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# SEATTLE CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

October 1996

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## Killing sparks family commitment against gun violence

by *Arlene Oki*

Early this month, Karen Yoshitomi, PNWD director, and local JACLers had the privilege of having dinner with Mieko Hattori and her translator/advisor Professor Yoshinori Kamo. Also attending was Joan Yoshitomi, representing King County Executive Gary Locke.

Four years ago this month, Hattori's son, Japanese exchange student Yoshi, was shot and killed in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, as he and a friend were approaching what they thought to be a Halloween party. The subsequent trial of Hattori's killer ended with an acquittal of the charges. The Hattori family's pain was further exacerbated when the courtroom erupted in cheers as the judge read the verdict. The case received extensive

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**The Hattoris hope to use future awards as challenge grants to stimulate more private sector giving to organizations committed to ending violence and the use of guns.**

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funds to end future senseless acts such as that which took the life of their son.

See "anti-gun violence fund" on page 2

## Moving forward together with the Puget Sound Area chapters

by *Jeffrey Hattori*

Collaboration is the buzzword and strategy of today. To better leverage resources and respond to issues of today and the future, it is imperative that our communities work together in ways that build upon and integrate our assets and interests.

Over the last five months, JACL chapter representatives from Lake Washington, Puyallup Valley, Olympia, Seattle, White River and staff from the PNW District office have been meeting monthly to discuss and identify ways in which we can work collaboratively around common goals and themes. These meetings of the "Puget Sound Area Chapters" were organized with the notion of creating stronger relationships and strategies between local chapters as JACL evolves and moves forward towards the next millennium.

The first few meetings, facilitated by consultant Alice Ito, were spent gaining a clearer sense of "who we are," "where we are," and "where we are going." This

See "Working together" on page 3

## Dig out the old photos! It's diamond anniversary time!

The Seattle Chapter will be celebrating our 75th anniversary next year. We are in the process of putting together a slide show of JACL activities over the last 75 years. If you have any photos depicting such activities, and are willing to lend them to us, please contact the JACL office at 622-4098 or Cal Takagi at 232-5885.

The diamond anniversary banquet will be held at the Seattle Sheraton, Saturday, January 25, 1997. Reception at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m. Tickets: \$50.

Check the enclosed flyer for more details.

## Misinformed columnist underscores need for continuing education about internment

An article that appeared in the September 23, 1996, issue of the Seattle Post Intelligencer Opinion Page startled and irritated me. Richard Estrada, a columnist for the Dallas Morning News, wrote about "concentration camps" during World War II. In his opinion, the story of the incarceration and internment of Japanese Americans during the war years had been distorted.

He compared the internment camps to the death camps that the Nazis used to incarcerate the Jews in Europe, stating that there were no gas chambers and no killing fields. Children were not separated from parents, nor husbands from wives and children. He further quotes a former Manzanar resident who was a teenager at the time, "we

got three square meals a day and could play all day long."

Mr. Estrada has been receiving wrong information. Could it be that this is the kind of information that is being taught in Texas, or for that matter other states? Other inaccuracies surface in his article, all of which are being addressed, both by the Seattle Chapter JACL and the National office.

We have tried to educate the public, with documentation and with personal stories, but somehow this is not enough. If the facts as Mr. Estrada sees them are perpetuated through the media, many will not know the true story. As a teacher, I feel it is vital that we work towards getting textbook publishers, across the country, to include the Japanese American

## Anti-gun violence fund, continued from page 1

Mrs. Hattori and her husband Masaichi have transformed their deep pain into positive action to end such senseless gun violence. The remaining \$45,000 from their settlement (after legal and other expenses) are pledged to support gun control organizations. On Sunday, October 6, Mrs. Hattori participated in a Day of Remembrance presented by the Ceasefire Foundation of Washington (CFW). The annual event featured a daffodil bulb planting as a memorial to victims of gun violence and a special

presentation by Mrs. Hattori to award part of that civil settlement fund to gun control organizations in Virginia and New Hampshire.

The Hattoris hope to use future awards as challenge grants to stimulate more private sector giving to organizations committed to ending violence and the use of guns. They, along with gun control organizations in the U.S. and Japan hope to build the Ceasefire Fund of America. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Bruce Gryniewski, director of CFW, at 322-1236 or 322-7564.

story in greater detail in all U.S. history books. Our Seattle JACL Education Committee is working towards getting Washington State History texts to place more emphasis on the topic. It will be a difficult task to achieve this. Not impossible, just difficult. However, if Mr. Estrada is typical of what Southerners know of the evacuation and relocation of Japanese Americans, the push to educate people across the United States must be greater.

There are projects under way in many communities which will help to carry out the education process. Through the Civil Liberties Public Education Grant, many of these projects will get the financial boost they need to get the projects going. One such project, the Washington Japanese Chamber of Commerce "Densho" project, will capture personal stories of Japanese Americans and make those available, through modern technology, to people across the country and around the world.

Mr. Estrada's article was a jolt to my complacent world. There is still much to do to underscore the tenuousness of our constitutional rights. Hysteria in an emergency could again cause mass racial prejudice to surface. Mr. Estrada and others who believe that Japanese Americans "were not singled out on the basis of ethnicity, but rather on the question of their alienage, noncitizenship," must be corrected. My faith was restored, however, by the number of supportive phone calls we received, and the letters that appeared in the Letters to the Editor the following week.

## Working together, continued from page 1

provided the context for us to examine issues that included:

- how JACL, at the local level, has evolved over time as a civil rights organization and the implications for our role and purpose today;
- how we can more effectively communicate and respond to membership and invite the participation of sansei, yonsei and their families, and;
- how we can encourage and provide opportunities for youth to develop and assume leadership roles within JACL and the greater community.

Through these discussions, po-

tential collaborative projects have been identified that address these issues. A family "fun" event during the holiday season, planning next year's Bi-District meeting that includes a Youth Leadership Conference and the development of a joint newsletter that would be distributed to the greater Puget Sound area are examples of potential projects on the table.

There is certainly much work to do. However, this experience has also been exciting, revealing how we can work together and move forward for the benefit of our community. If you are interested in learning more about these projects or would like to attend a meeting,

please feel free to call me at 448-0474 or call your respective chapters.



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## The Seattle Chapter JACL Newsletter

The Seattle Chapter JACL Newsletter is published on the second Wednesday of the month by the Seattle Chapter Japanese American Citizens League.

Seattle Chapter JACL mailing address: P.O. Box 18558, Seattle, Washington, 98118-0558.

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## Japanese American Citizens League

Seattle Chapter

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Vicky Yuki





"Diary, Dec. 7, 1941" by Roger Shimomura, Collection of Burdett Loomis, Lawrence, Kansas

You are cordially invited to an evening with internationally recognized painter, performer and teacher, Japanese American artist, **ROGER SHIMOMURA**. This event is hosted by the Lake Washington Chapter Japanese American Citizen League, the Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue Community College and the Meydenbauer Center.

Please come to a private reception hosted by Lake Washington Chapter Japanese American Citizen League and the Bellevue Art Museum. Guests will have an opportunity to meet with the artist.

*Thursday, November 7th, 5:00 to 6:30 pm  
Bellevue Art Museum, 3rd floor, Bellevue Square Mall*

There will be a viewing of the show:  
**ROGER SHIMOMURA: PAINTINGS,  
PRINTS, INSTALLATION & PERFORMANCE, 1966-1996**

Roger's grandmother, Toku Shimomura, was a picture bride who came to the U.S. in 1912. She was a nurse and midwife who delivered over 1,000 babies in Seattle. Mrs. Shimomura was incarcerated with her family during WWII at the Minidoka, ID camp. The diaries she kept during her life, particularly the relocation years, have been a major influence on the art of her grandson.

*At 7:00 pm*, Bellevue Community College invites you to a lecture by Roger as he shares his Grandmother's diaries and his "Diary Series" paintings at the Meydenbauer Center, 11100 NE 6th Street, Bellevue. There will be an entrance fee of \$5.00 per person for this portion of the evening and tickets will be available at the door.

Please join us for an important evening of introductions and discussion.  
Call Vivian Kobayashi (206) 702-9233 or Yoshiko Tokita Tsuji (206) 723-9935 for more information.

**SAVE THIS DATE ! ! !**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1997**

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**The Seattle Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League  
proudly presents .....**

*"Our Legacy, Our Future"*  
**75th Anniversary Installation Dinner**  
**Seattle Sheraton Hotel**  
**Reception: 5:30 P.M.**  
**Dinner: 6:30 P.M.**

◆ **Keynote Speaker** ◆  
**Dale Minami, Chair of the Civil Liberties**  
**Public Education Fund**

**Help us celebrate this important milestone  
in the community.**

*Invitations forthcoming.*