

New Year's Eve Gala

Save the date now, Dec. 31, 2009

Seattle JACL is planning a New Year's Eve Gala that we hope will become an APIA Community Tradition. We want all generations to attend so the music will progress from the 40's through the 00's as the night progresses. There will be a quiet jazz lounge for conversation and lots of hot and cold, served appetizers and a no-host bar. At midnight we will serve Ozoni, a traditional New Year's soup, to ensure all of us will have a full stomach in 2010.

Rides to and from the Gala will be provided at the beginning of the evening and toward the end of the evening. Come celebrate the beginning of a new decade with us.

Seattle JACL New Year's Eve Gala from 8 PM to 2 AM; Nissei Vets Hall, 1212 So. King St.; \$50 per person.

Minidoka Pilgrimage 2009

by Ann Fujii Lindwall

The 2009 Minidoka Pilgrimage brought together about 120 people of all ages, generations and interests from Seattle, Portland and Idaho, the weekend of June 26-28.

This was my second time and this year I brought my husband Alan (who is not Japanese American), who was very interested in learning more about what I had described from last year's event.

We boarded the air-conditioned bus around 5:30 AM at Bellevue Community College and left promptly. We arrived in Twin Falls for dinner at Rock Creek Park for a delicious picnic-type dinner, meeting up with folks who had flown or driven themselves from Seattle.

Bright and early Saturday morning, we again boarded the bus to head out to the Minidoka National Historical Site, about 30 minutes away. It's a beautiful drive, most notably seeing the beautiful Snake River Canyon. When we got to the site, we were split up in two groups and learned about the upgrades to the site, including the new way-finding signage that explains the different areas at the site and their significance. A few of the signs were put up, but we were able to look at most of them in a special room before our tour began.

The tour was about two and a half hours and went fairly fast. Some of the highlights were the root cellar, the firehouse and what was left of the original entrance to the camp during the war. After the tour, we headed to the Idaho Farm and Ranch Museum to see a preserved barrack from Minidoka.



Barrack potbelly stove.

See "Minidoka" on page 2

The Will of a Samurai

(part one of a series)

1

In your own land, no one knows you. You die as an old person, and you are just another wrinkled, old shriveled prune. With gray hair and a shriveled form, you fall to a quiet death. Your surviving spouse seeks to bury you without clamor or fanfare. She lets go of you, and remembers the years that were yours to share.

And suddenly, they come. They come to your funeral because they remember who you are. Only then, does your government wonder who you were, and why all these foreigners are here to honor you and remember you to history.

See "Sugihara" on page 3

A Part of Bon Odori

by Julieanne Hamasaki

I have been going to Bon Odori since I was a toddler. From then and now it was a chance for me to see family and friends, especially childhood friends from my Seattle Buddhist Church Daycare days—this is our chance to catch up every year. Eating kori and dancing to the songs with moves ingrained from many years of practice, and running around in our yukata and zori, these are some of the experiences I will remember most.



Practice session for 2009 Seattle Bon Odori.

This is a great experience of Japanese culture through song, dance, and community that happens across Japan and in Japanese communities around the world, really giving a connective piece to us all. Bon Odori was also important to me to remember those who have passed away and celebrate remembrance for them.

It's going to be a new experience for me to attend as a representative of the Greater Seattle Japanese Community Queen's Court. As a child, these were the girls I used to follow behind to do the dances and looked up to. I only get to experience this once as a reigning court member and I know this will add to my list of fond memories at Bon Odori.

2 Cruise to Vancouver BC, Two Nights on Holland American

Friday, October 2 through Sunday, October 4
(cruise leaves in the evening)
\$270 per person, double occupancy

Seattle JACL has been able to secure special pricing for this two-night cruise from Seattle to Vancouver, BC. If you have always wanted to try cruising as a way of travel but didn't have the time or money, here is your chance to get a taste.

The price of \$270 per person, double occupancy includes all meals from noon Friday through breakfast on Sunday. Holland America has some of the best food in the industry and is literally made available 24 hours a day. Entertainment is also included: live music, shows, dancing, a casino, exercise classes, spa, movies, games and other activities.

Sunday you can explore Vancouver, BC on your own but remember, a cruise vacation is as much about the travel time to the destination as the destination itself. Transportation back to Seattle on Sunday evening is provided (chartered bus or train, to be announced).

We need at least 50 people in order to reserve the space of 25 staterooms. Gather a group of your friends to come with you. Please email _____ by Saturday, August 1 to let us know your interest. You will not need to commit to a reservation at this time.



Paperless Newsletters

The Seattle JACL Chapter Newsletters are now available online. Just click on our web site www.jaclseattle.org to get the latest edition of the newsletter. If you missed a previous edition, you can search the archives.

Why go paperless?

- Convenience – access newsletter when and where you like.
- Easy – the newsletter is only a click away.
- Eco-friendly – you can do your part to reduce paper waste and preserve a forest.
- Cost effective – contributes to our chapter's efforts to be fiscally responsible in controlling costs so more funds may be available to support community projects.

What can you do?

Please let us know if you no longer wish to receive the paper newsletter. However, we will continue to send you a newsprint copy if you prefer!

Thank you for your support of JACL!

Minidoka, continued from page 1

After lunch we headed back to our hotels and participated in a program titled Magic Valley Residents: Memories from a Different Perspective. That was followed by the Talk Story groups, and ended with a sharing of stories in a larger group. We then took a group photo in front of the Red Lion and a separate photo of just the internees...thanks to the patience and expertise of Eugene Tagawa, event photographer.

Soon after, head out to the Prescott Ranch for a wonderful barbeque dinner and fellowship. Roy Prescott, our host, was very, very grateful and extremely friendly. Some of us went to see the very cute baby cows! After the dinner, we headed back to the hotel for a social hour of karaoke. Quite a few of us ventured up to the front to dance the Tanko Bushi.



After the closing ceremonies, everyone pinned a paper daruma to a cardboard tow

Sunday morning we were at the Minidoka site for the closing ceremony lead by Mistress of Ceremonies Connie Masuoka. Other program participants included Reverend Brooks Andrews, Wendy Janssen (Superintendent of Minidoka National Historical Society), and Chung (story teller). The honor roll was read by Kay Endo of the Nisei Veterans Committee with rifle salute and retiring of the colors.

The closing lunch was at the Turf Club with Dale Watanabe as our Master of Ceremonies. Tom Ikeda of Densho presented a nice program focusing on the difficulties the Japanese American had after camp. Emily Momohara of The Friends of Minidoka, gave an update of what is happening at the historical site.

The program ended with the raffle and a lot of nice prizes, while raising funds for the Minidoka Pilgrimage group for next year. After the event ended, we all said our goodbyes, hugging new friends and promising to follow up with future visits. And we were on the road around two in the afternoon, arriving about after midnight back in Seattle.

Thank you to the following Minidoka Pilgrimage Committee members: Bif Brigman, Chris Inaba, Frank Kitamoto, Ryan Kozu, Monica Lundberg, May Namba, Irene Shigaki, Gloria Shigeno, Anna Tamura, Dale Watanabe, Keith Yamaguchi, and Stella Yee. Also three college scholarship recipients that joined the committee: Chanda Ishisaka, Joshua Loren Smith and Alicia Watanabe. It was a fantastic experience. Thank you for all of your hard work.

Trivia Photo

- What is the name of this and why was it built?
- Do you know the name of the designer?
(Hint: he is Japanese-American!)
Where is this located?



Answers for previous issue

The waterfall from our last issue's trivia photo was built in 1977, and was commissioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The waterfall was designed by Masao Kinoshita, the principal in the architectural firm that bears his name. He and seven Japanese stone masons built the urban waterfall park.

The primary mission of the Annie E. Casey Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation was established in 1948 by Jim Casey and his siblings George, Harry, and Marguerite. They named the philanthropy in honor of their mother, who had struggled to raise them as a young widow. But the Foundation's history really starts back in 1907, when Jim Casey began a messenger service in Seattle, Washington to help his family make ends meet. That small family business became the global, multi-billion dollar UPS. The waterfall is located at the site of that first original office, in the basement of a tavern.

Urban park address:
219 Second Ave. South Seattle, WA 98104

With the weather this hot, go down there and have lunch and enjoy the water spray from the waterfall!

Source: homepage of the Annie E. Casey Foundation website, verbatim.

Sugihara, continued from page 1

Because you are Nikkei, you must know this man. When he died in Japan, the Israeli Ambassador to Japan and a contingent of Jews from around the world came to his funeral. It was only then that his neighbors learned that this man saved the lives of 6,000 Jews.

In 1939, he was appointed as the Vice Counsel to Lithuania from Japan. The Germans had overrun Poland, and Jews were losing their pathways to escape the Holocaust. The Lithuanian Jews opened out their arms to the frightened Jewish Polish refugees as they streamed into Lithuania.

But the war spread, and for these Jews, the only escape was through Russia. One could not escape without a visa. One day, hundreds of Jews stood outside the Japanese Embassy; Sugihara met with several of the leaders of the refugee groups. They were requesting safe passage to Japan through Russia.

Three times Sugihara requested safe passage for these Jews, and three times the Japanese government denied his request. At the same time, Russia had ordered all foreign diplomats to close their embassies and return to their countries.

Sugihara requested a twenty-day extension from the Russians. In twenty days, he wrote 6,000 visas, all by hand as required by law. There were no computers, and he would stop and cry because his arm hurt so much from writing. His wife would massage his arm and encourage him to be strong and to keep going. She would bring him sandwiches and stay by his side. For the Japanese Consulate, he might sometimes write as many as 300 visas a month, but now he was writing 300 each day.

He knew that he and his wife might be killed if discovered, or at the very least, disgraced and fired in his own country if discovered. He was a son of a Samurai, and lived by Bushido. This code of ethics gave him strength to make his choice. When the Russians forced the Sugiharas to leave Lithuania, he continued to write visas as he went to the train station, in order to save even more lives. As the train pulled away from the platform, Sugihara threw his visa stamp to another refugee, and that person in turn saved even more lives. These Jews are known as the Sugihara Survivors. There was a Jewish community in Kobe, Japan. Once in Japan, the Japanese government refused to give them up, and protected them until after the war.

Sugihara was disgraced in his homeland, and his activities were never recognized in Japan during his lifetime. He cobbled together a meager living as a part-time translator, spent time in a Russian POW camp, and then as a simple manager in Russia. He returned to Japan and died in 1986.

"In the course of human existence, many people are tested. Only a few soar as eagles and achieve greatness by simple acts of kindness, thoughtfulness and humanity." – Jewish Virtual Library

Source: Jewish Virtual Library, Newsweek Magazine, Together-Holocaust Magazine

Information

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.

Chapter Board Meeting: Our primary means of carrying out our mission is a monthly meeting, held at 6 PM on the third Wednesday of each month, except August, at the chapter office, 316 Maynard Ave. S, Seattle.

Seattle Chapter Newsletter: Published a week after the third Wednesday of each month by the Seattle Chapter Japanese American Citizens League. Address: PO Box 18558, Seattle, Washington, 98118. Phone: (206) 622-4098

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Article and Event Submission: Board members should submit materials to the editor 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.

Seattle Chapter JACL website: www.jaclseattle.org

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