



PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL - Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• JULY 2022 | VOLUME 28 ISSUE 07 •

Board Member MESSAGE

Reflections on what it means to be an American

By Amanda Shannahan

With the Fourth of July right around the corner, I've been reflecting on what it means to be an American. In the more recent years, I've felt conflicted about celebrating the 4th and I know I'm not alone. For many, the Fourth of July symbolizes some of the very ugly truths about the foundation of our country and the ongoing legacy of white supremacy in the United States. Many Black people were still enslaved when the Declaration of Independence was signed. How can we celebrate our freedom as a nation on a day when we were not all truly free?

Who Gets to Be an American

Like many other practices and policies in the United States, the Fourth of July reinforces who gets to be an 'American'. It suggests to us who is worthy of and who is excluded from the freedoms and justices that are, supposedly, a birthright in this country. It is part of the marginalization that takes place on a daily basis in the United States that tells us who fits in and who is an 'Other'.

I remember being a participant in an equity training several years back. The facilitator asked us to close our eyes and imagine an 'American'. When we opened our eyes, many of us described a similar person: a white, cisgender, straight and able-bodied man. The facilitator encouraged us to explore the messages we'd

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

July 4

Independence Day

July 10

July 10 Japanese American Plaza Clean-up

8am - 12pm

July 15

Nikkei Park Naming Celebration

NE 52nd St & NE 137th Ave, Vancouver, WA | 7pm

July 17

Tiger Tiger

Fernhill Park | 4pm - 9pm

August 3-7

JACL Convention

Las Vegas

August 7

July 10 Japanese American Plaza Clean-up

8am - 12pm

August 8

Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance,

Tom McCall Waterfront Park | 6pm

August 13

Dedication of Nisei Memorial Highway,

Hood River

1pm

August 21

Nikkei Community Picnic

Oaks Park | 12pm - 4pm

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received- through movies and television, representation in leadership, whose stories were told in classrooms, etc.- that had shaped how we viewed ourselves and others. The same messages that had constructed my idea of who is an 'American', also painted Asian Americans as 'perpetual foreigners', suggested the inferiority of Black and Brown people, and made invisible Native Americans.

These messages can impact our sense of self, how we relate with other people, and further cause harm by normalizing the inequities that are produced by racist and oppressive policies.

How We Resist

Messages that other and dehumanize are all

around us, but we also get a say in our own narratives. We get to choose what and how we celebrate. While long overdue, Juneteenth is now a recognized federal holiday thanks to decades of organizing and advocacy by Black leaders and activists in the Juneteenth movement. Even before it was established as a federal holiday, though, people honored the day through local celebrations.

This summer, there will be more opportunities to celebrate our community and culture, like Obon and the annual Nikkei community picnic. When we build community and honor our traditions, we are claiming our space and our right to exist and to thrive. It is through these small acts of resistance that we can help create a United States in which we are all included and belong. And that, to me, is something worth celebrating.

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



Liminal Spaces



Explain how the Japanese-American experience, or your own experiences in working with the community, has shaped your life.

By Nina Takahashi

I have found myself crying in Asian grocery stores more often than I'd like. This phenomenon first occurred in seventh grade, and the memory of it has since rented space in my right atrium.

I was investigating the Asian market that had opened near my house. The store was marvelous, to say the least. It reminded me of perusing the aisles of the local supermarket with my grandmother in Chiba. It reminded me of sticky-sweet summer nights spent licking drips of gari gari-kun popsicles off my hand. But above all else, it reminded me that I didn't belong. I was an outsider in this store: my hair too light, my eyes failing to process the complex kanji, my heart unsure of which nori brand to buy. So, after looping around the same corner of the market for what felt like hours, I stopped before a display of ramen, caught my head in shaking hands, and let my heart trickle out through my eyelashes.

Even with seventeen years of practice, describing my experience as a biracial Japanese-American still makes my ribs float. Growing up, my father often remarked that I was "the least naturally talented" at Japanese out of his children. Uprooted from the Japanese immersion program of Portland's Richmond Elementary School in third grade, I never reached fluency in the Japanese language. Instead, I was the child who wrote her first name before her last, who never attended Japanese Saturday school, who packed Kraft Mac and Cheese in her suitcase during

a month-long trip to my father's homeland. On top of that, I was white passing in most settings. In turn, I felt like I existed nowhere, both culturally and racially: not white enough, not Japanese enough, and certainly not "half Asian" enough.

Something shifted during high school. As my sense of self developed, I felt the urge to confront my cultural dissonance. I signed up for an online Japanese class through PCC. I founded an Asian & Pacific Islander Student Union (APISU) at my school. And, against all odds, my wounds beneath wounds associated with my Japanese-American identity began to heal. Japanese 203 improved my communication skills, but it also reminded me that fluency does not determine my heritage. APISU highlighted that most Asian-Americans also exist in a social liminal space, and that we could lean on each other to tackle understanding it.

None of this process has been painless. I am still trying to separate my father and his comments about me from my perception of Japan and my heritage. I'm still struggling to accept that having "white" phenotypes does not negate my culture. But for what it is worth, I am no longer sad. I cry less in Asian grocery stores, and my lungs keep breathing when I speak to my elementary school-age half Japanese, half white neighbors up the street. My lungs keep breathing, and breathing, and breathing.



Celebrate with Us!



Please join us in celebrating the dedication of the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway on Saturday, August 13, 2022 at 1pm (1300 hours).

The program will be held at:
Wy'east Performing Arts Center
3000 Wy'east Road
Hood River, Oregon 97031

All are welcome and there is plenty of free parking.

To find out more about this event go to www.tigertigerpdx.com

TIGER TIGER

A CELEBRATION OF OUR AAPI COMMUNITY
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH APANO



FOOD

FAMILY

MUSIC

HEYDAY PDX

BAON KAINAN

MATTA PDX

GRINDWITTRYZ

JUNE MAGNOLIA

SURRIJA

JOE KYE & THE GIVERS



4-9PM
FERNHILL PARK
JULY 17TH 2022

MOVE ON



MOVE ON is a movement class held once a month designed for physical and emotional health. The class is held before Ikoi No Kai lunch at Epworth Church and is led by Chisao Hata.

Thursday, July 7
10:30am-11:15am
Epworth United Methodist Church
1333 SE 28th Ave, Portland, OR 97214
Please RSVP to chisao@jamo.org

MOVE ON is a creative aging movement class held once a month designed for physical and emotional health. This class is led by Chisao Hata and is part of our Living Arts Program.

Creative Aging is dedicated to the practice of engaging older adults in participatory, professionally run arts programs focusing on building relationships and the study of the arts. The programming at the center will focus on meaningful creative expression and value the life experiences and talents of the participants.

Here is the link to the July movement class at Ikoi no Kai: <https://jamo.org/event/move-on-creative-movement-class-july/>

Come Join the Nikkei Park Naming Celebration

All are welcome to celebrate the naming of Nikkei Park in Vancouver, Washington on Friday July 15, 2022 at 7 p.m. The celebration will include music by the Minidoka Swing Band and story telling by Alton Chung. Kids will enjoy the dinosaur-themed play equipment and the movie night that follows. All are free. Nikkei Park is located at NE 52nd Street & NE 137th Avenue, Vancouver, WA.

In 2021, I helped advise the park naming

committee. The city of Vancouver wanted to honor the Japanese Americans who made up about half of the truck farmers in the area before World War II and were displaced due to internment. A park naming survey was conducted, and the community selected "Nikkei Park".

For more information:
www.cityofvancouver.us/parksrecculture/page/nikkei-park

Photo Corner



On May 29, 2022, many volunteers from the Shokookai of Portland came to the Japanese Cemetery to help clean and tidy up the cemetery for the Memorial Day Service.



Memorial Day Service was conducted on May 30, 2022 at the Japanese Cemetery, located inside the Rose City Cemetery. Rev Eisei Ikenaga from Nichiren Buddhist Temple was the minister in charge of the service and the Master of the Ceremony was Commander Ron Iwasaki, Oregon Nisei Veterans, Inc.

July 10 Plaza Cleanup



Clean-up the Japanese American Historical Plaza at Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

August 7
Work party bet 8am-12pm.
Coffee and snacks will be provided.

Bring brooms, dustpans, buckets, tools to pull grass between the bricks.



Iko no Kai - JULY 2022

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
				1 <i>Japanese Style</i> Stuffed Eggplant & Green Peppers (Pork)
4 CLOSED	5 Panko Fried Shrimp <i>12:45pm Sing a Long</i>	X	7 Chicken Nanban <i>10:30am Move On Class 12:30pm Bridge/ Hanafuda</i>	8 <i>Japanese Style</i> Pork Chop
11 Chicken w/ Ume Sauce <i>11:15am Chair Yoga 12:30pm Mahjong</i>	12 <i>Japanese</i> Beef & Potato Stew <i>Niku Jaga 12:45pm Sing a Long</i>	X	14 Mackerel <i>11:15am Aikido Stress Reduction with Dwight 12:30pm Bridge/ Hanafuda</i>	15 <i>Thai</i> Chicken & Rice <i>Khao Man Gai Ohana Lunch / Bingo</i>
18 Miso Ginger Pork <i>12:30pm Mahjong</i>	19 Chicken w/ Hoisin Sauce <i>12:45pm Sing a Long</i>	X	21 Fish Tacos <i>12:30pm Bridge/ Hanafuda</i>	22 <i>Japanese</i> Sukiyaki <i>Beef Hot Pot</i>
25 Birthday Sushi <i>12:30pm Mahjong</i>	26 Mapo Tofu <i>12:45pm Sing a Long</i>		28 Ramen Salad <i>Hiyashi Chuka 11:15am Aikido Stress Reduction w/ Dwight 12:30pm Bridge/ Hanafuda</i>	29 Special Curry Rice

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) 503-238-0775 (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**



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Meet our newest board member Erika Jennings



As a third generation Portlander, I was raised around the Nichiren Buddhist Temple and the Oregon Buddhist Temple. I fondly remember going to Obon Fest with my grandparents who were very involved in the church. There were lots of dances, festivals, ceremonies and

other events that as a child were my main interaction with Japanese culture outside my immediate family. Other than holidays and ceremonies, being a Japanese American was sort of in the background of my everyday life. The murder of George Floyd in the summer of 2020 and the immediate response of the community really propelled me to get more involved both at home and at work. Promoting human

and civil rights for marginalized groups has become a driving force for me and I'm excited by the opportunity to contribute through the JACL Portland.

My parents both live in the Portland area still as does my youngest daughter while she finishes school. My oldest daughter lives in Colorado but will be going to grad school in Texas this fall. My husband and I enjoy camping, traveling and cheering for the Portland Timbers when we're not at work, both in finance. make amends was incredibly healing. It also has been an opportunity for us all to tell our family stories and ensure our society learns from past mistakes. During the dedication of the new Nisei Rock Garden at USC, its administration made a commitment to "never again abandon our students when they need us most." It was a reminder of the duty higher education institutions have to their students and the community's responsibility to ensure that they fulfill that duty.