1000 for presenting this movie and the money was earmarked for the **Japanese American Veterans Memorial Project**.

In 2004, we sponsored the **Grateful Crane Ensemble's** musical review "**Camp Dance**" at Southwestern College. The review featured a Nikkei cast. Again, there was a full house.

In May 2005, a tremendous loss was felt with the sudden passing of **Prof. Don Estes**. Just three weeks later on Memorial Day, we dedicated the **Japanese American Veterans Memorial** at Mt. Hope, all through the generous donations of the community.

Later that year, we acquired the Austin storage site in Spring Valley. We began our very first major fundraising drive which enabled us to begin cataloguing every item in our collection, thanks to our archivist, **Linda Canada**, and her crew of volunteers.

Memorial Day 2007, the flagpole at the JA Veterans Memorial was dedicated to the late **Min Sakamoto** who founded the **Japanese American Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4851** in the mid-1960s.

We just completed our exhibit at the Bonita Cultural Museum, **Home Grown: Japanese Americans in the South Bay**. We especially thank **Prof. Susan Hasegawa** and **Linda Canada** for their hard work on this project, just one of many we have presented in the last 15 years.

This brings us to today, and **Christina Pierson**.

MOVING FORWARD: YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

by Christina Pierson, 2008 JAHSSD Vice President

When Christina, a Yonsei, joined the Board, she brought an enthusiasm and determination to learn new skills to best serve JAHSSD's mission and membership. Last year, she also joined the San Diego JACL Board. These are the notes from her address at the 2007 Annual Meeting.

I first came in contact with the Japanese American Historical Society in 2001. After losing my grandmother **Asako Kobayashi** to lung cancer, I decided to research and document our family history.

My grandmother had been a powerful influence in my life and this was a way to feel close to her and commemorate the life and culture she was so proud of. While doing Internet research, I came across the website for JAHSSD. I thought that maybe they would be able to help me with my family history research. I sent an e-mail and received a return e-mail from **Joyce Teague** who invited me to a meeting scheduled at the home of **Don and Carol Estes**. I gladly accepted.

Arriving at the Estes home, I was welcomed by friendly board members who were more than eager to share their personal memories of my grandmother's family. I was surprised to meet her childhood neighbors, **Yuki and Mits Kawamoto** and **Mich Himaka**, from the **Van Camp Fish Camp**. They shared stories of life before the war, growing up on the waterfront area now at the base of the Coronado Bridge.

I continued my family tree research and visiting the board meetings of JAHSSD. I enjoyed spending time with my new friends. I began to feel the familiar comfort of the Japanese American community of San Diego. I was raised in the Temecula area of Riverside County. When I had time off from school, I was excited because I knew I was going to see my grandmother. Most of my life, she and my grandfather lived in a



modest apartment in Chula Vista until they were blessed with a brand new home at **Kiku Gardens**. I remember when my grandmother told me that she was moving there she said, "Next time you come and see me, Grandpa and I will be in a brand new place. A place for retired Japanese Americans to live and it's a very, very nice place."

I went to visit her the next holiday break. She was excited to show me the new place and was especially proud of the Japanese Garden in the courtyard. I immediately noticed how everyone seemed to be old friends reunited who greeted each other in the halls with traditional Japanese customs. Many times I went with my grandmother to the dining hall to "help out." I was fascinated by the way everyone smoothly took up a task to accomplish a big project like feeding 100-plus people lunch.

There was always something to do there and I felt a part of a big family. Shopping trips to the local Japanese food stores were always rewarded for good behavior by receiving various Japanese candies from my many community Aunties who always greeted me with a smile and plenty of compliments.

Being with the board of JAHSSD brought back many of these wonderful memories and the feeling of family. When I was asked to join the board I wondered—would I be up to the task? What could I do to help? The members were encouraging and promised to pass on the teaching of historical exhibits and board duties led by Don Estes. I gladly accepted. As I did when I was a young girl, I began to go "help out."

I was taught many things in the first years: the formalities of board meetings, the development of historical exhibits, the amazing stories of San Diego's Japanese American community and the many people that overcame a variety of difficulties to pave the way for where we are today.

Most of all I learned the value of friendship and the importance of sharing the stories of our community. Every time you share a story with a young person, you teach the importance of sharing the stories from generation to generation. There are many wonderful stories from San Diego's Japanese Americans that address virtues such as hard work, perseverance, bravery, honor, team work, family and friendship.

I also learned that I had many gifts to share as well. I began to develop exhibits that focused on the youth of our organization and the future of preserving the history of our community.

I encourage everyone to volunteer and take a young person with you. Taking part in activities like folding newsletters or identifying people in historical photographs is a big part of preserving our history and the future of our organization. There was a time when I wasn't sure what I would do as a volunteer either.

As we move forward into the next phase of JAHSSD, we will focus on involving young people and I encourage everyone to help us prepare the next generation to both preserve and make history in the Japanese American community of San Diego.

WABI SABI: WHAT'S NEW AT THE AUSTIN ARCHIVES

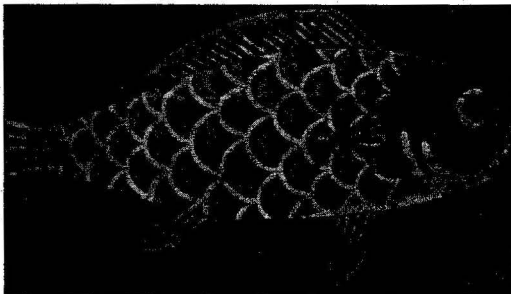
by Linda A. Canada, Archivist

JAHSSD has been invited by the **Japanese Friendship Garden** to create an exhibition of materials made in the internment camps. With the Japanese Friendship Garden's prime location in Balboa Park, and the fact that this exhibition will be in place during the Garden's well-attended August Moon event, there is a potential for a very large audience to see and appreciate the artwork, and to learn more about the relocation and internment.

We've been invited to use the Exhibit House space near the entrance of the Garden from June until the end of August 2008. This is a wonderful opportunity that the Friendship Garden has presented us, and special thanks go to JFG Board member **Steve Sato** for proposing the idea.

Our proposal to the Garden for the exhibition described the items to be displayed as follows:

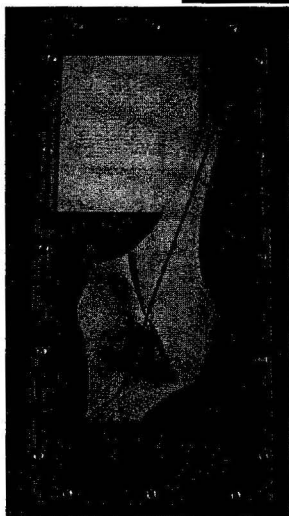
- Framed works in water color, oil, crayon, charcoal, and pencil,
- Decorative arts objects made of wood, stone, or metal. This includes wood carving, wood turning, metal shaping, or stone carving.
- Objects from daily living. These items were made from "found" objects or carved from wood available in the desert. Included are a chair, a small table, sprinkler cans, a wood handled razor, paper flowers, toys and games.



Two examples of World War II camp-made art:

Above: a colorful red koi (carp) hand-painted on cotton cloth

Left: a clever spinning toy made of barbed wire (barbs removed), a wooden spool and metal from a tin can



While JAHSSD has many such items in the collection, it would be nice to include additional camp-made art that might not have been displayed before. Do you have artwork, a carving, a doll or other handcrafted object made by you or one of your relatives on display or stored somewhere in your home? If you have an item that you'd be willing to loan for exhibition, or have stories to share about people who made art in camp, please contact me at (858) 457-9676.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

by Naomi M. Himaka, Membership Chair

A warm welcome to those who have joined our organization since the last edition of *Footprints*. We are pleased to have all of you as new members of our Society.

New members include: **Momiji Seligman, Carl B. & Anna Marie Thompson, Tom & Elizabeth Hashimoto, and Charles & Susan I. Bender.** The following are gift memberships: **Brian & Viola Kiyohara**, a gift of **Stephens Sato**; and **Masami Iwataki**, a gift of **Charles & Susan Bender.**

We thank **Miyo E. Reff** who upgraded from Annual to Life Member.

Thanks also to the following for their membership renewals: **Tetsuden Kashima, Tom & Taeko Udo, James M. & June F. Tajiri, Grace & Hiroshi Sawasaki, Azusa & Haruko Tsuneyoshi, Sakia Kawahara, Sumio & Fumiko Nakamoto, Nancy & Daniel Martinez, Joe Takehara, Ben Kiathata, Jodi Masumoto, Pam Springer, Matthew Estes & Rajjam Roose** (gift of **Carol Estes**) and **P. Kumao Estes** (gift of **Carol Estes**).

We also thank the following for their recent renewals: **Tim Asamen, Mary Marumoto, Frank & Janet Koide, Akira & Joan Loveridge-Sanbonmatsu, Guy & Toshi Kiyoi, Hiroshi Kubota, James & Helen Urata, Toshi & Miyoko Miyashita, Yone Shiwotsuka, Chieko E. Saito, H. Roy & Alice Asaki, Akira & Helen Takeshita, Kenneth Uyeda, John Bucher & Iona Batchelder** (gift of **Bob & Hisae Batchelder**), **Hideko Shimasaki, Paul & Helene M. Shimizu, Eric Segawa, Jiro Saito and C.R. Takehara.**

We also appreciate the continued support of **Kikuye Koga, Pat Takeshita, Wakae Sato, Fusako Yokotobi, David & Yuri Kaneda, Nobe & Lilly Takashima, Mary Kaneyuki, Christy G. Vikander, Miyoshi & Emi Ikeda, Mary Yamamoto, Jack Fujimoto, Charles S. & Jane A. Ogino, Eunice Yamane, Edythe Harada, Jean Okazaki, Jean Okazaki, Jim & Patsy Yanagihara, James & Yuri Yamate, Alice Yano, Eileen Katayama, Aiko Kida, Karen Hart, Yoko (Mayeda) Hashima, Michael & Mary Segawa, Oliver & Michi (Ishimoto) Nishimura, Steve & Aki Tomiyama, Mitsue Tanaka, Robert A. & Teruko I. Brown Jr., Hesaa Takahashi, Margaret Ikeda, Masayoshi & Grace Tsuida and Nancy Cowser.**

HOME SITE COMMITTEE WINTER 2007 UPDATE

by Robert Ito, Committee Chair

The HOME Site Committee is pleased with the community response for financial pledges and support needed for the Austin site where work is being carried out to organize the Society's collection.

Donations/contributions received this year exceeded our plan and the expenses are below what we had expected with the end result being revenues exceeding expenses.

The Committee's proposed plan to help JAHSSD interact more with members of other JA community organizations was recently approved with the goals of:

- Promoting the Mission of JAHSSD,
- Outreach to organizations/individuals that are "links" to key community stakeholders, and
- Cultivate relationships that will assist with generating financial support for JAHSSD.

In the upcoming year, the Committee will be assisting the Board with determining future facility needs.

SAN DIEGO LONG-TIMERS NEEDED for PHOTO I.D. PROJECT

Beginning in January 2008, JAHSSD will host a monthly series of "Photo I.D. Parties" at its Austin Archives, inviting interested folks to spend a pleasant couple of hours looking at old photos and identifying the people, places and events in them. Archivist **Linda Canada** has already coordinated a couple of fruitful gatherings and wants to make the I.D. parties an ongoing membership activity.

As explained in Fall 2007 Footprints, **Susan Hasegawa**, Professor of History at San Diego City College, will devote the upcoming Spring semester to researching and writing a book on the Japanese American experience in San Diego from the 1880s to the 1980s.

At its November board meeting, President **Mich Himaka**, representing JAHSSD, signed a contract with Arcadia Books to produce the pictorial history book authored by Hasegawa by the end of 2008. It is anticipated the book will give wider exposure to both JAHSSD and its archives and even give the Society an ongoing, if modest, revenue source for years to come.

Hasegawa will use JAHSSD archival photographs, oral history interviews, and other materials to tell the story of San Diego's Nikkei community. In the process, she will have the laborious task of electronic cataloging and documentation of all the photographs in the JAHSSD's sizable collection.

That's where you come in! Mark you calendars!

Photo I.D. Party Dates

The parties will be the last Tuesday of each month and begin at 10:00 a.m.: **January 29, February 26, March 25, April 29 and May 27.**

Your obligation:

1. Eat cookies.
2. Look at photos, see if anything looks familiar, write it down.
3. Sip tea, eat more cookies.
4. Enjoy yourself!

Though most of the photos we'll be looking at are of San Diegans and their families, there are also some in our collection which are a total mystery. These need to be identified as well. So *any* of our membership is welcome to join in *any* session. You may just help solve a mystery!

Austin Archives is at 10464 Austin Drive, Suite F, in Spring Valley. Take 94 Fwy., go south on Sweetwater Springs Rd., turn left on Austin Drive. It is wheelchair accessible. We'll provide the photos, refreshments, magnifiers and encouragement...you provide the memory!

Call Linda if you need more information.



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Deborah Sato

IN GRATITUDE

JAHSSD gratefully acknowledges the following monetary donations to the Society since our last newsletter. If we have inadvertently omitted your gift, please accept our sincere apologies. Notify Nancy Cowser at (858) 270-0733 for correction.

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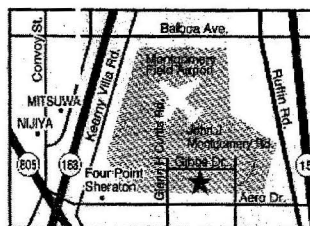
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SENIOR DAY every first Tuesday of the month:
Free adjustment for 65 and older

CHANKO NABE

by Joyce Nabeta Teague

"Just Too Much Good Stuff"

All day Sunday, October 21, members of the Buddhist Temple were working diligently, welcoming visitors, selling food from tents in the parking lot, and presenting a music concert in its Annex Hall. It was the annual Food & Music Festival, one of several fundraisers the temple holds each year to help keep its doors open.

It was a warm, gusty day. Santa Ana winds combined with high temperatures and low humidity brought people into the first floor classroom where I was overseeing the silent auction. Folks remarked on how cool it was inside and how lucky I was not to be working out in the parking lot or upstairs in the Annex Hall where, despite the open windows, it was warm and stuffy.

Once outside to take a lunch break, I could tell there was more than just a warm day going on: the scent of smoke in the air, the oddly-colored sky, and the sight of a dark gray haze to the north of us could only mean we had a major fire somewhere in the county.

After my father died last March, my four sibs and I decided to continue our schedule of taking turns staying at my parents' home in El Cajon so that one of us would be with Mom every night. So I was to be at Mom's that night through Tuesday.

When the festival wrapped up and I was driving on the 94 Freeway en route to El Cajon, I could see there were actually two sources of smoke—one to the north and one to the south. I soon learned these had been dubbed the Witch Creek and Harris fires and they were burning out of control and heading rapidly west, whipped by the Santa Ana winds. Many homes had already been destroyed, one man killed, and communities in the fires' paths were being evacuated.

It was the beginning of San Diego's nightmare week of wildfire.

Mom and I couldn't follow our regular routine on Monday because the awful air quality kept us indoors. Like most everyone else, we relied on the TV to follow the progress of the fires.

We recalled vividly several years prior watching flames reach the easternmost hills of El Cajon and begin their descent into the valley, so it seemed to me very possible fire could reach into the city from one of three directions: east from La Cresta, north from Lakeside, or south from Rancho San Diego. That morning I made a short list for each room of what I thought needed to be packed and ready for a quick getaway in case we were ordered to evacuate.

My parents were collectors. There are a lot of things in that house, all at one time deemed worth keeping. Dad was an amazingly organized guy, so his "stuff" is labeled and orderly. But there is a lot of it.

I asked Mom what she wanted me to save if we were forced to leave the house. *Dad's urn and the family photo albums*, she said. *I can live without the rest.*

Oh, really? I thought to myself. What about the cat?!? The but-sudan. The computer. The address book. My baby shoes made into bookends. The fancy Japanese dolls in their glass cases. Art hanging on the walls. Medical records. The TV. I found myself assigning intrinsic value to everything in the house, trying to analyze what was worth saving.

That afternoon, I went out and bought 20 cardboard files boxes. My nephew Brandon stopped by to visit his Baachan and ended up assembling boxes. By then I had packed up important papers, medicines, Dad's journals, and some irreplaceable old family photos and memorabilia, like the hard hat Dad wore as a coal miner on work furlough from Poston Camp I.

By the time Brandon and I had filled the remaining boxes with photo albums, there were still dozens more sitting on the shelves. It finally dawned on me there was *no way* these boxes would fit in the station wagon, or even in both of our cars! *We had too much good stuff.*

By midnight Monday, I'd found containers for all the photo albums which were stacked in the family room. Each box weighed a gazillion pounds. If we were forced to leave, I would need my brother to bring his truck. And maybe a forklift. Sheesh. *Way too much good stuff.*

Early Tuesday morning, we got a call from both my daughter and my sister in Spring Valley saying they had loaded their cars and were bringing their pets and valuables to Mom's. The reason: a new fire which had started around midnight had scaled Mt. San Miguel just southeast of their homes. At 3:00 a.m. from Mom's street, we could see the vivid red fire line at the top of the mountain making its way down the slope in our direction. Though miles away, this was an unsettling sight.

Later that morning, another Spring Valley sister and her family, and my nephew Derek and his girlfriend displaced earlier from their Carlsbad apartment, settled in at Mom's. We talked about what had been packed and what left behind. It had not been an easy choice for anyone.

By Thursday afternoon, imminent danger seemed past for El Cajon, but we nonetheless kept everything in boxes till the following week.

We were among the lucky ones not forced to learn the hard way whether we'd made the right choices about what to save. With an astonishing half a million people forced from their homes during this disaster, most of us were either evacuated, housed someone who was evacuated, or worried over friends' or relatives' whereabouts and the fate of their homes. We are grateful for our lives, grateful to those who battled the fires, and sympathize with those who suffered loss.

WE GET LETTERS

Dear Mich and Gwen—

Just a thank you note for the wonderful work you and your Board members continue to perform for our Nikkei community! John and I thoroughly enjoyed the educational display of the early South Bay farmers. I met Linda Canada that afternoon at the Bonita Library so you are surrounded by so many dedicated people! The life of the Japanese in Hawaii is somewhat different than the Mainland Japanese so we have thoroughly appreciated this historical journey of our kinfolk.

Thank you for your wonderful leadership in keeping us informed! Enclosed is a small donation to help with the rental to house the JA artifacts.

Faithfully, John and Norma DeSaegher

Dear Mitch and Japanese American Historical Society:

Thank you so very much for your kind words and the special "Kansha" award this past weekend. It was a nice surprise for me and also a nice recognition for the program that has lasted for so many years in Mexico and South America. "Twenty five years doesn't really feel like a long time when you are having fun," as they say. The best part is that Dr. Kathi (Dr. Honeybee) has taken over and has developed the program into an even better and more effective program, so it should last at least another 25 years.

My entire family enjoyed your comments about me pulling Danny's hair during the services. I purposely looked for you and Naomi when we came upstairs into the Hondo so we could sit behind you two and the boys. We've had a lot of fun over the years and we are ever thankful for you and Naomi and our friendship.

Sincerely, Terry Tanaka, DDS

POSTON CAMP III REUNION NEARS: REGISTER NOW!

Just four months to go...time flies.

The first mailing of registration packets have been sent out for the 13th—and possibly the last—reunion of former internees of Poston III.

The reunion is scheduled April 18–20, 2008, at Mission Valley's Doubletree Hotel in Hazard Center. While it is called the Poston III Reunion, all of San Diego is invited to participate no matter where they were interned. If anyone has not received a registration packet, call co-chairmen **Mich Himaka** (619) 316-2258 or **Rev. Jim Yanagihara** (858) 357-6461, or e-mail contact@jahssd.org and one will be mailed to you.

While Mich and Jim serve as co-chairmen, they insist the main shaker, mover, organizer, cajoler, pusher and hustler they have relied on is the committee treasurer, **Bob Batchelder**, to whom they owe a debt of gratitude.

The committee has attempted to keep costs as low as possible, especially because most former internees are on a fixed income. When you think about it, even the last baby born in Poston would turn 63 years of age next year, almost eligible for Social Security!

With economy in mind, planned programs will be minimal in the belief that most of the former internees would prefer to spend time reminiscing with old friends.

To help them remember those camp days, we are planning an exhibit of camp artifacts, photos, and art done by our family and friends. Many of these will be from JAHSSD's collection, but we are also seeking items never publicly displayed for this special exhibit. They are being gathered by **Linda Canada**, **Carol Estes** and **Susan Hasegawa** who are organizing the display.

Exciting **Asayake Taiko** of UC San Diego will provide the Saturday banquet entertainment. We also are planning to have a deejay, "Todd E. Todd" (also known as **Todd Himaka**), spin some oldies mixed with some modern stuff for the young (and old) at heart.

The Friday night mixer will feature some of the former internees performing karaoke songs. **Steve Sato** (Block 329) and **Pauline Date Nakamura** (Block 323) are organizing a golf outing. **Gary Hamada** (Block 327) and **Jean Fujisaki**, both professionals, are putting together a publication sure to be treasured by our registered guests. **Jeanne Marumoto Elyea** (Block 329) and **Aya Ibarra** (Japan Society of San Diego-Tijuana) are gathering items to be included in the "goodie bags" to be given to registered guests.

Our committee of 30 volunteers has been meeting almost every month for the past year planning and preparing for the reunion, which we hope will be enjoyed by all. For that, we thank them all.

REUNION BOOKLET NEEDS ADS

The Poston Reunion Committee invites greetings, memorial or congratulatory ads for its souvenir program booklet to be given to attendees of the 2008 Poston Camp III Reunion. Deadline for inclusion is February 15, 2008. Please use the insert/order form with this issue.

If anyone has any informal snapshots or camp scenes that were taken in camp, the reunion committee would like to borrow and copy them to be included in our exhibit. The exhibit committee is also seeking art and crafts created in camp which can be displayed. All such items will be returned safely after the April reunion.

Please call **Mich Himaka** (619) 660-9865 or **Rev. Jim Yanagihara** (858) 576-1618 who are willing to pick them up and return them.

CELEBRATIONS!



Rio and Tamiko Imamura visiting Ventura Harbor, 2007

Rio and Tamiko Imamura will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on January 5, 2008. Long-time residents of San Diego, where Rio worked for Kyocera prior to his retirement, the couple now resides in Fukuoka, Japan. They have two children, **Yukina Warner (husband Raymond)** of Thousand Oaks; **Kirk Imamura (wife Chieko)** of New York, N.Y.; and two grandchildren, **Alina** (18) and **Raymond** (4). The Imamuras were very involved in San Diego life, lending support to local organizations like the **Japanese Friendship Garden** and **Minato Gakuen**. He is a founding Life Member of JAHSSD and contributes occasional articles to *Footprints*. As a member of Toastmasters International, Rio has traveled the world and made countless friends.

Congratulations, Rio and Tamiko, on your wonderful milestone!



A pair of Shinkichi Tajiri's iconic Sentinels ("de Wachters") stand guard at one end of the Maas Bridge. A second pair flanks the opposite end.

In May 2007, long-time JAHSSD member, 442 RCT veteran and renowned Nisei artist **Shinkichi Tajiri** enjoyed a career highlight when four of his giant warrior sculptures titled "Sentinels" were dedicated on the span of the 50-year-old town bridge linking Venlo and Blerick in The Netherlands. Previous bridges had been destroyed twice during World War II.

The bridge project took four years from commission to completion. Shinkichi, his wife **Suzanne**, and grandchildren **Tanea** and **Shakuru Roberts** were among hundreds at the dedication ceremony attended by **Queen Beatrix of Holland**. The Los Angeles-born sculptor has created many artworks over his lifetime dedicated to promoting peace. He made the Sentinels as symbolic protectors against future aggression, violence and war.

Congratulations from all of us across the oceans!

MAZEGOHAN

by Mich Himaka

New York, N.Y.—July in the gray, concrete jungle they call “New York, New York.”

Days after Tony Gwynn was inducted into baseball’s Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, where homes are separated by country blocks and there are green fields everywhere. Even cattle ranches and farms. I never thought there could be farms in New York.

I used to think of New York only as gray buildings stretching skyward. Two visions we saw on our last visit here some 20 years ago are missing. Of course, I mean the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, both leveled by events of September 11, 2001.

However, the Empire State Building still stands tall. We pointed it out to mother-in-law Sakiko Kada, who was in New York for the first time. You could tell she was impressed by the sight of the skyscraper as son Daniel drove through midtown Manhattan. (I would never think of driving in New York City where they have No Parking signs that read, “Don’t Even Think About It.” Really!)

The hustle-bustle of the Big City is too much for this laid-back Californian. (Well, I think I am!)

The last time here, I thought of taking the boys via subway to Yankee Stadium to see a ball game. We walked down to a subway station but Daniel, who was around 11, stopped, turned around saying, “Uh-uh,” and started walking back up the stairs.

I asked, “What’s the matter?”

“It stinks!” he declared as a strong odor of shikko permeated the air below street level. “I don’t wanna go!” And that ended that venture. It was probably best we didn’t because I probably would have got lost in that maze of rails.

A little older this time and more experienced in the New York life-style, Daniel, Keith and Keith’s wife, Dawn, took me to Yankee Stadium to watch the Yankees and the Chicago White Sox.

They had purchased the tickets a few months before so we were there to see if Alex Rodriguez could hit his 500th home run. He had hit No. 499 a few days before, so there was a capacity crowd there to watch him try and hit his 500th.

The boys had become old pros traveling about New York City. In fact, Keith stood in the middle of Times Square on New Year’s Eve 1999 and called us as the famous crystal ball descended down the Times Square. He was there with his old high school friends, Darby Crow and Derek Ellingson.

The baseball game we attended was the one where the teams set a home run record. The Yankees hit eight (including two by Hideki Matsui) and the White Sox hit one, but A-Rod was shut out. I told the boys the New York papers probably would have a headline that read something like: Yanks 8; Sox 1; A-Rod 0. I was close. The New York Daily News’ headline read: Yanks 8; A-Rod 0.

Our seats were in the upper deck of left field where Matsui was patrolling. He looked great. Also joining us at the ball game was Derek’s fiancée, Caitlyn (whose last name I won’t try to spell out), and her mother.

One reason for us going to New York was so Naomi could meet with Caitlyn to discuss her wedding flowers. Caitlyn is a beautiful Italian-Irish lass who is a world-class Irish dancer like the Riverdance dancers. Yep, that means we’ve got to return to New York City next summer.

While in New York City, we took Saki to Liberty Island for a close-up of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island (which she found depressing as it reminded her of “the time we went to camp”), the top of the Empire

State Building at midnight to view the city skyline, drove through the Holland Tunnel and the New Jersey Turnpike and even visited the Orange County Choppers shop, where they film the family that builds special motorcycles.

She went to see a Broadway show, “Mary Poppins,” with Naomi, viewed Times Square at night, and ate at the Hard Rock Cafe. From the Empire State Building, we could see where the Twin Towers once stood, which is marked by two blinking red lights.

It was a long trip but well worth it.

The baseball season of 2007 would have been complete if the Padres had made the playoffs. Maybe next year.

(One note for anyone planning to visit New York City sometime in the near future: If you plan to take the subway, you might buy yourself a Metro ticket for however long you plan to be in New York because it will save you big bucks. You can ride the subway all day long if you wish. And you might ride all day long anyway, if you get lost!)

Don’t let me scare you off, though. It’s an event visiting that big city.

Enjoy it.

“ONLY THE BRAVE” SCREENINGS BENEFIT NIKKEI GROUPS

Filmmaker **Lane Nishikawa** brought his full-length World War II drama, “**Only the Brave**,” to San Diego for two screenings on November 18 which benefited local Nikkei organizations. The organizations to receive donations are **JAHSSD, San Diego JACL, Buddhist Temple of San Diego, Japan Society of San Diego & Tijuana** and the **San Diego Asian Film Foundation**.

Nishikawa has launched a 30-week, 30-city series of screenings to introduce the DVD version to a wide audience. The tour is sponsored by Kyocera. In return for promotional help, part of the proceeds will be donated to local Nikkei groups.

“Only the Brave” tells the story of the rescue of the Texas Lost Battalion by the famed **100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team** as recalled by those who lived it. The drama stars Nishikawa, **Tamlyn Tomita, Yuki Okumoto, Jason Scott Lee, Jeff Fahey, Greg Watanabe, Mark Dacascos** and the late **Pat Morita**.

Nishikawa’s father and three of his uncles had served during World War II and were the inspiration for the film which was completed shortly after his father’s passing in 2005. His father, **Jimmy Nishikawa**, was a long-time resident of San Diego employed by **Kyocera**.

“Only the Brave” has been re-edited since it was featured at the 2005 **San Diego Asian Film Festival** and now includes extensive end credits listing all who made contributions in honor or in memory of a veteran to help complete the film. It features a slow crawl of a “Valor Roll,” names and photos of the WWII vets.

“I know what you’re thinking,” Nishikawa joked at end of the screenings, “Those are the longest credits I have ever seen.” But it was important to list everyone who made this film possible and to honor the veterans.”

Zenbu, the Buddhist Temple’s social adjunct, handled ticket reservations for both the temple and JAHSSD and sold 170 tickets.

JAHSSD has purchased a number of autographed DVDs for interested members. Sales benefit the Society. Please see the Media Order Form on Page 23 to order a DVD.



Nishikawa at screening Q & A

OBJECTS TELL STORIES TOO

by Linda Canada

We continue to receive many interesting items that are donated to the JAHSSD archives. Whenever possible, I try to get some information about the object, who used it or made it, where it was used, and what its connection is to Japanese Americans in San Diego.



*This oil portrait of ship's captain Joe Yoshioka, painted by his daughter Joann Allen, was recently donated to the Society. Joe's navigation instruments and the steering wheel from his ship, **Navigator**, are also part of JAHSSD's collection.*

Recently, this oil portrait of fishing captain **Joe Yoshioka**, painted by his daughter, **Joann Yoshioka Allen**, made its way into our collection. When I asked Mrs. Allen to sign a transfer of ownership form, I requested additional information, and here is what she had to say about this painting:

"I believe Dad's portrait was painted around 1969-71 and was a gift for his birthday. It was painted from two photographs. He always wore those hats and had quite a golfing hat collection, and I felt it [the golfing cap] signified his 'captain's hat' since he always wore them at sea.

"He was a man of few words, and very conservative on compliments using words. His compliments were more by actions. So, I felt he enjoyed [the portrait] and related to it, since he immediately found a spot [for it] between the family area and kitchen where he sat almost every day in the morning to eat his breakfast, and often at lunch and dinner. It hung in that spot all those years."

While the portrait gives us an idea of what Joe Yoshioka looked like at the time it was painted, it is these extra words of explanation that round out his personality, and convey the love and respect of the daughter who painted it.

2007 M.S. WALK DONORS!

*Last issue, we acknowledged the names of those who sponsored Bob's Buddies in that group's most successful ever walk for the M.S. Society. The following people, who supported walkers **Dan Collins** and **Nancy Shimamoto**, were inadvertently omitted from that list. We thank them here with much gratitude and regret any other omissions.*

Jean & Jerry Byma, Terry Smith, Brenda & John Churchill, Dale & Charles Coe, Elaine Morinaga, Barbara Miller, Kim & Sheila Walker, Deb Moskyok & Dan Collins, Jr., Joy & Lee Plummer, Randy & Nancy Matsumoto, Daria Zachar, Debbie Johnson, George & Karen Shinzaki, Jack & Peggy Dudenhoeffer, Helen Strauser, Beverly Fergusson, Jerry Herman, Barbara Noble & Nabeeh Totah, Mary Wendland, Sue Noble Glass, Mary Ellen Alton, Pat & Charleen Dewitt, Shiz Maruyama, John & Reiko Maruyama, Tom & Taeko Udo, Sandi Wong & Gary Selick, Barbara Weissenberger, Jerri Sober, Pam Waters, Art & Pat Walshe, John & Blythe Van de Ven, Adrien Lanusse, John Tschample, Camille Le Feddema, Julie Le, Faith & Hayden Lee, Jim Davis, Sylvain Puccianti, Michelle Mann & Eric Schmidt, Elizabeth Le, Dale & Marie Watkins, Bob & Cynthia Shintani, Mike & Jennifer Hogsett, Phillis Shimamoto, Jan & Carl Wiegmann, Larry & Irene Shimamoto, Gordon & Dorothy Fish, Betty Leigh, Millie & Robert Stanley, Renata Schneyer, Tom & Karen Shea, Steve Sato, Freddie Parrott, Ron & Judy Teshima, Christi Marshall, Judith Rex, Linda Linderman, John & Vicki Karney, Susan Blythe, Diane & Jack Jansen, Nancy Baldry, Dennis & Judy Shimamoto, Dawn & Greg Harms, Darrell & Naomi Shimamoto, Tom & Lynn Steinke, Beverly Shimamoto and Stacy Momita

A CHRISTMAS GIFT THAT WILL KEEP ON GIVING

With the holidays here and gift-giving on your minds, why not give a membership to JAHSSD? A gift membership includes the quarterly Footprints, so your thoughtfulness will be remembered four times a year. Help former San Diegans stay in touch with their "homeys," or give a friend/grandparent/parent/kid/grandkid a year-long gift that can teach, inform and inspire...because you support the good works of JAHSSD.

COMMUNITY

"DEAR MISS BREED" ACTORS MEET MISS BREED'S LETTER WRITERS (Aug. 26, 2007)



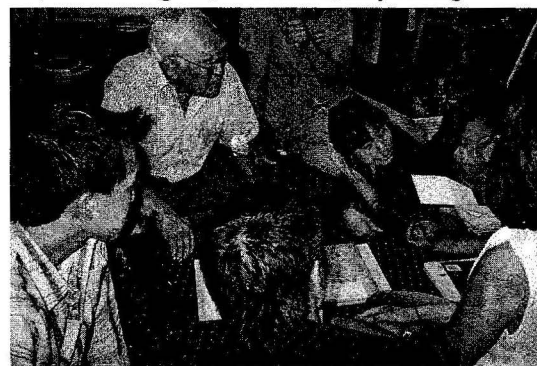
Liz Yamada, Louise Watanabe, Ben Segawa



Above left (L to R): Enoch Wu, Rosalie Celestial, Billy Khang, Asst. Director Kimberly Miller, Evie Rodriguez, Susan Hammons
Above right (L to R): Director Andy Lowe, Kezia Liu, Ciceron Altarejos, Rosalie Celestial, Evie Rodriguez, Enoch Wu, Billy Khang



JAHSSD facilitated the get-together of some of Miss Breed's actual letter writers and the youthful cast of Asian Story Theatre's "Dear Miss Breed" which debuted in San Diego last September. Left and right: Ben Segawa, whose late wife Kathy is portrayed in the play, shares a scrapbook of Poston Camp III to give the actors an idea what life was like for teenagers during their incarceration.



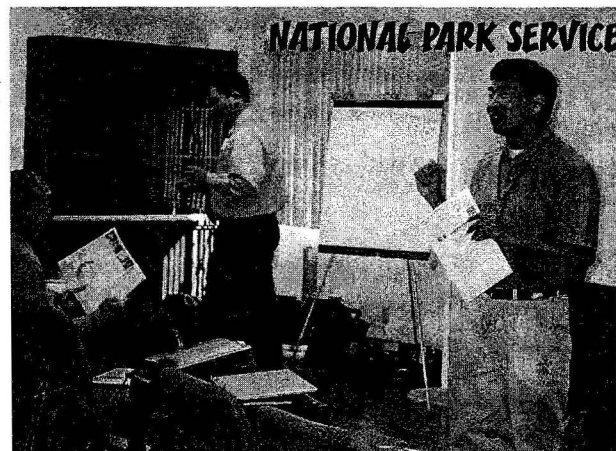
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (Oct. 6, 2007)



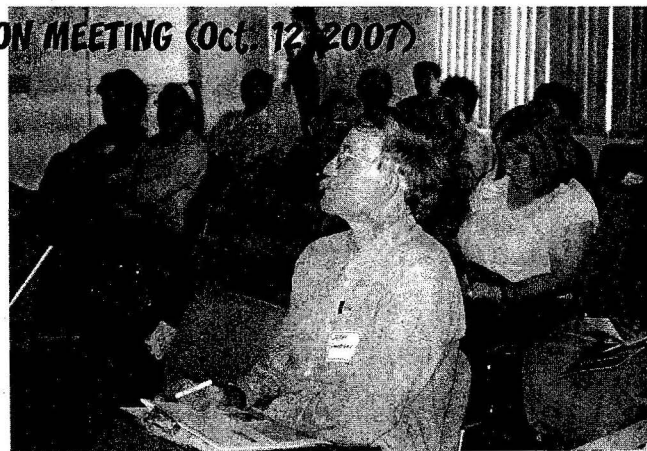
Left: Dr. Terry Tanaka is presented the 2007 Kansha Award by event chair Gwen Momita. Right: Dr. Yuri Kaneda also received the Kansha Award. Around 150 attended the annual luncheon.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SAN DIEGO REGION MEETING (Oct. 12, 2007)



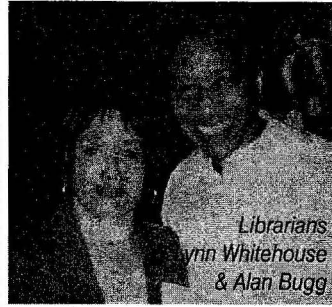
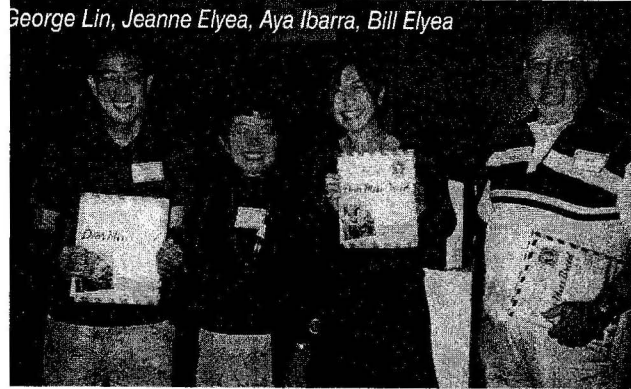
Left: Tom Leatherman of the National Park Service and Tom Ozaki of Densho led a community meeting at BTSD last fall to solicit input on how to most effectively use funds earmarked by Congress to preserve World War II internment sites. About 20 attended. Seventeen such meetings were conducted throughout the U.S.



SNAPSHOTS

"DEAR MISS BREED" OPENING NIGHT, Lyceum Theatre (Sep. 16, 2007)

George Lin, Jeanne Elyea, Aya Ibarra, Bill Elyea



Librarians
Lynn Whitehouse
& Alan Bugg



Brandon Inouye, Kaycee Yamada, Louise Watanabe,
Pat Yamada, Diane Yamada

Joanne Oppenheim signs her book *Dear Miss Breed*

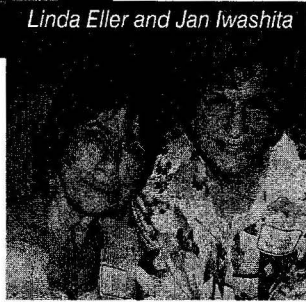


Ciceron Altarejos,
Library Director
Anna Tatar



Rev. Jim Yabagihara
So Yamada
Wade Watanabe

Linda Eller and Jan Iwashita



Kali Lowe-Brisby, Andy Lowe, Joyce Teague, Gingerlily Lowe-Brisby



Sets Iwashita and Li Yamada



Umeko Kawamoto, Susan Moribe, Leslie Moribe



Alan Bugg,
Theresa Friedrichs,
Wayne Takasugi



Bruce Sherman,
Susan Hasegawa,
Karen & James
Kawasaki-Williams



HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!
HAPPY
NEW YEAR!
from
JAHSSD

Mildred Kawasaki, Mits Kawamoto, Tracy
Kawasaki, Irene Koga, Yuki Kawamoto



THREE-YEAR PLEDGE RENEWALS

The JAHSSD Board of Directors is very grateful those who have pledged their support of the Society's Three-Year Plan since our last issue. This list includes pledge payments and new gifts received as of October 27, 2007. Please notify our Treasurer of any errors.



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CHIZ IMOTO

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In memory of GEORGE AKIJI, KESAYE WATANABE

and DONALD H. ESTES

VERNON YOSHIOKA

GIFTS IN LIEU OF A PLEDGE

MR. and MRS. F. Y. NAKATANI

MR. and MRS. JAMES M. YAMATE

POVUCC'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

by Vernon Yoshioka

This was the celebration of the century for the **Pioneer Ocean View United Church of Christ**, entitled "God's Amazing Grace for 100 Years and Beyond."

The banquet was held on Saturday, Sept. 22, 2007, at the Cattan Resort Hotel, with about 300 people in attendance. In addition to the food and a brief look back at the history of the merged Pioneer UCC and the Ocean View UCC, we were entertained by the singing of **Joseph Almohaya**, grandson of **Joe and Kiyomi Gist**, and a hilarious costumed group led by **Richard Kataoka** called the Singing Elvii ("plural for Elvis" we were told).

We were also honored with the presence of **Rev. Dr. John Thomas**, President of the United Church of Christ; **Rev. Dan Romero**, Conference Minister of UCC; and many of our past ministers, members and friends.



POVUCC ministers, past and present: 1st row from left: **Revs. Donna Eubanks, Dr. John Thomas, Norma DeSaegher, Dr. Yoshikuni Kaneda**
2nd row from left: **Revs. Peter Ota, Dan Romero, Dr. Tom Fujita, Chaplain Alfred Pena, John DeSaegher, Joseph Sandven**



The Singing Elvii provided entertainment at the luncheon. Disguised behind their aviators were (from left) **Steve Sato, Rev. Dr. Yoshi Kaneda, Rev. John DeSaegher, Rick Kataoka, Rev. Tom Fujita and Roy Arakawa**

In the foyer of the banquet area, a photo montage depicting highlights of the church's first 100 years was displayed. Inside the hall was an area with artifacts and memorabilia of past years.

On Sunday, the service began with a taiko performance, the Choir sang, and the youth also sang. **Pastor Norma DeSaegher** led us in prayer, and **Gwen Momita** led the 100th (Continued on Page15)

(POVUCC CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION continued from Page 14)



Above: A children's choir sings to the congregation under a canopy of origami cranes. Left: Members of San Diego Taiko perform at the Centennial Service. Below: Greeters at the banquet included (L to R) Roy Arakawa, Pastor Norma, Louise Iguchi and John Van De Ven.



Anniversary Littany before **Rev. Dr. John Thomas** presented the sermon entitled, "The Planet of Lost Things." The service was followed by a luncheon and time of fellowship.

The long-planned celebration all began with the committee headed by **Roy Arakawa** who directed the entire celebration effort. **Gwen Momita**, Church Moderator, kept the church on an even keel during this year with the guidance of our Pastor. **Jeanne Elyea** undertook the leadership of our fundraising cookbook and brought it to a successful conclusion in time for the celebration. **Elizabeth Ozaki** organized the banquet at the Catamaran Restaurant.

The entertainment was organized by **Sherry Kataoka**. **Jean Fujisaki** designed and created both the cookbook and the memorial album with her great artistic abilities. **Robert Austin** created a slide show and memento CD of all the pictures. A great time was had by all who attended, both Saturday and Sunday.

For those who are interested, the cookbook, anniversary album and picture CD are available for purchase. Call the church at (619) 276-4881 for more information.

BUDDHIST TEMPLE REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

by Ralph Honda, New Heights General Chairman

Ascending to New Heights is the theme chosen by the Buddhist Temple of San Diego for an improvement project unprecedented in its 82-year history.

As the foundation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in San Diego and a familiar landmark in the Nikkei community, the distinctive Buddhist Temple at 29th and Market Streets has been the site of countless activities.

The temple has served as both religious, social and cultural center, offering services, weddings, funerals, bazaars, dances, and memorial services. Over the years, it has hosted Japanese school, cultural clubs, and other community gatherings. Several generations of us have vivid memories of climbing those steps up to the Hondo (sanctuary) to attend a wedding or a funeral or to watch a Japanese double bill while seated in wooden folding chairs.

An Ambitious Project

Currently the 76-year-old temple main building is the focus of a major and much-needed makeover. Not since the addition of the Annex Hall over 40 years ago (with its upper floor social hall and ground-level classrooms), has a major construction project been attempted by the temple.

The need for an elevator was discussed by the temple board as early as 1994, spurred by the reality of its aging Nisei generation. Instead, funds were raised for a "quick fix," converting the former minister's residence on the property into a small worship hall which would be accessible by wheelchair. The resultant Sangha Hall, dedicated in 1995, allowed people unable to climb stairs the ability to view the Hondo via a video feed and monitor.

The Sangha Hall, while very useful, doesn't solve the basic problem of easier access to the Hondo. Along with structural and cosmetic changes that were made in conjunction with BTSD's 75th anniversary, an elevator became an important opportunity to enhance the outer features of the main building to help ensure its usefulness and longevity.

In 2004, BTSD formed a committee to study the feasibility of an elevator. An elevator would aid the elderly and physically challenged, but would also allow transport of a funeral casket to the Hondo. Another problem addressed was the lack of wheelchair access between the temple and the two-story Annex. The board eventually approved plans for construction of an exterior elevator and elevated walkway/quad area linking the temple to the Annex. These would be added to the west (parking lot) side of the temple.

The New Heights Project committee includes a spectrum of temple members. **Jim Shimozone** and **Michael Kinoshita** head the facilities sub-committee and are assisted by **Dennis Otsuji**, **Gary Himaka**, **Nancy Martinez** and **Tucker Saka**. The fundraising sub-committee includes **Roy Muraoka**, **Tom Yanagihara** and **George Yamamoto**. Our resident minister, **Rev. Yushi Mukojima**, board president **Ken Muraoka**, and past presidents **Susan Moribe**, **Glenn Negoro** and **Bill Teague** serve as members-at-large.

In July 2005, an artist's rendition and model introduced the proposed project to the Sangha (congregation). Six months later, the BTSD New Heights Project fundraising campaign was introduced with an ambitious goal of raising \$2 million.

Project Planned in Phases

Phase One includes the restoration of the temple's center onajjin (altar). Estimated to be 80 years old, the onajjin was acquired when the El Centro Buddhist Church closed after WWII.

(Continued on Page 21)

EVACUATION...AGAIN? SHEESH!

by Mich Himaka

It was late afternoon on Monday Oct. 22, 2007. We had been watching television news following the progress of the Harris, Witch Creek, Poomacha and Pendleton wildfires that were sweeping the southern, eastern and northern areas of San Diego County.

Newscasters spoke of residents facing mandatory evacuation from parts of the county. I never expected we would have to leave.

Around 5 p.m., our doorbell rang. I answered and there stood a uniformed sheriff's deputy.

"You'll have to leave your home, sir," he said very respectfully.

"Is it a mandatory evacuation?" I asked.

"Yes sir," he replied.

Damn! Again? Except this time they were a little more respectful. The last time, the only notice we received was a notice posted on a downtown San Diego telephone pole which was directed at "all persons of Japanese ancestry, aliens and non-aliens," or words to that effect.

I never thought it would happen to me again. Yet, 65 years after the first time, there it was. Another order to evacuate.

Only this time, it wasn't Uncle Sam. It was a San Diego County sheriff's deputy with equal authority who said, "You have to evacuate."

The blaze from the Harris fire was burning up the southeast side of San Miguel Mountain, east of the Sweetwater Reservoir. Naomi and I had wondered if it was getting close enough that we might have to leave. We thought about what we would pack up and take with us. I packed some family photos, keepsakes and other things she valued and had them ready to load into our van.

We moved to my mother-in-law **Sakiko Kada's** home about five miles away. We thought if she also had to evacuate due to prevailing winds, at least we would be there to move her elsewhere.

As it was, we got other telephone calls offering us shelter from **Mari Tanizaki**, nephews **Gordon Shimizu** and **Rick Shimada**, **Kiku Gardens**, and the **Buddhist Temple of San Diego**.

During the early morning hours (around 5 a.m.), we returned to our home to retrieve other things we had left, like papers. I went back to get FOOD! I had forgotten. We had bought food at the Buddhist Temple Food Festival and left it in the frig! Fortunately, the road to the house was still open so we got in.

Yes. I carried the food out. And yes, it was MY idea! Couldn't let all that food spoil with the fire so near!

As it was, it was kind of frightening as we saw the blaze coming down the southwest side of San Miguel pushed by high winds and fingers of flames stretching down the mountain side.

The newscasters kept telling us to stay with them because they would tell us the latest info on when the evacuation notice was lifted for each area. We kept watching the news but no word ever came about the Harris fire evacuees being allowed to return home.

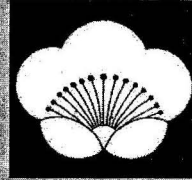
Tuesday went by, Wednesday went by. No word. Finally, I saw a number that flashed across the screen where we could call and get information. I called that number and asked about our area and I was told, "Oh, yes. You were cleared yesterday afternoon."

Thank you, I thought. Nice to know that. I guess our area was not pricey enough to be included in the news.

We returned home Thursday morning, four days after the sheriff's deputy came to tell us to leave. Our home and others on our street survived. As it turned out, the blaze came within about one-half mile of us. It stopped because firefighting helicopters loaded up water from the reservoir and dropped it on the flames, confining it to the eastern edge of the reservoir.

Unfortunately, I learned that one family in our community suffered the loss of their home in Jamul. **Nathan and Merri (Hatashita) Hom** lost their home in the 2200 block of Honey Springs Road, I was told. Merri is the daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hatashita**, who lived in a home situated above the Homs' residence.

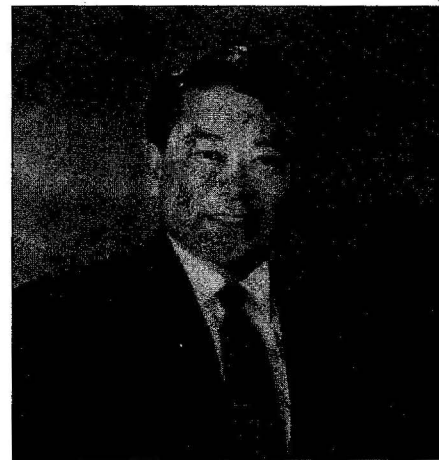
WHY DO WE RECORD WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?
WHY DON'T WE JUST TALK ABOUT YESTERDAY?



Because what we experience, endeavor, accomplish and overcome today becomes our history tomorrow.

*Write it down. Photograph it. Share it.
Help preserve our history.*

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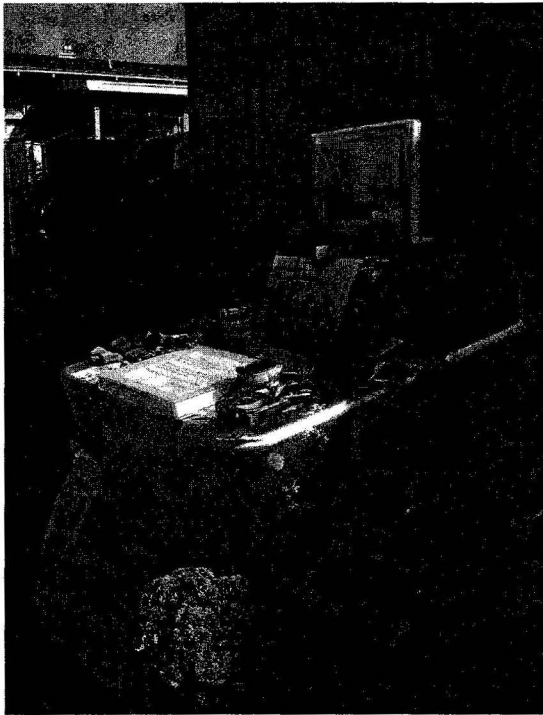
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KYUJI AIZUMI REMEMBERED IN ANNUAL SHERMAN HTS. EVENT

Each year, the **Sherman Heights Cultural Council (SHCC)** hosts a Dia de los Muertos event where local artists create memorial altars to honor events or persons from Sherman Heights history. The tables contain photographs and items that reflect the person's interests or achievements. Participants obtain a booklet with map and addresses and take a walking self-tour of the memorials. The 13th annual Dias de los Muertos was held November 3, 2007.

JAHSSD contributed a table to honor **Kyuji Aizumi**, a highly educated Issei who was a partner in the major Japanese fish brokerage business in San Diego. Assembled by **Linda Canada**, the colorful memorial was displayed in front of one of Mr. Aizumi's former residences in Sherman Heights.

Many Japanese Americans lived in this neighborhood, one of San Diego's oldest, and their history there is part of the layers of San Diego that the SHCC is working to illuminate. The brief biography of Mr. Aizumi which appeared in the program booklet is below.



KYUJI AIZUMI

...was born in 1886 in Japan where he graduated from Morioka Agricultural College. He came to the United States by himself to study veterinary medicine, but instead ended up in San Diego working in the fishing industry. He became a partner with **Tokunosuke Abe** in the **Southern Commercial Company**, a major Japanese-owned San Diego fish brokerage with ownership interests in many fishing boats. Seized by the FBI on December 7, 1941, he was sent to Missoula, Montana. He later spend the duration of the war in the Poston Relocation Center with 2,000 other Japanese and Japanese Americans from San Diego. Aizumi loved to take long walks, looking for interesting rocks which he polished to show their beauty. His grandson remembers him as a quiet Christian man who wrote poetry and loved to work in his garden. He died in the Los Angeles area at the age of 81.

2007 FALL BACK FESTIVAL

On Sunday, November 4, several thousand children brought their families to the **Fall Back Festival** held in San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter and JAHSSD was there for its second year of participation.

Volunteers **Misako** and **Michelle Roussin** and **Linda Canada** helped interested children fold a variety of origami cranes, cats, dogs, and samurai helmets. Misako wrote children's names in Japanese, much to the delight of young and old.

This is the sixth year of the popular event, and appears to have been the most well-attended. We can certainly agree—we almost ran out of folding paper!

Thanks to the Roussins, **Carol Estes** and **Naomi Himaka** for donating paper, and to the Gaslamp Quarter Historical Foundation which once again included us in this fun event.



Left: Volunteer **Michelle Roussin** sports a paper samurai helmet, one of the paper projects enjoyed by kids stopping by the JAHSSD tent. The festival draws students to the downtown area to learn San Diego history through fun activities. Below: JAHSSD's booth at the 2007 Fallback Festival. JAHSSD's booth included a map of the Japan town that essentially disappeared with San Diego's WWII evacuation of Japanese.



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THE PLAY "DEAR MISS BREED"

by Maggie Ishino

*This personal essay appeared in the **Rafu Shimpo** on November 24, 2007. Maggie, who was born and grew up in San Diego as **Margaret Arakawa**, was among two dozen youngsters who exchanged letters with San Diego Children's Librarian **Clara Breed** during World War II. She now resides in Los Angeles and is a typist for the **Rafu Shimpo**. Her essay, reprinted here with her kind permission, has been edited slightly for length.*

As a guest of the **San Diego Public Library** and **Asian Story Theater** and because my dear sister **Florence Ishino Enomoto** drove me to San Diego, I was able to attend the opening night performance and reception of Joanne Oppenheim's play, "**Dear Miss Breed**." The play was performed at the Lyceum Space Theater in the Horton Plaza on Sept. 16.

Joanne Oppenheim is the author of the book, *Dear Miss Breed*, which won the National Council for the Social Studies Carter G. Woodson Book Award for 2007 and was chosen for the New York Library's Books for the Teen Age 2007.

Dear Miss Breed was written because Joanne Oppenheim was searching for a classmate, **Ellen Yukawa**, and thus, through the Internet and the **Japanese American National Museum**, came across the letters of Nisei children, incarcerated in the Santa Anita Assembly Center and the Colorado River Relocation Center (Poston, Ariz.). They wrote to the San Diego City Librarian, **Clara E. Breed**. Oppenheim became so fascinated and was compelled to write a book and she, indeed, did. *Dear Miss Breed* brings together a well-documented history of what happened to people of Japanese ancestry during those dark and uncertain times after Dec. 7, 1941.

The main theme of the book, however, are the letters of Nisei ages 5 to 19, who wrote to Miss Breed. The letters were written from the heart...of their experiences in camp life, their thoughts, activities and...to thank Miss Breed for all the books—wonderful books—and supplies such as an iron, scissors, crayons, pencils, notebooks paper, etc. She did not wait weeks and months to send them to us, but within the week, she took time from her busy schedule to oblige our wishes.

The play was based on the book. It was obvious that the Director **Andy Lowe** and Assistant Director **Kimberly Miller** and the cast gave of their best to produce such a successful play. I know that Joanne Oppenheim was very pleased and proud of their efforts and of the outcome of the play.

As I sat in the front row, I could almost touch the players since there was no platform or stage per se. Each [actor] played one of us in the book and everyone gave a very good impersonation. For example, **Susan Hammons** played the role of Clara Breed and she was superb. When **Michelle Cabinian** (Maggie) stood right in front of me and spoke the letters I had written, an indescribable feeling arose in my heart. She gave a wonderful [portrayal] of Maggie at 17 years.

The play brought back those difficult times of Santa Anita and Poston, Ariz., yet there were some happy moments. Although it is over 60 years ago, those memories are still very vivid in my mind. I cried because the play was so realistic and well-performed. It was, indeed, a successful opening night.

May I say Kudos to Joanne Oppenheim for another successful literary achievement, now as a playwright.

My only regret is that Miss Breed could not read the book or be present for the play written in her honor. I know, however, she is smiling from Heaven and saying, *Thank you, Joanne Oppenheim, Andy Lowe and Kimberly Miller and the wonderful cast for this honor of being recognized and remembered. I did it for my children.*

Young Voice:

"DEAR MISS BREED" REVIEWS

Jaime Enochs is an English teacher at San Diego High School of International Studies. Last September, she took her 9th grade English class to Joanne Oppenheim's play, "**Dear Miss Breed**," presented by the Asian Story Theatre at the downtown Lyceum Theatre. Based on actual letters written by Japanese American teenagers during World War II, the play centers on their lives growing up at the isolated Poston Internment Camp, far from their home, school, friends. The following are responses to the play by Ms. Enochs' students.

I was surprised that some of the characters in the play wanted to join the American army. It seems like they would be mad at the country for putting them into camps, but they still wanted to fight. I had just never heard of that happening before so I found it a little surprising.

~Veronica Kwiatkowski

Before seeing *Dear Miss Breed* I had very little knowledge of World War II and the internment camps. It was never taught to me in school, only mentioned. However, the play gave me a whole new perspective. It portrayed the emotions, thoughts, feelings, and struggles of the Japanese Americans and what they went through during that devastating time. The play showed what actually happened through the eyes of the victims.

For instance, I like the part where Miss Breed is reading the newspaper and is astonished by the propaganda. This shows that the media and government tried to cover up what was really going on. One example is when the newspaper said that "aliens and non-aliens" were staying in "luxury apartment facilities." As Miss Breed said, they had the nerve to use "non-aliens" in place of "U.S. citizens," and "luxurious apartment facilities" instead of horse stalls and cheap, fenced-in barracks.

Overall, *Dear Miss Breed* has been placed as one of my new favorite plays [with] a storyline that stirs up comedy, romance, and heartfelt emotion. The acting was very realistic, like I was there in the moment.

I hope that others will appreciate the play as much as I did. In fact, I'm going to recommend it to others. It was fulfilling to learn a part of San Diego's historic heritage. ~Asia Hernandez

I thought this play was really well done. By acting out this true story, we were able to see what hardships Japanese Americans had to go through, and how they felt. ~Victoria Marchal

I enjoyed the play *Dear Miss Breed*. Even though I'm not Japanese, it didn't matter because this play applies to everyone in the world.

I started to think how I'd feel being forced to move into a concentration camp and I just couldn't imagine it. The way I would imagine it would be wrong because I knew it would be at least twice as difficult. I couldn't give up anything I owned and treasured. I couldn't live not knowing what would happen to my family or me. Then, I started to think what it would like to wear a pin saying "I am Filipino" every day. I don't like being labeled like that. If I did live back then, I still don't think that they'd treat me any different than they'd treat the Japanese because I look Asian.

I would hate to judge someone without even knowing the person, but people like Miss Breed didn't care if everyone thought she was a "Jap lover." The girl in the play was right when she said that the world needs more people like Miss Breed because she looked beyond what was on the outside to what was on the inside. ~Bernee Francisco

(Continued on Page 19)

(YOUNG VOICE continued from Page 18)

As we walked to the theater, I thought about the short documentary [Democracy Under Pressure] we had seen before leaving the classroom. I thought about how tough this event was on the Japanese Americans. [...] It must have meant the world to those who knew Miss Breed. She not only lived her own life, she literally put her life in danger to do everything she could for her "children." She didn't care what anyone said about her, she stood up for her true feelings.

If she were still alive, I would thank her for everything she did to help others. ~ Karla Armenta

World War II was one of the times in history that should have never been fought the way it was. We (the "United" States of America) went racist against our own people and ended up repeating history and putting internment camps into our nation. ~Bethany Coppia

[The internment camps] weren't fair and nowhere near just. America was and is supposed to be the land of the free, the land of opportunities, the land of equality and, most of all, a united land. Where were these qualities? [...] When I was watching the play, I was ready to burst out in tears. I was thinking that if we could do that to our own people, imagine what might happen in the future. ~Sarahi Reynoso

As I watched the play *Dear Miss Breed*, it was unreal to me that something like that could actually happen in America. In a place that is constantly preaching justice, where others flee to escape the cruelty of discrimination. And to make things worse... It was right here in San Diego, California, the place that we call home.

The innocent children taken to the camps were so lucky to have Miss Breed. Although they may not have fully comprehended what was going on at the time, I'm sure that as they reflected later in life, they realized she was truly their angel. In a time when everyone was turning their back on an entire race, Miss Breed stayed strong and did not change her opinions of the people she knew and loved. Even as people began to turn against her for supporting the children, she continued to do what she knew was right.

I thought the actors in the play were amazing. They did a phenomenal job of representing the people this happened to. I was amazed at what high spirits the victims kept through this horrible time. They are wonderful representatives of the power of the human spirit.

I am really happy to be educated about times like these in school. Although this injustice should have never happened, it is crucial that we are aware it did. We must know that our country is not always perfect, and try our hardest to make sure our rights are not taken away. As many people have said before, "the only way to change the future is to know the past." ~Allison Cardwell

THANK YOU to the JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY of SAN DIEGO for SPONSORING "DEAR MISS BREED"
From Ms. Enoch's 9th Grade English Class, San Diego High School of International Studies

Thank you for sponsoring the play, I really enjoyed it. I've never really been taught about what happened to the Japanese during that time, and it was really beneficial for me to finally see what happened. - Anton H.

Andy Andrade

Daniela Blair

I'm so appreciative of you sponsoring the play I learned so much thank you - Paige Braxton

Thank you so much for everything you do! thank you, the play was great! - Veronica

It was fantastic glad it could happen & thank you

Victoriano

Thank you for sponsoring the play. It was fantastic and I'm glad we went. - Bernadette F.

Much thanks for everything in that I was able to see the play & hear Miss Breed's story. - Sarahi

The play was great. I'm so glad I got to see it. - Morgan

I really appreciate us being able to see it, so thanks for sponsoring it. - Eric J. Calum

Thank you very much for sponsoring the play, we enjoyed it very much, and I learned from it as well. Thanks so much... we loved it! - Allen

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to see this play. I had learned a lot from it. - J. Way I

Thank you for sponsoring the play. It was great. - Jennifer

Thank you for sponsoring Dear Mrs. Breed. - Humberto

Thank you for sponsoring a wonderful play. - Emerson Phillips

Thank you! - Lauren

Emerson Phillips

Thank you for sponsoring the play. It was great. - J. Way I

Thank you for everything. - Kaito

Thank you for sponsoring Dear Mrs. Breed. We would love to see it. - Kaito

Oscar was born in El Centro to a farming family, the next to the youngest son of six boys and four girls. (The oldest in the family, a daughter, is 91 this year.) The family subsequently moved to Imperial where they grew vegetables such as tomatoes, sugar beets, watermelon and squash.

Soon after the World War II broke out, Oscar was driving down the road and noticed FBI agents going to a neighbor's house. Thinking that the FBI would be coming to arrest the Kodama father, Oscar's mother packed a suitcase for him and they waited for FBI agents to come for him, but they never came.

Evacuation from Imperial Valley

Residents of Japanese descent living in the Imperial area were notified that they would be evacuated on May 23, 1942. When the notification came out, most of the Nisei students attending Imperial High School quit school. On the last day of school before the evacuation, Oscar was the only Nisei student still at Imperial High out of about a dozen Niseis who had been attending.

On evacuation day, the owner of the Kodamas' farm drove them to another farm along the highway where a Greyhound bus transported them to Brawley. In Brawley, they assembled with other area families and boarded a caravan of buses, which Oscar believes were Los Angeles city buses. The evacuees were not informed, nor did they know, where they were headed, but eventually they ended up in Poston Camp I. The group which included the Kodama family was the last to be evacuated from Imperial Valley. The majority of the Imperial Valley Nikkeis had been relocated earlier, also to Poston I.

The owner of their farm jacked up the house the Kodamas lived in and moved it to a site close to the owner's house. The Kodamas were able to store their belongings in the house for the duration of the war. When the family returned to Imperial after the war, some of the belongings were gone but a lot of it was still there. A Model T they owned was gone. In Poston, the owner came to visit the family a couple of times, bringing some things they wanted, including their car and truck, which the government rented. On the third visit, he said he wouldn't be coming any more because he was being branded a "Jap Lover."

Life in the Arizona Desert

In Poston, the Kodamas were housed in Block 39 of Camp I. On the first day in camp, Oscar had filled his mattress with straw when some guy took the mattress. Oscar ran after him and took him down. Oscar held him down and the guy kept hitting the ground with his palm. After a while, the guy said, "I give up," and Oscar let him go. When Oscar got back to his barracks apartment with his mattress, one of his brothers asked why he was fighting. Oscar told him that the guy took his mattress and he wasn't going to let him have it.

Some time later, Oscar took up Judo and found out that hitting the mat with the palm of your hand means that you concede and that's what the guy was trying to signal. That guy was big and to this day, Oscar doesn't know how he took him down. Oscar recognized the guy as someone from school when he was going to El Centro High, but he always thought he was Chinese.

Before school started in camp, Oscar worked as a carpenter's helper, a "go-fer" so to speak, and subsequently got a job making adobe bricks. One of the things Oscar remembers about camp is that part of the roof on the barrack that he lived in blew off during a dust storm. In Poston, all the barracks were double-roofed. The first roof was directly over the living quarters and the second roof was about a foot above the first one, forming a kind of breezeway. It was the second roof that partially blew off. Oscar said he and his brothers salvaged the lumber to make things with.

The block Oscar lived in was among the farthest away from the school and many school age kids in the block didn't go to school because it was too far.

In 1944, he found out about an opening for camp movie projectionist but the applicant had to be 18 or older to be able to drive the movie truck. He lied and said he was 18 and got the job. Going to school during the day, he worked nights, showing movies twice a week in Camp I, once a week in Camps III, once in a while in Camp II, and biweekly in the tuberculosis ward in the camp hospital.

Since he was under age, he had to get a signed okay from his parents to be able to show movies in the TB ward. He said the Camp II people always helped him set up and take down his equipment and invited him to parties after the showing, but Camp III people were not helpful at all.

During the time he worked as a movie projectionist, the Camp III movies were shown by the camp swimming pool. He remembers that there was a group of girls that always sat behind him and put their legs up on the bench he was sitting on. He said he was always afraid to look back at them (a likely story!). He didn't know who they were at the time, but later when he moved to San Diego, he found out that Pauline (Date) Nakamura, Bubbles (Tsuida) Shimasaki and Helen (Ozaki) Takeshita were among the group of girls.

In 1945, Oscar received his draft notice and went before the draft board. Since he was still in high school, they gave him a deferment form to fill out, but he never turned it in. He was drafted in May 1945, a month before he would have graduated. He was inducted into the Army at Fort Douglas, Utah. He eventually wound up in Germany in graves registration and was discharged in November 1946.

Resettlement

Oscar returned to Imperial Valley to help on the family farm. In 1950 he was farming in Valley Center, a farming community north of Escondido, when he got a call from one of his brothers to bring his truck to Poston. His brothers had purchased one of the Poston barracks buildings and needed Oscar to help them transport it. Oscar put a mattress on the back of his truck and took off for Poston.

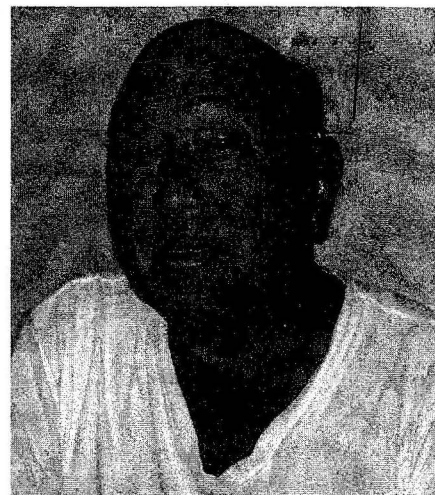
Oscar believes it was a barrack in Camp II and that they paid the government \$50 for it. Once he got to Poston, they razed the building to salvage the lumber. Oscar said it was good lumber, all redwood. It took two days for four brothers and his father to take down the building. Oscar never did get to use the mattress—his father confiscated it.

The family hired **Hats Morita**, who owned a trucking firm in El Centro, to haul the lumber to Imperial. Oscar recalls that one of his brothers used the lumber to build a house and also to build a shed for his farm.

Before World War II, there were many, many Japanese families farming in Imperial Valley. Not too many returned there after the war. Sadly, today there are only a handful of Nikkei families in the Imperial Valley and only one who is still farming.

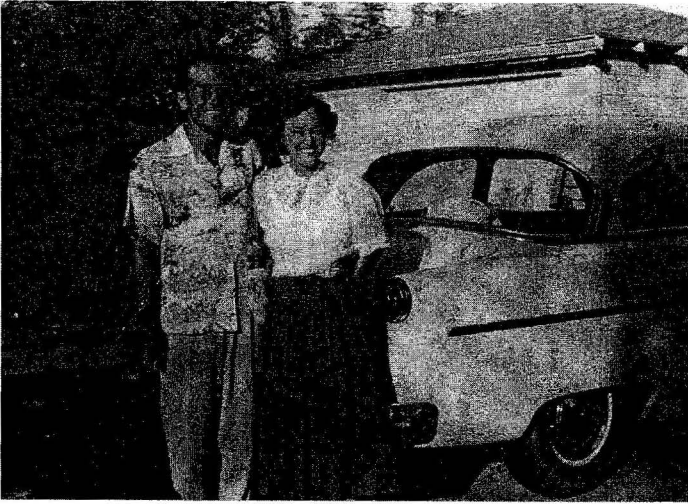
Oscar married **Grace Imamura** in 1956. In 1965 they moved to San Diego, leaving a job he had with a Ford agency.

(Continued on Page 21)



Oscar Kodama in a recent photo

(OSCAR KODAMA: A NISEI'S STORY continued from Page 20)



Oscar and Grace Kodama, circa 1960s

Once in San Diego he couldn't find a job, so he helped his father-in-law on his gardening route. Eventually, Oscar started his own gardening route.

Oscar and Grace had two sons, **David and Paul**. Today, Oscar is retired and lives with Grace, Paul, and a huge Akita mix dog in the Oak Park area of San Diego. David is married to Cindy and they have two children, Lauren and Lucas. Lauren attends UC Santa Barbara.

(BUDDHIST TEMPLE NEW HEIGHTS PROJECT continued from Page 15)

It was in deteriorating condition and repair was long overdue. In January 2006, the onaijin was shipped to Japan, for restoration. Six months of meticulous handwork restored the objects to their original beauty. The onaijin was re-dedicated at the Obon Service in July 2006.

The second half of **Phase One** and all of **Phase Two** centers on the elevator and the elevated walkway/quad. This is the major effort of the current fundraising. The cost of this phase alone is \$1.2 million and we are still a long way from our goal.

Although a groundbreaking ceremony was held in January 2007,



Buddhist Temple of San Diego organizational representatives at the ceremonial groundbreaking, January 2006. From left: **Motoo Tsuneyoshi** (ABA), **Fumiko Ohara** (BWA), **Avis Honda** behind young students **Hailey Sasaki** and **Breven Honda** (DharmaSchool), **Lauren Nakamura** (Jr. YBA) and **Kris Tokunaga** (YABA)

construction did not begin until July because of unexpected delays. Many of the temple's activities have been affected by the construction.

Originally the project was expected to be completed by mid-December 2007. Again, unforeseen delays have pushed project completion to the end of January 2008.

Phase Three will be the redesign of the main building's first floor into dedicated meeting and office space, a mini chapel, new kitchen facilities and alternative access between the temple and Annex Hall. A component for endowment is also included in Phase Three.

Gratitude to Members and the Community

With the completion of Phase Two in sight, the Buddhist Temple thanks its many friends for their support of this ambitious project. The improvements will not only help assure the temple's future, but will benefit and strengthen the community as well.

For many of us, the temple embodies the strength and perseverance first demonstrated by the Issei in meeting the extraordinary challenges of immigration, settlement and the upheaval of World War II evacuation. It represents the Nisei who endured prejudice during wartime and during postwar resettlement, and who raised their children believing education was the key to advancement. And it represents our current challenges to be respectful and celebratory of our Japanese roots while embracing an increasingly diverse membership which comes to the temple for guidance in today's complex world.

If you would like to contribute to the New Heights Project, contact the temple at (619) 239-0896 .

As always, we invite everyone to our Japanese Cultural Bazaar, Bon Odori, Mochitsuki and other community events and activities in 2008. Come see the changes for yourself as you enjoy wonderful traditions which were passed down from San Diego's first Nikkei settlers.

Joyce Teague also contributed to this article.

JANM TO SPONSOR 2008 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The **Japanese American National Museum** is sponsoring the 2008 National Conference in Denver, Colorado on July 3-6, 2008. The venue will be the Hyatt Regency Denver, Colorado Convention Center.

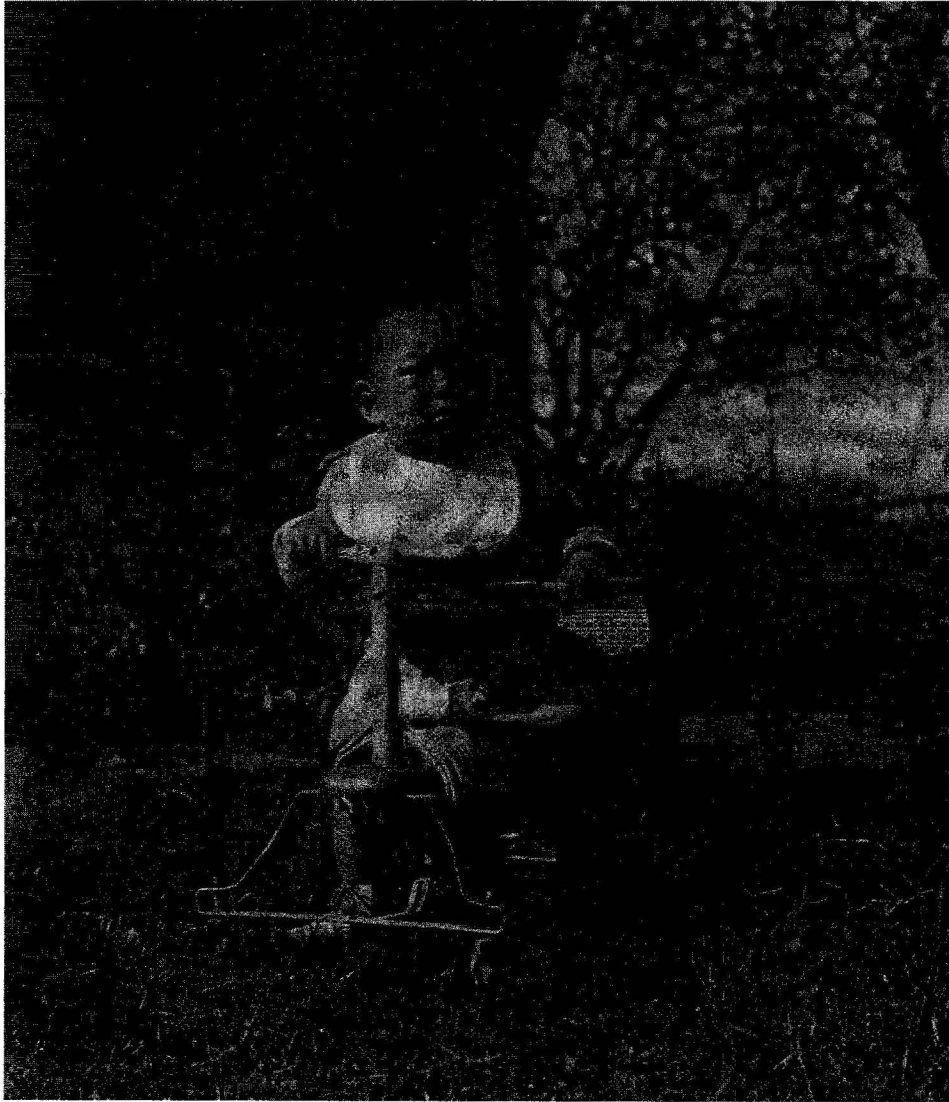
The four-day conference will feature a fascinating array of guest speakers who will examine the connections between the Japanese American experience and the historical and contemporary issues surrounding democracy and civil rights. It promises to provide thought-provoking, dynamic presentations and engaging programs and activities for adults and children ages 7 years and up. Included in the activities will be a trip to the site of the **Amache Relocation Center**.

For more information about the National Conference, visit www.janm.org/projects/exc or contact **Nancy Araki** at (213) 830-5649.

WANT TO SHARE A BIT OF HISTORY OR SOMETHING ELSE YOU LEARNED TODAY?

If you found something worth sharing on these pages, please consider giving a JAHSSD gift membership to your children, relatives, or friends. They will receive their very own four informative issues of Footprints... and the Society will benefit as well!

FROM THE JAHSSD ARCHIVES...



*A MYSTERY OF HISTORY:
DO YOU KNOW WHO
THIS CHILD IS?*

Elizabeth "Jinx" Ecke of La Jolla recently donated this faded, sepia-toned photograph to JAHSSD. It was among the few items in salvageable condition she and her mother-in-law **Magdalena Ecke** found when they opened an abandoned trunk left in a barn on their North County property. In 1942, neighboring Japanese farmers ordered evacuated from the county had been invited by Jinx's father-in-law, **Paul Ecke, Sr.**, to store their belongings on his property till they were allowed to return. After the war, everything was reclaimed save for two trunks discovered in 1962 during a cleaning by the senior Mrs. Ecke. If you recognize the photo, the child or the location, please call JAHSSD and help solve this mystery!

This moment in San Diego Nikkei history is brought to you by:

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SOUTH BAY MONOGATARI: Tales of the South Bay Nikkei Community (Donald H. Estes ©1996, Chula Vista Historical Society): Stories of struggle and success among San Diego's Japanese immigrant families. By the acknowledged expert on the San Diego Nikkei. 195 pages, photographs, annotations and index.
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ONLY THE BRAVE DVD. Full-length feature film is a dramatic retelling of the WWII 100th/442nd RCT rescue of the Texas Lost Battalion...and their loved ones back home, prisoners in their own country. Stars filmmaker Lane Nishikawa, Tamlyn Tomita, Jason Scott Lee, Jeff Fahey, Pat Morita. Limited number with covers signed by the principals.
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JAHSSD volunteer Michelle Roussin, left foreground, helps kids complete origami projects during the Fall Back Festival in downtown San Diego, November 4, 2007. See story inside on Page 17.

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