



PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL - Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• NOVEMBER 2025 | VOLUME 31 ISSUE 11 •

Board Member MESSAGE

By Marleen Wallingford

On March 2025, the White House gave an executive order called "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History." It called for restoring Federal sites dedicated to history....to remind Americans of our...heritage." The result of this policy has been reductions in funding and grants for museums especially ones that feature minority experiences. The result has been staff reductions at all of the Japanese American incarceration sites and loss of federal funding for the Japanese American National Museum. Ronald Kobata participated in the [Heart Mountain Pilgrimage](#) this past year. It is not known if these experiences will be available in the future.

Community Message

By Ronald Kobata

Heart Mountain Pilgrimage (July, 25-26, 2025)

I was a "First Timer" at this year's Heart Mountain Pilgrimage on July 24 - 26. The event was based at a Holiday Inn in Cody, WY and the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center facility located on the site of what remains of the WWII Concentration Camp, twenty minutes away near Powell, WY. My interest in attending was that my parents met at Heart Mountain and married when they left camp to begin their post-camp life in Ogden, UT, where I was born. From there, I'm told, we traveled by train to San Francisco, CA, where I grew up.

The three day program began Thursday morning and concluded with a Sayonara banquet on Saturday evening. The weekend was filled with special events, workshops, discussions and

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

November 4
Election day

November 11
Veteran's Day
Hood River | 11am

November 27
Thanksgiving

November 29
Nikkei Winter Holiday Party
Oregon Buddhist Temple | 5pm

informative/inspirational talks throughout. The 270 pilgrims, more than half of whom were also "First Timers", came from over half the states in the union, Canada and Japan, were transported by chartered buses shuttling pilgrims back and forth between the Holiday Inn and HMIC, or drove on their own.

The Pilgrimage Plenary began at the Wynona Thompson Auditorium in Cody. The plenary session featured: "A tribute to Alan Simpson and those we have lost"; a video and in-person panel: "Heart Mountain Voice: Connecting Communities with Digital Stories" comprised of young adult descendents of incarcerated and the local Apsaslooke (Crow) Nation; and the premiere screening of Hello Maggie! Based on a book written by former HM incarcerated Shigeru Yabu and animated by renowned cartoonist and illustrator

Willie Ito Jr., who was interned at Topaz, UT and grew up in San Francisco. As a personal side note, Willie Ito Jr.'s father was my barber in San Francisco.

We proceeded to the Interpretive Center (IC) that recently added an extension in honor of life-long friends and congressional colleagues Secretary Norman Mineta and Senator Alan Simpson, named the Mineta-Simpson Institute. In addition, Rev. Dr. Duncan Williams brought his Irecho (Memorial Register) Stamping project to enable attendees to stamp the names of their family members and friends.

The program on Saturday was held on the grounds of the Interpretive Center where a large tent was set-up for an Opening Ceremony that involved a Flag Ceremony, Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem led by a local Boy Scout troop. As part of the opening ceremony a Crow Blessing was offered by Johnny Tim Yellowtail, of the Apsaalooke Nation. A welcome message was extended by newly appointed HMIC Executive Director, Aura Sunada Newlin.

Following the Opening, pilgrims were invited to visit the Interpretive Center to view the special exhibit "Taken From Their Families", and take guided tours or explore the grounds and sites on their own. We were also informed that a Heart Mountain AR (Augmented Reality) App was also available. Irecho stamping was conducted at different locations throughout the weekend by appointment. A surprising realization that occurred while I looked toward Heart Mountain from the Memorial Park, was how dark it looked. I was informed that it was that due to the type of vegetation surrounding the peak. I don't know if it was just my imagination but it looked as if a cloud had blocked out the sun at the time.

Inquiring where the cemetery was, our guide explained that when the camp was closing families were given the opportunity to make arrangements for their relative's remains to be transferred to other locations. For the unclaimed gravesites, the remains were transferred to graves

in a cemetery in Powell.

After a catered lunch under the tent, the program continued with speeches and award presentations, Crown Push Dance workshops, Taiko workshops led by Denver Taiko, Reading of Names of those who passed at Heart Mountain Camp ceremony led by Rev. Dr. Williams, and a keynote talk, "Lessons from the WWII Japanese American Incarceration" by Sam Mihara. Mr. Mihara was recently recognized at the National Endowment for the Humanities 51st Jefferson Lecturer. Established in 1972, the lecture is the highest honor the federal government confers for distinguished intellectual achievement in the humanities. He is a Heart Mountain survivor and the oldest person to receive the honor. Another sidenote, Sam shared with me that his father started a paper goods business in SF Japantown before the war. After the family returned to Japantown and the area was being "redeveloped", which I considered to be a second evacuation, the building that the business had operated from, was sold to the National JACL, where it continues to serve as the headquarters. It was also mentioned by others, that honorariums from his many speaking engagements over the years have been generously donated to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

During the Sayonara Banquet closing reflections were shared by Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Board Chair, Shirley Ann Higuchi, and others. A Compassionate Witness Award was presented to the Powell Tribune, the local newspaper that provided courageous news coverage about the camp during the incarceration years. Also recognized were Deni Mineta and Ann Simpson, for the love, care and support of their husbands Norman and Alan, that enabled them to accomplish all that they did in their service to the country.

The pilgrimage concluded with a raffle drawing and results of a Silent Auction that had been going on throughout the weekend. Which was a recurring theme throughout the pilgrimage, i.e. fundraising is necessary to keep the history alive and the legacy to thrive, so a history of injustice isn't repeated.

Congratulations to the Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to the Portland JACL members who received National JACL Scholarships. Both of these students have also been awarded our local Yumibe Scholarship.



Ichiro Tanada (Takashi & Yuriko Moriuchi Memorial Scholarship)

I applied for the National Scholarship in addition to the Portland chapter's scholarships because of the possibility of me receiving one - and now I have two. My engagement with the Japanese community and the connections I have gave me the belief that it was achievable for me to receive these scholarships.



Quinha Faria (Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Creative Arts Scholarship)

I am so grateful to receive the Henry & Chiyo Kuwahara Memorial Creative Arts Scholarship, which will support me to pursue a Masters of Fine Arts in Painting at Bard. After leaving my full-time nursing career, the award allows me to fully dedicate myself to my artistic development by helping to cover tuition and material costs. Coming from a lineage of Japanese and Japanese-American artists and scientists, I see my education as both a continuation of that legacy and an important step in my growth as a contemporary artist.

2026 Portland JACL Election Ballot

Here is the proposed slate of Board Members for the 2026-27 term. The following have been submitted for consideration by the Portland JACL Nominating Committee:

Portland JACL Officers

- Co-President:** Jeff Matsumoto
- Co-President:** Spencer Uemura
- Vice President:** Tiffany Koyama-Lane
- Secretary:** Heidi Tolentino
- Treasurer:** Chip Larouche (interim)
- Membership Chair:** Setsy Sadamoto Larouche

Elected Members – At Large

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Erika Jennings | Sharon Kuroda |
| Kenneth Nitta | Stevie Dunbar-Matsufuru |
| Connie Masuoka | Sean Egusa |
| Justin Sato | Linda Ueki Absher |
| Marleen Wallingford | |
| Connor Wakayama | |

Vote to accept the Portland JACL Slate as presented.

If NOT accepting of the slate, please write-in the member names AND the position you wish to elect them. Officer positions are President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Chair. Up to 10 at Large Board Positions.

Send completed ballots to jacl@pdxjacl.org or mail to **PO Box 86310, Portland, OR 97286**

You may also vote online at: <https://www.pdxjacl.org/election/>

❖ 2026 Portland JACL Election ❖



Jeff Matsumoto
Co-Presidents

Jeff Matsumoto is a Yonsei born and raised in Lodi, CA. He has worked as an elementary school teacher in Forest Grove since moving to Oregon in 2000 and has been on the

Portland JACL Board since 2019. He looks forward to the continuing efforts to serve and support JACL members through his involvement on the Portland JACL Board.



Spencer Uemura
Co-Presidents

I am a Yonsei/Shin-Nisei from the Los Angeles area, but I've been in Portland for six years. By profession, I'm a mental health therapist, drawn into this work by a passion for stories

and connection. One of my hobbies has been documenting my family's history and requesting and translating koseki (family registry documents) from Japan. I have cherished the opportunity to give back to the Nikkei community during my first term, so I'm honored to be considered for the JACL Co-President.

Chip Larouche (interim)
Treasurer

Tiffany Koyama Lane (she/er)
Vice President

Tiffany Koyama Lane (she/her) is a community organizer, Japanese American (Yonsei), activist,



mother of 2 and educator. She has taught K-5 elementary school in NYC and Portland. She is now a Portland City Council Commissioner. In addition to centering justice work in her classroom, she is a community organizer

for child- and family-centered anti-racist events, engaged in the local AAPI community, and an active leader in the Portland Association of Teachers. She has served on the Teacher Advisory Councils at the Portland Art Museum and JAMO. She's participated in powerful landmark programs at JANM and the Wing Luke Museum. During her free time, you can find her biking, dancing, and adventuring in the PNW with her two children and partner.



Heidi Tolentino
Secretary

Heidi Tolentino is a biracial Yonsei who has been on the board for many years and is the current secretary of the chapter. She works as a high school counselor at Cleveland

High School in Portland and was a high school English teacher prior to becoming a counselor. Heidi and her husband, Patrick, have a daughter, Malia, who is part of the Portland Public School's Japanese Immersion Program.

Setsy Sadamoto Larouche
Membership Chair

I would be honored to be your Membership Chair again as Portland has continued to be the largest Chapter in the Nation to include the



one Chapter in Tokyo. I'm a product of Nisei Kibei parents from Hiroshima, Japan and we moved back to PDX when I was a child. My bachelor's degree is in education and my master's is in logistics. As a retired US Army Quartermaster Officer,

I would like to continue my volunteer service to our community.

Linda Ueki Absher
Board Member



Linda was born in Fukuoka, Japan to a multiracial military family and has grown up across the world, including the UK, Japan and California. She received her

masters in Library and Information Science from the University of California, Berkeley and worked as a librarian for over thirty years. She is retired from Portland State University and has lived in Oregon since 1994.

Sean Egusa
Board Member

Sean Egusa is a fourth generation Nikkei whose father was born behind barbed wire on American soil in Gila River, AZ. Raised in the Portland area, he returned

after graduating Cornell University (with a minor in Japanese studies) to work in various fields from international trade to public relations to international tourism, always finding a way to bridge Japan and the Northwest. Proud husband and father, both sons graduated from

Portland's Japanese immersion program. Sean has served on various boards including Hood to Coast, ONE/JAMO, Oya no Kai and has volunteered extensively for JASO. Sean is excited to bring his experience of building communities both internally and externally to JACL leadership.



Erika Jennings
Board Member

As a third generation Portlander, Erika grew up involved in JA culture via family events as well as attending Oregon Buddhist Temple and Nichiren Buddhist

Temple with grandparents and great aunts and uncles. She enjoys being part of the JACL board so she can serve the community through social justice projects and interact with others of similar backgrounds. Her career has been primarily in the financial industry, currently working for Umpqua Bank as a product manager. Her family consists of 2 grown daughters, her husband of 33 years as well as a dog and cat. She enjoys watercolor painting, camping, and kayaking among other hobbies.



Sharon Kuroda
Board Member

Sharon Kuroda is a sansei who grew up on a multi-cultural sugar plantation in Hawaii. She has lived in Longview, WA since after her college years. In addition to being a

Rotarian, she is an active member of the Portland JACL, JAMO, Portland Japanese Garden, The Ancestral Society, and The Chinese Garden. She has been on two Minidoka Pilgrimages. She also has participated in several cultural activities offered by the Hawaiian, Jewish and Black communities in the Portland-Vancouver areas.

Sharon is a retired elementary teacher and library media specialist. She is also a retired Scouting America professional and volunteer. Her adult son lives in Bainbridge, WA. She will be attending the Fukuoka Kenjinkai World Convention in Fukuoka, Japan this November.



Connie Masuoka
Board Member

I am a Portland born sansei with over 40 years invested in the Portland JACL. You might say I was born in to JACL, as my parents were both active JACL members. My

avocation is being the Oregon group leader to the annual Minidoka Pilgrimage and my regular job is being a general dentist in Portland.



Ken Nitta
Board Member

Ken Nitta is a sansei who became aware of Portland JACL during the Congressional Gold Medal event in Washington DC since his father served in the 442nd and in the

Military Intelligence Service. He has been on the Advocacy Committee representing Portland JACL on Nikkei Progressives and the National Nikkei Reparations Coalition. He is a retired physician and volunteers at the Free Clinic of SW Washington as well as with Family Promise helping unhoused families. He lives in Vancouver, Washington with his wife. They have two sons and two grandchildren.

Stevie Dunbar-Matsufuru
Board Member

I am a biracial Yonsei originally from Hawaii, and I moved to Portland in 2018. I've been helping the JACL out with their social media since



learning about them at an Oregon Rises Above Hate rally a few years ago. Currently, I work at the Portland Japanese Garden as a Cultural Programming Assistant. Getting to know the Portland JA community has been a great experience!

Justin Sato
Board Member



Justin is a Hawaii-born gosei striving to keep the Japanese culture thriving through sharing culinary arts, music, and other cultural practices. He has spoken Japanese

growing up with his family and continues to perpetuate the language with his kids. (The eldest is attending UTokyo!) Justin is retired from leading a semiconductor R&D division and now teaches ukulele and spends most days cooking and volunteering. He is a head cook at Ikoi No Kai.



Connor Wakayama
Board Member

Connor is a Yonsei from Honolulu, Hawai'i. He works as an independent consultant in the social sector, focusing on projects that expand job access and economic mobility.

He also leads walking tours on the history of Portland's Japanese American community through his company, Kizuna Tours Portland. Outside of work, Connor enjoys surfing, outrigger canoe paddling, training in Aikido, and playing the ukulele.



Marleen Wallingford
Board Member

I am a Sansei who was born and raised in Portland, Oregon..I graduated from the University of Oregon with a master's degree in speech and language pathology and worked for almost 30 years for Portland Public Schools. As a retired educator, I became active with the Portland JACL, volunteer at the Japanese American Museum of Oregon and am active with OEA-Retired. In honor of my parents, I am committed to supporting our Japanese American community.



*Wishing you a
Happy Autumn!*

❖ Time to Renew the Paper Newsletter ❖

Please let us know if you would like to continue receiving the paper copy of the newsletter instead of reading the issue on-line. We are asking for a suggested donation of \$25 for those that can afford it for 2026. Please fill out the form below if you would like to continue receiving the newsletter by postal mail. By changing to mostly on-line newsletters we have been able to save a significant amount of our costs. We have gotten feedback that many of you feel that our

newsletter is a valuable service for our community.

Return the following information to the:

**Portland Chapter JACL
PO Box 86310, Portland, OR 97286
or email marleen@pdxjacl.org.**

Thank you for your support!

Name of JACL Member		Preferred Phone	
		Circle One: (Home / Cell)	
Current Address			
Street Address			
Street Address (Line 2)			
City	State	Zip Code	
New Address (if changing)			
Street Address			
Street Address (Line 2)			
City	State	Zip Code	

Please return this form to Portland Chapter JACL, PO Box 86310, Portland, OR 97286
A suggested donation of \$25 per year will help us cover costs.

Photo Corner



On August 28, 2025, John Akira Kodachi was awarded The Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon at the Consular Office of Japan. The attendees in the photo are: Setsy Larouche, Chip Larouche, Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong, Lynn Parks, Jeff Selby, John Kodach, Dr. Connie Masuoka, Lauren Sadataki.



Setsy Larouche, Jillian Toda-Currie, Jeff Matsumoto and Connie Masuoka participated in the annual Ridgefield Cultural Festival, in Washington on September 6, 2025.
Photo by: Chip Larouche



Connie Masuoka teaches Origami and chopstick skills to eager children at the annual Ridgefield Cultural Festival on September 6, 2025.
Photo by: Setsy Larouche



Ron Kobata is at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage with David Mineta, son of Norman.



Portland Taiko's Fall Concert with special guests, Minidoka Swing Band was a booming success.

Unite People's Holiday Wreath Sale

Get ready for the Holidays and reduce your stress by pre-ordering winter greenery to decorate your home or office.

This is a fundraiser activity for Unite People, a youth driven community and social justice group. The proceeds will help fund projects to educate youth and seed community projects.

Your Name

Phone number

Mixed wreaths with berries	Qty	Price	Total
12 inch		\$21.00	
16 inch		\$29.00	
20 inch		\$45.00	
24 inch		\$55.00	
30 inch Candy Cane Style with berries		\$20.00	
30 inch Cascade with berries		\$20.00	
15 foot Garland		\$23.00	
Red Bow		\$ 6.00	
Poinsettas 6 inch pots		\$12.00	
Total			

Deadline to order is November 23, 2025

Pick-up date:
Sunday, December 7, 2025
from 11-2pm
at Epworth United Methodist

Mail this form to:
Unite People
6305 E Burnside
Portland, OR 97215

or
Order online at
pdxjacl.org



Please make checks payable to UNITE PEOPLE



2025 Mochi Orders			
First NAME:		Last NAME:	
PHONE:		EMAIL:	
Mail or return to OBT with check payment to Oregon Buddhist Temple c/o Mochitsuki 3720 SE 34 th Ave. Portland, OR 97202		Your freshly made mochi order will be ready for pickup on Sunday December 14 between 3 to 4:30 pm at temple basement. After that time, the mochi will kept frozen.	
Orders must be received by Tuesday, December 9		How many pounds?	Total \$ Amount
Mochi per pound (in 1-pound Increments)	\$7		\$
<p>Please contact obtmochitsuki24@gmail.com to learn about volunteering opportunity for mochitsuki. If you prefer, orders can be placed online after November 1 at www.oregonbuddhisttemple.com/mochitsuki.</p>			



Iko no Kai - NOVEMBER 2025

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
3 Happosai Combination Stir Fry 八宝菜 11:30am Chair Yoga 12:30pm Mahjong	4 Grilled Chicken 焼き鳥 12:45pm Sing-along	X	6 * Ganmodoki Tofu Fritters 自家製がんもどき	7 Hawaiian Beef Stew ハワイ風 ビーフシチュー 10-11:30am Shigin
10 Pan Seared Pork Chops 鍋焼き ポークチャップ [INK Veterans Day] 12:30pm Mahjong	11 Butter Chicken バターチキン 12:45pm Sing-along	X	13 * Beef Chili チリコンカン 11am Blood Pressure 11am Haiku 10:30am Ukulele	14 Teriyaki Pork 豚肉の照り焼き 10-11:30am Shigin 12:30pm Bingo
17 Hamburg w/ Mushroom Sauce ハンバーグの きのご飯掛け 12:30pm Mahjong	18 Chicken Katsu Curry チキンカツカレー 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing-along	X	20 * Shrimp Egg Fu Young 広東風エビ玉 11am Blood Pressure	21 Crispy Garlic Chicken カリカリ ガーリックチキン 10-11:30am Shigin
24 Miso Ramen 味噌ラーメン 12:30pm Mahjong	25 Birthday Sushi お誕生日寿司 *Reservations required (suggested donation \$12) 12:45pm Sing-along	X	27 CLOSED	28 CLOSED

Chefs: Naomi Molstrom- M Kyoko Adcock / Raaga Mandala- Tu Justin Sato- Th/F

Suggested Lunch Donation: \$9 for seniors 65+ / \$12 for adults under 65 / \$ 6 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***** vegetarian option available on that day - please reserve two days in advance**

Yes! I want to help!

Your generous donations help fund cultural events, youth programming, community partnerships and social justice causes. We appreciate your support of our work.

You can make a tax-deductible donation online through:

Paypal



Check

Portland JACL
PO Box 86310
Portland, OR 97286

Venmo



Nikkei Winter Holiday Party & JACL General Meeting

Saturday, November 29, 2025
Oregon Buddhist Temple
Starting at 5pm

Create a new holiday tradition and please join us for the 10th annual Nikkei Community Winter Party where we will joyfully welcome the holiday season. This will be a semi-potluck dinner where the main course (Kalua Pork with cabbage, and Vegetarian/Vegan Chili) will be provided. Bring a side dish of your choice (Optional - We would rather have you and your family there!).

There will be activities for kids, raffle for the adults, and a visit from Santa and a short general meeting of Portland JACL.

Start the holidays with food and fun.

For More Information or To RSVP
Contact Connie at connie@pdxjacl.org or call/text 503-318-5839.