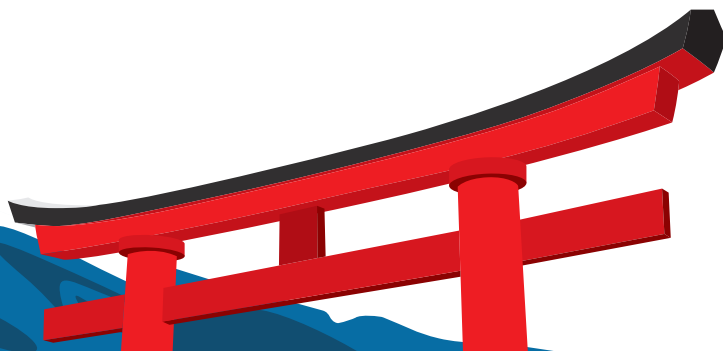




PORTLAND JACL NEWSLETTER

Portland JACL - Supporting Civil Rights Since 1928



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Board Member MESSAGE

Intergenerational Trauma From Japanese American Incarceration During World War II

By Ken Nitta

In the fall of 2025, I attended a National Tsuru for Solidarity Retreat in Federal Way focused on healing intergenerational trauma from the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII.

Growing up in the late 50's and 60's, I thought my family was normal. I knew my father and his family lived in Delano, California before WWII and were forcibly removed from their home to a camp in Poston, Arizona. After he was released from the incarceration camp, he was drafted into the Army and served in France and Italy in the 442nd and then served in the Military Intelligence Service in Tokyo. He met my mother, who was born in Tokyo and survived the US bombings (which killed over 80,000 in Tokyo), and they eventually married and moved to California. It was only after my wife noted that the predominant emotion in our family was of anger, not affection or love that I realized that my parents' traumas had a huge impact on my sister and me.

Recent studies document the toll of Japanese American trauma on Issei and Nisei incarcerated. This historical trauma contributed to an increased prevalence of negative physical health outcomes, anxiety and depression. Japanese women who were incarcerated during their childhood gave birth to babies that were 81 grams lighter compared to Japanese American mothers born in Hawaii. Former incarcerated had a 2.1 greater risk of cardiovascular

Continued on Pg. 2

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 3

Graduation Banquet

Doubletree by Hilton | 1pm

May 9

Making Waves

APANO | 1pm

May 10

Mother's Day March

Japanese American Historical Plaza | 12pm

May 25

Memorial Day Service

1pm

Continued from Pg. 1

disease than their counterparts who weren't subject to incarceration. Moreover, subsequent Sansei and later generations were shown to inherit specific epigenetic stress with altered genes, potentially passing down increased stress reactivity to offspring. Descendants of incarcerated Japanese Americans often show increased long-term risks for cardiovascular disease and psychological distress.

Trauma is also passed down through parenting styles influenced by survival-focused mindsets, shared emotional distress, and cultural, silence narratives surrounding the incarceration.

These genetic changes are not necessarily permanent, as research suggests they might be reversible through improved environmental conditions and support.

In a 2023 talk sponsored by Densho and Tsuru for Solidarity, University of Michigan psychologist Dr. Donna Nagata presented her findings on a survey of Yonsei (fourth generation Japanese Americans) whose relatives were incarcerated during WW II. Nagata's survey revealed feelings of anxiety and depression and a propensity for hoarding. Negative feelings mentioned by one Yonsei respondent stated, "so much loss, shame, sadness, our family members are still struggling as 70-90 year old elders and my generation sees all that. Will we still be that traumatized in 60 years?" Another wrote, "I feel so much rage and anger when I think of what was taken away from my grandfather and grandmother, and subsequently from me." Another Yonsei mentioned, "our family didn't talk much or discuss things and feelings freely. I think it held me back a lot."

Some Yonsei noted positive aspects of the incarceration. Japanese Americans proved themselves by providing for their family and "quietly doing as they were expected to do". We got everything we needed to survive, but lacked a lot in emotional well being." Some commented on how incarceration shaped their awareness of and commitment to addressing injustice.

My grandparents and parents are no longer with us. And though they never seemed to say "I love you", they expressed their love by giving my sister and I as much support as they could. From providing music lessons, coaching Little League teams, running the Girl Scout cookie sales, attending all our concerts and games and making sure that we had the best education they could afford. Their love was expressed by their actions.

One of the moderators of the Tsuru retreat extracted a promise from the attendees to reach out to family members and discuss their family's intergenerational trauma. My sister and I started having regular phone calls to discuss our family life growing up. We also spent a long weekend in Phoenix during the Martin Luther King holiday to talk, hike in the mountains and share other experiences. These discussions have made me closer to my only sibling. I would recommend this for all of us.

Bibliography:

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- Jensen GM. *"The Experience of Injustice: Health Consequences of the Japanese American internment."* Dissertation. University of Colorado; 1997.
- Nagata, Donna. *"The Japanese American wartime incarceration: examining the scope of racial trauma."* Am Psychol, 2019; 74(1):36-48.
- Nagata, DK. *"Forever foreigners: intergenerational impacts of historical trauma from the World War II Japanese American incarceration."* In: Tummala-Narra P, ed. *"Trauma and Racial Minority Immigrants: Turmoil, Uncertainty, and Resistance."* American Psychological Association Publishing; 2021:105-126.
- Sotero MM. *"A conceptual model of historical trauma: implications for public health practice and research."* J Health Dispar Res Pract. 2006;1(1):93-108. and I look forward to serving the local chapter and the local community.

Challenges to Telling Our Story

By Marleen Wallingford

"Not everything that is faced can be changed.
But nothing can be changed unless it is faced"

-James Baldwin

In March of 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14253, "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History," that called for the removal of "divisive, race-centered ideology" at federal sites and instructed the Interior secretary to revoke recent changes to landmarks and monuments if they're found to "perpetuate a false reconstruction of American history." This suggests that by telling the truth about our past that falsehoods are being perpetuated. What has been called the "truth" is a idealistic story of the past which does not hold anyone accountable for the wrongs that happened.

Park superintendents are asked to identify and flag signs, exhibits, films, and other public-facing content that are deemed to disparage US history. This is problematic at sites of conscience like the incarceration sites of Japanese Americans or the Harriet Tubman National Park that tells the story of slavery. This is part of the administration's ongoing campaign to dismantle foundational principles of diversity and democracy, suppress historical narratives that challenge the heroic story of America and erase the contributions of people of color, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and other marginalized communities from American history.

"Federal funding will be contingent upon implementing curriculum that promotes American pride, unity, and moral clarity." This makes clear that any uncomfortable stories about the past need to be buried.

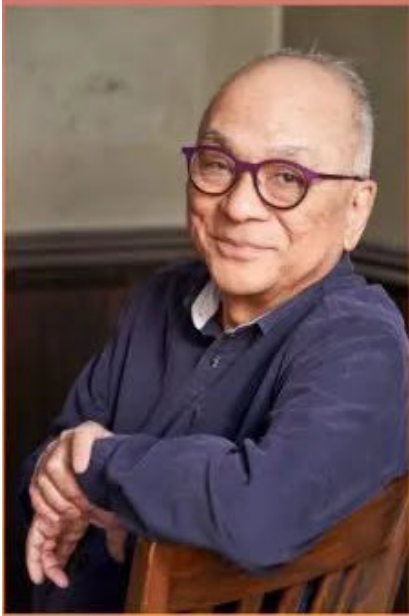
The Institute of Museum and Library Services, which sends federal money to libraries and museums, and other agencies is slated to be dismantled.

The administration is also calling for an end to the "Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling" emphasizing "patriotic education." Schools are accused of indoctrinating children in anti-American ideologies, such as gender policies and stating that "demanding acquiescence to 'White Privilege' or 'unconscious bias,' actually promotes racial discrimination and undermines national unity."

There has also been a dramatic increase in book banning in schools throughout the nation. Librarians who were welcomed into their communities have been accused of sharing inappropriate content to young readers. In addition, the administration has removed at least 600 different books from Department of Defense Schools on military bases for lack of alignment with executive orders related to diversity, discussions of race and "gender ideology extremism." Identities and experiences are censored to protect the young but what about those young people who need to find content that speaks to their feelings and experiences.

The administration is also in the process of reinstating memorials to the Confederacy. There is an effort to rename sites like Denali back to McKinley.

This approach to history leads to an incomplete and biased view of the past which will not help lead us to understanding and dismantling the disparities that exist today. We will just continue to repeat the injustices which still haunt us. This is not unbiased education. This is propaganda perpetuated under the guise of patriotism.



Lines of Resistance

Graphic Storytelling,
Minidoka, and the Memory
of Incarceration

Saturday, May 16, 1pm
220 NW 2nd Ave, Portland

Authors **Kelly Goto** (*Seattle Samurai*) and **Frank Abe** (*We Hereby Refuse*) will discuss how graphic storytelling gives voice to the experiences of Japanese Americans incarcerated at the Minidoka concentration camp during World War II. Award-winning journalist **Lori Matsukawa** will moderate.

JAPANESE AMERICAN
MUSEUM OF OREGON



Photo Corner



The Cherry Blossom Bazaar drew hundreds of people searching for that special item. This fundraiser for the Japanese American Museum of Oregon occurs every two years. Set aside Japanese or Asian inspired items to donate to this worthy cause.



Bento volunteers help put together to-go boxes at Ikoi No Kai this April



The cherry blossoms in the Japanese American Historical Plaza attracted thousands of visitors to the park when the full bloom happened in mid-March. To attract visitors at night the trees were lit with pink lights.



Special Guest:
Director Jon Osaki

MAKING WAVES: THE RISE OF ASIAN AMERICA

Free community screening & discussion

Join us for a screening of award-winning filmmaker Jon Osaki's newest documentary, *Making Waves*, followed by a discussion with Jon and local activists.

SATURDAY, MAY 9
1-3pm @ APANO

RSVP required - space is limited.
RSVP here: bit.ly/waves-5-9-26



Multicultural
Centers





Iko no Kai - MAY 2026

1333 SE 28th Ave / 503-238-0775

MON	TUES		THURS	FRI
		X		1 Teriyaki Meatball 肉団子の照り焼き 10-11:30am Shigin
4 Lemon Shiokoji Chicken レモン塩麹チキン 11:30am Soroban 12:30pm Mahjong	5 Children's Day Meal 子供の日ランチ 12:45pm Sing-along	X	7 Eggplant Katsu 茄子カツ 11am Haiku 10:30am Ukulele	8 Salt & Pepper Fish 白身魚の塩胡椒焼き 10-11:30am Shigin 10:40am Reiki 12:30pm Bingo
11 Kakiage Donburi Shrimp and Veggie Tempura Rice Bowl かき揚げ丼 11:30am Chair Yoga 12:30pm Mahjong	12 Mapo Tofu 麻婆豆腐 11am Blood Pressure 11:30am Aikido Stress Relief 12:45pm Sing a Long	X	14 Seafood Chowmein 海鮮炒麵 11am Blood Pressure 11:30am Tai Chi	15 Yakitori 焼き鳥 10-11:30am Shigin
18 Tonkatsu とんかつ 11:30am Soroban 12:30pm Mahjong	19 Keema Curry Minced Meat Curry キーマカレー 12:45pm Sing-along	X	21 Cold Ginger Chicken 冷やし ジンジャーチキン 11am Haiku 10:30am Ukulele	22 Hawaiian Plate ハワイの郷土料理 プレートランチ 10-11:30am Shigin
25 CLOSED	26 Birthday Sushi お誕生日寿司 *Reservations required (suggested donation \$12) 11am Blood Pressure 12:45pm Sing-along	X	28 Tofu & Mushroom Hot Pot きのこ湯豆腐 11am Blood Pressure 11:30am Tai Chi	29 Stuffed Cabbage ロールキャベツ 10-11:30am Shigin

Chefs:

Naomi Molstrom-M Kyoko Adcock-Tu Justin Sato, Jeff Higa and Andrea Hoyt -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



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Cemetery Clean-up Schedule

The toban duties consist of opening/closing the storage shed and dumpster, and providing cleaning guidance to volunteers who show up.

All times are 9:30 am to noon, except for 5/25, see schedule. Toban's names are shown in parentheses.

For Questions Please Reach Out to **Kenji Yamasaki (503-330-3327)**.

- **Sat, 5/16:** Cleanup #4 (Lynn/Terry)
- **un, 5/24:** Prep for Memorial Day Service (Chip)
- **Mon, 5/25:** Memorial Day Service (Mike/Rich): Starts at 1pm
- **Sat, 6/6:** Flower pickup (Kenji)

PORTLAND JAACL'S MOTHER'S DAY MARCH TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

We are rallying against the separation of children from their parents. We are alarmed by the use of immigrant detention centers housing children and families, often in the same sites and conditions in which our families were incarcerated during World War II.

Noon to 2 pm, May 10

Japanese American Historical Plaza



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