



PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL - Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• AUGUST 2021 | VOLUME 27 ISSUE 8 •

Board Member MESSAGE

Summer Reads

Recommendations from
Portland JACL Board Members

With summer winding down, we wanted to share some books you might enjoy while soaking up the remainder of the sun. We asked several of our board members what they've been reading these days. Here are some of the titles we haven't been able to put down!

We Hereby Refuse by Frank Abe and Tomiko

Nimura: This new graphic novel tells the story of the Nikkei who did not readily go along with the exclusion order: Jim Akutsu, the inspiration for "No No Boy," Hiroshi Kashiwagi who renounces his US citizenship, and Mitsuye Endo who challenged her firing. This book challenges the story that all of the Nikkei were cooperative.

- Marleen Wallingford

All About Love by Bell Hooks: Hooks is a groundbreaking visionary who helped birth inter-sectional feminism in this country. This book in particular, although non-fiction, is a smooth read and feels like medicine for the soul as it's ingested. She teaches us how to love, not just in the romantic sense, but how to be a loving family member or community participant. She discusses what it means to be loving and requests the reader participate in this new kind of love. I believe that she teaches radical self love in the...

Continued on Pg. 2

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

August 6

Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance

Japanese American Historical Plaza
(Registration Required)
6pm

August 6-8

We Hold Sacred

JAMO Annex (Formerly ONLC)
Art exhibit of history of anti-nuclear activism
6th: 630pm - 8pm
7 - 8th: 12pm - 3pm

August 10

Civil Liberties Act of 1988

Signed by President Ronald Reagan

August 15

Kimochi Project

Oaks Park Picnic Area
12pm - 2pm or
3pm - 5pm

August 19

Portland JACL Board Meeting (Members welcome to visit)

OBT Annex
630 pm

Edited by Chong Sim (simc0186@gmail.com)

Continued from Pg. 1 been stories of our own parents/grandparents.

...process- urging the reader to participate in, find, and create healthy loving connection in their own life.

- Sachi Kaneko

We Are Not Free by Traci Chee: Japanese American author, Traci Chee, vividly paints the complicated landscape of the incarceration camps in this YA novel. *We Are Not Free* explores the vast experiences of several Nisei teenagers during their transition from being a tight-knit group of friends in San Francisco's Nihonmachi to being incarcerated in a desolate camp. Although the overall story is fiction, Chee's research and interviews with camp survivors is very apparent as readers are taken through a roller coaster of moments that could easily have

- Jillian Toda-Currie

The Body is Not An Apology by Sonya Renee Taylor: In this book, activist and poet Sonya Renee Taylor teaches us about radical self-love as a foundation for transformation and liberation. With reflection prompts scattered throughout the book, she encourages readers to explore messages that we've received about our own body and others, and to imagine a world where we are all free from body shame and oppression. I appreciate how she bridges personal and systems-level work and encourages us to continue working towards justice from a place of love.

- Amanda Shannahan



Portland JACL board members, Amanda Shannahan and Jillian Toda-Currie, joined volunteers at the Japanese American Museum of Oregon (JAMO) in painting and weather-proofing boards to protect the exterior windows of the museum.

❖ Kimochi Project ❖

J A C L



LEGACY FUND

The JACL Legacy Fund logo is simple, yet rich in meaning.

At its core is the diamond motif—found throughout the traditional Japanese arts—suggesting strength and stability.

The three diamonds, together with the flame, symbolize the fusion of past, present, and eternal future of Japanese American life.

The circle is the continuance and protection actively preserved by JACL.

Summer is here and COVID 19 mandates are lifting, we had hoped to have our annual Nikkei Community Picnic this summer, but I haven't quite figured how to maintain safety standards for our youngest and older picnickers. So instead of a Picnic this year we are offering a training to help ease back into the world with confidence. With a generous grant from the JACL Legacy Fund we will be hosting an in-person program about personal safety and situational awareness which will include training in the use of personal alarms and pepper spray. This program is developed for those who are not athletically inclined and show you options to meet your physical ability. The program will include a training booklet, personal alarm, pepper spray, water and snacks. Please join us to help build the safety and confidence of our community.

Sunday, August 15, 2021

At Oaks Park under the Canopy - South Grove 2 (same site as the Picnic)

Cost: Free

This will include a training booklet, personal alarm, pepper spray.

Open to the community but there is limited capacity so please RSVP to attend.

There will be 2 sessions offered: 12pm-2pm and 3pm-5pm

Please RSVP to Connie Masuoka at 503-243-3291 or reserve your space online at youth@pdxjacl.org.

❖ Essays from the Scholarship Winners ❖



The winner of the Yoshiko Kennedy Scholarship was Kandai Shimada of Camas High School.

About five years ago, on a cloudless sunny day sitting in seiza on the aging tatami mats that gave off the sweet quaint smell of a traditional washitsu, I was introduced to the art of Japanese calligraphy, shūji. After learning the basic principles and techniques, my instructor insisted that my first piece of writing be of a character from my name. I chose the kanji Dai. To this day, the character Dai hangs quietly in my room. Despite the writing's smaller size, its presence has had a great impact on who I am today. It continues to remind me of my Japanese ancestry, to strive for my big goals, and to embrace myself as a Japanese American.

Earlier on in my life, I tended to shy away from my distinct cultural background. Living in a predominantly white community, I felt isolated as a Japanese American. From the racial stereotypes to the history between Japan and the US, I often felt that hiding my culture was for the better. It was an immature mindset developed from fear and naiveness and it continued to grow as I got older. I soon became so cautious to avoid conversations about my background that I began to lose my true identity as an individual, pretending to play a false persona. However, whenever I traveled back to Japan to visit my grandparents, I was reminded

of the vast beauty that Japanese culture held. Experiences including the customs of politeness, the lively Natsu Matsuri under the tranquil Chouchin lights, and the visits to an abundance of shrines across the country, these experiences of traveling back to Japan was what stopped me from completely abandoning my ethnicity and culture.

Once I reached high school, I began to come out of my shell of fear of my ancestry. From joining the Japanese Language Class to partaking in Japanese cultural events in the community, I realized how flawed my mindset was. I met other Japanese Americans who had similar experiences, yet their pride and passion for their Japanese ancestry shocked me. Their openness to sharing and listening to not only Japanese culture, evoked a sense of urgency into me that I myself had to change. Through connecting and sharing more of my experiences, I gradually gained more confidence while switching to a mindset that focused on embracing my differences, instead of abandoning them.

From visits to Japan to getting involved in the local Japanese American community, I became more invested in my ethnicity. Being in America was just another window of opportunity for me to share and spread the beauty of my unique background. This is why the shūji of the Dai has had a great influence on who I am today. It is a visual reminder of the values that I hold in my Japanese ancestry, the people I have met on the journey of realization, and to sometimes take a step back and look at the bigger picture.

Congratulations!

❖ Essays from the Scholarship Winners ❖



The winner of the Mabel Shoji Boggs Scholarship was Sayuri Payne of Mountainside High School.

Last month, on February 20th, I came full circle on the first step of my journey in understanding the historical significance, and what it means to Japanese American. It was the annual Day of Remembrance. Portland JACL and NAACP Vancouver chapter were sponsoring an online round table that started with Peggy Nagae taking the audience through a history of Japanese American incarceration during WWII and the subsequent efforts for redress. The discussion took me back in time to last summer when I learned first-hand how Japanese Americans were treated during the war.

Halfway through the return leg of our annual family Summer trek to Lake Tahoe last year, Dad announced a detour. Great...the last thing I wanted to do on a 10-hour drive home to Beaverton was extend it. The sign read: National Historic Landmark - Tule Lake Internment Center. The next hour completely changed my perspective on what it meant to be Japanese American; I spent the rest of the Summer researching a very different history from what I had experienced in either Japan or the United States.

Black Lives Matter gained national prominence while riots continued nightly in Portland

throughout the Summer. I saw clashes on Television reminiscent of the 1960s. For Asian Americans, Covid-19 was bringing an additional unique problem – hate crimes. It is no surprise that Covid-19 has become a catalyst for the recent spike in anti-Asian discrimination and violence across the United States. Fear of the unknown and the need to blame someone... anyone spawn terms like China-Virus and Kung-Flu, which in turn, perpetuate the cycle of prejudice against all Asian-Americans.

With a new understanding of how ignorance and inaction effectively enabled prejudice of Japanese Americans during WWII and all Asian Americans today, I wanted to be part of the solution. Last Fall, I joined the Japanese American Citizens League's Portland Chapter and learned the power of political representation and the importance of standing up against prejudice. I participated in letter-writing campaigns encouraging people on both sides of the political ideological spectrum to vote in the general election, the Georgia Congressional runoff, and most recently, HR40. Attending events like the JASO's "Women in Leadership: Where Power Lies" series has made a difference in how I present myself. After the session, I felt like I found an amazing role model that I can look up to. I set a goal to one day become like these leaders from the meeting.

Now, I understand the meaning of multi-cultural heritage and the importance of standing up for civil rights. As Asian hate crimes continue to increase across the U.S., it is incumbent on all of us to embrace our identity and show the world what it means to be proud Japanese American citizens. I value JACL's role in our community, as they provide leadership and guidance for making America a better society for everyone.

Our Grass Roots Efforts For the Nisei WWII Veterans' Stamp

By Linda Tamura

We gathered in a legislative hearing room at the Oregon State Capitol. It was March 26, 2009 and we'd be testifying in front of the Veterans and Emergency Services Committee. Our goal? To support a bill for creating a stamp honoring Nisei World War II veterans.

The stamp was the 2005 brainstorm of three Nisei women from California, two who were widows of World War II veterans: Fusa Takahashi, Aiko O. King and the now late Chiz Ohira. They circulated petitions, set up tables at events, and gathered 10,000 signatures plus 10,000 more through on-line petitions.

Wayne Osako (whose grandparents lived in Hood River and whose uncle was veteran Art Iwasaki of Hillsboro) joined their cause and became co-chair of the Stamp Our Story Coalition with Fusa Takahashi. "If cartoon characters can get a postage stamp, we certainly can get a stamp for the veterans," Takahashi maintained. They faced a challenge, however, since the U.S. Postal Service in 2009 prohibited stamps honoring specific military units. And 35 new designs were selected from the 30,000 submissions each year.

But we were all buoyed by the spirit of gaman demonstrated by our Nisei veterans. I remember vouching for the inclusion of the Military Intelligence Service by telling how Oregonian Frank Hachiya volunteered for a mission in the

South Pacific before he was killed.

On May 20, 2009 the Oregon Legislature passed House Joint Measure 8. Representative Brian Clem of Salem and then Senator Bill Morrisette of Springfield carried the bill supporting the Nisei soldiers' stamp. The next month U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden sent supportive letters to Postmaster General John Potter. Former U.S. Representatives Greg Walden of Hood River and David Wu of Beaverton added their support. The nationwide campaign included state resolutions from Arizona, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, Illinois and Utah. Ninety-one bi-partisan members of Congress endorsed the stamp as did numerous national organizations, including the JACL, Simon Wiesenthal Center, and citizens and officials in France.

Oregonians joined early in this grass roots effort for our stamp. When I testified, I remember decrying the fact that 16 million Americans who served in our Armed Forces during World War II were dying at a rate of 1,056 a day. Now we know of only 11 Nisei veterans living in Oregon and Vancouver. But the spirit of sacrifice, patriotism and resilience are important lessons from our precious veterans. They fought prejudice with their actions more than words. Today we'll continue their campaign against racial bias – and for dignity, liberty and justice for all.

Thank you to all who helped. You did it!



Iko no Kai, August 2021

1333 SE 28th, 503-238-0775

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3 X	4	5
9 Shrimp Tempura w/ Vegetables	10 Cold Ramen w/ Pork	11 X	12 Miso Salmon	13 Sukiyaki Sliced Beef
16 Chicken w/ Green Onion Sauce	17 Shrimp Salad Rolls	18 X	19 Bibimbap Sliced Beef	20 Pork Cutlet Ground Pork
23 Miso Ginger Chicken	24 Mabo Tofu	25 X	26 Gyoza Ground Pork	27 Korean Barbecue
30 Cold Shabu Shabu	31 Birthday Sushi			

Cooks: Naomi Molstrom-M Kyoko Adcock-Tu Rieko Shimada-Th/F

New Lunch Prices: \$8 for 65+ / \$9 for under 65 / \$ 5 kids

We are requiring reservations at least 24 hours in advance for the month of August

* For reservations please call and leave a message or email:

(ph) 503-238-0775

(email) ikoinokai7@gmail.com

** vaccination card and signed COVID waiver will be required in order to dine indoors

(Please include the date you are attending, your name, contact phone number, and number of guests). Lunch will start promptly at noon so arrive early to check in and pay prior to lunch service. We will be encouraging all patrons to wear masks during all times other than when eating and drinking.



PORTLAND JACL
PO BOX 86310
PORTLAND, OR 97286

NON PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND, OR
PERMIT #579

Seeking nominations for Portland JACL Board positions

If you are interested or have questions about becoming a board member please contact Jeff Matsumoto at jeff@pdxjacl.org. There are five officer positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Chair. Additionally, there are ten at large board positions that compose the Portland JACL Board. The deadline for all nominations is October 15, 2021.

Thank you for your consideration!

Nominations Committee

Sachi Kaneko
Wynn Kiyama
Jeff Matsumoto
Jillian Toda-Currie

Attention Members!

Portland JACL will be conducting its election for chapter officers and board members this upcoming Fall 2021. Be on the lookout for details on our website and in September's newsletter.