

Nikkei Heritage Association holds its first annual meeting

The Nikkei Heritage Association of Washington held its first annual meeting on January 10, 2004 at the Bush Garden Restaurant. Ron Mamiya, Lori Matsukawa and Kip Tokuda provided a progress report and shared their visions for a Japanese Cultural and Community Center in Seattle with approximately 25 representatives from Nikkei organizations. Everyone expressed great optimism and enthusiasm for developing the Center and seemed not to mind paying \$150 to inaugurate the project. The meeting was a productive one in which elections were held for officers and members of the Board of Directors and agreements on meeting dates and organizational structure were negotiated. Organizational representatives were asked to respond to a questionnaire developed by Lori asking for specific information about their space needs, programming needs, and capacity to support the project. Members were encouraged to join committees which include Community Outreach, Finance, Fundraising, Events, Building, and Programs.

By unanimous consent, the group elected officers who served during the formative months of the Association: Ron Mamiya, president; Lori Matsukawa, vice president; Kip Tokuda, vice president; Dee Goto, treasurer and Arlene Oki, secretary.

They also elected members of the Board of Directors: Lance Akutsu, Shea Aoki, Jerry Arai, Mike Forrester, Kathy Hasegawa, Lillian Hayashi, Darrell Mihara, Masaye Nakagawa, Karen Akada Sakata, Tazue Sasaki, Yutaka Sasaki, Ken Sato, Tsuyoshi Sugimoto, Tom Tanaka, Elsie Taniguchi, Bill Tashima and Calvin Terada.

Young executives from the Executive Development Institute did intensive work over a six-month period to build a "road map" for the project, collated survey results and conducted a study of cultural centers in other cities. The Japanese American Chamber of Commerce contributed a generous part of proceeds from their spectacular "Sake & Sushi" event. Students at Seattle University's Albers School of Business developed a business plan and just recently students at the UW Business School's "Certificate of International Studies in Business" program volunteered to help with future efforts to develop the Center.

Funding from the South Downtown Foundation will partially pay for costs incurred by Lorig and Associates to conduct a feasibility study for the development on the Fujimatsu (former Uwajimaya) and Japanese Language School sites. Ken Katahira of Interim recently presented a concept paper on developing the Center at a site in the former Nihonmachi section of the International District.

This is a particularly challenging period for the NHAW as it begins to move into the planning and development phase of the project and embarks on a major fundraising effort. The organization will refine its structure, mission and strategies at a retreat to be held in May and will continue to conduct outreach efforts to ensure that the development of the Center is an inclusive process that the entire community will embrace.

JACL to Celebrate 75th Anniversary

by Susan H. Kitsu

The Seattle Chapter is helping to kick off the countdown to the JACL's 75th anniversary national convention to be held in Hawaii. Our theme for the national convention is "Our Legacy, Our Future: Ensuring Diversity In America." It is based on many hours of discussion over our kachikan, or values, and what needs to be achieved at this special event. It is our pleasure to invite you to be a part of this once in a lifetime convention to be held at the Waikiki Beach Marriot Resort & Spa, August 10 - 14, 2004.

Senator Mee Moua, the first Hmong elected to state office, will be our keynote speaker at a special luau to be held on Tuesday, August 11 at the Hale Koa Hotel. At this event, we will honor and celebrate Asian Pacific Americans in political office around the nation.

Moua was born in a small village in the Xing Khuang province of Laos. When Communists took over Southeast Asia, her family fled Laos. Her father used all of the family's money to bribe a fisherman to take them across the Mekong River, where they lived as refugees in Thailand before coming to the US. As a young girl in the US, some neighborhood children wrote obscenities on her family's garage and made fun of her because she looked different from them.

Moua has been working hard since then; she graduated from Brown University, received a degree in public affairs from the University of Texas, and a law degree from the University of Minnesota School of Law. Currently she serves as a state senator, representing the people of East Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Our opening ceremonies will feature Dale Minami, a partner with the law firm of Minami, Lew and Tamaki LLP in San Francisco. He also co-founded the Asian Law Caucus, the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area, the Asian Pacific Bar of California, and the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans.

Mr. Minami is best known for his work on civil rights litigation involving Fred Korematsu, *Korematsu vs. United States*, a case that ultimately vindicated Mr. Korematsu for refusing to obey curfew orders during WWII. Mr. Minami recently received the Thurgood Marshall Award from the American Bar Association for his lifetime of civil rights work and was also honored last year by the Hawaii Consumer Lawyers.

We are honored to have Senator Daniel K. Inouye and former Governor George R. Ariyoshi as our honorary co-chairs for this year's convention. Many more speakers are on tap for this event; we will be highlighting them in the future. Registration materials should be out in the mail shortly.

JACL scholarships available, detailed on page 3

President's Message

by Bill Tashima, President

On February 14th, Valentine's Day, members of the Seattle JACL Board left their loved ones to gather for our annual Board Retreat. For half a day on a beautiful Saturday, we discussed what our objectives would be, what areas we should engage in, what events we should stage, and how we could grow our membership. In this process, we discussed what initially drew us to JACL, and what now keeps us with JACL.

The retreat was very revealing, especially when you consider the diversity of our board in age, backgrounds, and other aspects. Essentially, we agreed that we value our history, our heritage, our culture, and that we need to give back to the community in terms of advocacy for civil rights, youth, and passing on our legacies. Near the end of our first session, we found ourselves reaffirming the Seattle Chapter JACL mission statement, "...we strive to be a leading Asian American Advocacy group for civil and human rights while promoting and preserving the values and cultural heritage of Japanese Americans."

We agreed that this retreat was the beginning of our commitment for the coming year, and that we need to keep our discussions going. Some issues that we will return to are: developing a method to archive our history; beginning a strategy for long term planning; recruiting and retaining membership (both new members and former members); and involving more youth in our activities.

For a Saturday on a nice weekend, especially being Valentine's Day, I think our time was well spent. A special thanks to Mark Kuciemba, a co-worker who serves as a facilitator and Alternative Dispute Resolution mediator with the Seattle Federal Executive Board, for his volunteer services in leading our discussions. Mark ably drew everyone into the discussion and kept the retreat in an informal atmosphere throughout the day.

Invitation to all members

This year we will be working to get more people involved with our activities. We are a membership organization and we want as many people to know what we are about as possible. When you see an article about an activity in the newsletter or calendar and are interested in helping, or in just finding out more about the activity, give the lead person a call. We welcome participation at any level: serving on the board, serving on a committee, helping plan an event, or helping out at an event. Please give us a call.

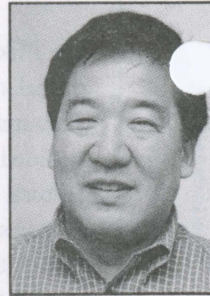
I also want to invite anyone who is interested to attend our board meetings held on the third Wednesday of each month at the JACL Office. Board meetings are always open to members. You are welcome to participate in the discussion of our issues. The meetings begin at 6 PM and end by 7:30 PM.

On occasion, I hope to hold special membership events. One meeting that I would like to see for early summer is on the proposed Japanese Cultural and Community Center in Seattle. I would like members of the Center to meet with our membership to give an update on the progress thus far and to solicit questions from our members. The Center promises to be an exciting project in the near future and I want to ensure that our membership has access to information they need to make decisions on their level of support in the future.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Shea Aoki for providing the beautiful flower arrangements, corsages, and boutonnieres for the Installation Dinner. The total value of flowers was over \$200. Shea donated

See "President" on page 3



Announcements

Thank You

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Events Calendar

Mar. 20 – A variety of music by East Current, formed by shakuhachi player, Dozan Fujiwara, and koto player, Mieko Miyazaki, hosted by the Seattle Cherry Blossom Festival Committee; Benaroya Hall, 200 University St., Seattle, 8 PM. Tickets: (206) 723-2003.

Mar. 28 – Wing Luke Asian Museum's 2004 Annual Dinner & Art Auction; Westin Hotel, 1900 - 5th Ave., Seattle. Contact: Mary Ann, [redacted]

Mar. 31 – deadline for submitting application for Seattle JACL Chapter scholarship; see related article on page 3.

Apr. 16-18 – Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival with exhibits, performances and demonstrations; Seattle Center House, Fisher Pavilion, all day, FREE. Contact: (206) 726-2003.

Apr. 26 - Program with talk by Bruce Yamashita and a film on Mr. Yamashita by Steve Okino; University of Washington, HUB Auditorium, 7 PM.

Save The Date

Jun. 25 - 27 - Minidoka 2004 Pilgrimage

Aug. 6 - From Hiroshima to Hope peace event at Green Lake.

Aug. 31 - Seattle Mariners baseball game with Lake Washington JACL.

President, continued from page 2

the flowers in memory of her husband and former Chapter President, Jiro Aoki, on the 20th anniversary of his death. Shea was assisted in distributing the flowers by her granddaughters, Jennifer and Stacy Asato.

Did you buy a raffle ticket at the Banquet? This year our ticket sellers raised over \$2,600 for our scholarship funds. The children who volunteered to sell raffle tickets were Derrik Hattori, Serii Hattori, Alex Anderson, Cameron Ryan, Katie Cunningham, Laura Hamada, Haley Hamada, David St. Germain, plus JACL National Youth Representative, Maya Yamazaki, and our ever youthful Banquet Committee member, Naoko Takagi.

It is with regret that I announce that Vicki J. Toyohara, former Chapter President, resigned from the Board for personal reasons. Vicki had served the Seattle JACL Chapter for over 20 years. The Board thanks Vicki for her years of service and wishes her the best in the future.

The Seattle JACL has just learned that former President and Redress Leader, Cherry Kinoshita, has been selected to receive the prestigious Jefferson Award for her volunteerism. Cherry will be honored at a luncheon on March 4th at the Sheraton Hotel. We will have more information on this well-deserved award in our next newsletter.

Finally, a special thank you to the Nisei Vets Committee for providing us a facility to stage our recent Card Making and Rubber Stamping Party.

Scholarships

The Seattle JACL Chapter is sponsoring three higher education scholarships for high schools seniors in the Puget Sound region. The scholarships are the Aki Kurose Memorial Scholarship (\$2,000) (Seattle School District only), the Minoru Tazuma Scholarship (\$1,500), and the Bunshiro Tamesa Scholarship (\$1,500). Scholarship descriptions and applications for the scholarships may be picked at the respective high school scholarship coordinator's office or may be downloaded from the Seattle JACL Chapter home page: <http://www.jaclseattle.org/>

All application submissions must be received by the committee or postmarked by March 31, 2004.

Washington Mutual, thank you for your sponsorship

The Seattle Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League would like to extend a special thank you to Washington Mutual for its sponsorship. During our 2004 Installation Banquet, Washington Mutual's advertisement was erroneously omitted from the program booklet. For this reason, an advertisement for Washington Mutual will be placed into both the March and April issues of this newsletter.

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Mission Statement: The Seattle Chapter JACL is a non-profit, grassroots civil rights organization dedicated to empowering our local community through high-quality programs and strategic partnerships focusing on activism, education, and youth leadership development. As a chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, we strive to be a leading Asian American advocacy group for civil and human rights while promoting and preserving the values and cultural heritage of Japanese Americans.

Chapter Board Meeting: Our primary means of carrying out our mission is a monthly meeting, held at 6:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month, except August, at the chapter office, 316 Maynard Ave. S., Seattle. Those wishing to make presentations or be added to the meeting agenda should contact President Bill Tashima prior to the meeting. All are welcome.

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Article and Event Submission: Board members should submit materials to the editor (ryanminato@hotmail.com) by the Friday after the monthly board meeting. Calendar items emphasize chapter or community events not likely to be covered by community newspapers or by other newsletters.

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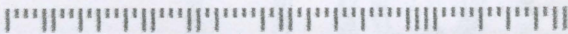
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