

It's that time of year again...with bells jingling, that nice jolly "HO HO HO" fellow will be visiting all the good children again. Time just seem to zoom by so fast...where does it go...What a year...earth shaking news world over...literally...the terrible Hurricane Hugo, the devastating earthquake up in the Bay area. I do hope that all of you up there are okay, and did not suffer injuries or damages. I know from my cousin up in Watsonville that it was very frightening...his brother's big tractor-truck moved 15 feet at his farm...could not stand or walk because the movement was so violent that he was knocked down...It must have been terrible. What we saw on the T.V. showed the result of a BIG QUAKE...though they say it was NOT the BIG ONE for California, it was big enough for those who were there.

The news from Europe...the Berlin Wall, the changes taking place in the Eastern world...it is just amazing...who would have thought that these changes were coming...and so fast...it's almost frightening...so much changes...

Changes...so much in all our lifetime...it doesn't seem possible that we were all in camp just about 48 years ago (half a century)...we didn't know what was going to happen to all of us...evacuation? Where to? What happens after the war? Wow...it must have been Hell for our folks...especially those who were separated as ours...our dads in New Mexico, or Montana or South Dakota, etc.,...our moms and us kids in other assembly centers...relocation centers not knowing where or what was going to happen...

Yet today, we're all continuing life...most of us now much older...many retired...enjoying lives traveling, relaxing...with grandchildren, ballroom dancing...having time to reflect and remember warm memories (some not so warm)...

I thought all the Isseis were soooo old in camp...then I now realize many were still in their 30's, 40's 50's 60's...and now that I've reached those high number and don't feel it, I feel bad that I thought of them as being so "OLD"..."OJI-SAN...OBA-SAN" such old sounding words...but I fit that category now, and do NOT feel aged at all! "Gomen, gomen."

Today, I believe it's a state of mind...as I've seen in many of my patients...so many live with aches and pain, but the Japanese "Gaman" and do not show it or "monku" about it, yet so many have less problems, but feel they must air it out loud to everyone around them...the ones with more pain are more quiet...so it is with age...many are ageless...numbers doesn't affect them...they continue on...and even live more actively and constructively...the word "retire" isn't on their vocabulary...and they are happy. They are ALIVE...and continue to contribute to society.

LATEST ON REDRESS

Last week, in the Pacific Citizen, there was an insert "Redress: The Next Steps" and in it "How ORA Will Verify Your Eligibility"...which states: that they are collecting data from individuals, and from state and federal agencies...then stored in ORA's computer. ORA (Office of Redress Administration) was established in September 1988. They verify unofficial data against an official source such as the WRA (War Relocation Authority) records...this process can determine if a person is preliminarily eligible for redress.

If you are determined to be preliminarily eligible, you can expect to receive 3 types of mail from ORA as follows:

1. VERIFICATION LETTER

This letter says that ORA believes you to be potentially eligible for redress and requests documentation so that ORA can verify your identity as the correct person. The letter will include the telephone number of a help-line you can call in case you have questions on documentation. It will be accompanied by a Declaration form for your identity, current residence, social security number, date of birth and, if applicable heir information. Also enclosed will be instructions on what types of documentation should be sent to support your identity, and a pre-addressed, postpaid envelope for mailing your Declaration and documents back to ORA. DO NOT SEND DOCUMENTATION UNLESS ORA REQUESTS YOU TO DO SO.

2. NOTIFICATION THAT IDENTITY IS ESTABLISHED or LETTER REQUESTING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. ORA will send you a postcard once it has examined your documents and confirmed your identity. If ORA encounters any difficulty in establishing your identity, or if the documents received are incomplete, ORA will notify you by letter. A check list, specifically identifying the problem will accompany the letter. Once your identity is confirmed and ORA informs you of this by postcard, you need do nothing more unless your address or other personal circumstances change. In that event, you should notify ORA of the change of writing.

3. OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY. This letter is the official notification that you are eligible for redress. This is also the point when ORA authorizes the U.S. Treasury Department to issue your check. The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 says that the official notification of your eligibility cannot be sent until funds for payment are available. For that reason, there will be a delay between the time you receive your postcard and the time you receive this last letter. The number of people each year who receive this letter and the payment which follows shortly after, will be dependent upon Congressional action regarding funding.

The majority of you will already have these documents in your possession...you need only photocopy them, notarized, or include signed statement.

So, what's new, you ask...well, not much, yet...but soon, very soon, after Christmas and New Year, Sei Dyo and Sidney Okazaki and I will have to get together, select cabinet...get the ball rolling for our picnic August 26, 1989... at the same private park we held our picnic at last year, the El Dorado East Regional Park of Long Beach. Now, I need some input...please contact me...

1. Would any of you like to get together at a restaurant for dinner on Saturday night...not a banquet situation because we're not planning anything that elaborate (takes a lot of time to put together), but to meet at a nice restaurant. I need your help to make reservations...

2. Would some of you like to get together for a round of golf or fishing or some place that you'd like to take in while down here in Southern California?

We'd like to know what activities you would like besides the races for the picnic...I know I heard comments last year that they missed the "Tug O'War"...let's have ideas...

Some of us would like to journey to Crystal City, possibly after the picnic date...charter a trip to see the ole campsite and visit the Crystal City Memorial site...probably couple of weeks...also including a trip to Carlsbad N.M., and see the Cavern, perhaps to Santa Fe and/or Lordsburg where many of our dads were interned. Please let me know those interested so I can plan a chartered trip with a travel agent.

Memories...memories...like "Back to the Future"...I know many of you may not have good memories of the camp days...of course, it was traumatic, and it never should have happened. What they did to our families...removing and having our fathers...and some of you your moms into camps in Montana, North Dakota, New Mexico, Texas, etc...even the redress does not cover the anxiety and fears our group of parents had to face...relocation and assembly camps were rough enough to get used to...the communal life with absolutely no privacy...etc...but our own parents were subjected to interrogation, other stressful situations, and separated not knowing when or if the family would be able to reunite.

Yet, because of this situation, we all met... in Texas...inspite of the difficulties, we were able to share memories of camp...everything from our many sports, picking those delicious oranges, tangerines, grapefruits...those times at Japanese school rooms...the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts all military style...Japanese ways. Meeting people from Hawaii, Peru, and some from Marshall Island, Alaska, Melanesia Island...the German groups and for a short time, the Italian group...it was a very unique camp.

Our folks had the original market baskets... made with wood and wooden wheels...the morning sound they made as our mothers went shopping for available food on certain days..."Kara kara, kara kara"...

Years have past since then...and all of you have succeeded...living well, now retired (many of you)...families...grandchildren...so much to be thankful about...we have/had wonderful Issei parents...their values...made us all strong. It comes through the "Gaman" and "Gambaru" Spirit. To them, giving to their children education, was not thought as "sacrifice"...they just wanted all of us to have something they never had...education

I wished they were all here to receive their Redress...they are the ones who lost everything. They worked so hard...toiling the soil, doing all types of labor..."Ase-Mizu Chi-mizu"... "Blood and Sweat" to give to us children...a better life.

They not only had to work hard before WW II, but after...they came back...working as gardeners, house workers...don't you remember those days as "school girls"...getting room and board and about \$20.00, \$25.00 per month...wasn't that fun...doing maid's work, sharing room with some brat (s)... oh those days...when I ate my turkey on the cuttin board, listening to the family in the dining room laughing and enjoying Thanksgiving...and I'm just choking with tears wondering how my folks were in Japan...I would have loved "Chazuke" just to be with them...but the bell rings to call you, to clear the table, bring coffee...dessert...clear and wash the dishes...etc...etc. Then there was Uraga, so it was still much better than that.

Reflections...so our lives are full of many memories...some bitter...many sweet...yet all build "character"...we are what we learn (ed) and are still learning...as in fabric...many colors, many patterns...

Well...I'm sure that our parents are not only proud of their children but are happy that they paved the rough roads for children and grandchildr...we owe them so much...

I hope you'll all forgive me for rambling on... you see what happens when no one sends me news? Anyway...Christmas...again I'm so grateful to my folks...they were Buddhists but they gave me full Christmas enjoyment...Biggest tree with beautiful ornaments and lights...so much presents under the tree...stocking (my mom's longest cotton stocking) hanging by my bed (no chimney or fireplace in my home)...filled to the top and overflowing to the floor with so much surprises...I never knew until much later, really after my late teens, that my folks' love did not see religious differences.

We shared this spirit with my relatives in Japan after the war...with Christmas tree and all. My co-conspirator was my brother-in-law...we were not supposed to cut trees down in a state park in Sendai...well, I really didn't know that but we had a tree at my uncle's home, and sang Christmas Carols...and made a wonderful holiday out of very little.

I'm grateful for the many churches that always remembered us in camps...Heart Mountain, Wvoming to Crystal City, Texas...to even Matsonia ship crossing the Pacific...we got little gifts...how love reaches out...MERRY MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!