Happy Spring and Post-Cherry Blossom Season, DC Chapter!

We hope you took beautiful pictures with the many species of sakura we have in DC. As Japanese Americans, there is a moment of pride that the gift of friendship from Japan to our country is a celebrated symbol of our nation’s capital.

This edition of News Notes is bursting with stories that illustrate the vibrancy and passion of DC Chapter members and friends to uphold the history of the Japanese American experience, stand up for and stand with communities who face injustice and hatred, and come together to strengthen ties as a community. You will find stories on the Day of Remembrance 2019 commemoration at the National Museum of American History; the work of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium; the Freedom Walk, where Youth Co-Chair Christie Mori served as mistress of ceremony, and longtime members Yuka Fujikura shared her personal story of the incarceration camp and Mr. Bob Sakaniwa, served as moderator for the panel; Co-vice president Linda Sato Adams speaking at the Women’s Unity March in Maryland; Ms. Barbara Nekoba discussing the J-A Ladies Luncheons, and much, much more. Many thanks to all who contributed to this edition of the News Notes; we are incredibly fortunate to have you as members of our chapter.

In addition to the above, we are excited to announce two save-the-dates:
• 5/26: Memorial Day
• 6/15: Annual JACL DC Chapter Picnic

For those of you who completed our survey, thank you very much! We look forward to creating a stronger chapter with you.

As always, we would like to thank our membership and all-volunteer Board of Directors. The success of our DC chapter is thanks to you and what you do for the Japanese American community.

With many thanks and looking forward to catching up with you at Memorial Day and the Picnic,

Nikki Yamashiro and Georgette Furukawa
Co-Presidents
On February 19, the Hall of Music and an overflow room at the National Museum of American History (NMAH) were filled to capacity for the Day of Remembrance 2019 commemoration. It was satisfying to see many new faces in the audience, an indication that information about the incarceration is spreading. The Day of Remembrance marked President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1942 signing of Executive Order 9066 and resulting incarceration of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans. After an introduction by Ambassador Shinsuke J. Sugiyama, the museum hosted a free film screening and live performance by the award-winning composer Kishi Bashi and a guest lecture by renowned scholar Duncan Ryuken Williams.

In the Songfilm, “Omoiyari,” by Kishi Bashi, composer Kaoru Ishibashi (professionally known as “Kishi Bashi”) embarks on a personal quest by creating music in locations relevant to the Japanese American incarceration and explores what it means to be Japanese American. “Omoiyari” is a genre-breaking cinematic exploration that fuses history and art to examine the complexities of the human condition. It is on this journey in which Kishi Bashi comes to terms with his own identity and uncovers a myriad of social issues that have gripping modern relevance.

Continued on Next Page
University of Southern California professor Duncan Ryuken Williams is the author of the new book *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War*, (released on February 19) which for the first time explores the role of religion – particularly Buddhism – in the Japanese American incarceration. In this pathbreaking account, Professor Williams reveals how, even as they were stripped of their homes and imprisoned in camps, Japanese American Buddhists launched one of the most inspiring defenses of religious freedom in our nation’s history, insisting that they could be both Buddhist and American. In the face of discrimination, dislocation, dispossession, and confinement, Japanese Americans turned to their faith to sustain them, whether they were in camps behind barbed wire or serving in one of the most decorated combat units in the European theater. Using newly translated sources and extensive interviews with survivors of the camps and veterans of the war, *American Sutra* reveals how the Japanese American community broadened our country’s conception of religious freedom and forged a new American Buddhism.

After the screening and lecture, Kishi Bashi and Duncan Ryuken Williams joined NMAH curators Peter Manseau and DC Chapter member Noriko Sanefuji on stage for discussion and audience Q&A.

It was heartwarming to see so many JACL and DC Chapter members at the event. We hope that all of you will be able to join us at the Day of Remembrance 2020 next year.
Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium

The Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium (JACSC) met in Washington, DC for its winter/spring meeting from February 26-28, 2019. JACSC is a national network committed to preserving, protecting, and interpreting the history of the World War II experiences of Japanese Americans and elevating the related social justice lessons that inform current issues today. Members include the 10 War Relocation Authority confinement sites, historical organizations, endowments, museums, commissions, and educational institutes.

One major highlight from JACSC was the collaborative advocacy for the Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program, where over 200 projects had been funded. Attendees blanketed the Hill, meeting with Members of Congress and their staff to emphasize the funding of Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grants through the National Park Service and the work consortium members are doing in preserving history. JACL Executive Director David Inoue led many of the Capitol Hill visits and set the tone for the group in preparation for the visits. Through this lobbying, JACSC was able to sway Congress to support continued funding for the JACS grants in 2019. The second highlight was having thirty-four JACSC participants, including Secretary Norman Mineta, lobby Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi regarding their important work.

The three days of the meetings were punctuated by moving personal and family accounts of the incarceration experience during WWII. Participants viewed documentaries produced by Carolyn Hoover (granddaughter of Mary Murakami and the late Ray Murakami, and the daughter of Kimi Murakami and Dr. Kenley Hoover), Kendall Matsumoto (granddaughter of Yoko Morita and daughter of Alan Matsumoto and Susan Morita) and the film, “For the Sake of the Children.”

Continued on Next Page
Many DC Chapter members participated in JACSC. Julie Abo, Linda Adams, and Janice Faden visited Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland to provide historical background for the confinement sites, personal family histories and funding background for the JACS program. John Tobe led a tour of the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism, and Noriko Sanefuji led a tour of the Smithsonian Museum of American History exhibit, “Righting a Wrong.” Noriko reported that the exhibit has been extended through the summer. The Embassy of Japan hosted a reception with Kazutoshi Aikawa, Deputy Chief of Mission, who welcomed the group and referenced his trip to the Heart Mountain site and the Japanese Government’s ongoing efforts in helping to share the Japanese American story in Japan. Minister Kenichirou Mukai and his wife Midori Mukai were also hosts for the event.

Organized pilgrimages are planned to most of the 10 confinement sites this summer, and DC Chapter members may want to explore their roots through these memorable pilgrimages. Tentative dates in 2019 are: Amache, May 18; Crystal City, sometime in May; Heart Mountain, July 26, 27; Manzanar, April 27; Minidoka, July 5-8; Poston, October 11-12; Rohwer/Jerome, April 11-14; Tule Lake, early July; Wakamatsu Fest 2019, June 6-9. In addition, those attending the JACL National Convention in Salt City Lake will also be able to visit Topaz during the July 31-August 4 convention.
It was a beautiful morning as over 100 people gathered on Saturday, April 6, for the 21st Annual Cherry Blossom Freedom Walk. With high energy, Nen Daiko joined us again to open the program. The Mount Airy Boy Scout Troop 508 along with Color Guard, retired Colonels, Marty Herbert and Mark Nakagawa, presented the colors accompanied by Dr. Noriko Hunter singing the national anthem.

DC Chapter Board Youth Co-chair, Ms. Christie Mori, did a great job serving as the Mistress of Ceremonies for the program. Mr. Richard Bradley, Chair of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, gave remarks and joining him was Ms. Diana Mayhew, the Executive Director of the National Cherry Blossom Festival. Minister Ken Mukai gave greetings on behalf of the Embassy of Japan, accompanied by Ms. Haruna Minoura and her new husband. Also providing greetings were representatives of the co-sponsors; Mr. Larry Oda from the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, Mr. Al Goshi from the Japanese American Veterans Association, and Ms. Georgette Furukawa from the DC Chapter of JACL.

This year’s theme, “Fractured: The Faces of Family Separation”, sought to share stories of families separated in the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and subsequent incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II and the similarities to the situation happening now with those seeking asylum in our country today. Mr. Bob Sakaniwa, former JACL representative, moderated the panel which included Mrs. Yuka Fujikura, incarcerated at Tule Lake with her family and Mr. Kham Moua, immigration policy advocate at the Southeast Asia Resource Center.

Bob started off the panel laying a historical perspective during World War II. Yuka shared heartfelt memories of her family, beginning with when her father was taken away early after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Her mother remained strong throughout and supported her children’s endeavors, particularly when her brother, Minoru “Min” Yasui, defied curfew and was subsequently arrested and sent to Minidoka. Yuka also talked about her sister, who was able to leave camp to attend college. This left only her and her brother, Homer, at home trying desperately to find a home for their aging cat. Kham then shared the story of his family’s journey to the United States. He further talked about the impact of separation in the broader context of the Asian and Pacific Islander communities today.

After the symbolic ribbon cutting before the Walk, attendees enjoyed more taiko drumming by the Mark H. Rooney Taiko School’s Miyako Troupe.
DC NEWS NOTES

FREEDOM WALK 2019
JACL DC Chapter board members had the opportunity to meet with the JACL contingent from the 2019 JACL/OCA Leadership Summit. The summit is an amazing opportunity for JACL and OCA (Organization of Chinese American) members to visit the nation’s capitol and gain a broad overview of the federal decision-making process and meet with members of Congress, the White House, federal agencies, and other advocacy organizations. Chapters represented were from across the country and it was incredibly uplifting to see the next generation of leaders passionate about the work of JACL.

The four-day annual leadership summit was originally established by JACL in 1984 and has been a co-sponsored event with OCA since 1994. It is a tremendous opportunity to learn how to affect policy change and we encourage chapter members to consider applying for next year’s summit.

And, a special thank you to JACL National Executive Director David Inoue and his family for hosting us for this special event!

To learn more about the summit, visit: https://jacl.org/events/jacloca-leadership-summit/
DC NEWS NOTES

DC CHAPTER BOARD NEWS

Messages from New Board Members

GABI OGATA

Hello, DC Chapter!

My name is Gabi Ogata, and I am honored to be the new youth co-chair this year. Like my good friend Christie, I am Brazilian Japanese American, and while I haven’t been a member for as long as she has, I have been volunteering for JACL for the past two years.

I was born in DC, but being raised in Brazil by a Japanese family didn’t make moving here comfortable. I didn’t consider myself American and felt closer to my Japanese heritage than anything else. After a couple of years at Keisho and meeting Christie, I was introduced to JACL and the DC Chapter’s annual cultural events. At first, I felt disconnected and out of place—I could only relate to the Japanese side of the community. Since I had learned but not experienced the past difficulties of Japanese Americans in the US, I thought I couldn’t truly be a part of this group.

However, over the years, I have come to terms with my background and my identity, and this group has been a big part of that. JACL and members of the DC Chapter have accepted me with open arms and have wordlessly taught me about unity, open-mindedness, respect, community, and, as cliche as it sounds, love.

I can only hope to be able to give back to the community that has helped me so much and made me feel so accepted. I’m very excited to be working with the DC Chapter, and I will do my best to move it forward and help it improve!

KATHARINE HIRATA

Katharine Hirata became the Norman Y. Mineta Policy Fellow in November 2018. She has had four years of nonprofit experience prior to JACL, all in the Bay Area. She worked in development at YWCA San Francisco & Marin, a social services nonprofit, and the Berkeley Student Cooperative, an affordable housing nonprofit. She also worked as a research intern for the National Network of Immigrant and Refugee Rights. She studied history at U.C. Berkeley and wrote her senior thesis about her grandmother’s experiences at Poston, which inspired her to work for the JACL. She hopes to pursue a career in public policy after the fellowship.
WOMEN’S MARCH

The 3rd annual Women’s Unity March in Maryland was held on March 2, 2019 in Annapolis. This year, the Women’s March centered around Coretta Scott King’s powerful words, “Women, if the soul of the nation is to be saved, I believe that you must become its soul.” The March called for women and allies to come together to discuss how to uplift and amplify the most marginalized, underrepresented, and oppressed members of the community, with the belief that injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere.

Linda Sato Adams spoke on behalf of the JACL DC Chapter and shared the history of the Japanese Americans’ incarceration during WWII, the injustices faced by the Japanese Americans as a whole, and her family’s personal story. Parallels were drawn to the separation of family, the tagging and numbering of individuals of Japanese ancestry, and removal to “relocation centers,” which were often hastily converted stables and livestock areas, being sent to more permanent incarceration camps, similar to the circumstances happening currently at the US southern border. Ms. Adams also shared some of the work JACL is doing now to support groups whose civil rights are at risk.

The event began with an introduction from Mayor Gavin Buckley, and started at the Civil Rights Foot Soldiers Memorial and ended at the Kunta Kinte – Alex Haley Memorial. Community organizations also included March on Maryland, March On, Connecting the Dots, Planned Parenthood of Maryland, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland, and Women Indivisible Strong Effective (WISE).

ALICE LIN, DC Chapter Co-Vice President

Congratulations to Alice Lin, for her appointment as co-president of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Staff Association (CAPASA). CAPASA is committed to providing Capitol Hill staffers with high-quality networking and professional development opportunities.
Whenever I attended church, my pastor would often remind his congregation how important it is to be involved with and to give back to our community. I would wonder what contribution I could make.

In the back of my mind, I had a nagging thought that the Nisei ladies in our community were getting older and I remembered how much they enjoy getting together – and that these opportunities were getting less frequent as more of them were no longer driving and many of them did not live close to one other.

So, one day I decided to start a ladies lunch group with a simple concept in mind. I would organize a luncheon that would meet several times a year, alternating between Maryland and Virginia (as our ladies are divided between the two states) – and that I would keep it simple – no program, no fancy setups - just a gathering of friends at different restaurants for lunch. At first I worried that maybe only five people would show up; then I decided that if only five showed up, we would still have a great time getting together.

The first luncheon was held on May 14, 2009 at the Matuba Restaurant in Bethesda (now closed). I was so surprised that 40 ladies from our J-A community signed up. They were so happy to see one another and happy to meet new ladies as well. Several were friends who had not seen each other for over 40 years. We have been meeting for ten years now! Over the years, sadly we have lost too many of our Nisei members – at the rate of nearly one per luncheon. Twelve who attended our first luncheon have passed on. Fortunately, we have added many new Sansei members. I thought I knew most of the J-A women in our area through my association with JACL - and found that was certainly not true.

Much has happened that I did not expect nor anticipate from these luncheon get togethers. First, many daughters have brought their mothers (and grandmothers) to our luncheons and, as their mothers passed away, they continue to come. Drivers have gladly offered to pick up others (both friends and strangers) who do not drive. Ladies have brought their friends and family members. We have all made friends of people we previously did not know and learned more about those we do know. Most of all, our ladies have been friendly, gracious and welcoming to all. Happily, we are a very inclusive group – in the best sense of the word.

While we are inclusive, we unfortunately have also had to be exclusive. I have been asked by several other groups to join us on a regular basis. Unfortunately, I have not been able to accommodate them as our own group always numbers between 30-40 people. Adding other groups would make our

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numbers so large our choice of restaurants would be extremely limited. As it is, we do not fit into many restaurants, sadly, Japanese restaurants in particular.

While our group is not affiliated expressly with JACL, we continue to welcome all Nisei and Sansei women – along with their spouses and family members. Friends (Japanese and non-Japanese) are always welcome in accordance with our space limitations – so far, everyone has been accommodated – no one has ever been turned away.

We meet on the first Thursday of March, the second Thursday in July (we do not want to conflict with the 4th of July) and the first Thursday of November. We are celebrating our 10th anniversary and going strong. Do join us. We love to meet new friends – and greet old friends too! Please call Barbara Nekoba at (703) 780-9124 or email me at bnekoba@verizon.net to be placed on the notification list. There is no charge and no additional obligations beyond the cost of the luncheons. Easy!

MEMORIAL DAY FLOWER DONATIONS

Following the Memorial Day service at the Arlington National Cemetery on May 26, attendees are invited to lay floral arrangements at the gravesite of our fallen heroes. If you wish to give, donations will be accepted by DC Chapter co-president Nikki Yamashiro at the ceremony or send a check to DC Chapter treasurer Craig Uchida at 200 S. Los Angeles St., #601, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Thank you in advance for your kind and generous contribution.

See page .. for additional details about this year’s Memorial Day service
The League of Educators for Asian American Progress’ (LEAAP) holds an annual Lunar New Year Banquet, which is a scholarship fundraiser for Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) Asian American students interested in careers as teachers. This year the event was held on January 30, and three $2,000 scholarships were raised for high school seniors across the county to go into education. Over the past five years, the DC Chapter has collaborated with LEAAP to donate a table of 10 seats to host first-year Asian American MCPS staff members. One of the keynote speakers this year was Ananya Takikonda, student member for the MCPS Board of Education. She shared the complex nature of being an Asian American student leader, from meeting two sets of expectations and knowing how to speak two languages with native proficiency. She also discussed the multiplicity and diversity in the Asian community and the diverse perspectives that all bring to the table that further unites us all as one. Chapter members present at the banquet were Janice Faden, Donna Hollingshead, Dale Horos and Linda Adams.

LEAAP’s core purpose is to sustain the advancement of the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) Asian American community through service, support, recognition and leadership development. LEAAP was established in 2013, after expanding the scope of the original MCPS organization, the Asian Education Association, which was established in 1987.

Partnerships with JACL DC

Throughout the year the DC Chapter collaborates with various Asian American and civil rights organizations to broaden our capacity and increase our visibility in the community and nationwide. If you have suggestions for future partnerships, please send them to co-presidents Nikki Yamashiro at nsyamashiro@gmail.com or Georgette Furukawa at georgette.furukawa@gmail.com.
Dear Friends,

We're thrilled to share the news that our documentary film, *Norman Mineta & His Legacy: An American Story*, is scheduled for national broadcast on PBS Monday, May 20th at 9:00 PM!

Since we began the Mineta Legacy Project more than five years ago, our goal was to educate as many people as possible about Norm's life and career; potentially 2 million viewers will tune in. Please check your local listing.

This PBS broadcast is the culmination of the faith, moral support, and donations we received. While we are basking in the glow of the announcement, we are preparing for the debut of the educational curriculum as part of the Mineta Legacy Project. More on that to come, later this year.

Please help spread the word among your friends, family, and associates. “Like” the “Mineta Legacy Project” page to receive updates that you can share with your friends. Join us on Monday, May 20th!

With appreciation,
Dianne Fukami & Debra Nakatomi
Co-Producers, Mineta Legacy Project
By METRO: Metro to Arlington National Cemetery, go through Visitor Center & to the Columbarium. By CAR: Park at the Visitor Center Parking, Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) to catch shuttle at entrance.

NOTE: The Virginia State Police will close part of Washington Boulevard near the Pentagon on Sunday, May 26, 2019, for the Rolling Thunder motorcycle rally. From 7:00 a.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m., Washington Boulevard (Route 27) will be closed from I-395 to the Memorial Bridge. There will also be no access to Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) from Washington, DC via the Memorial Bridge. ANC will only be accessible from southbound George Washington Memorial Parkway or northbound Route 110.
ANNUAL PICNIC!

Saturday, June 15, 2019
12:00 pm — 3:00 pm
Wheaton Regional Park, Shelter G
2000 Shorefield Rd., Wheaton, MD

Raffle!
Kalbi!
Potluck!
And more!

Potluck assignments
(By last name)
A–K: Salads
L–P: Sushi, rice, or noodle dish
Q–Z: Fruit/dessert

Raffle items help!
To donate raffle items or for more information, please email JACLWDC@gmail.com!

Non-members:
Please kindly bring a potluck dish and RSVP to the email above! You are also encouraged to become a member or donate $5. Thank you so much, and see you there!
JACL MEMBERSHIP

Increase your support to the JACL by increasing your membership option:

- Thousand Club: $200 per year
- Century Club: $350 per year
- Millennium Club: $1,000 per year

Please consider supporting JACL-DC with employer matching donations or in-kind donations.

Members receive a complimentary subscription to the Pacific Citizen Newspaper, free admission to the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, CA (just show your membership card), valuable discounts, access to special events, and eligibility for over $70,000 in scholarships awarded every year. Most importantly, your membership dues also will support the mission of JACL as the oldest and largest Asian American organization dedicated to protecting the civil rights and liberties of all Americans and preserving the Japanese American cultural and historical legacy.

To join or renew your membership online, go to www.jacl.org/member! If you’d like to join or renew over the phone, please call 415-921-5225 (Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm PST).

CHECK US OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA, FOLLOW US AND STAY IN TOUCH!!

https://jacl-dc.org/  JACL- DC Chapter  @jacl_DCchapter  @jacldcchapter

The JACL-DC Chapter website (www.jacl-dc.org) posts the latest news and resources for our members. On the JACL-DC website, you’ll also find a photo gallery of our members at events like Keiro Kai, JACL Picnic, and our Mochitsuki. And you can post comments after every news item – even if it’s to say hi or “job well done” to friends in the chapter. Another way to keep up to date is to connect to the chapter on Facebook. Search for “JACLWDC” and friend us! Then you’ll get the latest information from us as posts to your wall.