



# PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL - Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• MARCH 2022 | VOLUME 28 ISSUE 03 •

## Board Member MESSAGE

### Removing the Wedge:

*Solidarity Between Asian-Americans  
And Other Communities of Color*

By Sachi Kaneko

In the wake of the month of February, Black History Month, I'd like to consider the importance of continuing solidarity with Black and other communities of color. The definition of solidarity, according to dictionary.com is a "union or fellowship arising from common responsibilities and interests..." ("Solidarity Definition and Meaning"). The same systemic racism that constructed the Japanese Concentration Camps and the anti-Asian hate in the wake of COVID, is alive and at work in other communities of color. It is the same system that disproportionately incarcerates Black and Brown bodies, helped instate the Muslim ban and lead to worldwide calamities, like global warming and the pandemic, overwhelmingly affecting communities of color. As individuals involved in the Japanese-American community, how can we best stand in solidarity with other minorities?

Traditionally, by the White gaze of this country, Japanese-Americans have fallen under the umbrella of model minority, or the "good kind" of minority. Asian-Americans have been held up in the United States as an example of "successful" immigrants, and have been used to falsely demonstrate how racism no longer exists (Tseng and Chen). In short, Asian-Americans are frequently used as a "wedge" in racism (Tseng...

**Continued on Pg. 2**

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**March 3**  
**Hinamatsuri (Girl's Day)**

**March 8**  
**International Woman's Day**

**March 19**  
**Coming Out Coming Home**  
4pm - Virtual

**March 26**  
**Taking a Stand**  
1pm - Virtual

**March 28**  
**Min Yasui Day**

**March 30**  
**In 1870, African American men gain  
The right to vote with the 15th amendment**

**March 31**  
**Birth of Cesar Chavez**

**\*Nichiren Buddhist Temple  
has cancelled its March Spring Bazaar  
due to Covid-19 concerns\***

**Continued from Pg. 1**

...and Chen). Not only does this depiction ignore the nuances in racism (such as colorism) that affect different communities with differing levels of oppression, it also ignores that some Asian American communities continue to struggle and are far from the White American definition of having "made it" ("Black & Asian American Solidarity: Exchanging Ideas").

Again, how do we best stand in solidarity with other minorities? By following the path of solidarity and activism that has been laid before us. On Youtube, there is a video series called the May 19th Project constructed by "See Us Unite" that chronicles solidarity between AAPI communities and other communities of color. The title of the project, "May 19th," is the shared birthday of Yuri Kochiyama and Malcolm X. The video series speaks on everything from the participation of Youa Van Lee, from the Hmong community, in the George Floyd protests, to the Japanese-American community's participation in the repeal of the Emergency Detention Act in 1971. Our community has a legacy of solidarity that is continuing today because of a common experience of racism and a feeling of responsibility to create a more equitable country.

The very definition of solidarity starts from a point of "shared responsibilities and interests." I say that it also comes from sharing our stories, experiences, resources, and time. As a community, we can draw attention to a narrative that does not depict us as a "wedge," but instead as an ally. I do not say that we drown

out Black and Brown voices and experiences, but that we support and validate them with our own narratives. As a light skinned minority, I will never know the experience of a Black or Brown person in this country, but, despite my place of relative privilege, I can share the resources I have available and use my voice to validate and uplift myself, as well as others.

**Works Cited**

Kendi, Ibram. "Black & Asian American Solidarity: Exchanging Ideas, Sharing History." *Be Antiracist from Pushkin*, interviewee Cathy Park Hong, August 2021, <https://open.spotify.com/episode/1rP7loUfKM4YSzjl9tEnE7>.

"Solidarity Definition & Meaning." *Dictionary.com*, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/solidarity>.

Tseng, Ada, and Jessica Q Chen. "A Discussion of Asian and Black Solidarity: 'Wherever There's a Fight, That's Where I Want to Be'." *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Aug. 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/story/2021-08-11/filmmaker-blm-leader-discuss-asian-black-solidarity>.



## ❖ Oregon Nisei Veterans Should be Honored ❖

Oregon Senate Bill 1509 was introduced by Senator Chuck Thomsen of Hood River and passed by the Senate during this short session of the Oregon Legislature. It will be introduced and voted on in the House. If this bill passes, we would see signs honoring ALL Oregon Nisei WWII veterans along Highway 35, from the Columbia River to Mt. Hood. This highway would honor Nisei veterans' valor during wartime as well as their resilience once they returned home.

The bill describes the 57 Nisei from the Mid-Columbia area (Columbia River region north of Mt. Hood) and a total of 120 Nisei from the State of Oregon who served in our country's Armed Forces during World War II and the post-war occupation of Japan, even as their families were incarcerated on American soil after President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942

Community members were asked to testify at the bill's hearing included: Eric Ballinger, Mia Ballinger (11 years old), Mike Allegre, Carol Suzuki

and Linda Tamura. (Three others were unable because of ongoing technical difficulties.) The testimonies were moving tributes to the sacrifices of the Nisei soldiers.

The Oregon Nisei Veterans WWII Memorial Highway would be among eight Oregon highways dedicated to Oregon veterans during five major wars, thanks to veteran Dick Tobiason and the Bend Heroes Foundation.



John Murakami from Sherwood, Oregon was a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team who fought in Bruyeres, France. He earned a Purple Heart, Bronze Star and the Congressional Gold Medal. After his military service, he worked in the construction trade with the Onchi Construction Company and later taught building construction at Benson High School.

## ❖ Photo Corner ❖



Portland JACL members were installed into office for 2022-24 at a ceremony at the Oregon Buddhist Temple on February 5. Some of our new officers were not able to attend the in person event.



# 80 Years Ago

By Marleen Wallingford



February 19, 2022 marks the 80th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 which led to the removal and incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans. We

no longer use the vocabulary of the 1940's. At that time, we were told that we were being evacuated. Evacuation usually refers to a emergency removal because of a natural disaster like a flood or hurricane. We were forcibly removed from our homes because we were considered a national security threat. If we did not comply there were serious consequences including jail time and fines. We no longer use the word internment camps since the accurate name would be American Concentration Camps. Internment camps actually refer to prison camp for the confinement of prisoners of war, enemy aliens and political prisoners. The vocabulary that was used during the Second World War were euphemisms. The words were designed to appear more benign to mask the true nature of our treatment during a very tumultuous time in our history. This language was used by our federal government to control public perceptions of our treatment.

Signs that went up in Japanese American communities called for aliens and non-aliens alike to report to assembly centers. What exactly is a non-alien but a citizen. The so called assembly center was a prison that enclosed us behind barbed wire fences with armed soldiers.

To control public perceptions about our removal from our homes to desolate camps inland, the vocabulary selected to describe our treatment downplayed the unconstitutional basis for our government's actions. There was no due

process. There was no trial. Words matter and our treatment was not to protect us but resulted in our hardworking great grandparents and grandparents losing all that they had worked for.



This is Minidoka in 1942, home for my grandparents for almost four years. The Bureau of Land Management is considering renting open land close to the site and building 400 windmills over 700 feet tall which will be within sight of the historic site and completing changing the landscape of the surrounding area. The project is being promoted because it will bring income to the Bureau of Land Management and bring hundreds of jobs and income to the local area from taxes.



## In the news

The Amache site, located in Grenada, Colorado was one of 10 American Concentration camps created during World War II. On February 14, 2022, the US Senate voted unanimously to

pass the Amache National Historic Site Act. U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet, representing Colorado, was the chief sponsor and the bill was co-sponsored by Sen. John Hickenlooper. The site is now part of the National Park Service: Sites of Shame and its history will be preserved and shared.

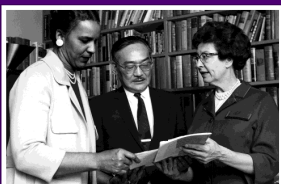


## Taking a Stand Against Racism and Discrimination

Saturday, March 26th, 1:00 - 3:00 pm PDT

### [REGISTER HERE](#)

*This is a free event, but requires registration.*



We invite you to continue the legacy of Min and Holly Yasui to take action to fight racism and discrimination as an individual, with groups in your community, or with others at the national level.

### *Program Highlights*

- Eric Ward—Erik is a nationally-recognized expert on the relationship between authoritarian movements, hate violence, and preserving inclusive democracy, is the recipient of the 2021 Civil Courage Prize— the first American in the award's 21-year history. In his 30+ year civil rights career, Eric has worked with community groups, government and business leaders, human rights advocates, and philanthropy as an organizer, director, program officer, consultant, and board member. Eric's widely quoted writings and speeches are credited with key narrative shifts. He currently serves as Executive Director of Western States Center, Senior Fellow with Southern Poverty Law Center, Chair of The Proteus Fund, and Advisor to the Center for Entertainment & Civic Health.
- Kerry Tymchuck—Kerry has served as Executive Director of the Oregon Historical Society since April 2011. He came to OHS after a career in public service, where he served as a top aide to Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole, United States Senator Bob Dole, and United States Senator Gordon Smith. A native of Reedsport, Oregon, Kerry is a graduate of Willamette University and Willamette University College of Law. He is recognized for providing the truth about Oregon's racial history.
- Deepa Iyer—Deepa served as executive director of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) for a decade, and has also held positions at Race Forward, the US Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center, and the Asian American Justice Center. Deepa's first book, *We Too Sing America: South Asian, Arab, Muslim and Sikh Immigrants Shape Our Multiracial Future* received a 2016 American Book Award. She has been a fellow at the Open Society Foundations and the Social Change Initiative, and in 2019, she received an honorary doctoral degree from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

### **Special Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors (partial list)**

#### **Pillars of Justice**

ACLU Foundation of Oregon  
Northwest Health Foundation

#### **Minoru Yasui Stalwarts**

APANO  
Chop Yasui Fund of the Gorge  
Portland JACL

#### **Minoru Yasui Legacy Boosters**

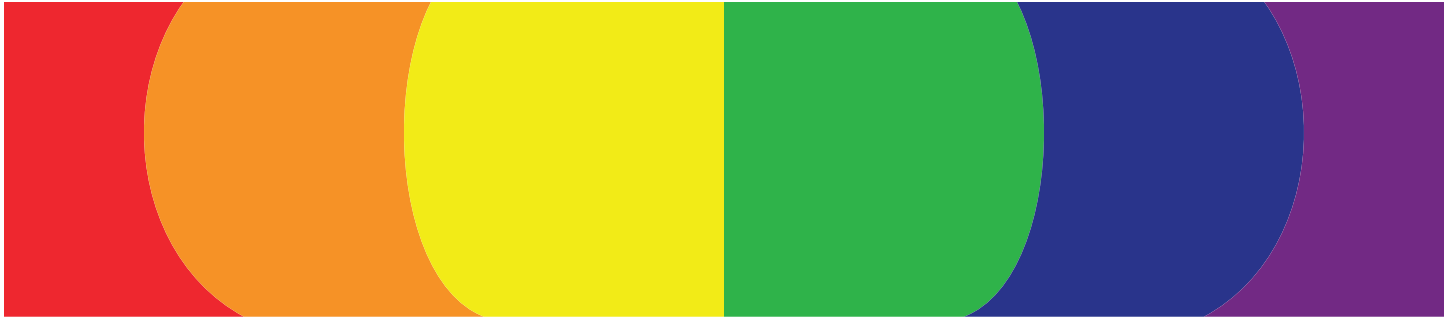
Muslim Educational Trust

#### **Solidarity Sponsors**

Portland Taiko

### [Become a supporter of the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project](#)

"If we believe in America, if we believe in equity and democracy, if we believe in law and justice, then each of us, when we see or believe that errors are being made, has an obligation to make every effort to correct them." — **Minoru Yasui (1916 - 1986)**



# COMING OUT & COMING HOME

Documenting the Voices of Queer and Trans Japanese Americans

"We strive to make our events accessible. ASL interpretation for the live portion of the evening and captioning for the film will be provided."

## Video Participants:

Aya  
Melvin  
Bill  
Marsha  
Barney  
Gary  
Mia

Date: March 19th

Time: 4:00 PM

Sign Up Here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8kk2jm>

Or Find us on Eventbrite!





## Iko no Kai - MARCH 2022

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
	<b>1</b>  <b>Oyakodon</b>  <i>11 am Blood Pressure</i> <i>12:30 pm Sing a Long</i>	<b>2</b>  <b>X</b>	<b>3</b>  <b>Chicken Nanban</b> Marinated Deep Fried Chicken <i>11 am Blood Pressure</i>	<b>4</b>  <b>Shrimp and Calamari</b>
<b>7</b>  <b>Grilled Mackerel</b>	<b>8</b>  <b>Niku Jaga</b> Beef and Potato Stew  <i>12:30 pm Sing a Long</i>	<b>9</b>  <b>X</b>	<b>10</b>  <b>Seafood Curry</b>	<b>11</b>  <b>Ankake Kaarage</b> Fried Chicken with Sauce
<b>14</b>  <b>Pork Shioga Yaki</b> Ginger Pork	<b>15</b>  <b>Chicken with Mushrooms</b>  <i>11 am Blood Pressure</i> <i>12:30 pm Sing a Long</i>	<b>16</b>  <b>X</b>	<b>17</b>  <b>Nikumaki</b> Beef Rolls <i>11 am Blood Pressure</i>	<b>18</b>  <b>Yaki Shumai</b> Fried Shumai
<b>21</b>  <b>Grilled Chicken with Salt Koji</b>	<b>22</b>  <b>Kakiage Udon</b> Deep Fried Vegetables with Udon <i>12:30 pm Sing a Long</i>	<b>23</b>  <b>X</b>	<b>24</b>  <b>Croquette</b>  <i>10 am Calligraphy</i>	<b>25</b>  <b>Pork Steak</b>
<b>28</b>  <b>Chicken Wonton Soup</b>	<b>29</b>  <b>Birthday Sushi</b>  <i>12:30 pm Sing a Long</i>	<b>30</b>  <b>X</b>	<b>31</b>  <b>Tofu Burger with Pork</b>  <i>11 am Blood Pressure</i>	

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

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

**Reservations preferred / Indoor Dining Limited**

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

**(ph) 503-238-077! (email) ikoinokai7@gmail.com**

**Seating at 11:30 am with lunch served promptly at noon**

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



**PORTLAND JACL**  
PO BOX 86310  
PORTLAND, OR 97286

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

## ❖ March 28th, A Day to Remember ❖



Oregon recognizes March 28 as Min Yasui Day. On that evening in 1942, this young attorney decided to deliberately violate the 8 pm curfew imposed only on Japanese Americans in order to challenge its constitutionality. He walked the streets of the now Old Town Chinatown but was ignored. He finally had to go to the neighborhood police station, showed his birth certificate and told the officer on duty that he was violating the law. Min was told to go home before he got in trouble. He was ultimately arrested.

The consequences were extreme. Yasui had his citizenship temporarily taken from him, and he served nearly a year in solitary confinement at the Multnomah County Jail. (The jail cell that held him

is on display at the Japanese American Museum of Oregon.) When Yasui finally was freed, he had to travel to another confinement site, Minidoka. Despite earning the highest score on the Colorado Bar Exam after he settled in Denver, his history of being jailed for his actions almost made him ineligible to get his law license.

Min took his fight all the way to the US Supreme Court where he lost his case in 1944. His case was reopened in 1983 but never completed because of his death. The court would not allow his family to continue to have his case litigated. Min Yasui was one of the few Japanese Americans who was willing to stand up and fight for his rights. He is the only Oregonian to be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his heroism and lifelong struggle for civil rights for all. He told audiences many times that we all have a responsibility to make the world a better place.