



PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL · Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928

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BOARD MEMBER MESSAGE

By Connie Masuoka

For my turn at the board members column I was planning on writing to inspire you to join me in being engaged; in touching your JA side, and join me at the Tsuru for Solidarity Rally or the Minidoka Pilgrimage. But then came COVID-19 and all plans are on indefinite hold.

COVID-19 has created a great state of UNKNOWN (?) – When will it be over? – Should we wear masks and gloves as daily wear? – When will it be “normal”? – What will “normal” look like? – Do I ever get to hug my friends again? For a person like me who has trained to plan, institute, and complete goals; I have experienced a paralysis. It now takes me forever to complete the simplest task as I lose my focus worrying and second guessing every action or thought for fear of the virus. This lack of focus has led me to countless hours looking for misplaced coffee cups, glasses that are absent minded placed on top of my head, and thoughts. Writing this message is a lot harder than I planned it to be.

After stressing for a couple of weeks about not having a job to go to and how was I going to do everything by computer (those who know me know I have the ability of a Neanderthal when it comes to technology) I have come to the realization that this

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Japanese American Graduation Banquet

May 3rd has been cancelled
Scholarships will be awarded

Primary Election

May 19

Memorial Day Service

May 25th has been cancelled

National Pilgrimage to Close the Camps

June 5-7th has been postponed

JACL National Convention in Las Vegas

June 24-28th has been postponed

Ikoi No Kai is closed for now

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pandemic has a silver lining for me. I now have the luxury of quiet time to ponder what is important to me and what should I be doing to make that happen. In this time of quarantine and physical separation I think about being Japanese American and how can I utilize that to be helpful and more engaged with our community. Being Japanese American is not a blood line it is a cultural/community mindset that has a civil rights agenda. It is informed by the hard work and spirit of the Issei; the injustices and racism of World War II; the fortitude and perseverance of the Nisei; the revitalization of culture and kimochi of the Shin Nikkei and the tenacity of the Sansei to reclaim this identity. I cannot take you on a Minidoka Pilgrimage this year and we may not be able to rally for Tsuru for Solidarity in Washington DC, but you can get a feeling for your JA side by going to Heartmountain.org and see there online programming, or go on YouTube and watch "Pilgrimage" by Tadashi Nakamura or "Ugly history: Japanese American incarceration camps" by Densho. These are only a few of the offerings on the internet but check them out and share them with your family and friends and let's see if we can grow a greater stronger heart of community.

By the time you read this you will know exactly how long a 20 second handwashing lasts, how to social distance gracefully, wear a facemask with panache, and how to order groceries and take-out on-line. So now that you have got the technical aspects of quarantine down you should probably consider keeping yourself mentally healthy. Coping with the stress and anxiety caused by the uncertainty and fear of the unknown is difficult but I saw this little blurb called "The ABC's of handling uncertainty" that might give you inspiration.

Awareness of how the unknown affects you –

mind, heart, or body (take 5 minutes or more in the day to meditate and listen to your inner self) Balance in how you spend your time (even though I said go to the internet take a little time to take a walk and not just to the refrigerator) Connection with friends, loved ones and peers, even when physically distancing (this could include waving at the neighbors, call or text to check on friends and neighbor especially those who you know live alone)

We, the board of Portland JACL, are here for you, to help get through this difficult time. Contact us at 1-877-843-6914 or at youth@pdxjacl.org

Newsletter Update

By Christopher Lee

Hopefully most of you received a copy of the paper newsletter last month as well as an email version of the newsletter that was sent on April 4th. They are the same newsletter so feel free to read either one. Although, you may have noticed the digital version is in color!

We are excited to finally have a digital newsletter that we can share and send directly to you. We received many positive responses and hope you all enjoyed it. In the future we anticipate being able to use email to share important news and announcements in a more timely manner as well.

For now we'll continue sending both a mail and an email version of our newsletter. We are still working on long-term options for the printed copy.

If we don't have your email or if you didn't receive the April 4th email, please let us know. You can email us at **newsletter@pdxjacl.org**.

Asian People are **NOT** A DISEASE

David Inoue

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Sarah Baker

VP Public Affairs sbaker@jacl.org

As terms like “Chinese Virus”, “Wuhan Virus”, and “Kung Flu” are increasingly used by the President and other leaders in our country, so do we see the increase of racially-based hate crimes and xenophobia against people of Asian descent. While President Trump has defended his usage of these types of terms, as “inot racist at all”, the impacts on our communities tell a different story.

Since as early as January, Asian-owned businesses have been seeing drastic decreases in sales, to the point that some have had to permanently close. New York City has seen a significant rise in violence against Asians, ranging from verbal abuse to physical assault, including a man chasing an Asian woman through the subway station before beating her. In San Francisco a woman was spit on and screamed at by a man on the street, forcing her to flee to a nearby business to escape further attack. These types of incidents are only going to increase as rhetoric that points the finger at the Chinese, and more broadly Asians, continues to escalate.

Asians, especially East Asians, are being labeled as dirty, uncivilized, and animalistic based on cultural generalizations. Senator Cornyn (TX) blamed the Chinese for causing COVID-19 because of the stereotype of a diet of animals exotic to American palates. This type of fear-based inductive reasoning harkens back to moments in our history like the Chinese Exclusion Act and the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans, when people of Asian descent were targeted by our government through racist policies.

People of Asian descent are no more likely to be carriers of COVID-19 than anyone else: viruses do not see race. The negative and in some cases violent reactions Asians have been experiencing serve as a reminder that we are seen as the perpetual foreigner. It doesn't matter how many generations our families have been here or if we have just recently immigrated, we are continually labeled as “other”. Had COVID-19 originated in a predominantly white country, the story would have looked a lot different.

This harmful narrative that is being divisively used by our government leaders is creating wide-spread hatred and fear against Asians that will have long lasting impacts on our community. As businesses close and racist

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attacks continue, we call on our leaders to use language that does not cast blame on Asian people. COVID-19 is a global pandemic that impacts all of us equally. It should be called by its scientific name, not a colloquialism that is harming the Asian people.

Reporting Hate or Bias Incidents in Oregon

If you are the victim of a hate or bias incident, please report it to:

Oregon Department of Justice
1-844-924-BIAS (2427).

The hotline has trained staff available Monday-Friday, who will help victims connect with resources best suited to their

needs. Name calling and racist comments may not rise to the level of a criminal act but they are still hurtful and traumatizing.

To report incidents of hate or racial bias, and/or to contact an organization for support, visit here: **<https://www.portlandunitedagainsthate.org/report-hate>**



**Current
Board Members**

Co-President
Chris Lee

Co-President
Amanda Shannahan

Vice President
Jeff Matsumoto

Treasurer
Jillian Toda-Currie

Secretary
Heidi Tolentino

Membership Chair
Setsy Larouche

Board Members:
Sachi Kaneko
Lynn Fuchigami Park
Connie Masuoka
Marleen Wallingford
Jenny Yamada

If you would like to contact the Board, their email address is **First Name@pdxjacl.org**

Thank you to **Ryan Nakano** for his service on the Portland JACL Board. Ryan has resigned from his board position as he has now moved to California.

A Robber/Killer

Stalks the Neighborhood

Sharon Takahashi

Japanese Ancestral Society

The menace has taken its toll on our community and its damage includes having us confined in our homes. The perpetrator will not be prosecuted for the damage it has caused but we can hope that it will be identified, captured and placed under lifetime quarantine so damage is minimized.

First Victim

The COVID Robber took the Greater Portland Graduation Banquet away. The 11 sponsoring organizations decided in March via an email vote that we could not risk holding a function which would definitely have more than 10 in attendance. From the students who had applied for scholarship/awards, it took the opportunity to be visually recognized by the supportive attendees. These usually included proud parents, grandparents, fellow church members, other high school friends and a variety of folk who make this event a part of their spring calendar.

The students had other deprivations to cope with: no junior prom, no DECA state finals, no state sports honors, no Model United Nations group gatherings, no Statewide or Regional Lego Robotics science competitions and on and on grows the list. Perhaps the biggest loss the Class of 2020 suffered was the excitement of finishing their 12 plus years of organized institutional education with friends, watching parents plan their family gathering and welcoming relatives from afar, and looking forward to starting their next chapter.

The sponsors deeply felt the graduates' losses and voted to proceed with the selection process of scholarship awards, dispensing with the face to face interviews, and choosing to have each organization notify students individually. The interview committee read and did their jobs diligently. We wished that the shelter in place mandate could have been lifted and we could have met and congratulated all of the students in the banquet setting. That was not to be.

Second Victim

As of today, it is not known if Oregon will return to a semblance of normalcy by May's end. The Japanese Ancestral Society and the Oregon Nisei Veterans, Inc. do not want to put any of our friends at risk by going forward with the annual Memorial Day services at Rose City or Lone Fir Cemetery in its traditional form. As we seek input from the participants, we hear the hurt and sense of loss for something folks feel is a community ritual. Reverend Andrew Uzunoe and the Konko Church have known that it was their year to be the church in charge and had plans in the works to proceed. The reverend reminds us all that a honoring our forebears is a personal thing and that if he is committed individually to being at the cemetery on that day. Masks, safe distancing and extra care in every way should be the order of the day. We will probably not gather together as a community this Memorial Day but we will work together again soon.

Till then, it is our mission to stay home, stay safe and save lives.

PHOTO CORNER



JASO Shinnenkai was held on January 15, 2020.

L to R: Setsy Larouche, Keiko Nakata, Mrs. Teraoka,
Consul General Teraoka, George Nakata.
Photo By: Chip Larouche



Emperor's Birthday Reception

At the Hilton Hotel was held on Feb 7, 2020.

L to R: Setsy Larouche, Consul General Teraoka, Mrs.
Teraoka, Chip Larouche



Oregon Hiroshima Club held their Shinnenaki on January 18, 2020.

We were honored to have Consul Hiroaki Sato and Mrs. Yuko Sato from Hiroshima, JPN.

L to R: Setsy Larouche, Shig Fujikawa, Ken Kawazoe, Katie Kawazoe, Cherie Yokota, Chip Larouche,
Yoji Matsushima, Consul Sato, Connie Masuoka, Todd Yuzuriha, Elaine Yuzuriha, Mrs. Sato.



Portland JACL installed the officers for 2020-22 at the Holladay Park Plaza on February 1st. We had a delicious bento made by chef Hiroji Obayashi.

L to R: Chip Larouche, PNW Governor installs (Back row): Chris Lee, Amanda Shannahan, Jeff Matsumoto, Jenny Yamada, Heidi Tolentino, Setsy Larouche, Sachi Kaneko.
(Front row): Jillian Toda-Currie, Marleen Wallingford, Connie Masuoka.

Tsurus for Solidarity Fold In

By Richard March

When we gathered for serious good activism to fold tsuru for the movement to close the immigrant detention camps on February 16th, we could hardly have guessed how different our lives would be just two months later. It's a compelling reminder of how fast and dramatically things changed for Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the two months between December 1941 and February 1942. Although Tsuru for Solidarity had to postpone the "Pilgrimage to Close the Camps" planned for June, they will reschedule. And, sad to say, we need to redouble efforts to raise the demand to close today's internment camps amidst all the new urgent needs brought on by the pandemic.

We are happy to report that the tsuru you folded at the February fold-in are now part of the soon-to-be 125,000 tsuru folded by freedom fighters across the country. We had such a huge number of tsuru after the fold-in, plus a hundred from Ellen who folded before she went out of town, then Loen donated two hundred more, scores more came in from others (including from an ESOL club at PCC Southeast)... we were so close, that Nikki decided to round it up to the mythical 1,000 (and wound up with 1,003 to be exact). Well, we strung the final tsuru this past week and Connie Masuoka picked them up yesterday – a few days after the national Tsuru for Solidarity committee announced that they were only 15,000 shy of their goal. Our tsuru bring that goal ever closer.

Also, a special thank you to Malli Moran for collecting donations to help support the Tsuru for Solidarity movement. You all contributed a total of \$65.00, which we mailed off to the national Tsuru office in Tucson, AZ.

Hopefully, the tsuru and the thousands of tsuru-folders and friends will add power to the mobilization and demands we need to keep

making until the people imprisoned are freed and the detention camps are closed. **THANK YOU, CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF US.**

And, in the words of Tsuru for Solidarity: **LET'S KEEP RAISING OUR COLLECTIVE VOICES TO DEMAND HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS AND ALL IMMIGRANTS.**



May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month!

Celebrate with our list of recommended t.v. shows and movies you can watch in the comfort and safety of your own home.

- ★ Terrace House: Tokyo 2019-2020
- ★ Tigertail
- ★ The Half of It
- ★ Always Be My Maybe
- ★ Hari Kondabolu: Warn Your Relatives
- ★ Kim's Convenience



Now streaming on Netflix!



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STAY HOME
SAVE LIVES



Our sewing champion is Jean Yamamoto who used her skills as a seamstress and her big stash of fabric to make masks for Multnomah County Nurses. It is now recommended that everyone wears a mask when you go out into the public.

Kristen Dozono started a face mask outreach to our INK family delivering a hand made mask to those that needed one. We still have handmade masks on hand so if anyone still needs one they can call Kristen Dozono at (503)939-7989 or Tracey at (503)522-2295.