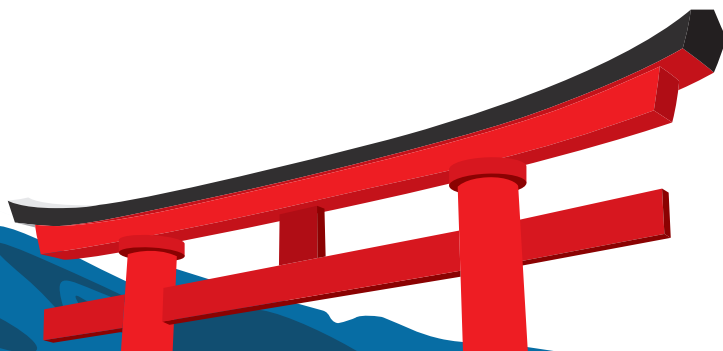




PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL – Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



• DECEMBER 2025 | VOLUME 31 ISSUE 12 •

Board Member MESSAGE

Veteran's Day 2025

By Setsy Larouche

On November 11, 2025 at 1100 hours, American Legion Post 22 and Program Coordinators Eric Ballinger, Commander, Carl Casey, Beth Dehn & Linda Tamura hosted a special ceremony honoring all veterans. At this year's Veteran's Day, Hood River's American Legion Post 22 led veterans, families, dignitaries and community members in a long-awaited salute to their service and sacrifices, building on efforts in recent years to make amends for what transpired 81 years ago to the Nisei Veterans. The Emcee was Jeff Matsumoto, President of Portland JACL. Many stories were shared by descendants of our brave Nisei soldiers. Among the speakers were Mia Ballinger, Great Granddaughter of Harry Morioka (MIS), Malia Tolentino, Great Granddaughter of Joe Saito, 442nd RCT, and Leigh Figuredo, Granddaughter of Art Iwasaki, 442nd RCT. The unveiling of the Historical Marker was done by Frank Nakata, a 99 year old WWII Nisei Veteran; Setsy Sadamoto Larouche, Vice Commander of the Oregon Nisei Veterans, Ted Kulongoski, former Governor of Oregon, Senator James Manning, Chair, Oregon Senator Interim Committee on Veterans, Representative Thuy Tran, Chair of Oregon House Interim Committee on Veterans, Carl Casey, Commander of American Legion Post 22, Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong, ED of JAMO, Ron Iwasaki, Commander of ONV, Jeff Matsumoto, President of Portland JACL, and Eric Ballinger and Mia Ballinger.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

December 7

Pick up holiday wreaths from Unite People
Epworth United Methodist Church | 11-2pm

December 14

Pick up mochi orders
Oregon Buddhist Temple | 3-430pm

December 21

Winter Solstice

December 25

Christmas

January 10

Know Your Rights
Oregon Buddhist Temple | 1-5pm

Continued on Pg. 2

Continued from Pg. 1

After the program ended, light refreshments were served and a car caravan to the Mt. Hood Viewpoint and Historical Marker on Highway 35 was conducted. A shuttle bus was also provided with police escort to the site. The sponsors for this event included The American Legion Post 22, The Historic Museum of Hood River County, the Japanese American Museum of Oregon, Oregon Nisei Veterans, Inc. and Portland JACL. Ken Olsen is a writer for the American Legion, and here is how he described the day's event:

As World War II raged across the Pacific Ocean and in Europe, Legionnaires in Oregon tried to hide the heroism of Japanese-American soldiers from their community who served and fought for the United States. But on Veterans Day 2025, Hood River American Legion Post 22 led veterans, families, dignitaries and community members in long-awaited salute to their service and sacrifice, building on efforts in recent years to make amends for what transpired 81 years ago.

"All veterans have earned and deserve our gratitude and respect," Post 22 Commander Carl Casey said in opening remarks. "We hope that we will learn from the past mistakes to ensure that they are not repeated."

Casey was referring to the events of Nov. 29, 1944, when members of Post 22 removed the names of 16 Nisei soldiers – all U.S. citizens – from an honor roll of Hood River County residents who were serving in World War II "solely because of their Japanese heritage." And while Tuesday's Veterans Day service was dedicated to all Oregon Nisei veterans, Post 22 particularly "wanted to honor these 16 because of the injustice that was done to them," Casey said. "And hopefully it will never happen again."

The removal of the Nisei soldiers' names was soon followed by more than 1,800 local residents signing a petition saying Japanese-Americans are not wanted in Hood River, writer and retired professor Linda Tamura told the audience

packed into the River of Life Assembly Church for Tuesday's ceremony. "But we can rise above our past.

"We wish all our grandparents and parents could actually be here today with us," Tamura said, noting these first- and second-generation Japanese-Americans didn't talk about the racism and hatred they faced. "They didn't want to worry us – or maybe make us to feel less than optimistic about what our futures could hold."

But Hood River and Oregon have changed.

"Today, we have a gift for them," Tamura said. "We're working together with our communities and the state of Oregon to honor our Nisei veterans. We're addressing the adversity they faced. And we're ready to tell stories that they were reluctant to share."

Tamura's father Harry served with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and her uncle, Mamoru Noji, served with the Military Intelligence Service in the South Pacific. They were among the 33,000 Nisei who served in the U.S. military – 433 of whom were from Oregon, "yet not always welcome home," said Tamura, author of "Nisei Soldiers Break Their Silence: Coming Home to Hood River." The soldiers' families were among 120,000 Japanese Americans who were uprooted from their West Coast homes and sent to incarceration camps.

"What my Issei (first generation) and Nisei (second generation) family endured resulted in a generational trauma that still resonates to this day," said Eric Ballinger, a descendant and one of the ceremony speakers. "The generations in front of me, the Gosei, my daughter's generation, inspire and motivate me to continue to share this history and to change the narrative to one of pride, honor and healing." It's a history that includes Ballinger's grandfather, Harry Morioka, who served as an interpreter in with the Military Intelligence Service during World War II. And his great uncle, Shig Hinatsu, a soldier with the 442nd Infantry Regiment, was wounded during the battle to rescue the 141st "Lost Battalion" in

France's rugged Vosges Mountains in late 1944.

Tuesday's ceremony also included tributes from former Oregon governor and Marine Corps veteran Ted Kulongoski, who highlighted the stories of two Oregon Nisei veterans who gave their lives in World War II.

Shin Sato's family grew berries and vegetables in Bethany, Ore., when they were shipped to the Minidoka, Idaho, incarceration center after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Shin and his brother, Roy, enlisted in 1943 and were part of the highly decorated 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Shin also was killed during the battle to rescue the Lost Battalion.

Frank Hachiya, who was born and raised near Hood River, also enlisted after his family was sent to Minidoka. He served with the Army's Military Intelligence Service and was killed after interrogating a Japanese prisoner in the Philippines in January 1945. Hachiya was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star.

In addition to honoring Sato and Hachiya and their families, Kulongoski recognized all Nisei veterans and families "who endured tragedy, imprisonment and economic loss. We are grateful for their valor and their sacrifice."

This includes Frank Nakata's family, which was operating a fruit and vegetable stand in Portland before being shipped to Minidoka, Idaho, in 1942. Nakata was drafted into the Army after his family was released and served without hesitation.

"It was what I should do," said Nakata, 99, who was one of the guests of honor at Post 22's Veterans Day celebration. "It was part of my duty as an American."

Julia Tokiwa, widow of 442nd veteran Yosh Tokiwa, also was a guest of honor Tuesday. Gary Akiyama, whose father, George was a decorated combat veteran with the 442nd, rang the Bell of Honor at the beginning of the

ceremony.

George Akiyama's name was among the 16 removed from the community honor roll in November 1944. The nation took notice. Everyone from citizens to clergy to soldiers fighting alongside Japanese-Americans overseas sent nearly 400 letters and postcards to the post, the majority condemning the act. The Nisei names were restored to the honor roll – on the front of the Hood River County Courthouse – in April 1945, seven weeks after American Legion National Commander Edward N. Scheiberling called Post 22's actions "ill-considered and ill-advised and contrary to the ideals and purposes for which The American Legion is organized." Post 22 publicly apologized removing the names of the 16 Japanese-American soldiers in 2023.

The History Museum of Hood River County, Japanese American Museum of Oregon, Oregon Nisei Veterans and Portland Japanese American Citizens League helped sponsor Tuesday's ceremony. The event included the dedication of a new historical highway marker on State Highway 35 – the Oregon Nisei Veterans Memorial Highway. Fourth- and fifth-generation descendants of these Japanese-American veterans introduced the six images that appear on the new highway sign.

Ballinger and his daughter, Mia, made the case for the State of Oregon to create and install the interpretative sign while housebound with COVID two years ago. And in 2022, Ballinger – with the help of Post 22, the Bend Heroes Foundation and other advocates – persuaded the Legislature to designate the highway in honor of the state's World War II Japanese American veterans

"In recent years, we have come so far as a community," Mia Ballinger said in closing remarks. "We now work alongside The American Legion and we come together today to honor our veterans. We did not stay divided. We did not stay afraid of each other ... For the future, this is an example of how we can come back together."

❖ Tadaima 2025 ❖

In 2020, the Japanese American Pilgrimage began holding virtual programming in lieu of in-person events. Tadaima 2025 returned this November and there are 20 programs available at this link below:

Link: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5cIPSWKMd0VCAFMbJu_sPFqUS0oiUT



The History and Legacy of the Redman-Hirahara House

Link: <https://youtu.be/QFhsOc5wTvk?si=TLck7m9vh7CxyVr9>

A Glimpse into Nikkei Grassroots Activism & Print Media: Civil rights leader Sei Fujii's Pre-WWII Advocacy to Post-War Legacy

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANdnpeIEh5Q>

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqosKsobYIY>

❖ 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.

❖ Thank You from Portland JACL! ❖

Portland JACL would like to thank everyone listed below for their generous donations during the past year (November 13, 2024 to November 11, 2025) to our programs which include Day of Remembrance, the Nikkei Community Picnic, our ongoing efforts for civil rights advocacy, Unite People (youth program), scholarships, monthly newsletters, annual calendar, the Minidoka Swing Band, and the Pacific Citizen Holiday Issue advertising. **Domo Arigato Gozaimashita!** Please note that all donations of \$100 dollars or more are acknowledged by receipt. All others are acknowledged here in our newsletter, in alphabetical order by last name.

Alice Sumida Living Trust
William Allen
Kevin Ando
Roberta Ando
Samuel Asai
Jim Azumano
Max Bareilles
Alexander Bildsoe
Erika Bildsoe
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Betty Jean Harry
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William Herbert
Mae & Lincoln Hirata
The Hirata family
Gary Hongo DMD
Bruce & Diane Hori
Sarah Hunsberger
Ismoon Hunter-Morton
Michael Ichisaka
Robert Ichishita
Robert & Racheal Inouye

Kurtis Inouye
Midori Irie
Rich Iwasaki
Japanese American Museum of Oregon
Japanese Ancestral Society
JASO
Erika Jennings
Alexander Jimenez
Yoshie Kagawa
Fude Kagawa
El Kageyama
Dana Kakishita
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Lynn Nakamoto & Dr. Jocelyn White
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Troy Neilson
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Ken Nitta
Kenji Nobori
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Angie Widener
Haruki Winner
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Jennifer Wright
Nancy Wynkoop
Bette Yada
Jenny Yamada
Russell Yamada
Jean and Ralph Yamamoto
Harumi Yamamoto
Colleen Yamamoto
John Yasui
Sharon Yasui Carrell
Robert & Susan Yoneda
Saeko Yoshida
Bob & Teresa Zimmerman

Photo Corner



Nikkei came out for the No Kings Rally. Tsuru for Solidarity held a pre-rally at the Japanese American Historical Plaza. The banner was carried by camp survivors Joni Kimoto (left) and Janice Okamoto (right). Center is lead organizer Chisao Hata. On the far left is City Councilor Tiffany Koyama carrying "Never Again" sign.



The annual Veteran's Luncheon was held on November 10th due to the event scheduled in Hood River on November 11th. A total of 17 veterans participated in the luncheon sponsored by Ikoi No Kai.



Jeff Matsumoto M/C'd the Veteran's Day Ceremony at the River of Life Assembly Church on November 11, 2025 in Hood River, Oregon.

Photo by: Setsy Larouche



1. Our honored guests at the Centenarian Lunch at the Doubletree Hotel. Photos by Rich Iwasaki
2. High school students Kira Sato and Haruki Winner give the toast to our community members who are 95 years and older.



Iko no Kai - DECEMBER 2025

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
1 Tonkatsu とんかつ 11:30am Chair Yoga 12:30pm Mahjong	2 Clam Chowder クラムチャウダー 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing-along	X	4 * Stuffed Cabbage Roll ロールキャベツ 11am Blood Pressure	5 Chicken Chow Mein Minute-Chicken Cake Noodle 鶏のかた焼きそば 10-11:30am Shigin
8 Teriyaki Chicken 照り焼きチキン 12:30pm Mahjong	9 Pork Kimchi Donburi 豚キムチ丼 12:45pm Sing-along	X	11 Meat Jun Korean/Hawaiian Marinated Beef ハワイの韓国風 豚バラ炒め 10:30am Ukulele	12 * Dan Dan Mien 担々麺 10-11:30am Shigin
15 Holiday Meal Turkey Dinner ホリデーディナー 七面鳥の丸焼き *Reservations required (suggested donation \$12) 12:30pm Mahjong	16 Croquettes コロッケ 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing-along	X	18 Birthday Sushi お誕生日寿司 *Reservations required (suggested donation \$12) 11am Haiku 11am Blood Pressure	19 Salt & Pepper Pork Chop w/ Fried Rice 椒塩猪排 11:30am Tai Chi 10-11:30am Shigin
22 CLOSED	23 CLOSED	X	26 CLOSED	27 CLOSED
29 CLOSED	30 CLOSED	X		

Chefs: Naomi Molstrom- M Kyoko Adcock - 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**



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Venmo



❖ Know Your Rights Training ❖

Learn what your rights are and how to respond if you are confronted by immigration enforcement. Learn how you can support our immigrant neighbors.

1 pm, January 10
Oregon Buddhist Temple

Sponsored by the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.), Portland JACL and Tsuru for Solidarity

RSVP Marleen at marleenwong@gmail.com or 503-927-2766