



Twice Heroes and More Shows the Valor of Nisei Veterans by Frederick Liang



Photographer & author Tom Graves

On January 17, locals and visitors from afar congregated at the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMSj) to attend the opening of its new exhibit, *Twice Heroes and More*. This exhibit features the experiences and stories of Japanese Americans who fought in WWII and the Korean War. The title, *Twice Heroes and More*, stems from the award-winning book *Twice Heroes*, which includes interviews and portraits by writer and photographer Tom Graves.

For the past fifteen years, Graves has interviewed and photographed nearly 300 war veterans and compiled this documentation into a book. This new exhibit at JAMSj mainly features his photographic portraits and interviews with Nisei veterans from Santa Clara Valley. This exhibit also includes miniature Nisei soldier figures made and donated by Rian Ebesugawa, as well as The Crusaders Scrapbook, a newly donated artifact compiled by Ruth Ishizaki.

The opening ceremony for the exhibit started with a warm welcome by JAMSj Vice President Joe Yasutake, who expressed much gratitude to the audience for attending this very special exhibit. The Reverend Keith Inouye asked the audience for a moment of silence and prayer for the soldiers who perished during and after the war. After the prayer and moment of silence, Graves began the podium discussion on his documentation of Nisei veterans. He first introduced the guests of honor, seven veterans he personally interviewed, who fought either in WWII or the Korean War. The interviewed veterans who attended were

all from the local area: Buster Ichikawa, Leo Oyama, Lawson Sakai, John Sakamoto, Sam Sakamoto, Kats Hikido, and Terry Terakawa.

Graves introduced himself to the audience and described how a small project progressed into a commitment spanning 15 years. He explained that because his photography business slowed down in 2000, he decided to use his newly-found free time to experiment with new cameras and different subject matter. Coincidentally, Graves began attending monthly luncheons with a group of Marine Corps veterans. This led to photographing veterans and eventually interviewing them.

He eventually attended a meeting of 442nd Infantry Regiment veterans. At that time, he only knew of their existence but not their experiences. After interviewing and hearing the 442nd veterans' stories, Graves realized their significance and felt compelled to share those experiences. He felt committed to broaden the historic narrative of the Japanese American experience beyond the American West Coast.

Graves worked as a professional photographer throughout his career, initially working for *Time* magazine and the *New York Times*. Interested in the concept of portraiture, Tom studied under renowned portrait photographer, Phillippe Halsman (well-known for his *Life* magazine covers). Capitalizing on this training, he spent his professional



Bay Area WWII & Korea vets
Photo courtesy Fred Liang

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Message from the President *by Aggie Idemoto*

For some, a visit to the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) has created **connections** of various types and degrees. Tracing history has been attributed to strengthening the “ties that bind.” Such ties observed at JAMsj have ranged from the reuniting of past acquaintances to new-found friendships. The following will provide some illuminating examples:

- When Naomi Hirahara, author from Southern California made an appearance to discuss her latest novel, *Murder on Bamboo Lane*, many of her family members and friends from throughout the Bay Area, especially Watsonville, attended.
- Recent internment **camp reunions**, Heart Mountain and Rohwer/Jerome, brought together friends and acquaintances from afar who were able to recollect old times.
- By chance one day, I met my parents’ *baishakunin* (marriage go-betweens) in the JAMsj lobby. My sister was working in the museum store that day and joined our conversation. The couple remembered us by our Japanese childhood nicknames, a moniker and a term of endearment reserved for family members.
- In that same light, JAMsj has connected couples who eventually became **engaged** to be married—two volunteers, as well as a visitor and docent.

We welcome more volunteers. Enrich your life by joining the JAMsj family and rekindling relationships and/or establishing new ones. Isn't it time for a change in your life?

Twice Heroes—from Page 1

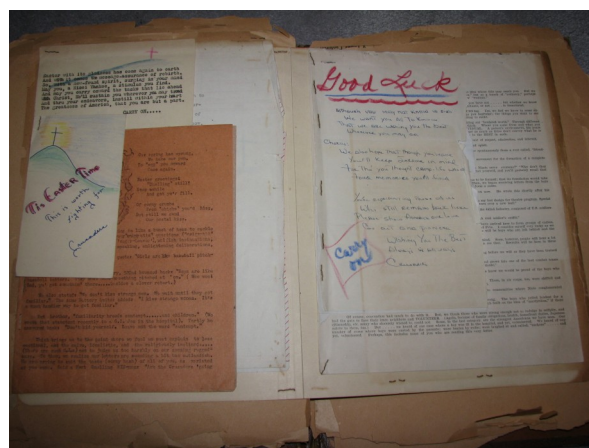
career photographing portraits for a wide variety of subjects, including corporate executives, writers, artists, and workers. Although he is experienced in other types of photography, he finds himself more drawn to portraiture. Graves is intrigued by the way his subjects’ interact with the camera.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Yasutake reminded the audience to have a close look at the newly donated items and artifacts featured in *Twice Heroes and More*. The miniature Nisei soldiers were made and donated by Rian Ebesugawa, who created these dolls through purchasing kits and parts from various vendors. Ebesugawa first started making Nisei soldiers as a small project for the Nisei Veterans’ Committee in Seattle. His goal in creating and sharing these replica soldiers is to stimulate interest in Nisei soldiers. Ebesugawa and his wife Shelley flew down to San Jose to assist in the installation of the six soldiers.

The Crusaders Scrapbook is one of two scrapbooks compiled by Ruth Ishizaki and Rinko Enosaki. During the WWII incarceration, Mary Yuri Nakahara (Yuri Kochiyama) initiated The Crusaders, a group of young Japanese American women who would send letters of encouragement from the incarceration camps to boost the morale of Nisei soldiers. At the end of the war and the Japanese internment, Ishizaki and Enosaki decided to compile the letters into two scrapbooks so as to preserve their memories and efforts. We thank Ishizaki for her generosity in donating her scrapbook to our museum. The event ended with gifts of J-rations, a contemporary twist on C-rations, for special guests and audience members.



Rian Ebesugawa’s Nisei soldiers



Page from Crusaders’ Album

Japanese Americans Fighting for the Emperor? *By Jane H. Yamashiro*

February 7, 2015 was a cloudy, wet day, but that didn't keep people from attending the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) panel, "Fighting for the Emperor: Japanese Americans in the WWII Imperial Armed Forces." The event was standing room only, and the speakers did not disappoint.

After a warm welcome from Dr. Stephen Fugita, Dr. Michael Jin, an Assistant Professor of History from Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi, spoke about his research on Nisei draftees in the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces. He narrated the complicated transnational histories of select individuals and also provided an overview of the Nisei WWII experience in Japan. In addition, two Nisei who had themselves been in the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces, Jimmie Matsuda and Peter Sano, were also part of the program. This combination of speakers gave the audience a sense of the diverse factors that brought Nisei to Japan and resulted in some of them wearing Japanese military uniforms during WWII.

Many Nisei became "stuck" in Japan when, in response to the U.S. embargo of aviation fuel to Japan, the Japanese government suspended all shipping to the United States on August 1, 1941. Those who were dual citizens (U.S. by birth, Japanese if their parents had registered them) could be drafted by the Japanese military. If they served in the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces, the armed forces of a foreign state, they lost their U.S. citizenship based on the 1940 US Nationality Act. Dr. Jin added that since Japanese military records don't specify whether or not their servicemen during WWII held foreign citizenship, it is hard to determine the number of Nisei who lost their citizenship this way, though he estimates the number to be more than 2,000. He also pointed out that only men faced this particular dilemma regarding loyalty and citizenship, as women were not drafted.

Jimmie Matsuda was born in Hood River, Oregon. In 1938, while traveling in Japan with his family during Christmas vacation, he became ill and was hospitalized for two weeks, causing him to miss his boat back to the United States. He stayed in Japan, graduated from high school, and eventually volunteered for the Japanese Navy. After the war, he returned to the United States; became a gardener in Sunnyvale; and spent 24 years on the Yu-Ai Kai board, from which he recently retired.

Matsuda spoke about the negative and positive aspects of being a Nisei in wartime Japan. He relayed numerous accounts of clashes with Japanese policemen because they singled him out as different. Sometimes these boxing matches ended up with the policemen being hospitalized! On the other hand, Matsuda's fluency in English enabled him to interpret and translate for the U.S. government as part of the Allied occupation forces.

Peter Sano was born in Brawley, California. In 1939, when he was 15 years old, he was sent as a *yoshi* (adopted son) to Japan to carry on the family line of his childless rich uncle. In 1945 he was drafted into the Japanese Army, spending 3 years as a prisoner of war in Siberia. He was eventually repatriated to Japan. During the Allied occupation, he was also an interpreter. When he came back to the United States, first he was a gardener with his father, then eventually became an architect.

Sano wrote a book about his WWII experiences, as well as his migrations to and from Japan, entitled *1,000 Days in Siberia* (which I later happily discovered was available for purchase at the JAMsj gift shop). He read an excerpt from the book and reflected on his plight, admitting that while accepting his fate to fight for Japan, "I didn't feel America was my enemy." As Dr. Jin had pointed out earlier, it was not a black-and-white issue of loyalty to one side *or* the other.

According to Dr. Jin, about 50,000 Nisei spent various amounts of time in Japan before and during WWII. Those who eventually returned to the United States – such as Matsuda and Sano – are called *kibei* Nisei, which Dr. Jin translates as "returned to America."

We rarely hear about Nisei who experienced the war in Japan and its colonies within mainstream Japanese American history. Dr. Jin explained, "One of the reasons is that a U.S.-centered historical paradigm has confined the history of Japanese Americans to the interior of American political and cultural boundaries." So we typically think about the Japanese American war experience in terms of internment in the United States, though, as the panel showed, some Japanese Americans also experienced the war on Japanese soil.



Prof. Michael Jin



Jimmie Matsuda



Peter Sano

2015 Day of Remembrance Speech *by JAMsj Docent Kent Carson*

Good evening everyone. Tonight I'm going to share with you a story that my grandfather, Hiroshi Terakawa, once told me. This story serves as an example of the hysteria and mistreatment that many Japanese Americans had to deal with during the war. I will be telling the story in a 1st-person narrative account from the Point of View of my grandfather. So, this is his story, from his Point of View as a young boy.

Sometime after the attack on Pearl Harbor, some FBI agents knocked on my family's door. When we answered the door, they came barging inside and started rummaging and searching our house, looking for something. They didn't tell us why they were there or what they were looking for. We asked them what they were looking for, but they just ignored us. Of course, they were probably looking for weapons or some kind of evidence that showed any kind of collaboration with the Japanese.

They asked us where my Father was. We were living in Salt Lake City at this time, and my father was a very high ranking member of the Buddhist Church over there. They were obviously very suspicious of him and his connections to the Japanese American community.

Unfortunately, he was in the hospital at that time. He had some kind of illness and had to be put into a big iron lung machine. These agents eventually found out where he was and they went to visit his hospital room, and when they got there, they actually tried to open this gigantic metal machine and tried to take him outside the hospital. The hospital staff and doctors were so angry at these agents that they called up the agents' superiors and reported what was happening. They were ordered to put my father back into his hospital room. They said that they would wait until he was healthy enough to come back home, and then they would come see him and take him away.

Once he was out of the hospital, they came back to our house and arrested my father and took him away to the police station in our town, no questions asked. They allowed my family to come down to see him one last time before they took him away to jail. At the station, we saw the officers walk him outside towards the transportation bus. As they were

walking away, my mom handed me a picture of our family and she told me to give it to my father to keep while he was in jail. I ran up to my father, but before I could give him the picture I remember getting knocked back by one of the officers and falling to the ground. I wasn't able to give him our family picture.

That was the last time I saw him for a long time, for many months. At that time, I didn't know where they took him, and I'm not sure they even told my mom or anyone else in my family. Even though we still faced harassment by people for being Japanese American, fortunately for us, we also happened to be surrounded by many supportive people within that community who tried to help us. When my father was finally released and sent back home to us, many people and community leaders in the area continued to show our family, especially my father, a lot of support and kindness.

So, that was my grandfather's story. Hearing that story about his father really opened my eyes. This was a period of time when many communities and families were torn apart. Therefore, I think it's very important that we take the lessons that we learn from back then and apply them to building and nourishing our own communities and families today.

Thank you.



Terry Terakawa
Photo courtesy Andy Frazer



Eiko Yamaichi
Photo courtesy Andy Frazer

May Matsuzaki Recognized by Junior League of San Jose



May Matsuzaki

May Matsuzaki's amazing contributions to the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) were recognized by the Junior League of San Jose at its annual banquet on April 24, 2015. She received a certificate of appreciation at the luncheon held at Villa Ragusa in Campbell.

May's wide-ranging efforts at JAMsj began in 2002, where she helped with our office computer systems, the museum store, and the library. But her first love and most significant contribution has been in the area of craft design and production. May has organized more than 30 enthusiastic volunteers who meet Friday afternoons to create and produce superb Japanese American crafts that are sold in the museum store and at events such as JAMsj's Winter Boutique. Congratulations, May, and thanks so much for all that you do for JAMsj!

Tohoku Update 2015: The Next Generation *by Michael Sera*

To understand what was happening in Tohoku after the March 11, 2011 great earthquake and tsunami, the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) hosted an event to capture the voice of the volunteers. Last year we captured the voice of the residents. This year we wanted to understand the future and reached out to high school students living in Tohoku.

So on March 7, 2015, JAMsj hosted three high school groups from the Tohoku region: Sendai, Minamisanriku and Ishinomaki. They were paired up with high school students from Wesley United Methodist Church, Los Gatos High School and Harker School, all located in Santa Clara County.

The goal was to create a bridge between students in Tohoku and California by exchanging Japanese and American history, culture, and language. The students communicated via Skype, starting back in October of last year. "Initially it was a little bit like a first date," recalls Sensei Ann Jordon from Los Gatos High School's Japanese class. The students introduced themselves and then would ask about each other's hobbies as a way to get to know each other. As the calls progressed, they become more engaging.

"What is your favorite anime," Kavya Seth from Harker School's Japanese class would ask the Ishinomaki students. Then one of the Ishinomaki students would ask, "What video games do you like to play?" During another call, food was the topic of discussion. "Have you ever had cow's tongue?" Nanami Miura from Sendai would ask. "Cow's tongue?" would be the response from the Wesley side. Sendai is famous for cow's tongue, one of the city's most famous products.

When asked if they played any musical instruments or had any other hobbies, Kanako Satou from Minamisanriku pulled out a *sanshin*. This is a traditional Okinawan stringed instrument that the Japanese military brought to the Tohoku evacuation sites to share with the children. From Los Gatos High School, Chris Perry brought his guitar, to which the Japanese students added a piano and song sheets for "Let it Go" in Japanese. Over a few Skype sessions, a duet was formed between Los Gatos High and Minamisanriku.

Takayuki Furuyama, co-founder of the nonprofit organization Itonabu, shared his goal of "Mentoring 1,000 IT engineers from Ishinomaki by 2021, 10 years after the Tohoku earthquake." The Harker students traded files on a Facebook Group page they had translated from Japanese to English for the Ishinomaki students. The translation was a part of a presentation for several videos. One showed how Ishinomaki has changed since March 2011, while another highlighted Itonabu and the applications the students have created. Lastly, the Harker students recorded responses to a series of questions asked by the Ishinomaki students, which was shared with the audience.

The Harker/Ishinomaki group was able to meet face-to-face when the Ishinomaki students visited California and attended the Tohoku Update 2015 event in person. The group also got together the night before to get to know each other. Sensei Yumiko Aridomi, Harker School's Japanese class teacher, helped arrange dinner at a local restaurant to give the Ishinomaki visitors a taste of American cooking.

On the day of the event, all three groups presented what they learned using videos and PowerPoint presentations. Octopus-kun, the local Minamisanriku mascot, had made his rounds to various spots in Los Gatos. Sensei Jordon and her class then created Katsu-kun (katsu勝 means win in Japanese). Katsu-kun was photographed traveling throughout Minamisanriku with local high school students and residents. Sensei Jordon's class then combined these photos and created a video to help promote Minamisanriku. The students also performed "Let it Go" in Japanese with Kanako on the big screen.

Nanami Miura, Shigetatsu Nishigai, and Mariko Suzuki, through various chats with the Wesley students, were able to zero in on what would be attractive to an American audience. The result was a video with translation by the Wesley students, capturing the "Parade of Lights," an illumination made up of hundreds of thousands of LED lights in the center of Sendai, along with different foods that are famous in Sendai.

Gordon Iwagaki discussed his experience of visiting Sendai last summer with the Wesley youth group. He said, "We only spent a little time pulling weeds and working in their yard; what they really wanted to do was spend time with us and share stories." This is a common theme expressed by many of the people I have spoken to on my travels to Tohoku.

So when people ask what's next, I tell them to go visit Tohoku and see what the area has to offer. If you like to ski, know that Tohoku has some of the best powder skiing in the world. If you enjoy the water, see the beautiful coastline. Once you meet the locals, you can't help but want to go back, which is why I am actually writing this article from Tokyo and will be making my eighth trip to the Tohoku area this weekend. I encourage anyone who is visiting Japan to grab a JR East Pass and explore Tohoku. You won't be disappointed.

Tohoku Update 2015-The Next Generation was captured on video by Duane Kubo and Jeffrey Sera. It will be posted on the JTown Community TV YouTube Site at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIZKljxgUOAwSy1xn11fvA>.

[Continued on page 6—Tohoku]



Tohoku project participants
Photo courtesy Ginger Sera



Meg Mizutani & Michael Sera



Japanese & U.S. Tohoku project mascots
together at Tako Caffè
Photo courtesy Michael Sera

JAMsj's First Oshogatsu: Big Fun *by Akemi Koike*

On January 11, 2015, a good crowd of younger children, teenagers, and adults enjoyed a special New Year's event, *oshogatsu*, at the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj). Despite the foggy morning, the upstairs community room was filled with laughter and good conversation.

Everyone tried making different origami figures, but with 2015 being the year of the sheep, of course the sheep was the most popular figure. At the game station, people were blindfolded and placed paper eyes, eyebrows, nose, and mouth on Pikachu of Pokemon fame. (This game is similar to the children's party favorite, "pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey.") Everyone laughed out loud at how the face of Pikachu turned out. Other activities were button making, coloring, and creating cotton sheep cards.

The most difficult task was at a *kakizome* calligraphy station. Kakizome is traditional Japanese calligraphy written at the beginning of the year or more precisely on January 2nd. Most of the participants had never even gripped a brush so were challenged to write their favorite words. After a few practice brush strokes, people were often able to create a masterpiece. One teenage boy brought his Christmas gift, a GoPro camera, and recorded his own calligraphy experience. Soon he put his camera away and wrote words such as love, dream, and fly high (achieve). It was evident that he enjoyed his calligraphy experience.

What a great way to start off the new year: 2015, the year of the sheep! Next year, celebrate with JAMsj to usher in the new year.



Richard Otsuji keeping JAMsj black pine
bonsai beautiful
Photo courtesy Joyce Yamamoto

Priceless Day for Region 5 Educators

by Judy Tokubo

The Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj), the Korematsu Institute for Civil Rights and Education, and the National Park Service sponsored the early spring Legacy Voices Network workshop on March 7 at JAMsj. These workshops are designed to tell the story of Japanese Americans to educators so they can go forth into their classrooms to disseminate information about their experiences. In this way, no one will forget their legacy. Stories were shared about WWII assembly centers and incarceration camps, as well as relevant civil rights issues.

The personal stories and historical perspectives shared by attorney Karen Korematsu and author Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston highlighted the morning sessions. The Sansei legacy voices of Shirley Matsumura Ota and Judy Kaita Tokubo presented their personal journeys of discovery and reflection about the topics under discussion.

There was also a delicious lunch and an informative museum tour, as well as time to network with the attendees. The attendees received a full tote bag with curriculum guides and other educational materials to share with their schools, school districts, and communities.

One teacher's evaluation included a comment by the late George Carlin, who had remarked on the Constitution and the "rights" of citizens of the United States, calling them "privileges." He had said in one of his last performances, "Rights aren't rights if they can be taken away. If you're not sure, look up Japanese Americans 1942." It was truly a priceless day for Region 5 educators.



Teachers Workshop—Jeanne Watsuki Houston presenting

Vernon Hayashida: JAMsj Walking Tours Expert

by Stephanie Fugita



Vernon Hayashida with youngster

Vernon Hayashida does walking tours for the museum whenever he can. He has been involved with JAMsj since its opening "doing various things." Since his retirement, he not only spends time with JAMsj, he also donates his time to the Wings of History Air Museum, Yu-Ai Kai, the Hispanic Theater, and San Jose Stage.

Originally from Stockton, he became involved with the local Japanese American community while in college at San Jose State (University). He was a member of Asians for Community Action (ACA), from which San Jose Taiko and Yu-Ai Kai both evolved. While at ACA, he helped raise "mochi money," which was donated to the JACL and eventually funded Yu Ai Kai.

With a degree in chemistry, Vernon worked for Syntex Pharmaceutical Labs, which created the active ingredient in the pain reliever, Aleve, and also made contraceptives. Then he also worked for United Technologies and Lockheed in the area of aerospace, eventually retiring in 2006.

Vernon stated that if one word could be used to describe JAMsj it would be good: good organization, good people, and doing good things for the community. He is excited that there is always some sort of activity going on at the museum and being offered to the community. He is impressed with all of the farm equipment collected by JAMsj and points out that this feature makes the museum unique. For example, he stated that such artifacts are not part of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

His favorite part about doing the walking tours is meeting a lot of interesting people. He stated that he likes to ask questions of the people on the tours, encouraging them to think on a different level. He asks what "non-alien" means and explores what it means to be "protected by the Constitution." He relates the loss of rights during the incarceration to the detainment of perhaps innocent people at Guantanamo Bay.

He stated that JACL advocated for the Iranians during the Iranian hostage crisis and that recently an Iranian American group visited the museum on the Day of Remembrance. Vernon also stated that what surprises him the most on his tours is that a lot of people aren't aware that Japantown in San Jose even existed. He spoke to a curator from the Japanese Migration Museum in Yokohama who has been all over the world and described San Jose Japantown as "the most vibrant" he had ever seen.

Another interesting fact that Vernon shares with visitors to the museum is that many of the buildings in Japantown are very old and have always been at risk for fire. For example, he pointed out that Congressman Norman Mineta's family home has concrete walls to avoid the risk of fire. He also shared that he has met Congressman Mineta on several occasions and that Mineta "remembers everyone" and will also remember the place that he saw you last and ask you about it in conversation.

In his spare time, Vernon likes to attend blues jam sessions at a restaurant in Campbell. He has two grown children, one who lives in Los Angeles and one in Berkeley. He also has a brand new granddaughter. When asked how long he sees himself volunteering at JAMsj, Vernon responded, "Until I keel over." He also expressed that the museum has created a lot of great memories over the years and that he will continue to do it "as long as it is fun."

HinaMatsuri Celebrates Girls and Dolls *by May Fukui, Patty Maruyama, and Janice Yasutake*



Jace Sakakihara coloring
Photo courtesy May Matsuzaki

Museum of San Jose (JAMsj). To celebrate the festival of Hinamatsuri, many gracious volunteers displayed their personal collection of *hinaninyo* (dolls) in the museum. Many of the dolls displayed were antique sets given to children by their parents or grandparents. The traditional *hinaninyo* sets that were shown ranged from 1938 to the present. The *hinaninyo* set that came from the Amache concentration camp, featuring hand-crocheted dolls and accessories, was a masterpiece.

Most of the traditional *hinanjngyo* sets consist of 3 to 7 steps:

- The emperor and empress on the top step
- Three court ladies on the second step
- Five musicians, two ministers, and three servants on the third step

The bottom rows may have small pieces of furniture and dishes for dining.

There were many traditional Japanese dolls made by volunteers who are taking *kimekomininyo* classes. They ranged from traditional sets to little girls dressed in kimono. Modern variations were also on display: Hello Kitty, Mickey and Minnie dressed in kimono, and a cat *hinaninyo* set. Also displayed was a beautiful "Precious Moment" *hinaninyo* set.

Many enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers got involved in craft activities for the children, parents, and grandparents. Families traveled from near and far to join us for a few hours of creating hands-on Japanese cultural art projects.

For example, one family traveled from Rocklin, California, to view the Hina Matsuri doll displays and to participate in the craft activities with their children. Family members found us on the Internet and traveled from afar to join us. They wanted their children to have experiences stemming from their own culture.

This year's raffle basket included many items from the hit movie *Frozen*. A little girl dressed in Elsa's princess gown begged her mother to purchase raffle tickets. Would you believe this same little girl won the raffle? She was so happy when she, still dressed in her Elsa's princess gown, and her family came to claim the raffle basket.



Bobbi Shiraki's Hinamatsuri set circa 1950
Photo courtesy May Matsuzaki



Hinamatsuri doll by Flo Altona
Photo courtesy May Matsuzaki



Lauren McMillan and friend Lia
making Kokeshi dolls

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JAMsj Scholarly Presentation on *Queer Compulsions* by Mary Pitman



Mary Pitman

This past October I had the pleasure of attending a JAMsj Scholarly Presentation by Dr. Amy Sueyoshi on her book, *Queer Compulsions: Race, Nation, and Sexuality in the Affairs of Yone Noguchi*, as part of LGBT History Month. Dr. Sueyoshi is a historian specializing in sexuality, gender, and race, as well as the associate dean of the College of Ethnic Studies and San Francisco State University. My initial excitement leading up to October 19th hinged on the uniqueness of the subject matter. When's the last time you went to a historical presentation centered on the sexual mores of the time? For that matter, when's the last time you went to a *contemporary* presentation centered on sexual mores? I don't expect the educational system to teach me everything, but it's only been in the past few years that I've learned of queer historical figures such as Alan Turing and Leonardo da Vinci. Sexuality is a taboo subject in general, queer sexuality more so. I had high expectations going into the presentation and Dr. Sueyoshi's talk more than surpassed them.

Yone Noguchi, father of Asian American sculptor Isamu Noguchi, was a turn of the century Japanese writer who immigrated to the US in 1883 (specifically to San Francisco). Dr. Sueyoshi investigated Yone's romantic relationships using private correspondence as a source. Specifically avoiding the challenge of trying to label the sexuality of a historical figure, the presentation instead focused on Yone's capitalization of the trends and mores of the time. These romantic relationships may have been private, but they certainly didn't develop in a vacuum; Dr. Sueyoshi explored what these relationships said about the culture which influenced them. Yone went out of his way to highlight his origin when it benefited him, cashing in on the Japanese exotic fetishism of the time. In his correspondence with men, Yone accentuated his femininity; with women, he evoked masculine imagery. Though Yone was deceptive and dishonest in his private life (he projected monogamy while maintaining multiple relationships), it offers a fascinating, unique, and in-depth view into the sexuality of the time - the relative abundance of letters providing a wealth of information.

From an intellectual point of view, I greatly enjoyed the presentation. What I wasn't expecting was the emotional impact the follow up Q&A session would have on me. In my relatively short life, I've seen gay rights and attitudes towards queer people improve by leaps and bounds. I'm only in my late twenties, but growing up in a gay household in the deep south (my father figure is gay), it's something I've always been sensitive to. Granted, the museum's membership skews older than my peer group and we are located in one of the most progressive areas of the country, but it was extremely heartening to look around the room and notice I was one of the youngest audience members. Even the reappropriation of the word "queer" gives me hope. Though I still have a ways to go - I'd still be surprised if a person described themselves to me as queer. But all around me, people were engaging Dr. Amy Sueyoshi for insight into Yone Noguchi's life and how people have reacted to her work. While the subject matter was very interesting, the attitude and openness of the discussion was wonderfully positive. Yes, I realize the audience chose to attend an LGBT presentation and thus their views are different from that of the general population. But the fact that the presentation *happened*, the fact that this book was *published*, the fact that queer studies is seen as a legitimate field - all of it points to one thing. *We are moving forward.*

Help Wanted



Want to learn the history of Japanese Americans and provide volunteer services at the same time? The Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) needs YOU to help out in the following areas:

- Museum docent
- Receptionist
- Retail sales
- Clerical openings
- Special event planning/implementation

As befits a volunteer position, no pay, but great benefits! Go directly to our website (www.jamsj.org) and fill out the volunteer application today. You won't be sorry!

Jerome/Rohwer Internees Interviewed at JAMsj *by Sharon Osaki Wong*

Memories of the internment camps in Jerome and Rohwer, Arkansas, flowed through the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) during the period from March 9 to 11, as Dr. Rebecca Barrett-Fox, assistant professor of sociology at Arkansas State University (ASU), interviewed 21 Bay Area internees who ranged in age from 70 to 94. Joining them were several younger people who were not interned but came to tell their family experiences.

Those interviewed were as follows:

- Jeanette and Kiyo Arakawa
- Steve Fugita
- Sadako Hatasaka
- Ernie Hirose
- Monty Ichinaga
- Sally Idemoto
- Clara Ike
- Carol Kaneko
- Grace Kim
- Dennis Kitagawa
- Roy Matsuzaki
- Amy Mori
- Robert Okamoto
- Tom Oshidari
- Paul Sakamoto
- Eiko Yamaichi
- David Yoshida
- Rei and Seiji Yoshinobu
- Patricia Yotsuya

Representing internee families were Barbara Hiura; Fred Ishizaki; Patty Kihara; Leslie Kim; and Richard, Cynthia and Zach Konda.

The internees were young adults, teenagers, kids, toddlers, and newborns during their internment. They told family stories of being forcibly evacuated from their homes, going through several years of incarceration, and rebuilding their lives after being released.

Dr. Barrett-Fox related her feelings, “My interviewees gave me the footholds I needed to find my way through their often heart-breaking stories. Without denying their suffering as internees, they also recalled details that made their own experiences bearable and, at moments, even fun: seeing fireflies for the first time (even watching those little bubbles of light floating over the barbed wire fence, leaving children inside), catching crayfish, and playing baseball. In these moments of respite from the anxiety, shame, and at times terror that they felt as internees, many were able to preserve their sense of dignity.”

I was born in Jerome so when I turned 70 last year, I visited my birth place as well as the Rohwer site. I also met other internees at the first reunion at the Japanese American Internment Museum in McGehee, Arkansas, which was dedicated in 2013.

Tim Taira, Jerome/Rohwer internee, and I were both interviewed by ASU at that time. When I returned, I found other Arkansas internees and coordinated with Dr. Barrett-Fox for them to be interviewed. I enjoyed meeting so many energetic seniors who were willing to tell their internment stories.

I had such a wonderful time in McGehee that my husband and I are returning this year for another reunion on April 16. I encourage everyone to make a visit. Warren Shimonishi, who has led groups on many trips, including internment sites, is organizing a Heart of the South trip April 7 to 16, 2016, that will include visiting the Japanese American Museum in McGehee, as well as the Jerome and Rohwer internment sites. If you are interested, please attend a pre trip meeting on Saturday, March 21, at 11:30 a.m. at the Yu-Ai Kai senior center, located at 588 N. 4th Street in San Jose. Warren’s phone is (408) 265-1644; his email address is warrenshimonishi@sbcglobal.net

Arigato to JAMsj for the use of its facilities, Joyce Yamamoto and Steve Fugita for serving as site managers, and Warren Hayashi from facilities.



Sharon Osaki Wong, Prof. Rebecca Barrett-Fox, Brad Wong



Prof. Barrett-Fox interviewing Frank Inami
Photo courtesy Brad Wong



Jerome-Rohwer interview participants & helpers
Photo courtesy Brad Wong

Welcome to our Newest JAMsj Members *by Kristin Okimoto*

We would like to welcome our new Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) members as of March 9, 2015:

- Carlos Chaboya and family
- Steve Fujimura
- Catherine Giammona
- Cindi Handa
- Lisa Harvey
- Don Hayashi and family
- Patricia Horikawa
- David Ichikawa
- Stacy Ige
- Joan Iwamoto
- Bill Kanemoto
- Faye Kimura
- Emmeline Kiyon
- Yumi Kubo
- Lynda Martinez
- Tracey Matsui
- Denise Matsuoka
- Diane Nakagawa-Jew and family
- Tetsuya Namba and family
- Alfred Nishiura
- Colette Palacios
- Tammy Schooley and family
- Cindy Sumida-Scott and Arthur Scott
- Carol Takeda
- Warren Uesato

Thank you for becoming a part of the museum. Your support is greatly appreciated.

We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please contact us if any of the above information is incorrect:

- Online at www.jamsj.org
- Email at mail@jamsj.org
- Phone at 408. 294.3138

We hope that you will take advantage of your new membership by coming to our activities soon and as often as possible. See you at JAMsj!

Congressional Gold Medal Dinner Friday, June 12, 2015

A special fundraising dinner, organized to support the Congressional Gold Medal Digital Exhibition, which highlights the courage and bravery of WWII Nisei soldiers, will be held on Friday, June 12, at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose. The dinner will help to raise funds and increase awareness of the special exhibition that is presently in development at the Smithsonian Institution. The event will feature a special thank you to former U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki.

To purchase tickets, sponsor veterans, or leave a thank you message, please visit <http://nationalveteransnetwork.givezooks.com/events/congressional-gold-medal-dinner-san-jose-ca>. For information about the dinner, please contact Reiko Iwanaga at riwanaga@ecopiafarms.com.

Diverse JA Families Sought

Does your family represent the diversity that is the Japanese American family today? If so, would you like to participate in our upcoming exhibit, **Visible and Invisible: A Hapa Japanese History**? We are looking for local JA families who are willing and able to sit for portraits to be included in our display of "Modern JA Families." The more generations and the more diversity, the better! If interested, please contact Cindy Nakashima at clnaka@yahoo.com.

Shop at Amazon? Support JAMsj at No Cost Every Time You Shop



Amazon has come up with a new program called Amazon Smile, which makes a donation to your favorite non-profit organization automatically with every Amazon purchase you make. All you have to do is to log onto smile.amazon.com instead of amazon.com.

On your first shopping trip, you'll be asked which nonprofit organization you want to support. Simply type Japanese American Museum of San Jose. You only have to do this once. On your next visit, Amazon will remember that you want to support JAMsj. That's it--everything else remains the same, including cost, products, and even your optional Prime membership.

JAMsj will receive 0.5% of the price of your purchases. Almost every physical product sold is eligible. However, digital goods, as well as Subscribe & Save subscriptions, are not covered.



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Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs Hosts Fundraising Event

May 23, 2015

9:00 a.m.-4:30 pm

On Saturday, May 23, 2015, there will be a special fundraising event at Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs. Starting at 9 a.m. and going until 4:30 p.m., enjoy docent tours, displays, children's activities, entertainment, and sports stories. Picnic with friends on a pack-in/pack-out basis. For reservations, call (408) 314-7185 or email info@GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org.

The cost is \$15 per person, but children under 12 are free. All proceeds go for the protection and restoration of the hot springs.

The directions are as follows:

- Go south on Highway 101
- Exit on Leavesley Road
- Travel east on Leavesley Road
- Turn left on New Avenue
- Turn right on Roop Road
- Veer left onto Gilroy Hot Springs Road
- Cross the big green bridge
- Continue to the end of the road

There is parking available onsite, but please carpool if you can as space is limited. The hot springs are part of Henry W. Coe State Park. Call (408) 314-4185 to request special accommodations.