

## SUMMER FUN – A SPECIALTY FOR THE SFV JACL

Can you write your name in Japanese? Kids who attended *Suzume no Gakkou* learned from expert calligrapher, **Yuriko Muso**, how to write on the back of their *hagoita*. What's a *hagoita*? Now, you need to come to our summer camp so you can be smarter than a sixth grader!!

Our mission is to educate youth about Japanese culture and Japanese American history through hands on activities. Each day started with exercise to get their intellectual and emotional juices going. This year's 's high point was the *Hagoita* which is a Japanese toy that is elaborately decorated. **Paul Jonokuchi** prepared each wooden paddle while **Mitzi Kushida** selected the authentic male and female faces that adorned them. **Ayumi Inoue**, teacher from JLI, and we are especially proud of our two new teachers, **Molly Serizawa** and **Jaymie Takeshita** who taught Japanese language classes. In developing future leaders, we are proud of **Jenna Matsushita** and **Kayla Aihara** who were tremendous teacher assistants. **Joseph Welch** helped every day and was much appreciated by our menfolk. **Kayla Chong**, **Peggy Furutani**, **Megan Ikemoto**, **Taryn Manaka**, and **Kylie Okazaki** were awesome Junior TAs. With such a dynamic staff, many of the campers returned from the 2011 roster.

Thank you to the Japanese Language Institute for the use of their classrooms and to the Community Center members like the ping pong club, the ukelele club, and mandolin club that cleared the gym schedule so we would have a place for our final show. **Lois Okui** designed and published the colorful program booklet.



Story continued on page 3

## UPCOMING EVENTS



## COME JOIN US IN THE FUN AND ACTIVITIES

**August 1, 8, 15**  
 Katarou Histories

**August 20**  
 Third Tuesday Movie Outing

**August 24**  
 Katarou Histories Culmination

**August 25**  
 Tribute to Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi

**September 17**  
 Third Tuesday Movie Outing

**September 21**  
 PSW Awards Luncheon

## Questions or Comments?

Please email  
[kyoshino@verizon.net](mailto:kyoshino@verizon.net)  
 or send comments to:  
 Nancy Gohata  
 14229 Carl Street  
 Arleta, CA 91331

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

July 2013



These past few months have brought moments of joy and moments of sadness for all of us at SFVJACL. We were excited about the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, the successful historical preservation of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station site and the many programs we held recently including Suzume no Gakkou and the Katarou Histories Project. But we were also very saddened by the passing of several long-time SFVJACLees, including **Sam Uyehara** and **Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi**. Look for more information throughout this edition of our newsletter.

In June, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court made two significant rulings regarding same-sex marriage. They declared a key section of the federal Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional on equal protection grounds and they left intact a lower court's ruling that overturned California's Proposition 8 which prohibited same-sex marriages. This was an important ruling, but we must stay vigilant as this battle will surely continue from opponents of same-sex marriages.

On June 25, 2013, the Los Angeles City Council voted to designate the former site of the Tuna Canyon Detention Station an historic cultural monument. This is one of many locations where Japanese Americans were detained during WWII. I applaud the many JACLees and community supporters who spent a great deal of time and effort attending the city council meetings en masse to convince them to overturn a previous decision by the Cultural Heritage Commission NOT to recognize this site's importance in history and to allow the construction of condominiums at this location. It was through good ol' fashion activism and grass root efforts that proved successful in this case. Kudos!

The SFVJACL hosted two major programs this past month: Suzume no Gakkou and the Katarou Histories Project. Although you will read more about them elsewhere in this newsletter, I just wanted to point out the hard work that went into bringing these programs to the San Fernando Valley and to thank everyone who helped organize these events. I know I say this every time, but I am constantly in awe of how dedicated so many JACLees are and just how much volunteerism and commitment is alive in our chapter.

Sadly, we had to say goodbye to several SFVJACLees these past few months. In particular, Sam Uyehara and Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi who did so much for the JACL. Although we mourn the passing of these two great men, we also celebrate their amazing lives and reflect on the impact they have made on so many people. Thank you both for making this world a better place and for making a difference in our lives.

Please take the time to read all the articles in this issue of our newsletter. It is a reminder of what makes JACL strong, why we must continue to fight and how perseverance can prevail.

Sincerely,  
Brian Moriguchi



## Please help us lower our postage cost?

You can greatly help our chapter by getting the Chapter newsletter via email.  
Please go to [kyoshino@verizon.net](mailto:kyoshino@verizon.net) and register your e-mail address.



This year's field trip was a visit to Nikkei Senior Gardens. Co-chair, **Linda Tanaka**, taught the children how to make a handmade scroll with beloved *Sakura* (pink cherry blossoms). These gifts were presented to the audience by the campers teaching the children about the virtues of compassion and gratitude. The visual and performing art of singing and dancing brightened NSG's lunch room big time. Head teacher, **Nancy Gohata**, planned and organized experiences such as making *sushi*, arts and crafts noted below, and singing eight songs. Nancy's favorite was *ame, ame fure fure*, the rain song. The kids loved to sing *chi-chi-pa-pa*! **Kai Sugahara** and **Miku Inoue** sang outstanding solos.

*Suzume no Gakkou* summer camp is a Labor of Love. So many helped with making each day special for the kids. We appreciate the teachers, volunteers, and parents. So many people of all ages helped in so many ways. **Priscilla Mui** taught the kids how to make *maki sushi*! **Marion Shigekuni** ran snack time with contributions from the parents. We want to say thank you to all of the parents and grandparents who came each day especially to **Gene and Genevieve Lew**. Special welcome back to **Kiyo and Sho Doi**!

Special thanks to **Jill Clever, Kaori Hal, Priscilla Mui, and Saeko Orozco** who made forty seven bright green *Hapi* coats while **Al Tokunaga** expertly silkscreened the logo on it.. About twenty four children danced at the SFVHBT *obon* with their *Hapi* coats or delicate soft hued *yukatas*. We received a lot of compliments for their part in dancing at the *obon* on Sunday.

**Nancy Oda** read stories that were traditional and/or based on JA history while visiting mothers folded *origami* turtle, boat, or house paper squares to remind them of the main ideas. Since **Urashima Taro** was an example of kindness to animals, **Roy Sugahara** helped the kids write *haiku* for their chosen animal that they loved. **Kay Yamada** followed up with a "*Urashima Taro*" up book. The other titles were "How Baseball Saved Us," and "Where Sunflowers Grow". Each child received a sunflower plant from seeds donated by **Dorothy Oda**. Thank you to the late **Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi** who donated a book for each child. Other donations came from **Cathy Krohn, Kisui Fujimoto, Hazel Isa, Linda Kuratomi, Rouxann Kuwata, Isabelle Miyata, Barbara Nakatsu, Harriet Nishizaka, Pauline Okutake, Reiko Sauer, Patty Takayama, and Karen Yoshino**. The kids decorated their own "*Bachan's Goodie Bags*."

On the last day, guest experts like **Kaneshiro Sensei** demonstrated the ancient martial art of *kendo* with his two growing sons. **Master Akira Kimura** brought three gorgeous bonsai. **Sensei Ritsuko Shinbashi** created exquisite *ikebana* arrangements. **Sensei Setsuko Murakawa** showed *kimekomi* artwork. These exhibits gave students and their families a top notch experience with the valley's living treasures. Everyone took home memories of new friends, great food, and Japanese traditions and culture.

Next year SNG as it is affectionately called is planned for June 17-21, 2014. Don't sign up late!!  
Article submitted by Nancy Oda

## PHIL SHIGEKUNI HONORED AT THE JACL NATIONAL CONVENTION IN WASHINGTON D.C.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the JACL at their National Convention in Washington D.C., recognized those individuals who played an important role in the redress movement. San Fernando Valley's **Phil Shigekuni** was one of those honored. More details of this event, as well as coverage of the convention, will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter.





## In Memory of Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi

Please come join us in paying tribute to a great friend of the community

**Sunday, August 25, 2013  
1 – 3:30 PM**

San Fernando Valley Japanese American  
Community Center  
Sanbo Sakaguchi Hall

Will we be sharing our stories and hearing  
from friends, colleagues and family.

## Everyone is invited

Light refreshment will be served  
(RSVP for refreshment count)

Loisokui@aol.com or  
Leave message at (818) 899.1989



## “HEART SONG”

On Sunday, July 14, 26 JACL board members and friends enjoyed an afternoon attending the play “Heart Song” at the Fountain Theater in Hollywood.

Written by Stephen Sachs, the play stars Pamela Dunlap, Juanita Jennings, and our own “Valley Girl” **Tamlyn Tomita**. The comedy/drama centers around Rochelle, (Dunlap) a middle-aged Jewish woman who is in the midst of a life crisis. Lost and alone after the death of her mother the year before, she suffers from panic attacks, anxiety and a crisis of faith. Tina, (Tomita) her masseuse, tries to help her free her inner feelings and takes her, although unwillingly, to a flamenco dance class with other middle aged women, all shapes, sizes, and colors. There she meets Daloris, (Jennings) a middle aged black woman who gives Rochelle empathy and offers insight into her own inner found strength.

The humor in the first act (with a few well placed f-bombs) greatly contrasts with the drama in the second act. At one point, Rochelle and Tina get into an emotional shouting match about concentration camps and the experiences their families went through. Eventually, with the support of Tina and Daloris and the circle of the flamenco women, Rochelle finds her inner strength and is able to find peace and resolution in her life.

After the performance, Tamlyn graciously joined the group in a photo op and most of us continued on to HOME Restaurant to culminate a most enjoyable Sunday outing.

Article  
submitted  
by  
Barbara  
Okita



## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR SAM UYEHARA

Long-time JACL member, **Sam Uyehara** was remembered on July 5, at the Chatsworth West United Methodist Church.

Sam's friends and family fondly recalled Sam as the ever-smiling, steady, family man, always ready to lend a hand.

It was good to see Sam's family- some of whom I had not seen for many years: Eldest son, David and his wife live in La Verne. He and his wife, Donna, are dentists. David works for the Veteran's Administration. Wesley's wife is Elizabeth. They live in San Marino, and Wesley practices medicine in Arcadia. Their son, Tyler, is a senior at Baylor University in Texas. Loreen is Mark's wife. He is a dentist, practicing in Sylmar, and Loreen works as a financial planner at the former Pratt/Whitney plant in Northridge. Their daughter, Sara, is a 9<sup>th</sup> grader at Heritage School in North Hills.

Since I read the eulogy prepared by the family, I had a chance to tell of my remembrances of Sam. To illustrate his conscientious devotion to JACL I displayed a doughball booth binder which we use every year which Sam had started 50 years ago. In it were not only detailed construction instructions with photos, but a record of each year's earnings for the booth. Marion took over Sam's doughball assignment 12 years ago, and I was put in charge of overseeing the annual setting up of the booth. Two years ago, I had the crew ready to start setting-up the booth, but I had forgotten Sam's manual. I had to call Marion and have her bring it to the CC so we could do the job!

Terry, we grieve with you for Sam, a devoted husband, father, grandfather and faithful SFV JACL member.

Article submitted by Phil Shigekuni



## THIRD TUESDAY MOVIE OUTING



In **June**, our movie was *Before Midnight*, directed by **Richard Linklater**. "Midnight" was preceded by Linklater's *Before Sunrise* and *Before Sunset*. The trilogy is about Jesse (**Ethan Hawke**) and Celine (**Julie Delpy**) who were introduced as a couple when they were 23 years old and we meet them in *Before Midnight* as 41 year-olds. Written by Linklater, Hawke, and Delpy, Jesse and Celine are in Greece on a summer holiday with their young twin daughters. None of us saw the previous two films where Celine and Ethan have a magical courtship and a strong attraction for each other. The problems of married life is the focus of "Midnight". In the opening scene Jesse and Celine are in their car with their twins, carrying on an endless dialogue that sets the tone of their struggle to keep the magic they had in the first two films. Most of the movie goes on with their heated insulting arguments, long and tiresome, but a few of us, found depth in their character and hope that Celine and Jesse will find a way to stay together.

Our **July** movie was the predictable tearjerker, *Unfinished Song*, by director **Paul Andrew Williams**. Arthur (**Terence Stamp**) is a grouchy octogenarian married to Marion (**Vanessa Redgrave**) who is dying of cancer. Marion has the most cheery disposition and brings delight to all those around her, especially her senior choir. Because of his love for Marion, Arthur begrudgingly takes her to the club's rehearsals whose volunteer director is an energetic young woman volunteer, Elizabeth (Gemma Arterton). Besides Arthur's anti-social behavior towards the singing group, his relationship with his son is on the verge of estrangement. A sign of good times yet to come is seen in his relationship with his granddaughter. The strength of this film is in the performance of Terence Stamp and Vanessa Redgrave. The critic on KPCC gave a favorable review of *Unfinished Song*, equating it to last summer's hit, *The Marigold Hotel*. But to this movie-goer with the exception of Redgrave and Stamp, it wasn't even close.

## DODGER NIGHT FOR THE JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

July 12th was a special night at the Dodger Stadium for the JA community. The Dodger organization went through a lot of effort to make it special for the JACL Board members in attendance: **Nancy Takayama** (chair for tickets), **Nancy & Yas Gohata**, **Ellen & Harold Kameya**, and **Barbara & Dennis Okita**. The pre-game ceremonies included a hard-pounding Taiko group, the Nisei Week Court, and a rousing national anthem by a Korean mezzo-soprano and chorus. A section of the pre-game festivities was the throwing of the first pitches by three WWII Nisei veterans James Ogawa (100th), Don Seki (442nd) and Hitoshi Sameshima (MIS). It was especially moving to watch amputee James Ogawa toss his baseball. You can see a video of those three pitching balls at [www.goforbroke.org/dodgers.asp](http://www.goforbroke.org/dodgers.asp).

Since the Dodgers lost to the Colorado Rockies, 3-0, the other aspects of the game had to make up for it. Our 3 ½ yr old granddaughter sang her heart out during the national anthem and the 7th inning stretch. Dodger dogs are still \$5 each, but two deluxe versions are available.

Speaking of prices, there is some good news: Parking fees retreated back to \$10 per car. You can now bring outside food into the park. Ticket prices are now based on a 1 to 4 star rating for each game. 4-star games include games against the NY Yankees. 3-star games include giveaways such as Dodger blankets, sports team bags, etc. 2-star games include Friday night fireworks games, and the 1-star games have no special giveaways and are against low-ranked teams.

The fireworks at the end of the game made up for the Dodger's loss! My low expectations were blown apart by the great show! We saw some new fireworks variations that were simply spectacular!

Article submitted by Harold Kameya



(L to R): Yas & Nancy Gohata, Barbara & Dennis Okita



### MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO OUR ORGANIZATION

We welcome new members, **Linda** and **Roger Itaya** to our Chapter. Roger and Linda have joined us on several JACL outings and we are grateful to have Roger join us at the "Century Club" level. Roger and Linda are the instructors of the Ballroom Dance Class that meets every Tuesday at the SFVJA Community Center at 7:00 PM.



THE SFVJACC AND THE SFV JACL  
SELLING NAKANO NURSERY POTTED FLOWERS  
THE LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH BEGINNING  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup>

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM



Nakano Nursery has been donating potted flowers to our community for many, many years. Let's say thank you to the Nakano family.



## DOUGHBALL 2013

Despite the high temps and less than ideal attendance, the JACL Doughball game was a crowd favorite at the 2013 San Fernando Valley Obon Festival. The Doughball volunteers were kept busy with the constant flow of those willing to bet on their favorite color. **JP deGuzman**, JACL Recording Secretary/Scholarship Chair, displayed his carnival skills by enticing the crowd to part with their money by barking spontaneous creative rhymes. New volunteers **Jaclyn Tomita** and **Kaela Kawana** displayed their youthful energy by willing to work two shifts. **Neatha Mahony's** enthusiasm attracted returning people from last year and a middle school friend who said "I would recognize that yell anywhere!"

A round of applause to all those who help make the Doughball Booth a fundraiser team event, including **Wally & May Arakawa, Al & Mitzi Kushida, Michi Tokunaga, Linda Tanaka, Sumi Yamaguchi, Karl & Sandy Nobuyuki, Jean-Paul deGuzman, Mary Ishimoto, Bob Kobata, Linda Kuratomi, Harvey Negoro, Patty Takayama, Mas & Norma Jean Yamashita, Jaclyn Tomita, Kaela Kawana, Harold**

**Kameya, Doreen Kawamoto, Neatha Mahony, Gene Matsushita, Evelyn Mitarai, Jamie Takeshita, Laurie Shigekuni, Phil Shigekuni,** and special thanks to **Chairperson Marion Shigekuni**, who did a great job organizing the event and recruiting volunteers. Additional thanks to the mighty brawn that set up the booth - **Yas Gohata, Harold Kameya, Bob Kobata, Paul Jonokuchi, Gene Lew, Dennis Okita, Phil Shigekuni, Tom Uyeda, Karl Nobuyuki, and Al Kushida.**



Article submitted by **Marcia Mahony**, Co-Chairperson

## CIVIL RIGHTS SECTION THE SENATE IMMIGRATION BILL

On July 18, the senate passed an immigration bill which provides for a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented people. The path requires the meeting of certain conditions for 10 years, 5 years for youths.

It contains provision for a guest worker program, and raises the limit on the number of skilled workers to be allowed to enter the country.

It also allows for unlimited visas for spouses and children of permanent residents.

Controversial, is the addition of close to 40 thousand border security agents, and 350 additional miles of fencing along the Mexican border.

The passing of the senate bill was of note in that the bill was devised by a bi-partisan committee, and a significant number of Republicans crossed over to vote for the bill. Its passage was seen by many as a victory for President Obama. The house will consider its version of an immigration bill after the August recess.

Article submitted by **Phil Shigekuni**

## REDRESS MEMORIES

This year is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1988. The legislation signed by President Reagan provided for Redress, an apology for the forceable removal and incarceration in Wartime Internment Camps and for those internees still alive at the signing of the legislation, \$20,000 compensation for loss of property, humiliation, suffering and interruption of business and economic loss incurred as a result of the evacuation.

For Americans and Japanese in particular, this was an acknowledgement and redemption for failure of our constitutional due process. The principles laid out in our constitution is what our country stands for. If we do not practice it in our own backyard, how can we espouse it. The Civil Rights Act of 1988 was an acknowledgement of wrongdoing, a failure to uphold our own principles.

Two significant events occurred in the 1980s: First, was the commission hearings on the Wartime Relocation of Japanese Americans to Internment Camps. This was in preparation for presenting legislation to Congress that provided for Redress (an apology) and Reparations (\$20,000 per person) to all internees who spent time in one of the ten Wartime Relocation camps who were alive at the signing of the bill. The second was the legal challenge to the Korematsu case – a coram nobis challenge based on false evidence presented by the War Department to the Supreme Court to justify the removal of Japanese American persons on the west coast as a potential military threat to the country.

The hearings proved cathartic for the Nisei American citizen populace who spent decades ashamed of this part of their history. By bringing the stories and suffering to the attention of others, the shame could be turned to anger, then, transformed into energy and directed at something positive, not just for the individual but for the nation. It turned a shameful internalized experience into a call to action and duty to defend others similarly situated in the future.

The Supreme Court overturned the Korematsu case, but not the authority to remove and incarcerate, which was affirmed in the National Defense Authorization Act, passed and signed into law, December 2012.

By: Patricia Takayama

## Sumi's Corner

Speedy recovery to our own **Sumi Yamaguchi**, who had a heart operation on July 16<sup>th</sup> to implant a pacemaker. She's resting at home and is already feeling much better.

Congratulations to **Akemi Kikumura Yano**, who is the recipient of the Kunsho – a prestigious decoration from the Japanese government. Akemi is the former CEO and President of the Japanese American National Museum and visiting scholar at the UCLA Asian-American Study Center. She is board member, **Marion Shigekuni's**, youngest sister.

Congratulations to **Akemi Arzouman**, who graduated from Carleton College in June 2013. Star forward for the Carleton Knights, Akemi became the newest member of the 1,000-point club, becoming only the 12<sup>th</sup> player in the school's program history to score 1,000 points. Proud JACL parents are **Cherylee & Michael Arzouman**. Akemi is the eldest granddaughter of board member **Mitzi Kushida** and husband **Al Kushida**.

Condolences to the family of **Hiroshi "Hank" Kushida**, who passed away on June 11, 2013 at the age of 83. He is survived by his wife "**Sami**" and son, **Clete (Shirley) Kushida**. Hank was the older brother of JACL member **Al (Mitzi) Kushida**.

Condolences to JACL member **Hazel Isa**, whose mother **Masae Arimizu**, passed away on June 30, 2013. Mrs. Arimizu had celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on January 23, 2013.



## WARREN FURUTANI RESPONDS TO DWP ADVERTISEMENT

A racially demeaning television advertisement by the Department of Water and Power that showed a Caucasian man as a white-painted face geisha in the Japanese Garden at Balboa Park was purportedly intended to promote a water conservation program. However, it was totally lost on the viewing public who was so offended by the image, never grasped the message.

The advertisement was immediately pulled from the air. However, complaints by various organizations and individuals, myself included, resulted in an investigation by the Board of Public Works Commission. As a Commissioner on the Board of Public Works, Warren Furutani advised that an investigation had been launched to flush out the chain of events that led up to the release of the inappropriate advertisement and steps were being taken to avoid such conduct in the future.

Furutani advised that: 1) the Public Affairs staff would receive a mandatory diversity/sensitivity training, 2) Personnel proceedings were underway for individuals responsible for the production and release of the video 3) A new management oversight process was being finalized, 4) The Asian Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) has been contracted to do diversity training about Asian Pacific Islander American communities for the whole Board of Public Works (five Bureaus), 5) We are working on a "Days of Dialogue" program to discuss the issue of ethnic, racial, gender and other forms of diversity in the City Family (those who work for the City).

Furutani explained that since the objective of the video was lost, he arranged a tour of the Garden for the Consul General of Japan and the National Director of the JACL, in addition to other community representatives including a representative from JANM.

If anyone has other comments they wish to forward, Commissioner Furutani can be contacted by email: [Warren.Furutani@lacity.org](mailto:Warren.Furutani@lacity.org) and his office number is: (213) 978-0255.

By: Patricia Takayama

## WINTERSBURG HISTORIC CHURCH

The Huntington Beach Planning Commission will be discussing the preservation of a cluster of buildings once a Church, Japanese American owned house and barn among others in Wintersburg to determine their historic status. The commission is meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2013. Emails or letters of support should be sent in time for the Tuesday hearing.

On the heels of the success of the Tuna Canyon rally which resulted in securing historic status for the Detention site, another challenge requires our attention. The Wintersburg site needs support to preserve this historic site which has a church and on the adjacent Furuta family farm a house and barn among other structures. Four of the six structures on the property under consideration are eligible to be included as a historic landmark. The Mission complex is the oldest Japanese church in Orange County. These properties were acquired prior to the passage of the Alien Land Law. The U.S. Dept of Interior has announced an effort to preserve Asian American historic sites. Please support the effort to preserve this site by having it declared a historic site. Either attend or ask your friends who live nearby to attend the commission hearing or write a letter or send an email. See below for addresses and website for more detail.

Address your message to: C/O Planning Commission Administrative Chairman, Mark Bixby and Members of the Commission. Email C/O: Planning Commission Administrative Aide, Kim Decoite: [KDeCoite@sufcity-hb.org](mailto:KDeCoite@sufcity-hb.org). Please CC or BCC: Mary Urashima, to assure your emails is included in the public record. [mary.adams.urashima@gmail.com](mailto:mary.adams.urashima@gmail.com).

For more detailed information see: [www.HistoricWintersburg.blogspot.com](http://www.HistoricWintersburg.blogspot.com)  
And/or send your snail mail letters to: Planning Commission, City of Huntington Beach, 2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648, with copies to Mary Urashima via email.

Submitted by Patty Takayama

## KATAROU HISTORIES

This summer, the Japanese American Citizens League Pacific Southwest (JACL-PSW) District office is hosting Katarou Histories, a ten week dialogue-based program for all generations to foster a deeper understanding of identity, community and the importance of preserving oral histories in the San Fernando Valley's Japanese American community. This is the second summer the San Fernando Valley JACL chapter and the PSW District office have collaborated to encourage more community members to learn about the significance of sharing their stories and building community by enriching our collective knowledge. Through this experience, Miharū Okamura, a JACL intern helping to plan this program has expressed that, "Getting to work with people, who have experienced and gone through such difficult times has been a true eye opener...Not only have I gained experience with working with an intergenerational demographic, but also life experience getting to listen to their stories. Something that I have learned from this program is that, you're never too old or too young to inspire creation, aspiration and courage to the community." Katarou Histories offers a rare chance for Japanese Americans from multiple generations to not only share and be exposed to narratives that are often unheard, but to feel empowered to preserve their oral histories through creative outlets. The participants in Katarou Histories are currently working on their final projects to share their discoveries with the greater community **on August 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC) Cultural Room in Little Tokyo.** We encourage you all to join us for the inaugural celebration of our Katarou Histories program participants and their intergenerational collaborative efforts to empower the community and preserve our cultural, community and regional history.

By Traci Ishigo, Program Coordinator, JACL PSW District

## MEMORIES OF CAMP

When I was a child, we used to call Quonset huts, kamaboko houses, because they were shaped like the fish cakes sold on 2"x 5" wood boards. I don't recall where I first saw one, but I always associated it with camp. The camp that my parents went to in the Mojave Desert. We used to drive up highway 395 enroute to Lone Pine or some other town that was close to the lakes where my father took take us fishing. Sometimes they would stop the car and point at the desolate shrub brush and tumbleweeds or just point and remind us that is where they stayed when they went to camp..

I got it all wrong of course. That camp in the Mojave Desert wasn't a summer camp where my parents went to play and have fun, it was an internment camp where they were imprisoned behind barbed wire and guard towers. Soldiers, who supposedly were there to protect them, pointed their rifles inward at the residents, not out toward the townspeople. Soldiers, in a moment of panic shot into a boisterous crowd, killing five people instantly and wounding three more, two of whom later died.

I don't know if there were ever Quonset huts there. At some point, there were barracks where my parents were housed. However, when we drove by in the late 1950s they were all removed and evidence of the camp was gone. But I always imaged that there must have been Quonset huts there.

Then, when I was in college, I learned the truth. I read the book "Farewell to Manzanar" and learned about what camp meant to my parents. The place where they met and married was not some romantic summer resort camp, but a camp where they were imprisoned for being Japanese American.

Later, I discovered photo books on the camps and the other historical accounts of the events, riots, loyalty oaths, work furloughs, all those things, I neglected to ask about when I was a naïve child. The stark landscape and the row upon row of barracks that resembled P.O.W. camps in the movies, shocked me. I had no idea that our government could do something so contrary to the U.S. Constitution. I was not unfamiliar

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with acts of racism committed by individuals. However, I was astonished when I learned that the government betrayed my people -. Citizens and permanent residents alike – rounded them up like cattle, tagged them and relocated them to temporary holding facilities behind barbed wire in isolated geographical areas with the most inhospitable climate.

At first, I was angry. How could this happen? This is America, the country where I was born and raised. My country founded on principles of equality and freedom. How did this violation of civil rights occur? And worse still, how is it that my parents did nothing to challenge the government? In fact why didn't everyone rise up and protest their unconstitutional treatment?

Again, I was naïve. There were people who protested: some resisted the draft and were sent to prison, others chose to repatriate to Japan, even though they'd never been there before, but held dual citizenship.

I had to ask myself, what would I have done? How would I resist if I were placed in a similar situation? How would I affirm my constitutional rights?

How does one resist during a time of war? Would any resistance be viewed as a treasonous act and punishable with prison time? Or would any act be viewed as anti-American and be suspect or considered an act of sabotage?

That was in the past. It was time to look at what authority legitimized the mass removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans with due process. It was the legality of the authority that needed to be challenged and overturned and the internment needed to be brought to light for the American public to learn of this grave stain on our country's history.

Two things happened in the 1980s: The commission hearing on the Wartime Relocation of Internment Camps began in preparation for presenting legislation to Congress that provided for Redress (an apology) and Reparations(\$20,000 per person) to all internees who spent time in one of the ten Wartime Relocation camps alive at the signing of the bill; the second thing was the legal challenge – a coram nobis challenge based on false evidence presented by the War Department to the Supreme Court to justify the threat of Japanese American persons on the west coast as a potential threat to the country.

The hearing proved cathartic for the Nisei, American citizen populace who spent decades ashamed of this part of their history. By bringing the stories and suffering to the attention of others, the shame could be turned to anger, then, transformed into energy and directed at something positive, not just for the individual but for the nation. It turned a shameful internalized experience into a call to action and duty to defend others similarly situated in the future.

The Supreme Court overturned the Korematsu case, but not the authority to incarcerate, which was affirmed in the National Defense Authorization Act, passed December 2012.

My father once said to me – where were those people when we needed help? Who was speaking out for us? I had to ask myself, would I be the one to speak out when someone else needed help? If I did not then, like my father asked, who was going to speak out?

Submitted by Patty Takayama



## Historic Designation for Tuna Canyon: Looking Back and Moving Forward

By Jean-Paul de Guzman

On June 25, 2013 the Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted to add Tuna Canyon Detention Station (TCDS) to the Register of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monuments. This bittersweet moment gave dignity to the immigrant detainees held at TCDS during World War II and their families and marked the culmination of a long struggle that conjoined a diverse set of constituents.

Last fall, City Councilman Richard Alarcón, who has a long history with the Nikkei community stretching back to his youth, growing up next to Harry Nakada and learning judo at the CC, introduced a motion to designate TCDS a historic cultural monument. Shepherded by Mr. Alarcón's unflagging staff, including Gerald Gubatan, Mary Benson and Brenda Fortune, our coalition grew.

Indefatigable local historian and past-president of the Little Landers Historical Society Dr. Lloyd Hitt unearthed important documents such as aerial maps from the 1930s and 1940s to provide the "hard evidence" of the camp's past. To complement those primary sources, individuals whose fathers and grandfathers were detained at TCDS, such as Haru Kuromiya of Altadena, Russell Endo of Denver, and Ryan Yokota of Chicago, stepped forward to share their stories. Filmmaker Joe Barrett made several short documentaries designed to educate the public. Members of our Valley community including CC President Nancy Oda, former JACL president Nancy Takayama and myself joined this coalition to strategize how to generate further support for Alarcón's motion as it made its way through the legislative labyrinth of city hall.

In April the city's Cultural Affairs Commission voted against the motion citing a lack of physical structures at the current site of TCDS, the Verdugo Hills Golf Course (which is



Members of the Tuna Canyon Historic Designation Coalition with Councilman Richard Alarcon (center).

slated for residential development). We faced another set-back when the Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee similarly voted against the motion and recommended our coalition privately work with the developers to work out a deal. Undeterred, and unwilling to compromise, we buckled down and became even more determined. In the course of a few months, the grassroots mobilization was overwhelming. We secured letters or other expressions of support from the Sunland-Tujunga Community, veterans of the Asian American and Redress Movements, the Manzanar Committee, Rep. Adam Schiff, State Senator Carol Liu, and a variety of Asian American Studies scholars at CSUN, UCLA, University of Colorado, Texas A&M, CSU Dominguez Hills, San Francisco State University, and the University of Hawai'i. Because the history of TCDS spoke to larger issues about race and democracy we received touching support from APIAs in Historic Preservation, the Council of American-Islamic Relations, Islamic Shura Council, Muslim Public Affairs Council and the Italian American Museum of Los Angeles. Over 1,300 individuals from Arleta to Japan signed onto our online petition. Local media also took notice, with reporters from KPCC, the *Rafu Shimpo*, *Pacific Citizen*, *Crescenta Valley Weekly*, and eventually, the *Los Angeles Times* all taking note.

The showdown came on June 21 when Mr. Alarcón pushed a vote on the motion, going against the recommendations of the PLUM Committee. Armed with the numbers and wearing our brightest red clothes to demonstrate the passion with which we felt about TCDS our coalition and supporters boarded a large bus (generously funded, I might add, by the CC) in Sunland, drove past the site of TCDS, and made our way to downtown. Our coalition filled an entire half of the marbled council chambers. Members from the CC and/or JACL included Nancy Oda, resplendent in her red suit and black hat, Karl Nobuyuki, Mabel Takimoto, Nancy Takayama and myself. We tensely sat, listening to legislative jargon, perfunctory commendation presentations, and various gadflies. Noticing that the councilmembers continuously bypassed our agenda item caused great worry, but we could see Gerald, Brenda and Mary from Alarcón's office and coalition member and city hall veteran JoAnn Kumamoto quickly darting across the chamber taking to other staffers and councilmembers. Eventually Mr. Alarcón spoke out passionately. The chair of the PLUM committee, Ed Reyes, voiced his disapproval for not respecting the terms of his committee's recommendation. Yet, our sheer presence forced him to acknowledge the gravity of TCDS and its meanings for Japanese Americans and the entire community. Afterwards, we could see Alarcón earnestly negotiating with other councilmembers as some of his other colleagues spoke at length about preservation efforts in their districts. Eventually, the members reached a compromise: the Council would designate one acre of land, an oak grove, as a monument and mandate the creation of a task force to oversee the development of the site. A week later, the updated motion was unanimously carried.

Story continued on page 13

Although some wished for more land to be allocated, it was a victory nonetheless.

Our scrappy coalition is now looking to incorporate as a non-profit organization so we can fundraise, secure a plaque, and begin the process of building an interpretive and educational center that will bring the tragic, but rich, stories of World War II to the residents and school children of Los Angeles. That our friends, neighbors, family, and youth will be able to travel just a few miles from their homes to bear witness to this past is an important feat unto itself.

At this point, and I'm sure she'd certainly disapprove of this turn, I would like to personally thank Nancy Oda for her leadership, vision, and energy during this process. In addition to securing the invaluable institutional support of the CC, Nancy has served as an indispensable cornerstone in the coalition. With grace and foresight, she has articulated the historic educational and moral imperative to save TCDS. Nancy has been a critical figure in bringing together members of the Nikkei and wider Asian American community, the Sunland-Tujunga neighborhoods,



(L to R): Mabel Takimoto, Doreen Kawamoto, Nancy Gohata, Mitzi Kushida, Marion Shigekuni, & Nancy Oda.

legislative staff and others. Sitting down with interviewers, criss-crossing the east Valley from the CC to the TCDS site, and making countless personal appeals, Nancy has demonstrated a profound commitment to this cause and all that it represents: excavating long buried histories, defending democracy, and imagining a better future.

Jean-Paul de Guzman is a member of the Tuna Canyon Historic Designation Committee.  
Photos from Nancy Oda.

## DONATIONS

We would like to acknowledge the generous monetary donations made to our Chapter by members and friends.

Donations were made to our Chapter in memory of **Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi** by the following members: **Nancy & Yas Gohata, Mitzi & Al Kushida, and Harriet Nishizaka**. We also received an anonymous donation.



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# San Fernando Valley Japanese American Citizens League

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Membership for an individual, their spouse/partner and any children under 25 years of age.

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A membership category where members make a larger annual contribution to their chapter and national programs of the organization

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