

KOKORO

the heart and soul of our community
san mateo chapter Japanese American citizens league june 2009
www.sanmateojacl.org
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San Mateo JA CL is dedicated to promoting the historical and cultural understanding of the Japanese American experience and to protecting and advancing the human and civil rights of our multi-ethnic society through educational and community programs.

Articles must be submitted before the first Friday (one month prior to publication) to katemotoyama@sanbrunocable.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO TREVOR AND KIMI, OUR JA CL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!



Top photo, Trevor and the Smith Family; bottom photo, Kimi and the Yamada Family

HONORARY DEGREES AWARDED TO JAPANESE AMERICAN STUDENTS AFTER 67 YEARS

Japanese Americans, who were unable to complete their education at the College of San Mateo (CSM) when they were uprooted and incarcerated during World War II, were featured at commencement ceremonies at the college on Friday, May 29, 2009. CSM will present honorary degrees to former Japanese American students of the college or their families. They will be awarded the Associate of Arts, Honoris Causa, Nunc pro Tunc, meaning, "a thing is done at one time which ought to have been performed at another."

It was on February 19, 1942, when President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 resulted in the unjust incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans in the absence of official charges and due process of law. Japanese American students pursuing degrees at CSM during this time were ordered into U.S. concentration camps and forced to withdraw from all classes. Most were given 48-hour notices to pack up any possessions they could carry to these "camps," where they remained for the duration of the war, with men volunteering from their forced confinement to serve their country in the U.S. Army.

Now, nearly seven decades later, many of these former students have passed away or moved on, and any remaining individuals are elderly and may be in frail health. Ethnic Studies Professor Lewis Kawahara scoured through college records to identify and contact affected individuals or their families in order to restore these former students to the ranks of college alumni. Forty-five students were determined to have put their academic plans on hold due to EO 9066 and military service. The college presented honorary degrees to honor these students and symbolically right a wrong perpetrated against them due to the war hysteria of the time.

Commencement ceremonies took place 6:30-9:30 pm, CSM Building 8, in the large gymnasium. Assembly Member Warren Furutani (D-South Los Angeles County), author of AB 37, a bill to extend honorary degrees to individuals unable to complete their post-secondary education in California's public institutions due to their incarceration, delivered the commencement address. The commencement ceremony was open to the public.

To mark this historic event, San Mateo JACL and College of San Mateo hosted a reception before commencement. Each of the forty-five names were read aloud at commencement ceremonies, thus including these former students as part of the college's alumni.

SAN MATEO JACL MEMBER'S POEM CHOSEN FOR MEMORIAL

This article is excerpted from the *Highlands Newsletter*.

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF), headquartered in Washington, DC, sponsored a national search for a poem that can be inscribed in stone as part of the Japanese American memorial.

A poem by Dawn Ehrlich, San Mateo JACL member and Highlands resident, has been chosen and approved for inclusion in the memorial. The NJAMF sought to create under congressional statute a memorial to the loyalty, courage, sacrifices, and contributions to the greatness of the nation made by Americans of Japanese ancestry and their immigrant parents during World War II, despite injustices rooted in ethnic prejudices, and as commitment to an even greater America.

Dawn's poem, written in *tanka* form, says:

Legacy

*Japanese by blood,
Hearts and minds American,
With honor unbowed
Bore the sting of injustice
For future generations.*

"I have always been proud of my Japanese ancestry," says Dawn. When she was a teacher and volunteer, she shared her cultural heritage with children and their parents. She played the *koto*, raised and studied silkworms, organized multicultural events, and exhibited Girls' Day and Boys' Day displays in the classroom. Currently she studies and performs with an amateur *taiko* group, San Mateo Buddhist Temple Taiko, and is a member of the JACL, San Mateo chapter.

Dawn says her *tanka* is a tribute to her parents who gave her so much and who wanted her to experience the American childhood they did not have. About the plan to etch her poem in the memorial stone, she said, "I am grateful that my poem will stand as a reminder of all the sacrifices the Issei [first generation people of Japanese ancestry] and Nisei [second generation] made so that their descendents would enjoy a better future."

TERU TERU BOZU'S MAGICAL POWERS—from JCC's member newsletter

The NOAA National Weather Service forecast for January 11, 2009, the day of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i's New Year's 'Ohana Festival was 90% chance of heavy rain the thunderstorms. The mood in the Cultural Center's office was as gloomy as the

forecast. A concerned volunteer proceeded to make a *teru teru bozu* and hung it from the tent of the main stage in the Teruya Courtyard.

Brian Sato writes, "I was in a state of total disbelief when the day of the festival unfolded with blue skies and sunshine. The change in weather was so sudden and inexplicable that I could only attribute it to the *teru teru bozu*. *Teru Teru Bozu* literally means "shine, shine, Buddhist monk." It is a hand-made doll made of white cloth or paper with a smiley face that is believed to hold special powers. Traditionally, on a cloudy day, farmers hung these little amulets on the window to ward off rain and bring in the sunshine.

At the end of the day, while volunteers put away the remaining folding chairs in the Teruya Courtyard, writes Sato, "I noticed the solitary *teru teru bozu* swaying the breeze that funnels down through the courtyard from Manoa Valley. Although it was probably noticed by only a few people that day, I felt compelled to photograph this inconspicuous amulet; now thoroughly convinced of its power and effectiveness in warding off rain and saving the day for the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i's annual event."

FILMMAKER HELPS MAKE NATURE APPEAL TO URBAN KIDS

An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* [April 21, 2009] by Peter Fimrite discussed filmmaker Ken Burns's latest epic about America's national parks. Titled "Parks for All," the 12-hour film, narrated by Mill Valley resident and actor Peter Coyote was introduced at a screening at the Cowell Theater in Fort Mason and is scheduled to air on PBS in September. The film has diverse characters, as the National Parks Service hopes to inspire students, minorities, and urban youth in particular.

Yosemite's "Buffalo Soldiers" are featured. Burns says:

I don't think there is an African American schoolchild who would not be interested to learn that it was the African American Buffalo Soldiers who were watching over our parks in Yosemite and elsewhere in California at the turn of the century. They not only guarded the parks from vandals and poachers but ironically became the first protectors of these ecosystems.

According to Fimrite's article, "Asians, Latinos and American Indians are also highlighted in the profiles portion, which was funded by the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and is called 'The Untold Stories Project.'"

MORE ON AMERICA'S IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Rep. Mike Honda, San Jose's congressional representative, and Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) were at a rally at St. Victor's Church in San Jose. At the interfaith gathering, many came to ask that President Barack Obama fulfill his campaign promise to overhaul America's immigration policies. President Obama is expected to begin to make the changes in May.

Gutierrez is chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus's Immigration Task Force. He has traveled coast to coast trying to keep immigration reform in the spotlight. An article titled, "Border War Continues: Congressmen, speakers ask the president to focus on immigration reform," by Jessica Fromm [*Metro Silicon Valley*, April 22-28, 2009], states, "San Jose was the 19th stop in Gutierrez's tour, and was the first event to highlight the voices of Asian immigrants, with testimonials given by Filipina and Thai Americans."

Here is what Honda said at the rally:

Of the 12 million who are undocumented, 12 percent are Asians. So, we need to have people understand that this is not a brown issue, it's not a white issue, it's all of our issues. We need to engage the Asian American community on the issue of comprehensive immigration reform. All too often in major issues, our presence, our voices, our input are assumed, or not even thought of. So, this is a comprehensive effort to hear from communities like the Filipinos, the Vietnamese and other communities, to hear from them on the kinds of issues they have.

Fromm's article also quoted Alicia Carvajal, a counselor who volunteers at the Legal Aid Society of Santa Clara. Carvajal wished there had been more people in attendance, "A lot of people showed up, but I wish there were more people. Seventy percent of the people here were people I know who work in the nonprofits. I would like to see more people from the community, not only these people like me who work in different agencies."

SAMURAI EXHIBIT AT SF ASIAN ART MUSEUM

The culture of the samurai and their code of conduct, *bushido*, is the subject of a special exhibition *Lords of the Samurai*, on view from June 12 through September 20th. The Asian Art Museum will look at the *daimyo* ("great name") or provincial lords of the warrior class in feudal Japan (1300's to 1860's). Samurai were trained as fighters but also were versed in artistic, cultural, and spiritual pursuits.

An article in *Nikkei West*, April 25, 2009, stated that there will be more than 160 objects, such as armor, weaponry, paintings, lacquer ware, ceramics, and costumes. Nearly all the objects in this exhibition, titled *Lords of the Samurai*, were from the collection of one distinguished warrior clan, the Hosokawa family. This collection is housed in the Eisei-Bunko Museum in Tokyo, Japan and in the family's former home, Kumamoto Castle on Kyushu Island, Japan. Seven of the artifacts on view have been designated Important Cultural Properties, the highest cultural distinction awarded by the Japanese government; three are designated Important Art Objects, another prestigious distinction.

Target First Free Sundays will allow free admission to all on the first Sunday of every month; however, entry to this exhibit will require a \$5 surcharge.

The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm, with extended hours until 9 pm every Thursday. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and \$7 for youth 13-17, with children under 12 being admitted free of charge. Thursday evenings after 5 pm, admission is \$5 for all visitors except from those under 12 and members, who are always free.

DIGGING UP HISTORY OF SAN JOSE CHINATOWN

An article with this title by Jessie Mangaliman [*San Jose Mercury News*, 4/23/2009] talked about an a dig in an empty lot in San Jose's Japantown supervised by Sonoma State University archaeologists and anthropologists. The site had been a city vehicle maintenance yard for decades but, because of a proposed housing development, the dig was part of environmental impact studies.

The article states that Japanese artifacts were found, as Japantown grew next to the old Chinatown at the turn of the 19th century in Heinlerville:

During the race riots of 1880, arsonists, determined to drive the Chinese out of San Jose, torched the old Chinatown on Market Street where the Fairmont Hotel now towers. The displaced immigrants found a friend in John Heinlen, a German immigrant who leased land now bounded by Sixth and Seventh streets, and Taylor and Jackson streets. . . . Its commerce and boarding houses became an important base, historians say, for Chinese and Japanese agricultural workers in the valley.

Some objects uncovered were a rice bowl with bamboo design, half of a child's jade bracelet, iridescent homeopathic glass vials, pottery shards, bone toothbrushes, ceramic and glass gaming pieces, buttons, bones of fish, pigs, and cows.

DUCKWORTH'S ADDRESS DRAWS RESPECT, CHEERS

Monday, May 25, 2009 was Memorial Day. Memorial Day services were held at the National Cemetery in San Bruno, honoring the Nikkei who had served their country in the armed forces. In ceremonies in Honolulu, Hawaii, L. Tammy Duckworth, a former helicopter pilot wounded in Iraq and U.S. assistant secretary of veteran affairs, returned to her home to speak at Memorial Day ceremonies.

She said,

Not a day goes by that I don't wake u and think of my buddies who saved my life. I think of the names that go unanswered at roll call. They are why I wake up every day with a sense of purpose and a renewed vow to live my life to the fullest. I am living not just my life; I am also living the unfinished lives of my fallen comrades, and because of them I must be better.

In November 2004, Duckworth was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade fired by insurgents while she co-piloted a Black Hawk helicopter in Iraq. She lost both her legs and suffered severe damage to her right arm. The article with this title was written by Rosemarie Bernardo, *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, May 26, 2009.

LANTERN FLOATING CEREMONY IN HONOLULU

In Japan, there is a tradition of floating lighted lanterns with names of the departed and messages for them written on these glowing vessels. Usually, the lantern lighting and floating precedes the *Obon* season, where departed souls are reunited with their families. This is one of the more solemn and beautiful parts of the Peace Day Ceremonies in Hiroshima, held annually on August 6th. Those who were not immediate struck down by the atomic blasts made their way to the banks of the river, trying to quench their thirst. In memory of this, and in memory of those who have died, people come from throughout Japan and all around the world to place their own lantern and write their own messages to ease the hearts of the deceased and offer prayers for the living.

In Honolulu, Hawaii, each May, there is a similar lantern lighting ceremony for the departed. It is held on Magic Island, along Ala Moana Beach, and this year saw over one thousand lanterns lit and set out to sea as the sun set, making many spots of light on the dark waters. The sound of the *taiko* drums beat, punctuating the ceremony. This year's lantern lighting and floating ceremony was titled, "Many Rivers, One Ocean." A priest with the *Shinnyo-en* Buddhist order began by lighting the Light of Harmony, which was dedicated to the tranquility of souls and represents a hope for world peace.

One person placed a candle within a paper lantern with the message, "In loving memory: I thank those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom and way of life. Thank you! God Bless You Always!" Other people inscribed the names of their family or friends on the sides of their paper lanterns. Lanterns were floated for people from twenty countries. There were 2,200 lanterns that were set afloat on that day.



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2009 SAN MATEO JACL ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Place: Poplar Creek Golf Course
1700 Coyote Point Drive, San Mateo, California

Date: Sunday, September 13, 2009
Time: First Group Tees off at 9:30 AM

Entry Fee: \$85.00 including cart

Entry Fees Due: September 01, 2009

Please come out to support the Scholarship Program sponsored by the San Mateo JACL Chapter. Proceeds benefit the Scholarship Fund to graduating high school seniors.

Join us for a fun filled day on the links. Players of all levels are encouraged to play! No established handicap necessary. There will be tee prizes for all entrants and awards for flight winners, closest-to-pin, and longest drive.

Please send your entry form and fees (checks made payable to "San Mateo JACL") to:
Steve Katayama, c/o NTA America, Inc.
643 Bair Island Road, #301, Redwood City, CA 94063

If you have any questions, please call Steve at 650-306-1880, or email to skatayama@ntasfb.com Please submit one entry form per player.

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Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone No: (H) _____ (C) _____ E-Mail: _____
Handicap: _____

If you are arranging your own group, please complete the following:

<u>Player #1</u>	<u>Player #2</u>	<u>Player #3</u>	<u>Player#4</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____

Sorry, I can't play. Enclosed is my donation.

\$ _____ Other _____
Description of Merchandise or Gift Certificate